

“Traditional Islam” in the discourse of religious associations, ethnic organisations and government structures in Bashkortostan

*Zilya Khabibullina**

Abstract

The well-known and widely used term “traditional Islam” first appeared during the Islamic revival in post-Soviet Russia. It refers to something that has become a very relevant issue in those regions of the country with a predominantly Muslim population. This article analyses the discourse on “traditional Islam” in the Republic of Bashkortostan, particularly in relation to the spiritual administrations, Muslim movements, and schools and ethnic organisations. It also looks at different interpretations of common religious practices, e.g. regional pilgrimages, and whether they are considered to belong to “traditional” or “non-traditional” Islam. Research confirms the existence of multiple interpretations of “traditional Islam” in society and a lack of unanimity over how to understand the term. Debates over “traditional” and “non-traditional” Islam and the search for ethnically relevant forms of religion thus remain factors in the generation of conflict and facilitate further fragmentation of the Muslim community in the Republic.

Key words: Islam, traditional Islam, Bashkortostan, state, TsDUM, DUM RB, Islamic movements, ethnic organisations, pilgrimage

* Cand.Sc. in History; Senior Research Fellow at R.G. Kuzeev Institute for Ethnological Studies – Subdivision of the Ufa Federal Research Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

Introduction

The term “traditional Islam” first appeared in a Russian context in the early 1990s. As state policy on religion and its institutional formations changed radically, religious uplift and growth in the number of believers prompted organisational restructuring of the spiritual administrations that had regulated the life of the Muslim community in the USSR. As the autonomous republics gained sovereignty, the four Soviet muftiates (the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the European part of the USSR and Siberia, the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the Northern Caucasus, the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Transcaucasia, and the Central Asian Spiritual Administration of Muslims) disintegrated and new independent and competing spiritual administrations emerged all over the Russian Federation, generally on ethnic and territorial principles.

This organisational fragmentation of the Muslim community was aggravated by radical and extremist interventions within the Islamic landscape of Russia, combined with the absence of a high-quality system of religious education. During the Soviet period, the major educational centres for Muslims were in Uzbekistan (the Mir-i Arab *madrasah* in Bukhara and the Imam al-Bukhari Islamic Institute in Tashkent). The newly founded *madrasahs* and the R. Fakhretdinov Islamic University¹ in Ufa were not yet capable of providing high-quality education in the 1990s. Many young believers were therefore educated abroad, in Arab countries, Turkey, Pakistan, etc. Several researchers have contended that, when they returned with their newly acquired knowledge and foreign interpretations of the tenets of Islam, these young people often had difficulty fitting into Russian Islamic communities.²

Such were the conditions under which the dichotomy between “traditional”

1 In 1989–1996, the University operated as the Madrasah named after R. Fakhretdinov. In 1996–2003, it was called the Russian Islamic Institute of the Central Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Russia (TsDUM), and in 2003 it obtained accreditation as a university.

2 Gallyamov R.R., “Islamskoye vozrozhdeniye v Volgo-Ural’skom makroregione: sravnitelnyy analiz modeley Bashkortostana i Tatarstana” [“Islamic revival in the Volga-Urals macro-region: comparative analysis of the Bashkortostan and Tatarstan models”], in *Islam ot Kaspiya do Urala: Makroregional’nyy podkhod [Islam from the Caspian Sea to the Urals: Macroregional approach. Collection of articles]* (Moscow: Rospen, 2007), p. 98; Mukhametshin R.M., “Sistema musul’manskogo obrazovaniya v sovremennoy Rossii” [“System of Islamic education in modern Russia”], in *Razvitiye islamskogo teologicheskogo i religioznogo obrazovaniya v Rossii i za rubezhom [Development of Islamic theological and religious education in Russia and abroad]* (Moscow: Izdatel’stvo Moskovskogo islamskogo universiteta, 2009), p. 75; Khasanova A.G., *Religioznye obyedineniya Respubliki Bashkortostan v 1985–2005 gg.: dis. ... kand. ist. nauk [Religious associations of the Republic of Bashkortostan in 1985–2005: dissertation for the degree of Candidate of Historical Sciences]* (Ufa: BSU, 2007), p. 127; Yakupov R.I., Rayev R.A., “K noveyshey istorii razvitiya sistem mnogourovnevnogo obrazovaniya u tyurko-musul’man Rossii” [“Revisiting the contemporary history of developing systems of multi-level education for the Muslim Turkic peoples of Russia”], in *Idealy i tsennosti islama v obrazovatel’nom prostranstve XXI veka. Materialy mezhdunarodnoy konferentsii [Ideals and values of Islam in the educational landscape of the 21st century. Materials from the International Conference]* (Ufa: Bashkir’skiy Gosudarstvennyy Pedagogicheskii Universitet, 2014), p. 20–25, etc.

and "non-traditional" ("right/wrong") Islam was introduced. The main aims were to distinguish radical interpretations of Islam and define the specific features of Russian Islam. The terms were therefore widely deployed in the rhetoric of Muslim leaders competing for congregations and muftiates.³

The state's current religious policy is for "traditional Islam" to consolidate Russian Muslims within each country and so develop it as a powerful resource for encouraging civil unity.⁴ The term is deployed by representatives of government bodies, religious organisations, ethnic associations, academia, and the media and has widespread currency among Russia's Islamic community. There is no single or authoritative definition of it, because different social groups have different understandings of it and use it to support their different points of view on issues of concern to the Russian ummah.⁵

Given the regionalisation of Russia's Islamic community (there are several autonomous Islamic areas inside the country, including the Urals and Volga Region, the Northern Caucasus, and Western Siberia, each with its own religious and political leaders and social, cultural, and psychological features), debates on the essence of "traditional Islam" tend to be region-specific and influenced by socio-political, ethnic-religious, and personal factors.

In this paper we will be looking at these processes of interpretation from an anthropological point-of-view and explaining how it is perceived and used by Muslims in their daily life in the Republic of Bashkortostan, a major territory of the Russian Federation whose population has historically been largely Muslim. The goal of this study is to determine the field of discussion for the problem of "traditional Islam" and so to establish its general character and focus.

This paper is based on ethnographical materials collected in the Republic of Bashkortostan: interviews with clerics, believers, and the leaders of ethnic organisations, official and unofficial associations, as well as research into popular Muslim practices in the Republic, e.g. visiting the tombs of "saints" ("awliya"), which have become the subject of religious and jurisprudential dispute.

3 "Ekspert: termin "traditsionnyy islam" vvel Talgat Tadzhuddin v lihiye 90-e" ["Expert: the term "traditional Islam" introduced Talgat Tadzhuddin into the dashing 90s"], <https://www.islamnews.ru/news-jekspert-termin-tradicionnyj-islam-vvel-talgat-tadzhuddin-v-lihiye-90-e/>, accessed 25 September 2019.

4 Pyatkov V.P., "Sovremennaya religioznaya situatsiya v Respublike Bashkortostan" [The current religious situation in the Republic of Bashkortostan], in *Islam i gosudarstvo v Rossii: sbornik materialov Mezhdunarodnoy nauchno-prakticheskoy konferentsii, posvyashchennoy 225-letiyu Tsentralnogo duhovnogo upravleniya musulman Rossii – Orenburgskogo magometanskogo duhovnogo sobraniya. Ufa, 22 oktyabrya 2013 g.* [Islam and the state in Russia: collection of materials from the International Academic Conference to mark the 225th anniversary of the Central Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Russia – the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly. Ufa, 22 October, 2013], (Ufa: GUP RB Ufimskiy poligrafkombinat, 2013), p. 5.

5 See, *Traditsionnyy islam: ponyatiye, sushchnost', sodержaniye. Sbornik materialov nauchno-prakticheskogo seminara, provedennogo v Ufe 21 iyulya 2015 g.* [Traditional Islam: notion, essence, content. Collection of materials from an academic seminar held in Ufa on 21 July, 2015], G.B. Faizov (ed.), (Ufa: Bashkir'skiy Gosudarstvennyy Pedagogicheskiy Universitet, 2015).

Ethnic and demographic overview of the Muslim community of Bashkortostan

The Republic of Bashkortostan is a multi-ethnic⁶ and multi-religious region of Russia, most of whose population are Muslims native to the Republic. According to information from the Council for State-Religion Relations affiliated to the Head of the Republic of Bashkortostan, Islamic associations constitute some 68% of all religious organisations there, the remainder comprising a further 20% of Orthodox Christian associations and 12% of Protestant movements (Baptists, Adventists, Pentecostals, Mormons, etc.), along with a smattering of Old Believers, Buddhists, and adherents of pagan beliefs.⁷ The number of Islamic religious organisations is still growing, and, as of January 1 2018, there were 1,392 active Islamic religious associations in the Republic.⁸ The region is thus of significant interest for researchers into Islam and Islamic communities.

According to the last census, the Islamic ummah of Bashkortostan predominantly comprises two Turkic peoples, the Bashkirs, who number 1,172,287 people (29.5%), and the Tatars, who number 1,009,295 people (25.4%). The majority of Bashkirs live in the southern, south-eastern, eastern and north-eastern districts of the Republic (the so-called Bashkir Trans-Urals), while most of the Republic's Tatars are concentrated in the western and north-western districts, which border in Tatarstan. As one travels from west to east and south-east, Tatar Muslims thus represent a gradually decreasing percentage of the population.⁹

One should bear in mind that the ratio of Tatars to Bashkirs in Bashkortostan reported in Russian censuses tended to fluctuate in accordance with changes in formal ethnic identification, under the influence of state policy and institutional factors. Such changes in ethnic identification were most common in areas of intense inter-ethnic contact in the north-western parts of the present-day Re-

6 According to the 2010 census, there are representatives of over 160 peoples living in the Republic of Bashkortostan, speaking 150 different languages and dialects (see *Natsionalnyy sostav i vladeniye yazykami, grazhdanstvo naseleniya Respubliki Bashkortostan po dannym Vserossiyskoy perepisi naseleniya 2010 goda: statisticheskiy sbornik* [Ethnic composition and languages, citizenship of the population of the Republic of Bashkortostan according to the results of the Russian Census of 2010: statistical compendium] 2 volumes, Vol. 1. (Ufa: Bashkortostan, 2013), p. 13–27.

7 "Informatsionniy otchet Soveta po gosudarstvenno-konfessionalnym otnosheniyam pri Glave Respubliki Bashkortostan za 2017 g." [Information Report of the Council on State-Confessional Relations under the Head of the Republic of Bashkortostan for 2017], in *Tekushchiy arkhiv Soveta po gosudarstvenno-konfessionalnym otnosheniyam pri Glave Respubliki Bashkortostan* [The current archive of the Council on State-Confessional Relations under the Head of the Republic of Bashkortostan].

8 "Informatsionniy otchet Soveta po gosudarstvenno-konfessionalnym otnosheniyam pri Glave Respubliki Bashkortostan za 2018 g." in *Tekushchiy arkhiv Soveta po gosudarstvenno-konfessionalnym otnosheniyam pri Glave Respubliki Bashkortostan*.

9 *Narody Bashkortostana v perepisyah naseleniya* [Peoples of Bashkortostan in censuses], Part I. (Ufa: Kitap, 2016).

public during the 19th–20th centuries. Since the ethnonym (Bashkir) was state-sponsored, rejecting it could have a negative impact on one's everyday life, losing one privileges. Some people therefore accepted the ethnonym as designating their social (publicly declared) identity, while keeping their previous ethnicity in their private circle.¹⁰ Shortly before the Russian Censuses of 2002 and 2010, the "Tatar-Bashkir issue" had thus become a widely discussed one.¹¹

After the collapse of the USSR, the Bashkir intelligentsia had the task of consolidating the titular population into a "nation" by creating a high Bashkir culture that was distinct from Tatar culture, as had previously been the case when the Bashkir Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR) was formed in 1919. These processes were then projected on to the Muslim environment and took the form of seeking differences between "Bashkir" and "Tatar" Islam, which is what Bashkir activists went on to do.¹²

The native Muslim community of the Republic was supplemented by Muslim immigrants in the 1990s and visitors from CIS countries, most of whom stayed for short periods to earn money. According to figures from the Administration for Migration Issues of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Bashkortostan, 631,000 people moved to Bashkortostan between 1992 and 2005. This included 109,566 from republics of the former USSR.¹³ These Muslim migrants included Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Azerbaijanis, Tajiks, and Turkmen. The cities have neighbourhoods where migrants from the various ethnicities concentrate.

Attitudes towards migrant Muslims are mixed in the Islamic ummah of Bashkortostan. In the 1990s, migrants from Central Asian countries helped revive Islam in Bashkiria, as well as in forming an institutional Islamic clergy¹⁴ in the region and re-establishing Islamic congregations, and for these reasons they were often held in high regard by the local population, not least because of popular assumptions re-

10 Gorenburg D., "Tatary – bashkiry – snova tatary: izmeneniya etnicheskoy identichnosti v Bashkortostane" [Tatars – Bashkirs – Tatars again: changes of the ethnic identity in Bashkortostan], *Vestnik Evrazii* [Bulletin of Eurasia], 1 (2004). p. 68.

11 Gabdrafikov I.M., "Fenomen Bashkortostana: ot "tragicheskoy demografii" k "zakonomernoy rekonfiguratsii chislennosti" [The phenomenon of Bashkortostan: from "tragic demography" to "natural reconfiguration of the population"], *Etnograficheskoye obozreniye* [Ethnographic review], 5 (2007), p. 126.

12 *100 let duhovnomu upravleniyu musulman Respubliki Bashkortostan: istoriya i sovremennost'* [The 100th anniversary of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the Republic of Bashkortostan: history and present] (Ufa: Kitap, 2018), p. 12.

13 "Migranty v etnokul'turnom prostranstve Bashkortostana" ["Migrants in the ethnocultural space of Bashkortostan"], <https://www.fergananews.com/articles/6510>, accessed 25 September 2019.

14 Unlike other universal religions, Islam has no institutional church to serve as intermediary between believers and God. Nor is there a special social class of clerics supposed to possess divine grace. The situation in the Russian state is different for historical reasons. In 1789, Catherine the Great founded the Orenburg Mohammedan Spiritual Assembly, which institutionalised the Muslim clergy in the country. The Islamic clergy in modern Russia include muftis, imams, mullahs, and muezzins, who perform and organise acts of worship. Currently, the Islamic clergy is a social-professional group with certain elements of stratification and some hierarchical patterns.

garding the high level of development of Islam in Central Asia.¹⁵ Attitudes towards migrants in society were, however, also influenced by the expert assessment of the migration processes as a source of radicalisation of the Republic's Muslims, given the migrants increasing role in "Hizb at-Tahrir" activities. This is a religiously oriented political party¹⁶ that is considered a terrorist group in Russia.¹⁷

In CIS countries and the other republics of Russia, ethnic Bashkir migrants are themselves currently viewed in increasingly negative ways, which are, however, caused by social and cultural differences and economic factors rather than religious practices. This trend has been reinforced by two instances of conflict in 2018 between representatives of the Muslim peoples in the Republic, namely the Bashkirs and Chechens and the Bashkirs and Tajiks, where ethnic differences exacerbated everyday conflicts and put them in the public spotlight.¹⁸

Concern over migrants is also rising in Bashkortostan at the level of government institutions. According to the Council for State-Religion Relations, affiliated to the Head of the Republic of Bashkortostan, only those native to the region and educated in Russian institutes and *madrasahs* or with a good education abroad should be appointed as imams – in other words, they should be people who know the local culture and customs very well as a prerequisite to meeting the spiritual needs of the residents of the Republic, rather than outsiders to Bashkortostan.¹⁹ It is worth noting that there was a wave, particularly in Bashkir districts, of forcing migrant imams out of the Republic during the 2000s. Their places were usually taken by radically oriented local

15 Khabibullina Z.R., *Musul'manskoe duhovenstvo v Respublike Bashkortostan na rubezhe XX–XXI vekov [Islamic clergy in the Republic of Bashkortostan on the verge of the 21st century]* (Ufa: Mir pechati, 2015), p. 57.

16 Prohibited in the Russian Federation by decision of the Supreme Court, dated February 14, 2003, No GKPI 03-116.

17 "Bashkirskogo separatizma ne sushchestvuyet" Islamoved Ayslu Yunusova o natsionalnykh i religioznykh problemakh Bashkortostana ["Bashkir separatism does not exist" Islamologist Aislu Yunusova about ethnic and religious problems of Bashkortostan"], <https://lenta.ru/articles/2015/06/23/bashkir/>, accessed 25 September 2019.

18 "Skandal o massovoi drake s chechentsami v bashkirskom sele vyshel za predely respublikii" ["The scandal of a mass brawl with Chechens in the Bashkir village went beyond the borders of the Republic"], <https://rb.versia.ru/skandal-o-massovoj-drake-s-chechencami-v-bashkirskom-sele-vyshel-za-predely-respubliki>, accessed 25 September 2019; "Boynya v Baymake: ofitsial'no – bytovaya draka, neofitsial'no – natsionalniy konflikt" ["The massacre in Baymak: officially – a domestic fight, unofficially – an ethnic conflict"], <https://mkset.ru/news/incident/01-10-2018/boynya-v-baymake-ofitsialno-bytovaya-draka-neofitsialno-natsionalnyy-konflikt>, accessed 25 September 2019; Turov V., "Mezhnatsionalniy konflikt v pervoy stolitse Bashkortostana vyzval nedovol'stvo v Moskve i Chechne" ["Interethnic conflict in the first capital of Bashkortostan caused discontent in Moscow and Chechnya"], <http://pravdapfo.ru/articles/90663-mezhnatsionalnyy-konflikt-v-pervoy>, accessed 25 September 2019; Rahmatullin T., "Izvin'yayus pered vsem bashkirskim narodom": chto proizoshlo v Beloretske? ["I apologize to the whole Bashkir people": what happened in Beloretsk?], <https://realnoevremya.ru/articles/122472-beloreckiyy-konflikt-s-mezhnetnicheskoy-okraskoy>, accessed 25 September 2019; Sitikov I., V Bashkortostane proizoshla ocherednaya mezhnatsional'naya draka [There was another ethnic fight in Bashkortostan], <http://pravdapfo.ru/news/91389-v-bashkortostane-proizoshla-ocherednaya>, accessed 25 September 2019.

19 Karamyshev R.D., "Trudovaya migratsiya i islamskaya umma RB" ["Labor Migration and the Islamic Ummah of the Republic of Bashkortostan"], <http://lawinrussia.ru/content/trudovaya-migratsiya-i-islamskaya-umma-rb>, accessed 25 September 2019.

imams who had just returned from foreign educational institutions.²⁰ One of DUM RB's proclaimed priorities is the cultural integration of migrants from other regions of Russia, countries of the former Soviet Union, and beyond. Islamic traditions and the Bashkir language are supposed to be major factors in such integration, according to the Spiritual Administration's development strategy.²¹

The organisational structure of the Muslim community of Bashkortostan

In organisational terms, the Muslim ummah of Bashkortostan is represented by two officially registered religious centres:

- The Central Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Russia (TsDUM), chaired by Grand mufti Talgat Tadzhuiddin (since 1980, when he was appointed to head TsDUM's predecessor, the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the European Part of the USSR and Siberia). It brings together more than 2,000 Islamic organisations from all over the Russian Federation, including 622 in the Republic of Bashkortostan.²²
- The Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the Republic of Bashkortostan (DUM RB), led by Mufti Nurmuhamet Nigmatullin (from 1992 to 2019).²³ DUM RB is included in the Council of Muftis of Russia (SMR), chaired by Ravil Gaynutdin. From 1994 to 2017, Nigmatullin was also co-chair of the SMR. He is currently a member of its General Committee. DUM RB brings together 773 Muslim communities in the Republic, which constitutes a majority of the SMR's member communities.²⁴

20 In 2011, we noted such a case at the village of Abzakovo in Beloretsky district, when an imam from Central Asia, accepted and revered by most of the residents, was banished for ideological differences by a group of young local imams under the age of 35, who had returned to their homeland after studying abroad. Senior members of the village described these young people as failing to measure up to the moral requirements of the imamate and noted that they did not share the same understanding of Islam. The locals said that during the time of the previous imam, who had been forced to leave the village, the mosque had been its cultural centre, they had spent religious and other public holidays in the mosque, held all kinds of social gatherings and tea parties. The young imams prohibited cooking and bringing food to the mosque, discouraged the presence of women, etc. Locals stopped going and the mosque became a meeting place for just five young people with new views. During our fieldwork, the mosque was closed.

21 *100 let dukhovnomu upravleniyu musulman Respubliki Bashkortostan: istoriya i sovremennost* (Ufa: Kitap, 2018), p. 6.

22 "Informatsionniy otchet Soveta po gosudarstvenno-konfessional'nyim otnosheniyam pri Glave Respubliki Bashkortostan za 2018 g.", in *Tekushchiy arhiv Soveta po gosudarstvenno-konfessional'nyim otnosheniyam pri Glave Respubliki Bashkortostan*.

23 In April 2019, mufti Nurmuhamet Nigmatullin resigned, in June he died.

24 "Informatsionniy otchet Soveta po gosudarstvenno-konfessional'nyim otnosheniyam pri Glave Respubliki Bashkortostan za 2018 g." in *Tekushchiy arhiv Soveta po gosudarstvenno-konfessional'nyim otnosheniyam pri Glave Respubliki Bashkortostan*.

There are 1,173 mosques in the Republic. The 1,392 Islamic organisations have 1,275 imam-khatibs between them. There are 77 mosques without a permanent priest and a lot of imams serve 2 or 3 mosques. This shortage of clerics, most of whom are senior citizens (65–70 years old), has existed for some years.²⁵

Some districts of the Republic have seen an increase in the number of supporters of “unofficial” Islam. The largest “unofficial” religious groups are the Salafis and the so-called “Haqqanis” (followers of the Naqshbandi Haqqaniyya *tariqa*). Their main ideologist was Nazim Al-Haqqani,²⁶ who was followed, after his death, by his son, Sheikh Mehmet Adil.

The self-proclaimed leader of the Salafis of the Republic is I. N. Khaybullin, who chaired the “Shura of the Muslims of Bashkortostan” until 2017²⁷ (when the association dissolved itself, announcing that its members should continue their activities within the official muftiates).²⁸ The Bashkir Salafis consider Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait their religious centres and maintain communication with similar organisations in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

A neo-Sufi group called the Haqqaniyya *tariqa* operates under the leadership of S. Kildin, a former government official and General Director of the Bashkortostan State Broadcasting Company. Neo-Sufi ideas have proved popular with creative and academic Bashkir intellectuals, businesspeople, and political figures. The movement’s religious centre is the town of Lefka (in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus), which Bashkir adherents visit frequently. The leaders of the group position themselves as adherents of “traditional Islam”²⁹ and have actively participated in the work of Bashkir ethnic organisations. The *tariqa* is most popular in the southern and eastern areas of the Republic of Bashkortostan.

25 “Informatsionnyy otchet Soveta po gosudarstvenno-konfessionalnym otnosheniyam pri Glave Respubliki Bashkortostan za 2018 g.”

26 Muhammad Nazim Adil al-Qibrisi al-Haqqani (1922–2014). According to his official biography, he was a paternal descendant of the Prophet Muhammad and the Sufi ‘Abd al-Qadir Gilani (1077–1166), and so inherited his affiliation to the Qadiriyya *tariqa*. On his mother’s side, sheikh Nazim was a descendant of the Sufi Jalal ad-Din Rumi (1207–1273), the originator of the Mevlevi *tariqa*. In his own words, sheikh Nazim received spiritual initiation into the Qadiriyya *tariqa* from the late Gilani himself at the Sufi’s grave in Baghdad. In the golden chain of succession (*altny silsile*), recognised by the Haqqaniyya *tariqa*, Sheikh Nazim follows right after Abdullah ad-Daghestani.

27 The “Shura of the Muslims of the Republic of Bashkortostan” was founded in 2009 as a part of the World Qoroltai of the Bashkirs, and members were present as speakers at the Youth Qoroltai of the World Qoroltai of the Bashkirs in 2010. Their priorities were in philanthropy, Islamic education and awareness-building, organising religious social events and publishing (including the “Waqyt” newspaper).

28 “Obyavleniye o samorospuske Shury! Ishmurat Khaybullin” [“Announcement of the self-dissolution of Shura! Ishmurat Khaybullin”], https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a37KS_wNHJk, accessed 25 September 2019.

29 Mawlana Sutan al-Awliya Sheikh Muhammad Mehmet Adil al-Naqshbandi, *Sokhbety (besedy) v Bashkortostane [Sokhbets (conversations) in Bashkortostan]*, 2nd ed. (Ufa: Bashkortostan, 2015), p. 3–4.

Representatives of the Sufi *tariqas* (Naqshbandiyya and Shadhiliyya) of Dagestan also associate their work with the clerical administrations of Bashkortostan and contact them through immigrants from this Northern Caucasus republic.³⁰

There is also noteworthy and growing influence of Azerbaijani and Iranian Shiites on the local Muslims, even if the former are not particularly evident in the social life of the Republic. An online group called the "Shiites of Bashkortostan", on the VK social networking website, has about 600 members.³¹ The Khamza mosque in Ufa hosts annual mourning events during Ashura week, but their activities are limited to that. Of international radical organisations that have been declared terrorist or prohibited in the Russian Federation, the following are active in the Republic: Islamic State,³² Jabhat al-Nusra,³³ Hizb at-Tahrir, and Tablighi Jamaat.³⁴

The emergence of the term "traditional Islam"

The first people to introduce the term "traditional Islam" were representatives of religious organisations. The term appeared in the 1990s in response to the growth of foreign radical influences among Russian Muslims and the need to distinguish radical from peaceful interpretations of Islam. Authorship of the term is usually ascribed to the mufti of TsDUM, T. Tadzhuiddin.³⁵ The term has proven useful in clerical competition for muftiates and the repartition of the Islamic landscape that took place in the 1990s. The notion of "non-traditional Islam" was deployed by the management of the then-disintegrating Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the European Part of the USSR and Siberia to describe their opponents' religious views.³⁶ A term initially aimed at post-Soviet believers has thus stuck and

30 Author's fieldwork materials, Davlekanovo, Republic of Bashkortostan, 2018.

31 "Shiity Bashkortostana" ["Shiites of Bashkortostan"], https://vk.com/shia_bashkortostan, accessed 25 September 2019. The very existence of this group speaks to the religious mobilisation of Shiites in the Republic.

32 Prohibited in the RF by decision of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, dated 29.12.2014, No AKPI 14-1424S.

33 Prohibited in the RF by decision of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, dates 29.12.2014, No AKPI 14-1424S.

34 "Informatsionniy otchet Soveta po gosudarstvenno-konfessional'nym otnosheniyam pri Glave Respubliki Bashkortostan za 2018 g.", in *Tekushchiy arkhiv Soveta po gosudarstvenno-konfessionalnym otnosheniyam pri Glave Respubliki Bashkortostan*.

35 "Ekspert: termin "traditsionniy islam" vvel Talgat Tadzhuiddin v lihiye 90-e", <https://www.islamnews.ru/news-jekspert-termin-tradicionnyj-islam-vvel-talgat-tadzhuiddin-v-lihie-90-e/>, accessed 25 September 2019.

36 Yunusova A.B., "Islam i musul'mane v obshchestvennom i bytovom prostranstve Respubliki Bashkortostan" ["Islam and Muslims in the social and household space of the Republic of Bashkortostan"], in *Rossiya i Islam: mezhtsivilizatsionniy dialog* [*Russia and Islam: inter-civilisational dialogue. Collection of research articles*] (Ufa: Centre for Ethnological Research of the Ufa Science Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences, 2006), p. 142.

continues in use. It was taken over by other Russian muftis and government officials and journalists, ensuring it a widespread distribution in the media landscape.

A well-known religious figure, V. Yakupov, has explained the new term's appearance as related to a need for countermeasures to radical ideology and preservation of Islam's unique nature in Russia, given the extent of foreign influence and the wide distribution of so-called "modernised Islam".³⁷ Yakupov was one of the first religious figures to stress the distinctiveness of the Russian tradition of Islam and claim it as closest to the "prophetic ideal". He considered "Tatar Islam" such a version of Islam, typified by the "Tatars' high level of literacy, the higher position afforded women than by other Muslim peoples, the strong anti-assimilationist potential, and a centuries-old tradition of electing Islamic clergy".³⁸ Regardless of his ethnic (Tatar) focus, Yakupov's definition of "prophetic Islam" is shared by some Bashkortostan Muslims, mostly in points related to following the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet and cleaving to distinctive regional and ethnic features that not merely don't contradict Islam but go hand-in-glove with love of one's homeland and upholding its interests.³⁹

Russian scholars have thus developed a theory of the distinctiveness of Russian Islam⁴⁰ and its regional forms.⁴¹ Russia is accordingly considered one of the more distinctive areas of the Islamic world, where Muslims have been the second-largest religious group (after Orthodox Christianity) coexisting for a considerable historical period with the non-Muslim peoples of Russia. Areas of primarily Muslim population existed under the Russian Empire and the USSR, and the peoples that inhabited those areas had much in common in terms of their material, cultural, and religious life. The common geopolitical space they have occupied has facilitated various integration processes in social organisation, household life, culture and intellectual values. All those factors have influenced the form Russian Islam takes today. Its current specific features are underpinned by the ethnic and cultural peculiarities of the Muslim peoples of Russia.⁴² For such researchers, the general Islamic principles that unite the entire Islamic world are supplemented by regional forms of Islam. Russia both represents a regional form of Islam in the Islamic world and unites different regional forms of Islam within a single country. How these forms have been established has depended on the traditions of those peoples of Russia that adopted Islam.

37 See, Yakupov V., *K prorocheskomu islamu [Toward prophetic Islam]* (Kazan: Iman, 2006).

38 Yakupov V., *K prorocheskomu islamu*, p. 72.

39 Author's fieldwork materials, 2018. Opinion poll of believers about "Traditional Islam".

40 Prozorov S.M., "Vstupitel'naya statya" ["Introductory article"], *Islam na territorii byvshey Rossiyskoy imperii: Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar' [Islam in the former Russian Empire: An Encyclopaedic dictionary]*, S.M. Prozorov (ed.), Vol. 1. (Moscow: Vostochnaya literatura, 2006), p. 9–14.

41 Knysch A. D., *Islam v istoricheskoy perspektive: nachalniy etap i osnovniye istochniki [Islam in historical perspective: initial stage and main sources]* (Kazan: Izdatel'stvo Kazanskogo universiteta, 2015), p. 9.

42 Prozorov S.M., "Vstupitel'naya statia", p. 10.

"Traditional Islam" according to the imams of Bashkortostan

The Islamic clergy of Bashkortostan reduces traditional Islam to the historical tradition of the Hanafi school. Bashkortostani theologians associate the traditional nature of Russian Islam primarily with Sunni Islam, which 90% of the world's Muslims belong to, and the four *madhabs*. When clerics of the Republic talk about traditional Islam, they generally mean Sunni Islam of the Hanafi *madhab*, based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad.⁴³ Some clerics also say that, as most Muslims in Russia adhere to the Hanafi *madhab*, the question of *madhabs* is essentially irrelevant for the country's modern Muslim community.⁴⁴

Some opinions about "traditional Islam" frequently expressed by imams from both of the spiritual administrations of Muslims in Bashkortostan follow. They are taken from questionnaires and opinion polls and show how the term is generally understood:

- "Traditional Islam in Russia is Islam as it came from the Prophet and it has a 1000-year history of coexistence with other peoples in peace and unity. It's our Islam. This long history of inhabiting the same space has led to mutual understanding between ethnic groups, tolerance and mutual assistance between Christians, Jewish people, Buddhists."
- "Traditional Islam in Russia is a form of Islamic creed of Sunni orientation, established as a religious belief in Russia within the Hanafi school of Islamic jurisprudence. It takes into consideration the traditions of the peoples that profess Islam."
- "Traditional Islam is the Islam of Abu Hanifa's *madhab*. The Muslims of Russia have always professed moderate Islam."
- "Traditional Islam is the Hanafi *madhab*. It is the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet."
- "Traditional Islam is the religion that Muhammad's Islam provides the basis for. Why is it called traditional? Because it was prohibited, or almost prohibited, in Russia, but our ancestors preserved it for us with all its traditions and customs, as they were established by various circumstances of a social and political nature."
- "Traditional Islam is the Islam that follows what is prescribed in the Qur'an and acknowledges ethnic traditions and culture. As established in a given area and passed down from generation to generation."

43 Author's fieldwork materials, Ufa, Republic of Bashkortostan, 2005. Interviews with the mufti of DUM RB N. Nigmatullin; the Rector of the Russian Islamic University R. Rae, and the Head of the "Ikhlas" Muslim Religious Organisation of Kirovsky district of Ufa, M. Gallyamov.

44 Author's fieldwork materials, Ufa, Republic of Bashkortostan, 2005. Interviews with the First Deputy of the mufti of DUM RB A. Bibarsov; the Rector of the "M. Sultanova *madrasah*" Islamic College I. Malakhov; the Rector of the "Galiya" *madrasah*, I. Mukhamadiev and imam-*muhtasib* of Iglinsky district of the Republic of Bashkortostan, R. Kurbanov.

- “Traditional Islam is firstly Sunni Islam of the two *madhabs* (schools of religious jurisprudence) that have gained a foothold with the Muslims of Russia – the Hanafi *madhab*, to which the Tatars, Bashkirs and some Caucasus Muslims belong, and the Shafi‘i *madhab*, which is widespread in Dagestan and Chechnya. Secondly, it is Sufism, which is represented by several brotherhoods – Naqshbandiyya, Qadiriyya, Shadhiliyya.”
- “Traditional Islam is Sunni Islam, a symbiosis of ethnic tradition and religious dogma. So long as tradition does not contradict Islam and sharia, it should be accepted. For example, if a society traditionally sets a high bride price, and a Muslim man cannot marry because of it, that is a harmful tradition. Traditional Islam knows where tradition ends and sharia begins.”⁴⁵

On July 21, 2015, there was an academic seminar in Ufa on the problem of traditional Islam and its nature. The participating institutions included the Bashkir State Pedagogical University named after M. Akmulla, TsDUM and DUM RB. The proceedings were published in a dedicated volume, which has served as an instructional guide for students at the Russian Islamic University of TsDUM and the Bashkir State Pedagogical University (whose curriculum includes in-depth study of the history and culture of Islam). The guide does not present a determinate concept. Instead, it offers the opinions of various participants in the debate on “traditional Islam”, including the official point of view, as expressed by the religious administrations. According to this point of view, the main focus of religious organisations is preserving “traditional Islam”, which includes promoting peace and unity between peoples and traditional religious groups. This is the “antithesis” of “non-traditionalism”, associated with groups that identify as “Wahhabis” and “Salafis” and are completely opposed to the official government authorities and religious administrations.⁴⁶

“Traditional Islam” and the state

According to the Constitution of the Russian Federation (art. 14, 28), religion is separated from the state, religious associations are equal before the law, and citizens are guaranteed the right for freedom of conscience and religion. In Russia, Islam, Orthodox Christianity, Judaism and Buddhism are the traditional religions, established by

45 Author’s fieldwork materials, Ufa, Republic of Bashkortostan, 2018. Survey of imams on “Traditional Islam in Russia” at career enhancement training courses at the Russian Islamic University and Bashkir State Pedagogical University named after M. Akmulla.

46 Yakupov R.I., “Traditsionniy islam: terminologiya i ritorika” [“Traditional Islam: terminology and rhetoric”], in *Traditsionniy islam: ponyatiye, sushchnost’, sodержaniye. Sbornik materialov nauchno-prakticheskogo seminara, provedennogo v Ufe 21 iyulya 2015 g.*, G.B. Faizov (ed.), (Ufa: Bashkir’skiy Gosudarstvenniy Pedagogicheskiy Universitet, 2015), p. 29.

the Federal Law "On freedom of conscience and religious organisations" (1997). This law mentions a special role of Orthodox Christianity in the history of Russia and notes that Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism and other religions constitute an integral part of the historical legacy of the peoples of Russia and so deserve respect.⁴⁷

That these traditional Russian religious denominations have been formalised in legislation and their organizations guaranteed priority cooperation with the state shows that a cooperative model of relations between the state and the religions has been established in Russia. According to it, the state both preserves religious freedom and retains the right to regulation religious organisations' legal status differently.

The term "traditional Islam" is nowhere mentioned in the legislation of the Russian Federation. Representatives of government institutions do talk about "traditional Islam", however, which raises the question of a "non-traditional Islam".

The state authorities of Bashkortostan responsible for religious policies use the term "traditional Islam" to distinguish between "peaceful" Islam and emergent radical movements that claim a grounding in the Islamic creed and are spreading throughout the world, including modern Russia. In the understanding of statesmen and government officials, "traditional Islam" means a doctrine that respects the religious feelings of other religious groups and does not propagate extremist ideas or hate.⁴⁸ It is thus equated to the religion of peace. According to a member of the Council for State-Religion Relations, which is affiliated to the Head of the Republic of Bashkortostan, it means an "Islam that is loyal to the state, and whose representatives are respectful of the Orthodox Christian majority and ready to fight for their country, even if it means fighting their faith allies."⁴⁹ One should mention that this quote may be found on many Islamic websites attributed to the columnist R. Silantyev^{50, 51}

47 Federal Law dates 26 September, 1997, No 125-FZ, "O svobode sovesti i o religioznykh obyedineniyah" ["On freedom of conscience and religious organizations"] (revised and expanded), <http://ivo.garant.ru/#/document/171640/paragraph/20608:2>, accessed 25 September 2019.

48 *Traditsionniy islam: ponyatiye, sushchnost', sodержaniye. Sbornik materialov nauchno-prakticheskogo seminara, provedennogo v Ufe 21 iyulya 2015 g.*, G.B. Faizov (ed.), (Ufa: Bashkir'skiy Gosudarstvenniy Pedagogicheskiy Universitet, 2015), p. 5.

49 Karamyshev R.D., "Traditsionniy rossiyskiy islam: ideologema ili realnost'?" ["Traditional Russian Islam: premise or reality?"] in *Traditsionniy islam: ponyatiye, sushchnost', sodержaniye. Sbornik materialov nauchno-prakticheskogo seminara, provedennogo v Ufe 21 iyulya 2015 g.*, G.B. Faizov (ed.), (Ufa: Bashkir'skiy Gosudarstvenniy Pedagogicheskiy Universitet, 2015), p. 8.

50 Roman Anatolyevich Silantyev, professor of Moscow State Linguistic University, executive director of the Human Rights Centre of the World Russian People's Council, Deputy Chairman of the Expert Council for State Expert Assessment on Religion affiliated to the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation.

51 "V poiskah identichnosti. Osnovniye problemy i protsessy razvitiya musul'manskogo soobshchestva Rossii" ["In search of identity. The main problems and development processes of the Muslim community of Russia"], <https://islamrf.ru/news/analytiks/point-of-view/36890>, accessed 25 September 2019; "Traditsionnyy islam" – chto eto? ["Traditional Islam – what is it?"], <https://www.umma-42.ru/news-65270.html>, accessed 25 September 2019.

State religious policies in the Republic of Bashkortostan are formulated by a special government body, the Council for State-Religion Relations affiliated to the Head of the Republic of Bashkortostan (with five staff members). Its origins lie in the Soviet period, as a Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults (SDRK) affiliated to the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union was founded in 1944 for the purpose of “maintaining communication between the government of the USSR and the leaders of religious associations.”⁵² SDRK was active until 1965, when the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults were united into the single Council for Religious Affairs (SDR). The representatives of the Council in territorial districts were *chargés d'affaires* whose task was to control the development of religious life in the regions. According to the law “On freedom of conscience and religious organisations in the USSR”, dated 1 October, 1990, their position was abolished. In November 1990, however, the office of the *chargé d'affaires* for the Bashkir ASSR was transformed into a Council for Religious Affairs affiliated to the Council of Ministers of the Bashkir ASSR. It was preserved under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Bashkortostan, and, when that was abolished in 1996, under the Government of the Republic of Bashkortostan as well. Its main declared functions were facilitating the regulation of relations between the government and religious organisations and ensuring the public’s right to freedom of conscience.⁵³

The Council currently regulates relations between the state and religious associations, municipal government bodies, law-enforcement agencies, ministries and agencies dealing with the prevention of religious extremism.⁵⁴ The Council influences relations between Muslims in the Republic and actively observes and even participates, through particular individuals, in confrontations between Islamic groups and movements. We must agree with A. Malashenko that “the secular authorities of Bashkortostan, relying on administrative leverage, freely control the religious situation.”⁵⁵ Acting as proponents of secularism, the secular leaders behave as if they were figures of religious authority.⁵⁶ In 2018, the heightened interest of Ufa officials in the election of a new head at the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the Republic of Bashkortostan was extensively covered in the media. Quite

52 Central Historical Archive of the Republic of Bashkortostan. Fund R-4732. Inv. 1. File 1. Sheet 5.

53 Law of the Republic of Bashkortostan dated 20 June, 1991, No VS-6/19, “O svobode sovesti i veroisповедaniya v Respublike Bashkortostan” [“On freedom of conscience and religion in the Republic of Bashkortostan”], *Electronic fund of legal and regulatory technical documentation?* <http://docs.cntd.ru/document/935107751>, accessed 25 September 2019.

54 *Religiozniye obyedineniya Respubliki Bashkortostan. Spravochnik* [Religious organisations of the Republic of Bashkortostan. Reference book] (Ufa: GUP RB Ufimskiy poligrafkombinat, 2014), p. 7.

55 Malashenko A.V., “Federalniy tsentr i “musul’manskaya provintsiya” [“The federal centre and the “Muslim province”], *Islam i gosudarstvo: Sbornik nauchnykh statey* [Islam and the state: Collection of research articles] (Moscow, Ufa: Informreklama, 2007), p. 38.

56 Malashenko A.V., “Federalniy tsentr i “musul’manskaya provintsiya”.

a few online media publications covered the issue of how the Office of the Head of the Republic was exerting influence on the staff of DUM RB during nominations for mufti.⁵⁷ Recent change in who is Head of the Republic (12.10.2018) has caused the election for mufti of DUM RB to be rescheduled to the autumn of 2019.

The Council made clear in 2018 that the state continues to play a large role in the religious sphere in the Republic.⁵⁸ The Council's achievements were announced at a regional conference, "as a result of work undertaken by the Council for State-Religion Relations affiliated to the Head of Republic of Bashkortostan over the past 3 years, using the social-political technology of 'soft power,' in August of 2017 the unofficial leader of the Salafis of the Republic I.N. Khaybullin declared the voluntary dissolution of a large pro-Salafi association – 'the Shura of the Muslims of Bashkortostan,' and the continuation of their religious activities within mosques affiliated to the spiritual administrations of Muslims."⁵⁹

From the point of view of state officials, "traditional Islam" is an ideologeme which has yet to be firmly established in Russian Islam and society, and its main goal is to guard the interests of dominant social groups and the state and thus preserve the stability of the social order.⁶⁰

Polemics between Muslims and the ethnic factor

Discussions on traditional Islam may also be observed amongst the spiritual administrations of unofficial groups (the Salafis and Sufis) and Islamicised members of Bashkir ethnic movements.

The internal discourse of the Muslim community of the Republic was rendered relevant by the "Grozny *fatwa*" of 2016, which defined Sufism as traditional

57 "Musul'mane Bashkortostana ustali ot ufimskogo chinovnika Pyatkova" ["Muslims of Bashkortostan are tired of the Ufa official Pyatkov"], <https://islamnews.ru/news-musulmane-bashkorostana-ustali-ot-ufimskogo-chinovnika-pyatkov>, accessed 25 September 2019; "Plan "Petrovicha". Vybory muftiya DUM RB prevrashchayutsya v bitvu politikov i kriminala" ["The plan of "Petrovich". Election of the Mufti of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the Republic of Bashkortostan turns into a battle of politicians and crime"], <https://mynamaz.ru/news/7156886>, accessed 25 September 2019.

58 Karamyshev R.D., "Profilaktika radikalizma i ekstremizma v konfessional'noy srede v Respublike Bashkortostan" ["Prevention of radicalism and extremism in the religious environment in the Republic of Bashkortostan"], *Ekstremizm i terrorizm v sovremennom obshchestve: usloviya vozniknoveniya i formy protivodeystviya: sbornik materialov kruglogo stola* [Extremism and terrorism in modern society: conditions of its emergence and forms of counterterrorism: collection of materials of the roundtable] (Ufa: IP Abdullina I. A., 2018), p. 48.

59 Karamyshev R.D., "Profilaktika radikalizma i ekstremizma v konfessional'noy srede v Respublike Bashkortostan", p. 53.

60 Karamyshev R.D., "Traditsionniy rossiyskiy islam: ideologema ili realnost'?" ["Traditional Russian Islam: premise or reality?"], in *Traditsionniy islam: ponyatiye, sushchnost', soderzhaniye. Sbornik materialov nauchno-prakticheskogo seminara, provedennogo v Ufe 21 iyulya 2015 g.*, G.B. Faizov (ed.), (Ufa: Bashkir'skiy Gosudarstvenniy Pedagogicheskiy Universitet, 2015), p. 12.

Islam and an effective alternative to religious extremism.⁶¹ The *fatwa* was signed by representatives of muftis Talgat Tadzhuiddin and Nurmuhamet Nigmatullin. The non-government media of Bashkiria reacted to the fatwa immediately.⁶² The Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Bashkortostan held a conference on “Models of interaction between religious groups in the formation of a common Russian identity” on September 5, 2016, at which the question of the unacceptability of the “Grozny fatwa” for the Muslims of Bashkortostan became a subject of debate outside the official programme.⁶³

The factor of politicised ethnicity has substantial influence on processes inside the Muslim community in Bashkortostan. Regional experts think the reason competing movements have emerged within the Islamic ummah was the dismantlement of Bashkortostan’s political system in 2010 and they associate this crisis with the accession to power of new President R.Z. Khamitov.⁶⁴ In their view, the political system that had been being formed over the 20 years from 1990 to 2010 in the course of the governmentalisation of the Bashkir ethnicity was a framework that consolidated and structured Bashkir society.⁶⁵ A part of the Bashkir elite did indeed “Islamicise” and divide into various Islamic movements. In the present author’s opinion, however, the reason for this division was not a change in power but an absence of consolidation and unity in the Bashkir national movement itself and the continuing contradistinction between ethnic and Islamic identities by Bashkir scholars (according to whom, ethnic identity has a secular origin and is thus less susceptible to radicalisation than archaic Islam).⁶⁶

61 Fatwa “O neotyemlemykh priznakah otlichyia istinnogo Islama ot zabluzhdeniy” [Fatwa “On the inherent signs of the difference between true Islam and misconceptions”], http://www.sufir.ru/books_data/fatwa_grozniy/fatwa_grozniy.pdf, accessed 25 September 2019.

62 “Ekho “Groznskoy fetvy”: kakim byl Islam v Bashkirii” [“The echo of the Grozny fatwa: what was Islam in Bashkiria”], *Bonus – Newspaper*, No 35 (213), 20 October, 2016.

63 “05 sentyabrya 2016 goda provedena Mezhdunarodnaya nauchno-prakticheskaya konferentsiya “Modeli mezkhkonnatsionalnogo vzaimodeystviya v formirovaniy obshcherossiyskoy identichnosti” [“On 5 September, 2016, the International Scientific and Practical Conference “Models of Inter-Confessional Interaction in the Formation of All-Russian Identity” was held”], <http://www.bashedu.ru/nauchno-obrazovatelny-i-tsentr-polegii/sobytiya-i-meropriyatiya/05-sentyabrya-2016-goda-provedena>, accessed 25 September 2019.

64 In 2010, the Republic of Bashkortostan saw a change of power. During complicated backstage negotiations with the federal centre, the Head of the region Murtaza Rakhimov, who had governed the Republic for 20 years (1990–2010), was forced to resign. Rustem Khamitov was appointed Head of the Republic, breaking the succession line. This change in the ruling elite was accompanied by a growth of animosity in the ethnic sphere.

65 Buranchin A.M., Vakhitov R.R., Demichev I.V., *Sotsiokulturniye aspekty modernizatsionnykh protsessov v Respublike Bashkortostan [Social and cultural aspects of modernisation processes in the Republic of Bashkortostan]* (Ufa: Design-Press, 2014), p. 183–184.

66 Buranchin A.M., “Islamskaya identichnost’ v sovremennom bashkirskom obshchestve: istoki, sodержaniye, perspektivy” [“Islamic identity in modern Bashkir society: origins, contents, prospects”], *Rossiyskiy islam v transformatsionnykh protsessakh sovremennosti: novyye vyzovy i tendentsii razvitiya v XXI veke. Sbornik nauchnykh statey [Russian Islam in the transformational processes of today: new challenges and trends of development in the 21st century. Collection of research articles]*, Z.R. Khabibullina (ed.) (Ufa: Dialog, 2017), p. 116–118; Mardanov M., “Problematika religioznoy identichnosti v svetskom obshchestve sovremennogo Bashkortostana” [“The problematics of religious identity in the secular society of modern Bashkortostan”], *Ekonomika i upravleniye. Nauchno-prakticheskiy zhurnal [Economy and management. Journal of research and practice]*, 5 (133) (2016), p. 83–86.

The expansion of Salafism in the Republic coincided with systemic crisis in the Bashkir national movement, and Salafism was perceived as a protest against this state of affairs. Certain activists in the Bashkir ethnic organisations, the "Union of Bashkir youth"⁶⁷ and the "Kuk bure",⁶⁸ whose activities are currently suspended, became Salafis. Salafis do not consider Bashkir traditional Islam in opposition to the Islam of the Prophet Muhammad but its equal, unlike Tatar Islam.⁶⁹ The stereotype of a "Tatarization" of the spiritual administrations of the Republic, propagated by Bashkir historians, has also served to unite those oriented by their ethnicity and culture under the sign of Salafism. In a new reference book on the religious associations of the Republic of Bashkortostan, created at the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Bashkortostan with the participation of the Council for State-Religion Relations, one finds that "surprisingly, in a Salafism that vehemently rejects ethnic nationalism the Bashkir national factor is more pronounced than in the muftiates."⁷⁰ And this, even though the "Bashkir ethnic national factor" is very distinctly expressed in the muftiates. The Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Bashkortostan unites a majority of the Republic's congregations from the regions with a predominantly Muslim population. According to our research, 70% of clerics in DUM RB are Bashkirs. There are also Bashkirs in the Central Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Russia, where they constitute about 30% of clerics.⁷¹

Salafis are against a regionally specific Islam, and for them "traditional Islam" is Islam in the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad and his righteous companions, which is the understanding of the religion the first generations of Muslims had. Salafis claim that pilgrimage to the graves of saints is prohibited, because they see it as worshipping the dead. They also consider it inadvisable to celebrate the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad.

Another pole of consolidation for the Bashkir intelligentsia has been the Neo-Sufi brotherhood of Haqqaniyya (Rabbaniyya). The Cypriot sheikhs Nazim Al-Haqqani and Mehmet Adil visited Bashkiria in 2013–2014 and, during their travels to various districts of the Republic, "pointed" local Muslims towards the places of burial of "*sahabs*". This started active processes of creating new places of worship, accompanied by sacralisation and mythmaking.

67 The "Union of Bashkir youth" (Bashkir: Bashkort yashtare ittifaghy) is a social organisation founded in 1990 to promote the self-actualisation of Bashkir youth in the social life of Bashkortostan and defence of their rights and freedoms.

68 "Kuk bure" (Bashkir: "sky wolf") is a social union (movement) created in 2007 to protect the ethnic, cultural, social, economic and political rights and interests of Bashkirs in the Russian Federation and the citizens of the Republic of Bashkortostan.

69 Author's fieldwork materials, Ufa, Republic of Bashkortostan, 2017.

70 *Religiozniye obyedineniya respubliky Bashkortostan. Spravochnik* (Ufa: GUP RB Ufimskiy poligrafkombinat, 2014), p. 17.

71 Khabibullina Z.R., *Musulmanskiye duhovenstvo v Respublike Bashkortostan na rubezhe XX–XXI vekov* (Ufa: Print world, 2015), p. 112.

The Haqqaniyya *tariqa* is famous in the Middle East and in South and South-East Asia and is active in the USA, UK, Germany, and, as of recently, in Russia. Of the Russian regions, it the Muslims of Bashkortostan that proved most responsive to the sheikhs' calls. On February 18, 2013, Sheikh Nazim personally appointed Sheikh Abdulrafiq, who lives some 200 km from Ufa, as his person in charge of Russia. A well-known businessman, son of an influential politician and brother of popular Russian singer Marat Safin (Sheikh Murad), he became the representative of the *tariqa* in Moscow. In reality, the *tariqa* exists mostly in cyberspace, and its members participate in its activities via online communication.

Sheikh Nazim's doctrine is characterised by syncretism, up to the point of borrowing elements of Christianity, Buddhism and New Age teachings, as well as by a flexible policy towards attracting recent converts to Islam. Such people (including people in Russia), who tend to be disappointed in Western culture and are looking for enlightenment from the East, are offered a Westernised form of Sufism with images and notions that are already familiar to the Western mind. The key elements of his preaching are: waiting for Judgement Day, opposing individualism and egoism, developing spirituality, obtaining divine energy, self-actualisation and self-improvement. The Islamic *dhikr* is turned into "Sufi meditation". Haqqaniyya sheikhs often act as uncompromising adversaries of Salafis.⁷²

The supporters of this *tariqa* in Bashkortostan, as followers of Nazim al-Haqqani, have officially declared Naqshbandi Sufism a traditional school of Islam and accepted well-known religious figures and educators from the Volga-Urals region as their sheikhs, including "Sheikh Husain-bek, Mawlana Sheikh Abdulkhakim Kurbangaliyev, Abdulla Saidi Ishaan and Muzhahir Hadhrat, Gataulla Ishaan, Tolomguzha Ishaan, Sakhiulla Ishaan, Mawlana Sheikh Gilyazhetdin, Mawlana Sheikh Abdulgani, Shamigul Khalifa, Seyyidi Yaghafar, Muradym Ishaan, Ali Chukuri and Arifulla Kiyekov."⁷³ Others are Salawat Yulayev, Seyyidi Jafar Awliya, Sheikh Murat Kuchukov, Kilmyak-hafiz Nurushev, Kinzya-abyz Arslanov, Sheikh Zaynulla ar-Rasuli.⁷⁴

To advance their ideas, the leaders of the *tariqa* use Bashkir historical subjects and Bashkir cultural sites (usually the graves of famous religious figures of the Republic); adherents with psychic powers who demonstrate '*karamats*', or miracles and supernatural phenomena; foreign preachers; anti-Salafi rhetoric; and media resources.

In the 1990s, ethnic movements' influence on the political process ran high. Ethnic organisations, which had picked up momentum during the "parade of

72 Tsibenko V.V., "Nakshbandiyskiy tarikat hakkaniya (rabbaniya) i neosmanskiy proyekt sheykha Nazima Kipriotskogo" ["The Naqshbandi Haqqaniyya (Rabbaniyya) *tariqa* and the Neo-Ottoman project of Sheikh Nazim of Cyprus"], *Islamovedeniye [Islamic Studies]*, 4 (2014), p. 97.

73 Mawlana Sutan al-Awliya Sheikh Muhammad Mehmet Adil al-Naqshbandi, *Sokhbety (besedy) v Bashkortostane [Sokhbets (conversations) in Bashkortostan]*, 2nd ed. (Ufa: Bashkortostan, 2015), p. 3-4.

74 Adil al-Naqshbandi, *Sokhbety (besedy) v Bashkortostane*.

sovereignties" period, instigated confrontation between different ethnic groups at the political level. The political elites of the ethnicity-based republics of the Russian Federation were interested in drawing spiritual and ideological support from the traditional religions to strengthen their national ideologies. Each republic was trying to centralise power in the religious sphere. The ethnic factor played an important role in the disintegration of the Muslim communities of Bashkortostan and Tatarstan, as the ideologists of their national movements supported the division of *mahallahs* and their withdrawal from DUMES.

The well-regarded Bashkir national centre (BNC), "Ural", founded in 1989, supported the highest possible degree of sovereignty for Bashkortostan, as well as giving the Republic an ethnic/national character in internal policy, including all relevant professional, linguistic, cultural and economic programmes.⁷⁵ This proactive attitude on the part of the national movement had a major influence on the formation of a strong sense of ethnic/national identity in Bashkir society, one of whose main components is loyalty to Islam. The organisation did much to promote Islam. Under its auspices, the Qur'an⁷⁶ was translated into Bashkir, much other religious literature was published, various educational programmes were organised, and funds were raised for the construction of mosques.

The religious program of the BNC included developing Islam for Bashkirs and reinstating the spiritual administration of the Bashkurdistan era⁷⁷ (the Global Congress of Bashkirs, held in December of 1917 in Orenburg to consider the desire of Bashkir clergy for independence in the organisation of Islamic worship, had accompanied the proclamation of political autonomy with a declaration of the creation of the Bashkir Spiritual Administration (BDU). The central administration, TsDUM, had continued its work alongside the BDU. In 1936, the state closed down the BDU⁷⁸). The Bashkir spiritual administration is now a symbol of the unity of the Bashkir nation and the embodiment of its people's will.⁷⁹

For religious leaders, relations with the national movement played a pivotal role in the struggle for influence. The BCN initiated creation of DUM RB by electing N. Nigmatullin, an ethnic Bashkir with a religious education, to lead it. During negotiations, he was promised support in reinstating the spiritual administration. A book on

75 Valeev D.Zh., *Istoriya bashkirskoy filosofskoy i obshchestvenno-politicheskoy mysli Bashkortostana* [The history of the Bashkir philosophical, social, and political thought of Bashkortostan] (Ufa: Kitap, 2001), p. 188.

76 *Koran* (Ufa: Bashkirskoye knizhnoye izdatel'stvo, 1993).

77 Bashkurdistan (Bashkortostan, Small Bashkiria) was a national-territorial autonomy proclaimed on 15 (28) November 1917 by the Bashkir regional Shuro and approved by the Constituent Congress of Bashkurdistan. An army, government, parliament, state symbols were created. It was the first self-proclaimed autonomous area in the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic.

78 Kasimov S.F., *Natsional'no-gosudarstvennoye stroitel'stvo v Bashkortostane. XX vek* [National-state construction in Bashkortostan. 20th century], 2nd edition (Ufa: Gilem, Bashkirskaya Entsiklopediya, 2014), p. 79.

79 *100 let dabovnomu upravleniyu musul'man Respubliki Bashkortostan: istoriya i sovremennost'* (Ufa: Kitap, 2018), p. 5.

N. Nigmatullin states that the “Ural” BNC approached him multiple times with the offer to resurrect DUM RB. Influenced by these proposals, the future mufti started to pay attention to the “unequal attitude to the Muslim communities on the part of the leaders of DUMES (‘centrists’) and felt an urge to promote and strengthen the Islamic faith among the Bashkir people.” Every day, he became more and more convinced that the “Ural” members were right in what they were doing.⁸⁰

A student of religion, S.B. Filatov, who studied the relations of nation and state to religion in Bashkortostan in the mid-1990s, has noted, however, that the conflict between TsDUM and DUM RB had its origins in a religious dispute and was not directly related to either the Bashkir national movement or the establishment of Bashkir sovereignty.⁸¹ In Filatov’s view, the leaders of DUM RB are of a radical bent, unlike T. Tadzhuiddin, who is more focused on the values of modern civilisation, freedom and democracy, and so on so-called “Euro Islam.” Unlike TsDUM, which is trying to establish the closest possible ties with the Russian Orthodox Church, DUM RB’s contacts are generally formal and perfunctory. Tadzhuiddin has accused the leaders of DUM RB of propagating political and religious extremism and racial hatred and of having ties to Wahhabism. DUM RB has countered with accusations against Tadzhuiddin of amoral behaviour, servility toward the Russian authorities, ecumenism, and distortion of Islam’s truths.⁸²

The participation of the Bashkir national movement in the confrontation between post-Soviet religious leaders and the search for a “Bashkir Islam” have facilitated the growth of the influence of Muslim radical reformers in the Republic, leading to increased support for a “cleansed Islam” and neo-Sufism, as represented by the followers of Nazim al-Haqqani.

Muslims “holy places” – “traditionalism” and “non-traditionalism” in Islam

There has been practically no public discussion in the press on the issue of “traditional Islam” that covers current problems or attempt to discover the truth whether in the spiritual administrations or the unofficial Islamic movements. It is more evident in the ethnographic material. The question of traditional Islam has a very prominent place in the attitudes of the Muslim ummah of Bashkortostan to local

80 Utyabayev A., Khisamov G., *Mufti Nurmubamet khazret Nigmatullin. Dokumental'naya povest' s illyustratsiyami* [Mufti Nurmubamet hadhrat Nigmatullin. Illustrated documentary narrative] (Ufa: Profizdat, 2014), p. 218, 221.

81 Filatov S.B., “Religiya i obshchestvo v Bashkortostane” [“Religion and society in Bashkortostan”], *Religiya i obshchestvo: Ocherki religioznoy zhizni sovremennoy Rossii* [Religion and society: essays on the religious life in modern Russia] (Moscow, St. Petersburg: Letniy sad, 2002), p. 132.

82 Filatov S.B., “Religiya i obshchestvo v Bashkortostane”, p. 126–127.

holy places and related rites. Negative perception of the "holy places" has become an indicator of affiliation with the Salafi movement, as the Salafis proclaim pilgrimage to the graves of saints forbidden. They see it as worshipping the dead, which means committing an act of unbelief.

As Islam gained its foothold with the Bashkir people, a lot of ancient traditions took on new forms and became part of the Muslim worldview. This includes the tradition of honouring holy places. The main places of pilgrimage are the burial places of the "saints" or *awliya* (Arab. 'awliyā' – holy people who are under the protection of Allah). For Bashkirs, the notion of the "*awliya*" applied not only to famous religious leaders renowned for their righteousness and profound religious knowledge, but also to common people who distinguished themselves by their good deeds or supernatural abilities. People who died as martyrs were also typically considered *awliya*.⁸³

Almost every district in Bashkiria has graves of "saints" revered by Muslims (*awliya keberelawliya ziaraty*). Most are at Islamic cemeteries, which are separate from other graveyards. It is customary to visit them on both weekdays and Islamic holidays. A visit involves reciting surahs of the Qur'an and prayers, decorating the grave, walking around it, sacrificial offerings, and almsgiving with the aim of receiving God's blessing. It is considered an act of grace and beneficial to bury ordinary people alongside the graves of saints. In many villages in the Republic, entire cemeteries have emerged around the grave of a single *awliya*.

There is currently a group of "holy" places that attract pilgrims all year round, with Muslim visitors from both Bashkortostan and other regions of the Russian Federation. These are the burial place (tomb) of Husain-bek in Chishminsky district, the burial place on the hill of Narys-tau in Miyakinsky district (mass pilgrimage was initiated and organised by the adherents of the Haqqani *tariqa* in 2014, as visiting the "grave" of Companions of the Prophet Muhammad – the father and son pair of Abd ar-Rahman ibn Zubayr⁸⁴ and Zubayr ibn Zait⁸⁵), the grave of Muzhahir hadhrat⁸⁶ in Baymaksiy district, the Aushtau hill and the "Awliya" spring in Uchalinsky district, the grave of Gataulla Ishaan⁸⁷ in Khaybullinsky district, the

83 *Bashkiriy [Bashkirs]*, R. G. Kuzeev, E. S. Danilko (eds.) (Moscow: Nauka, 2016), p. 511.

84 'Abd Allah ibn al-Zubayr al-Qurayshi (approx. May 624, Medina – approx. November 692, Mecca) was one of the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad and a political figure of 7th century Arabia who aspired to the position of caliph. Son of Zubayr ibn al-Awam and Asma' bint Abi Bakr, daughter of the first caliph of the Rashidun Caliphate, Abu Bakr. Abd Allah ibn al-Zubayr was nephew of Aisha, third wife of the Prophet Muhammad.

85 Son of 'Abd Allah ibn al-Zubayr al-Qurayshi, a Companion of the Prophet Muhammad.

86 Muzhahir Wildanovich Sirazhetdinov (1882–1967), born in the village of Bakhtigareevo (Mansurovo) in Baymaksiy district of the Republic of Bashkortostan, was a Muslim religious leader who became known as an *awliya*. Repressed in 1939, vindicated on 28 June 1961.

87 Gataulla Abdmalikov (Alibaev) (1836–1914) was a religious leader, adherent of Sufism. He was educated in Istanbul (together with Zaynulla Rasulev). After returning to his homeland, he opened a *madrasah*, where he taught the doctrine of the Sufi brotherhood of the Naqshbandiyya. He also practiced folk medicine and became a renowned *awliya*.

place of burial of Sabir hadhrat⁸⁸ in Gafuriysky district, and the grave of mudaris Kharis Biktimirov⁸⁹ in Sterlibashevsky district. The best-known hieratic complexes are at the Muslim cemeteries of the villages of Raevka and Idrisovo in Alsheyevsky district, the village of Kilimovo in Buzdyaksky district, the village of Starotimoshkino in Aurgazinsky district, the village of Novyi Kainlyk in Krasnokamsky district (a place called “Kladbische svyatykh”), and the village of Chishmy in Chishminsky district (Akzirat cemetery).

Of these popular places, it is the graves of Narys-tau that stand out because of their ambiguous interpretation. The followers of the Haqqaniyya *tariqa* announced that they were the burial places of “Companions” of the Prophet Muhammad – the son and father Zubayr ibn Zait and Abd ar-Rahman ibn Zubayr. According to the archaeologists, this “holy” place is a burial mound (Ilchigulovo IV). The mound is located on the plateau of the elevated syrt or flat ridge of the Narys-tau hill, to the east of “sacred springs” that runs at its foot.⁹⁰ This monument was investigated in the 19th century by the anthropologist N. M. Maliev and in 1986 by the archaeologist G.N. Garustovich. Two constructions were discovered during excavations: one of them was empty, while underneath the other there was the burial site of a nomad from the early Islamic period (14th–15th centuries). This burial site on Narys-tau is mentioned in the ancient Bashkir epic, “Idukay and Muradym”, which dates back to the late 14th – early 15th centuries. It tells a story of the Golden Horde emir Edigu (Idukay),⁹¹ who started his military career in Tamerlane’s⁹² army and had to face off against the Tokhtamysh khan.⁹³ The story ends with the hero dying and being buried atop this hill.

In 2010, Sheikh Muhammad Nazim al-Haqqani, during his stay in Bashkortostan, announced that Narys-tau hill was the place of burial of two ‘*sahabs*’. The

88 Muhametsabir Abdulkhalikovich Khalikov (1854–1931), of the village of Saitbaba of Gafuriysky district in the RB, was a religious leader and educator. He studied in one of the *madrasahs* of Kargala. In 1904 (or 1890) he became imam-khatib of the 2nd congregational mosque in Saitbaba and founded a *madrasah*. Legend has it that he had the gift of prophecy, practiced folk medicine, and became a renowned *awliya*. He did the Hajj twice (in 1901 and 1905).

89 Muhammad-Haris Biktimirov (1810–1870) was a religious leader, educator and mudarris of the famous Sterlibashevo *madrasah*. He was a murid of Bukhara sheikh Ubaydalla ben Niyazkuli at-Turkmani (the son of Abu Salih Niyazkuli at-Turkmani), from whom he received his *ijaz-nama* (permission to teach *murids*). During his time, Sterlibashevo became one of the religious centres of the region.

90 Akhatov A.T., Bakhshiyev I.I., Tuzbekov A.I., “Rol’ arheologicheskikh obyektov v formirovanii novykh sakralnykh prostranstv Yuzhnogo Urala” [Role of archaeological sites in the formation of new sacral spaces of the Southern Ural], *Uralskiy istoricheskiy vestnik [Ural Historical Journal]*, 4 (2016), p. 42.

91 Edigu (Edigei) (1352–1419) was an emir of the Golden Horde in the late 14th and early 15th centuries. He founded the dynasty that ruled the Nogai Horde. His direct paternal descendants were the Russian princely families of the Urusovs and the Yusupovs.

92 Tamerlane (also known as Timur) (1336–1405) was a Central Asian Turkic-Mongolian military leader and conqueror, who played a significant role in the history of the Middle, South and Western Asia, as well as the Caucasus, Volga Region and Rus’. He was founder of the Timurid Empire (around 1370), whose capital was in Samarkand. A national hero of the Uzbek people.

93 Tokhtamysh (d. 1406) was khan of the Golden Horde in 1380–1395 and became khan of the Tyumen Khanate in 1400. A descendant of Jochi, the oldest son of Genghis Khan.

local media circulated reports of the discovery of the sahabas' supposed burial site, which prompted active construction works at the mound.⁹⁴ In 2011, a monument was erect on the hill under a dome-like structure. Inscribed on the monument are the names of two Companions of the Prophet – Zubayr ibn Zaid and Abd ar-Rahman ibn Zubayr. In 2012, a mosque was built at the foot of the hill to commemorate the “holy” place. The cost of construction of the entire complex was defrayed by the Charity Foundation of the first president of the Republic, M. Rakhimov “Ural”. The “holy” place is being rapidly developed and considered one of the more promising tourist sites in the Republic. Further plans include turning the site into an even more attractive place for tourists, by building a hotel, a religious educational institution, and a good access road.⁹⁵

The monument is currently a site of pilgrimage for representatives from various peoples and religions. Russians, Chuvash and Mari people visit the site quite frequently. Those who come here usually do so as tourists or with pleas and hopes that the Lord will heal them of some disease.⁹⁶ It is not too much to say, with regard to this “holy place”, that there is an uncontrolled process of the sacralisation of archaeological sites going on, and that these symbols are being managed to spread the ideas of Neo-Sufism, so that we may see an ethnic consolidation of the Republic's faithful around this “Bashkir Mecca”.⁹⁷ The “Holy places” in Bashkortostan are not an explicit part of the government's ethnic policy in this region. This reproduction of tradition was brought about by ethnic/national groups and the adherents of the Neo-Sufi *tariqas* and religious movements in order to attract new members.⁹⁸ The preservation of history, memory and tradition associated with local sites of public worship depends on the clergy. There are many abandoned graves of “*awliya*” in the Republic, particularly in villages whose imams take a negative attitude to visiting them or are indifferent to it. The modern Islamic clergy does not always approve of the custom of visiting holy places. A survey of religious leaders conducted in 2011 to discover the clergy's attitude on the acceptability of worshipping the “holy” places in Bashkortostan found that 44% of respondents described the rite as a harmful superstition and said Muslims were not allowed to worship these places. 25% said that visiting the “holy” places was acceptable and even necessary, but worshipping them was not allowed,

94 “Mekka v Miyakakh. Bashkiriya mozhet stat' zhemchuzhinoy religioznogo palomnichestva” [“Mecca in Miyaki. Bashkiriya may become a pearl of religious pilgrimage”], ufa.mk.ru/articles/2012/05/23/706919-mekka-v-miyakah, accessed 25 September 2019.

95 Author's fieldwork materials, Ilchigulovo, Miyakinsky district, Republic of Bashkortostan, 2014.

96 Author's fieldwork materials, Narys-tau, Miyakinsky district, Republic of Bashkortostan, 2016.

97 “Syemochnaya gruppa kanala TV3 rasskazhet zritel'yam o “Bashkirskoy Mekke” [“The camera crew of the TV3 channel will tell the audience about the “Bashkir Mecca”], www.bashinform.ru/news/915434-semochnaya-gruppa-kanala-tv3-rasskazhet-zritel'yam-o-bashkirskoy-mekke/, accessed 25 September 2019.

98 “Zhitel' Bashkiriï lechil patsiyentov pletkami i molitvami” [“A resident of Bashkiriya treated patients with whips and prayers”], www.ufa.kp.ru/online/news/1586581/, accessed 25 September 2019.

because a Muslim must only worship the holy places in Mecca and Medina. 19.8% expressed a positive attitude towards the phenomenon and said there was a long-standing tradition of worshipping such local Muslim sanctuaries in the Republic. 11.2% were undecided.⁹⁹

The current period in the development of Islam in Bashkortostan may be characterised as one of the extensive reconstruction of old places of worship and creation of new ones, of the revival of the historical memory of the “saints” of and prominent religious leaders. Another aspect of the development of local Islamic pilgrimages is that they often serve as the basis for destructive cults, financial schemes, and the distribution of various myths, all with the “blessing” of foreign preachers (Turkish sheikhs). Archival documents show that during the Soviet years there were several places frequently visited by believers in Bashkortostan: the tombs (mausoleum) of Husain-bek and Tura-khan and the grave of Ishaan Yaghafar.¹⁰⁰ Currently there are over one hundred such places visited by several thousand people each year. New sacral objects are being created in the place of old archaeological monuments, all of which is accompanied by extensive myth-making. In 2014, the staff of the R.G. Kuzeev Institute of Ethnological Research of the Ufa Scientific Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences catalogued 113 archaeological monuments as places of pilgrimage for Muslims.¹⁰¹ Over 70% of them are in the eastern foothills of the Uraltau range and the forest-steppe parts of the Ural Region, which has a predominantly Bashkir population.

The traditions of local pilgrimage still maintain their foothold with the Muslim population. This model of worship became a foundation for advancing the ideas of the Neo-Sufi Haqqaniyya *tariqa*. This in turn influenced the conflict between the Haqqanis and the Salafis over the debate about the “correct understanding” and fulfilment of the principles of the Islamic creed. To stabilise the pilgrim movement in Bashkiria, the Central Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Russia and the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the Republic of Bashkortostan annually organise memorial days for the first preacher of Islam in the Southern Urals, Husain-bek, which involve visiting his grave and mass prayers. In 2004, the first gathering of Muslims to commemorate Husain-bek was organised. This gathering has since become annual. It involves the participation of believers not only from Bashkortostan but from the surrounding regions as well. In 2016, a ceremonial reburial of Husain-bek’s relics took place at the request of Muslims. The relics had been removed for research purposes in 1985 by the Institute of

99 Author’s fieldwork materials, Republic of Bashkortostan, 2011. Survey of the clergy on visiting the “holy” places in the Republic of Bashkortostan.

100 Central Historical Archive of the Republic of Bashkortostan. Fund R-4732. Inv. 1. File 16. Sheet 15.

101 Akhatov A.T., Bakhshiyev I.I., Tuzbekov A.I., “Rol’ arheologicheskikh obyektov v formirovanii novykh sakralnykh prostranstv Yuzhnogo Urala”, *Uralskiy istoricheskiy vestnik [Ural Historical Journal]*, 4 (2016), p. 36.

History, Language and Literature of the Ufa Scientific Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences. The reburial ceremony was attended by Grand Mufti T. Tadzhuiddin, representatives of the administration, and residents.¹⁰²

This study has shown that the groups being examined, viz. the representatives of religious, ethnic/national and state organisations in the Republic of Bashkortostan, have their own understandings both of Islam and of "traditionalism." According to the representatives of the government bodies, "traditional Islam" is peaceful Islam, which accepts the existing state structure and coexists with other religious denominations. National movements consider "traditional Islam" Islam that accepts itself as a part of the Bashkir nation and facilitates its unity.

The faithful have an ambiguous understanding of "traditional Islam", as they are divided by different spiritual administrations and conflicting Islamic movements and groups. On the other hand, they are united by their affiliation with Sunni Islam and, more or less, with the Hanafi *madhab*. Each Islamic group's understanding of "traditional Islam" thus includes its basic ideas about the Islamic "model" and its place in Russian society.

Our survey of the religious leaders of the Republic on their understanding of "traditional Islam" showed that their views were not just divided by affiliation to one or other of the Republic's two muftiates, TsDUM and DUM RB. There proved to be no unity inside either religious organisation in how they defined the term they used so widely. A demonstrative acceptance of Sufism and loyalty to the practice of pilgrimage of Muslims to the graves of "saints" were instrumental as indicators of Islam's "non-traditionalism" in the promotion of the Haqqaniyya *tariqa* in the Republic and its adherents' construction of new sacral monuments. At the same time, this proactive attitude provoked an upsurge of fundamentalism on the part of the more radically minded part of the Muslim youth, or Salafis.

To sum up this analysis of the "traditional Islam" discourse in Bashkortostan, several factors appear to have substantially influenced the formation of ideas about "traditional Islam":

- 1) The *specific nature of religious identity*. Most of the population admit an affiliation to the Islamic faith but are not practicing believers. Islamic identity is, largely, part of ethnic identity.
- 2) The *ethnic/national factor*. Bashkir social and political organisations are trying to become the patrons of religion in the Republic and participate covertly in the activities of the spiritual administrations of Muslims.

102 "Bashkiriya: ostanki prosvetitel'ya Huseyn-beka snova zakhoronyat v ego mavzoleye" ["Bashkiria: the remains of the enlightener Hussein-bey will be buried again in his mausoleum"], www.ufa.kp.ru/online/news/1586581/, accessed 25 September 2019.

- 3) *Conflicts between Muslim groups.* There is a crisis in the official religious institutions that position themselves as adherents of “traditional Islam” but cannot unite the Muslim youth. As more young people in the Republic of Bashkortostan enter the clergy, we can trace a generational conflict here, as well as a turf war for spheres of influence between religious leaders with traditionalist views and younger more radically minded imams.

“Tradicionalni islam” u diskursu religijskih udruženja, etničkih organizacija i vladinih struktura u Baškortostanu

Sažetak

Općepoznati i često korišteni termin “tradicionalni islam” prvi put javio se tokom islamskog preporoda u postsovjetskoj Rusiji. Referira na vrlo važno pitanje u područjima ove zemlje s dominantno muslimanskim stanovništvom. U ovome članku analizira se diskurs o “tradicionalnom islamu” u Republici Baškortostanu, posebno u odnosu na duhovnu upravu, muslimanske pokrete i škole i etničke organizacije. Također se analiziraju različita tumačenja uobičajene religijske prakse, npr. regionalnih hodočašća, te da li se smatra da ona pripadaju “tradicionalnom” ili “netradicionalnom” islamu. Istraživanje je potvrdilo da u društvu postoje mnogostruka tumačenja “tradicionalnog islama” i da nema saglasnosti o tome kako tumačiti taj termin. Debate o “tradicionalnom” i “netradicionalnom” islamu i traženje etnički relevantnih formi religije, stoga, ostaju faktor generiranja sukoba i stvaraju uvjete za dalju fragmentaciju muslimanske zajednice u ovoj Republici.

Ključne riječi: Islam, tradicionalni islam, Baškortostan, država, CDUM, DUM RB, islamski pokreti, etničke organizacije, hodočašće