

ISLAM AND THE DYNAMICS OF ETHNO-CONFESSIONAL REGIMES IN
RUSSIA, 1990-2012

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Abstract

What explains Russian state policies toward Islam during the first two decades after the Soviet collapse? Research on secularism and state policies toward religion suggests several models of interaction. However, these models are often better at describing static relationships than they are at explaining change. This study advances a framework for understanding the conditions that presage a transformation of state-religion relations by examining significant differences between Russian state attitudes toward Islam in the early 1990s and the 2000s. In particular, notable changes in the licensing of Imams, the building permissions granted for mosques, and registration requirements for religious organizations call for explanation. In the 1990s, state-Islam relations were accommodationist: the state granted unrestricted access to the Russian public sphere for all Muslim communities and allowed a wide range of Islamic religious practices. State-Islam relations after about 2000 became regulatory: the state assumed a more active interventional role in the domestic Islamic community in order to control religious practices of particular Muslim factions and assure a privileged access to the Russian public sphere for state-approved “traditional” religious organizations. This study finds that, contingent on the interplay among competing national ideologies, which shape the country’s ethno-confessional regime, the state may either embrace unrestricted religious pluralism or adopt a regulatory stance toward certain religious communities. In their turn, structural factors such as public safety conditions and economic performance of the country may play an important role in determining the outcome of a struggle for ideological dominance. This framework largely explains the dynamics of Russian state attitudes toward the largest minority religion in the country during the first two decades

after the collapse of the Soviet state and offers analytical insights on the dynamic nature of state-Islam relations in other secular states with considerable Muslim populations.

Professor Bruce Parrott was the principal adviser, and Professor Charles Doran was the second reader for the dissertation. The other three readers were Professor Leila Austin, Professor Omer Taspinar and Professor Victoria Smolkin-Rothrock.

Dedication

I dedicate this to my parents, G m rby  f nde and F rid  Xanım, and my sister Alsu for their love and unconditional support; * le yary sez bar b xetem ,  le yary sez bar d nyada...*

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Introduction

One day Molla Nasreddin, a Turkic folk hero, ran into his neighbor in front of the house. ‘Molla Nasreddin, said the neighbor, may I borrow your donkey?’ For some reason Molla replied that he didn’t have a donkey. At this moment the animal brayed. ‘But I can hear your donkey braying. It’s there, in the stable,’ the neighbor cried out. Molla Nasreddin remained calm and said: “Do you believe me or the donkey?” The story doesn’t tell if the dialogue goes on but the moral of the tale is simple: there is a reason behind every intelligent statement, even if it is not true. The phenomenon of a post-Soviet Islamic revival in Russia and the state’s reaction to this process have recently become a subject of intense academic exchange and public concern. Since the late 1990s, after a decade of a relatively liberal rule, human rights watch groups, concerned with conditions of religious freedom in the country, have become increasingly critical of the state’s harsh measures against minority religious groups and particularly some observant Muslims.¹

Post-Soviet Russian state attitudes toward religion as well as their meaning and significance in the public eye can be interpreted in different ways. On the one hand, questioning official policies and rhetoric may be perceived as a natural attribute of any democratizing society. On the other hand, usually, there is a deep reason why particular policies are formally adopted. The state has justified its restrictive actions concerning religious affairs as necessary to maintain peace and stability, condemning the violent acts

¹ Fagan, Geraldine. *Believing in Russia: Religious Policy After Communism*. Routledge, 2012; Alexander Verkhovsky, “Anti-extremist legislation and its enforcement”, Sova Center, September 19, 2007. <http://www.sova-center.ru/en/xenophobia/reports-analyses/2007/09/d11595/> (Last accessed on March 20, 2015); Alexander Verkhovsky, “Inappropriate enforcement of anti-extremist legislation in Russia in 2011,” Sova Center. April 27, 2012. <http://www.sova-center.ru/en/misuse/reports-analyses/2012/04/d24302/> (Last accessed on March 20, 2015)

of Muslim extremists and the spread of militant religious ideologies. Many analysts have offered explanations for the dynamics of the relationship between Islam and the post-Soviet state. This study attempts to shed light on some of the key systemic factors that explain state attitudes toward Islam over the first two decades after the break up of the Soviet Union.

Since early Tsarist times Muslims have played an important role in the Russian empire. There is an overwhelming consensus among scholars studying Islam in Russia that indigenous Muslims took a major part in Russian history, culture, and politics.² Since the conquest of Kazan in 1552, Muslims have been the largest minority faith group that actively engaged in public life, gradually turning into one of the pillars of the Russian state.³ Today, according to different demographic accounts, the number of Muslims in Russia varies between 15 and 20 million people, about 10-15% of a country's total population⁴. In terms of its Muslim inhabitants, contemporary Russia remains the largest country in Europe and in the top twenty among all UN member states in the

² See, for example, works by Bennigsen and Lemerrier-Quelquejay (1967); Ro'i, (2000); Frank (1998, 2001); Carrère d'Encausse (1988); Geraci (2001); Kappeler (1992); Khalid (1998); Steinwedel (1999); Crews (2009); Malashenko (2007); Kemper (2009).

³ See the speech of the President of Russia Vladimir Putin at a celebratory event marking the 225th anniversary of the founding of the Central Spiritual Administration of Muslims. <http://eng.kremlin.ru/transcripts/6155> (last access March 10, 2015). For a brief historical overview of this process and relevant examples, see Werth, Paul W. *The Tsar's Foreign Faiths: Toleration and the Fate of Religious Freedom in Imperial Russia*. Oxford University Press, 2014.

⁴ Goskomstat/Rosstat does not actually collect information on the religious affiliation of the country's population. Therefore any data-based estimate of Russia's Muslim population must be limited to examination of population totals for Russia's ethnic groups ("nationalities") with a Muslim cultural heritage or historical background. For a comparison of various estimates, see Eberstadt, Nicholas. *Russia's peacetime demographic crisis: Dimensions, causes, implications*. Seattle, WA: National Bureau of Asian Research, 2010. It is important to note, however, that, not all of the members of "historically Muslim" ethnic groups regard themselves as Muslim or actually practice Islam. For discussion, see Mikhail Alexseev, "Overcounting Russia's Muslims: Implications for Security and Society," *PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo No. 27*, Georgetown University, August 2008, https://gushare.georgetown.edu/eurasianstrategy/Memos/2008/pepm_027.pdf; and Timothy Heleniak, "Regional Distribution of the Muslim Population of Russia," *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 47, no. 4 (2006): 426-448

world, including Muslim majority countries (Heleniak 2006; Eberstadt 2010). Being a home to more Muslims than Jordan and Libya combined, Russia also maintains a special status of an observer state at the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, an institution self-proclaimed as “the collective voice of the Muslim world.”⁵ Muslims are present in every sphere of Russian public and intellectual life and proudly represent it on international stage as Russian citizens, from holding offices at international organizations to participating in the Olympic games.⁶

Table 1: *Countries with the largest Muslim minority populations in Europe.*

Countries with largest Muslim minority populations in Europe		
	2009 Muslim Population	Percentage of Population that is Muslim
Russia	16,482,000	12%
Germany	4,026,000	5%
France	3,554,000	6%
UK	1,647,000	3%
Netherlands	946,000	6%
Bulgaria	920,000	12%

⁵ The official website of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). <http://www.oicun.org/2/23/> (Last accessed March 11, 2015)

⁶ For instance, during the 2008 Beijing Olympics, Russian athletes won 23 gold medals, 10 of which were obtained by indigenous Muslim athletes. See, Elmira Akhmetova, “Islam in Russia” <http://www.muslimstoday.info/content/story/islam-russia> (Last accessed March 10, 2015). Also see the speech of the President of Russia Vladimir Putin at a celebratory event marking the 225th anniversary of the founding of the Central Spiritual Administration of Muslims. <http://eng.kremlin.ru/transcripts/6155> (last access March 10, 2015)

Macedonia	680,000	33%
Source: Pew Forum (2009) ⁷		

Projected growth rate of Muslim population in Russia contributes to the importance of the subject. According to some data sources, the number of followers of the Islamic faith may grow as high as 50 million people by 2050 (Pipes 2005; Goble 2007).⁸ Taking into consideration the immigration trends, the developments promise to alter the country's ethnic complexion (Eberstadt 2010). Already within a decade, according to some predictions, Muslims may make up a majority of Russia's conscript army (Washington Times 2006).⁹

Table 2: *Expected Growth of Muslim Population in Russia.*

Expected Growth of Russia's Muslim Population		
	Muslim Population	Percentage of Population that is Muslim
2010	16,379,000	12%

⁷ Pew Research Center, October 2009, "Mapping the global Muslim population: A report on the size and distribution of the world's Muslim population."

⁸ Paul Goble, "Window on Eurasia: What Kind of Muslim Country Will Russia Become?" Window On Eurasia Website, March 26, 2007, <http://windowoneurasia.blogspot.com/2007/03/window-on-eurasia-what-kind-of-muslim.html> (Last accessed on March 11, 2015); and Daniel Pipes, "Predicting a Majority-Muslim Russia," Daniel Pipes Blog, August 6 2005. <http://www.danielpipes.org/blog/2005/08/predicting-a-majority-muslim-russia.html> (Last access March 11, 2015).

⁹ "Muslim birthrate worries Russia" <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2006/nov/20/20061120-115904-9135r/?page=all> (Last access March 11, 2015). There are two major arguments that are used to suggest this. The first is a higher birth rate among the Russian Muslims than among ethnic Russians. The second is high immigration from neighboring Muslim majority countries. Both arguments are highly contested. So far no research showed concrete evidences to support the claim that these trends are long term and likely irreversible. In addition, many Western political scientists even before the Soviet break-up "expected the main threat to the Soviet empire to come from the Muslim areas with their high birth rates" (Yekelchik 2002: 382). These expectations proved to be unfounded.

2030	18,556,000	15%
2050	50,000,000	50%
Sources: Pew Forum (for 2010 and 2030) ¹⁰		
Commentaries (for 2050) ¹¹		
Population estimates are rounded to thousands		

Long-term projections are often subject to a great deal of uncertainty. Nevertheless, for many students of Western European politics, experienced in debates on integration of immigrants, even the most conservative accounts of the increase in Islamic citizenry often become a reason for alarm. For Russia, the essence of the question about Muslims has never been limited to an issue of integrating immigrants. Although occasionally protested by some marginal Russian nationalist groups, there is a deep acknowledgement that Russia’s Muslim population is indigenous and is an indisputable part of Russian historical heritage (Shenfield 2001). As a matter of fact, dealing with Islam today, for the Russian state, implies more than just a population count because of the qualitative changes of the past two decades. The post-Soviet revival of Islam led to a profound social metamorphosis of the society. The fact is that, unlike their European

¹⁰ Pew Research Center, January 2011, “The Future of the Global Muslim Population: Projections for 2010-2030.” <http://www.pewforum.org/2011/01/27/the-future-of-the-global-muslim-population/> (Last accessed on March 10, 2015).

¹¹ Paul Goble, “What Kind of Muslim Country Will Russia Become?” *Window on Eurasia*. March, 26, 2007. <http://windowoneurasia.blogspot.com/2007/03/window-on-eurasia-what-kind-of-muslim.html> (Last accessed on March 15, 2015); Dmitrii Steshin, “Stanet li Rossiia islamskoi?” *Komsomol’skaia Pravda*. October 20, 2006. <http://www.kp.ru/daily/23793.4/58867> (Last accessed on March 15, 2015); Roman Joch “The Russians are Dying Out – and Lying as Well,” *MF Dnes*, (Access Russian translation form fram 20, 2007 at <http://inosmi.ru/inrussia/20070320/233513.html>, last accessed on March 15, 2015). These predictions rely on the assumption that Russia’s population by 2050 would fall down to 100 million and Muslims by then would comprise the majority group in Russia. Again, these figures are highly subjective and unlikely to reflect the true picture without accurate follow-up data. For the most recent population projections, see Pew Research Center, April 2, 2015, “The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050.”

counterparts, Russian state officials, for the past two decades, have had to learn how to deal with religious demands, not of immigrants, but of an indigenous Muslim population that has reconnected with the faith after seven decades of enforced atheism.¹²

The collapse of the Soviet Union and fall of its atheistic regime set off an extraordinary religious revival in the country.¹³ As the iron curtain fell and the official communist ideology was denounced, faithful Muslim citizens sought to return to their spiritual roots and reconnect with fellow believers abroad. Increased mobility and improved means of communication due to globalization contributed to a much faster spread of ideas than one could ever imagine. Foreign proselytism activities, close to nonexistent during the Soviet era, thrived as thousands of missionaries flew into the country from all over the Muslim world and Islamic literature was widely distributed thanks to a religious publishing boom.¹⁴ The number of mosques increased from about 160 in 1991 to several thousand just within a decade, in part with the help of investors from Islamic states.¹⁵ During the same period, the number of students receiving Islamic

¹² See chapters two and three for a fuller discussion of the ways in which Russian policymakers interpreted the post-Soviet Islamic revival in the country. The analysis reveals that the question was not whether Islam plays a role in the Russian society or about its legitimacy but what kind of influence it has upon the people and how its significance compares to that of the Russian Orthodoxy.

¹³ For a broader discussion of resurgence of religion, its evidence and implications in recent years, see Juergensmeyer, Mark. 2009. *Global Rebellion: Religious Challenges to the Secular State, from Christian Militias to al-Qaeda* (Comparative Studies in Religion and Society). University of California Press. Chapter 1; Hefner, Robert. 1998. "Multiple Modernities: Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism in a Globalizing Age," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 27: 83-104; Hansen, Randall. "The Danish cartoon controversy: A defense of liberal freedom (Reprinted from EUSA Review, vol. 19, pg 1-6, 2006)." *International migration* 44.5 (2006): 7-16.

¹⁴ No reliable statistics are available on this, but various commentators claim that over a thousand missionaries of Islam arrived in Russia in the early 1990s mainly from Turkey, Muslim majority states of the Middle East, Persian Gulf, and Southeast Asia (Goble 2009).

¹⁵ Reportedly, in 1991 philanthropists from the United Arab Emirates allocated 250 thousand dollars for the needs of the Muslim Spiritual Board in Ufa. According to unverified sources, in January 1992, Mufti Tadzhuddin signed the contract with Islamic Development Bank (Saudi Arabia) about granting to the Muftiyat in Ufa up to 1,5 million dollars for construction of mosques in Ufa, Kazan and Moscow, and also for opening of several Islamic schools. In July 1992, Kuwaitis, who were present at the opening of the "Taube" mosque in Naberezhnye Chelny, donated 140 thousand dollars. In 1991, the Saudi businessman

education at foreign Muslim universities such as *al-Azhar* of Egypt and in the *madrasas* of Southwest Asia and South Asia increased from single digits to more than 1800. More than 22,000 of those people have returned to Russia and have facilitated the revival of Islam (Goble 2009).¹⁶ The annual quota of 20,500 people that Saudi authorities allocated to Russia’s Muslims for performing Hajj in Mecca was easily filled and was subsequently increased to 25,000. The unofficial trip of another 15,000 pilgrims raised the question of increasing limit up to 40,000 people.¹⁷

Table 3: *The Period of Islamic Liberalization (1991-1997)*

	Number of Islamic Missionaries from abroad	Number of Students receiving Islamic Education abroad	Number of Mosques	Number of Pilgrims to Mecca (annually)
1990/1991	0	4	160	40
1997-2001	1000	1800	7000	20500

Most of these developments became possible due to major changes in the Russian legal environment. The Gorbachev-era reformers embraced high standards of Western legal norms that introduced new levels of religious freedom to the country. Russia’s 1990 laws on religion, which redefined the rights of religious communities, established

Tarik bin Laden is known to have contributed 20 thousand dollars as an initial installment for the construction of the mosque "Abdel Aziz Bin Saudi" in the city of Ulyanovsk.

¹⁶ Goble, Paul. Testimony at the public hearing before The Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe: U.S. Helsinki Commission. December 17, 2009

¹⁷ “Ochered’ za pyatym stolpom” (A Line for the fifth pillar) <http://www.islamrf.ru/news/world/w-monitorings/1041> (Last access March 14, 2015). Also, see Paul Goble’s 2009 testimony. The official Hajj quotas are determined according to the estimate of the Muslim population count of the country. The formula of 0.1% of a country’s total Muslim population was decided by the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) in 1987. Russia’s quota was increased from 20,500 people to 25,000 in 2007. This was interpreted as an effort to improve relations between Russia and the Islamic world.

unprecedentedly favorable conditions for various Muslim religious practices in Russia.¹⁸ In many ways, such conditions were not available even under the reign of Catherine the Great or the rule of Nicholas II, who issued Edicts of Toleration in 1773 and 1905, respectively. Muslim religious communities thrived as the state observed the new law, which not only gave much-needed breathing room to the practice of religion in Russia after decades of an atheistic regime but also assumed equality among all faith groups, including Russian Orthodoxy. The legislation mainly followed the stipulations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights, as well as other European conventions (Shterin and Richardson, 2000). The 1993 Russian Constitution further reinforced the main principles of this law.¹⁹

For almost a decade, under the new regime, religious communities enjoyed exceptional levels of freedom and mobility. Taking advantage of these opportunities, various Muslim communities, often acting independently of the official Muslim establishment, organized into groups, built mosques, founded publishing houses, and established contacts with their fellow believers abroad. Religious life under the framework of a modern secular democratizing state seemed to acquire an irreversible momentum unmatched by any of the previously known cycles in Russian religious history.²⁰

The euphoric spirit of early 1990s did not last long, however. Despite this seemingly irrevocable transformation of state-society relations, the late 1990s and early

¹⁸ See chapters two and three for a discussion of similarities and differences between the RSFSR and the USSR versions of the law, both of which were introduced in October 1990.

¹⁹ See chapter two for more details on legal provisions for religious communities between 1990 and 1997.

²⁰ See chapters two and three for a comparative discussion of the post-Soviet experience with that of the late Tsarist era.

2000s witnessed yet another change. Contrary to the essence of a democratic headway made in the period of liberalization (1990-1997), the state soon sought to return to a top-down approach of regulating religious affairs. Under the pretext that, if left unregulated by the state, newly emerging religious groups might abuse people's rights, the state attempted to restore its supremacy over religious life in the country. Policies were guided by conservative hard-liners, who argued that reliance on the "invisible hand" of inter-confessional competition might lead to "many troublesome problems" (Shterin and Richardson, 2000). A heated discussion about whether Russia had a tradition of religious pluralism accompanied this argument. In September 1997, the 1990 law was replaced by a controversial new law that has largely returned the regulation of religious organizations to the state (Bourdeaux, 2004). Since then, numerous policies regulating religious institutions and their activities have been adopted in Russia and, as a result, religion has become nearly as tightly regulated as it was in Soviet times.²¹ State authorities have often justified this move by their concern about security and responsibility to protect citizens from extremist attacks.

With respect to Islam in particular, the state's effort to regulate religion in the post-1997 period has been reflected in the attempt to draw a distinction between "traditional" and "non-traditional" forms of Islam.²² Early debates within official circles

²¹ For discussion of the consequences for Muslim religious practice in Russia of the legal measures such as regulations of the Criminal Code Articles 282 (Parts 1 and 2) and 20.2 (Parts 1 and 2), see chapter three. Also, see annual reports of the SOVA Center for Information and Analysis about the use of "Anti-extremist legislation" and its impact on Muslim religious practice. For example, Alexander Verkhovsky and Galina Kozhevnikova, "Inappropriate Enforcement of Anti-extremist Legislation in Russia in 2008," *SOVA Center for Information and Analysis*. 21 April 2009. <http://www.sova-center.ru/en/misuse/reports-analyses/2009/04/d15800/> (Last accessed on March 15, 2015).

²² See the next chapter for a graphical expression of the use of specific Islamic religious terminology and particularly the term 'traditional Islam' in the Russian mass media. According to the Integrum data, the concept 'traditional Islam' has been mentioned more than 12,000 times in several key federal and regional

on what the “traditional Islam” for Russia is and how it might be strengthened and “defended from infiltration by alien ideas” took place in the mid-1990s (Makarov and Mukhametshin 2003). As a result of these debates, in some of Russia’s regions clear attitudes have been adopted towards ‘alien’ Islams. Thus, in a resolution on *Anti-Hanafi Tendencies (O Anti-Khanafitskikh Napravleniakh)* passed by a local Islamic Cultural Center in 1998 in Kazan, *Ahmadiyya*, *Bahatism*, and *Wahhabism* were declared to be nineteenth-century concepts once spread by the British secret services in order to undermine the Ottoman Empire and destroy the cultural balance in India and the Muslim world (Pilkington and Yemelianova 2003).²³ This was followed by an extensive press discussion of dangers of *Wahhabism* and the use of Islam by *Wahhabists* as a contemporary cover to propagate antagonistic and extremist ideas.²⁴ In the meantime, official Islamic clerics, encouraged by the secular authorities in the regions, started strategic restructurings of Islamic institutions – building a strict administrative hierarchy for all Islamic organizations. Throughout the following decade the “official” interpretation of Islam, backed by state-approved religious organizations, was being strengthened vis-à-vis “non-traditional” forms of religion, allegedly spread by autonomous religious groups supported from abroad.²⁵ This compartmentalization of

newspapers between 1990 and 2013. Notably, the spread has not been even over time. The term was barely used until 1996 and only got popular in the 2000s.

²³ From the author’s notes on the ninth congress of the Youth’s Islamic Cultural Center *Iman* (Faith) held in Kazan in November 1998. Also see Pilkington, Hilary and Galina Yemelianova, eds. *Islam in Post-Soviet Russia*. Routledge, 2003.

²⁴ Analysis of the Integrum database suggests that reference to *Wahhabism* and more lately to *Salafism* as particularly radical interpretations of Islam that allegedly justify violent extremism has increased dramatically over the course of several years since the late 1990s. Thus, if in 1996 there were less than three dozens references to *Wahhabism* in *Izvestiya* and in a few other federal and regional publications combined, for the year of 2000 the number of such references exceeded 3,000.

²⁵ For a more detailed discussion of various definitions and different contexts in which the concepts of “traditional” and “non-traditional” Islam have been used, see chapter three. Analysis of the contemporary use of the concept suggests that “traditional Islam” has at least four distinct meanings in Russia (Batrov 2013, Safargaleev 2014).

Islam, which gradually penetrated into the official rhetoric, sowed the seeds of unrest among Russia's indigenous Muslim communities and fueled the broader society's concerns about the confessional peace in the country.²⁶

The freedom that was granted to religious groups during the early 1990s – the period of religious liberalization (1990-1997) – and the reverse course over the following decade and a half – the period of religious compartmentalization (1997-2012) – produced a nebulous picture. As two decades passed since the Soviet collapse, contemporary state attitudes toward Islam can be described as nothing else but a paradox. Despite strong allegations of unprecedented in post-Soviet history suppression of Muslim religious groups in Russia, since the late 1990s and early 2000s, the state has progressively supported development of Islam in the country both materially and discursively. Thus, on the one hand, the list of banned Muslim groups and Islamic literature has significantly expanded over the past decade, anti-extremist laws have been increasingly implemented against religious figures, and legal barriers have been raised for registration of new religious groups, among many other regulatory measures. On the other hand, the state has invested in strengthening of Islam as one of the pillars of the Russian state. In 2007 alone 800 million rubles (approx. \$25 million) were allocated for promotion of “traditional Islam” in Russia. More than 400 million rubles (approx. \$13 million) have been invested in Islamic education. Most recently, nearly one billion rubles

²⁶ In fact, classification of Islam into “traditional” and “non-traditional” categories is not new. For a detailed analysis of “establishment Islam” and “parallel Islam” in the Soviet Union, see Ro'i, Yaacov. *Islam in the Soviet Union: from the Second World War to Gorbachev*, London: Hurst, 2000. This study does not argue that Islam is monolith in its nature. It acknowledges the historical existence and value of multiple theological interpretations of the Islamic faith. Particularly, it recognizes that in the context of Russia, intra-faith debates took various forms depending on geographical specificities, attitudes toward religious innovation, or even urban and rural division. What the study emphasizes is that the Russian state attitudes toward these debates during the 1990s and the 2000s have not been the same.

(more than \$300 million) were granted for training of Islamic history and culture specialists over the next three years.²⁷ These are only few examples of controversies that have recently been noted by careful observers of religious life in Russia. The Islamic religious revival has not stopped as a result of these measures, but its pace and character have changed.

This study suggests that relations between Islam and the Russian state in the post-1997 period can be described neither as a systematic repression nor as unconditional support. Rather, the way in which they are connected could be characterized as the one of an increased regulation. A more nuanced analysis of major policy debates indicates that the state's approach to the issues concerning Muslim minorities varies both across time and space.

Inevitably, so-called “carrot and stick” method of the post-1997 period, which includes both restraint and assistance, has induced a compartmentalization of Islam in Russia into “loyal” and “treasonous” factions. While, as of 2012, state officials seem to be convinced that the chosen path is the right one, many local and foreign observers argue that so far this approach may have been more conducive to the escalation of tension in the society rather than to achieving stability and cohesion (Curanovic 2014, Goble 2014, Flintoff 2012).²⁸ As it has become evident from unceasing unrest in the

²⁷ See chapter one for details.

²⁸ Curanović, Alicja. "Weaknesses of the Post-Soviet Religious Model: The Kremlin and “Traditional” Religions in face of Interethnic Tensions in Russia." *Politics and Religion* (2014): 1-30.

Goble, Paul. “Putin’s offensive against Islam a ‘cover’ for broader attack on non-Russian nations, Kazan Tatar says.” *The Interpreter: A Special Project of Institute of Modern Russia*. Goble refers to an article by F. Zagidulla in *Zvezda Povolzhya* (no. 13 (693), April 10-16, 2014, p.1-2.

(<http://www.interpretermag.com/putins-offensive-against-islam-a-cover-for-broader-attack-on-non-russian-nations-kazan-tatar-says/>) Last accessed on March 15, 2015)

Northern Caucasus and a high societal resonance following terrorist attacks on religious leadership in traditionally peaceful Tatarstan in 2012, an alliance between secular state and “traditional” Islamic organizations has not yet produced a lasting serenity.²⁹ Overall, this dissertation shows that state policies toward Islam were less regulatory in the early 1990s than in the 2000s. Of equal interest from a political science perspective, is an assessment of causes and mechanisms that have triggered the change. Why has a secular state changed its rhetoric and policies toward religion? More specifically, why have Russian state policies toward Islam become more regulatory since the late 1990s? What explains Russia’s attempt to support “traditional” Islam vis-à-vis its alternative interpretations?

The following chapters will review the existing frameworks for the analysis of religious accommodation practices and introduce a model that aims to explain the logic behind the dynamics of state policies toward Islam in Russia since the Soviet collapse. In several steps I will develop my argument that explains why over the past two decades state policies toward Islam in Russia have transformed in style and function. The next theoretical chapter will focus on the main puzzle and elaborate on a framework that explains transformation of neutral policies in 1990s into regulatory policies in 2000s. It will also discuss selection of the time periods, explain the methodological tools, data sources, and define relevant terminology. Then, two empirical chapters will examine in detail the state’s approach toward Islam over the course of the 1990s and the 2000s. The

Flintoff, Corey. “Attacks Raise Specter of Radical Islam in Russia” NPR: All Things Considered. August 22, 2012 (<http://www.npr.org/2012/08/22/159822487/attacks-raise-specter-of-radical-islam-in-russia>) Last accessed March 15, 2015).

²⁹ Although the spread of Islamic radicalism in Russia is part of the explanatory framework, it is not the main focus of this study. For an excellent introductory review essay on Islamic radicalization in Russia, see Dannreuther, Roland. "Islamic radicalization in Russia: an assessment." *International Affairs* 86.1 (2010): 109-126.

first empirical chapter will discuss the early 1990s and reasons of the state's neutral and non-involvement approach to Islamic affairs. The second empirical chapter will focus on the 2000s and examine reasons of the emergence and development of regulatory religious policies toward Islam. The third empirical chapter will discuss some of the principal drivers and constraints of religious policymaking in post-Soviet Russia. Finally, the conclusion will briefly summarize the dissertation's main findings, discuss generalizable results, provide several policy recommendations, and suggest avenues for further research.

Understanding the dynamics of change in religious policy is important for a number of reasons. Development of systemic solutions to confessional discord, improvement of social inclusion practices, enhancement of religious freedoms, and fulfillment of human rights in general are affected by state attitudes toward religion. The state's leadership in Russia as well as many careful observers of Islam acknowledge that resolving these issues remains a priority for the country's policy makers. So far, however, neither recent state attitudes toward Islam, nor the topic of Russian secularism in general have been addressed by scholars in detail. Understanding how secular states deal with religious pluralism may help overcome some of the social challenges facing contemporary Russia and build better futures.

Chapter 1

Islam and the Dynamics of Ethno-confessional Regimes in post-Soviet Russia

“Without a higher idea, neither a man nor a nation can exist.”

F. Dostoevsky
November 1876

1. Introduction

The preamble to Russia’s 1997 Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations³⁰ is widely regarded as the first formal attempt to introduce the notion of ‘traditional religions’ to the Russian legal system³¹. Initially, for many observers of religious life in Russia, it was hard to foresee that recognition of a rigid dichotomy between *traditional* and *non-traditional* faiths might deepen existing confessional disputes and precipitate a full-fledged polarization within some of the state-recognized creeds, including the Russian Islamic community. Officials originally spoke of protecting the “spiritual security” of the country and thus drafted laws that would primarily safeguard Russian Orthodoxy, Islam, Buddhism, and Judaism (i.e. “traditional religions”) from the spread of foreign sects, cults, and newer religious movements.³² Soon, however, it became evident that such “protection” had serious social and political implications for some groups within ‘traditional faiths.’³³

³⁰ The 1997 Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations, the 1997 law, and the law will be used interchangeably in this study.

³¹ The preface to the 1997 Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations singles out Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, and especially Orthodox Christianity as the country’s four “traditional” faiths in Russia. Although there is a claim that the ‘traditional religions’ configuration is largely a Soviet construct, this terminology was not a salient part of official Soviet rhetoric (Fagan 2012:21).

³² See the 1997 Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations.

³³ The issue of security still largely dominates the official rhetoric and remains one of the key themes in many studies on Islam in Russia. See relevant sections in chapters two, three, and four for a brief review of the literature and pertinent policy debates. This study does not attempt to play down the role of security in

This study intends to examine the dynamics of state policies toward Islam and Muslims in Russia between 1990 and 2012 in the context of Russia's post-Soviet ethno-confessional regimes.³⁴ First, it is puzzling that a secular country would experience two distinct patterns of state policies toward religion in such a relatively short time.³⁵ Second, it is also interesting why a multinational state would attempt to introduce elements of civic nationhood (e.g. by removing the ethnicity line from internal passports in 1997) while maintaining ethnic federal structure. In other words, state policies toward both religion and ethnicity in Russia have changed over time, and one of the important manifestations of this change—and the focus of this study—has been the tendency, or lack thereof, toward the *compartmentalization of Islam*.³⁶

At the time of liberalization of the Soviet religious policy in 1990, Islam in Russia was both legally and discursively regarded as a holistic religion that constituted an important part of indigenous Muslim identities; no particular distinction was emphasized between various factions following different Islamic schools of thought. During the first few years after the collapse of the atheistic regime, all Islamic communities could indiscriminately use the permissive environment—or opportunity structure³⁷—to secure their religious rights and freedoms, such as registering new organizations, building and

the policymaking process. Rather, it invites to take a different look on the matter and consider ideological debates as an explanatory framework for a change in state policies toward religion.

³⁴ I define ethno-confessional regime as a coherent set of principles, norms, and rules that systematically guides state policies toward both religion and ethnicity.

³⁵ Before and after the passage of the 1997 law.

³⁶ Sener Akturk has addressed the question of persistence and change in state policies toward ethnicity. For his analysis of ethnic policies in Soviet and post-Soviet Russia, see Aktürk, Şener. *Regimes of ethnicity and nationhood in Germany, Russia, and Turkey*. Cambridge University Press, 2012. In this study I will focus on the dynamics of Russian state policies toward religion. The research, nevertheless, reveals that the two are often interconnected.

³⁷ I borrow the term “opportunity structure” from Tilly and Tarrow (Tilly & Tarrow, 2007). In their use, political opportunity structure “refers to features of regime and institutions (e.g., splits in the ruling class) that facilitate or inhibit a political actor’s collective action and to changes in those features” (Tilly & Tarrow, 2007, p. 49).

repairing places of worship, and printing religious literature. Of particular importance was the right to be present in the Russian public sphere.³⁸

However, towards the late 1990s, state attitudes regarding various Muslim factions in Russia started to change. As Islamic religious terminology gradually made inroads into public debates and eventually entered the official state rhetoric, some Muslim communities found themselves in a transformed policy environment. Some of the groups that identified with marginal Islamic practices and refused to affiliate with the official Muslim establishment now faced challenges in continuing their religious duties and rites.³⁹ As a result, the overall growth of registered religious communities and construction of mosques slowed down, and the number of students traveling abroad for Islamic education has sharply declined.

³⁸ There is an ambiguity about a definition of public sphere/space in the Russian law in the sense of J. Habermas's *Offentlichkeit*. See, Habermas, J., *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989). For further discussion, see Krasin, Jurij Andreevich. "Publichnaia sfera i publichnaia politika v rossiiskom izmerenii." *Politija* 3 (2004): 5-23. In this study I use the term public sphere in the meaning of a space to which all citizens have access and in which all issues of concern to citizens and all available opinions can be articulated and deliberated. See Shearing, Clifford, and Jennifer Wood. "Nodal governance, democracy, and the new 'denizens'." *Journal of law and society* 30.3 (2003): 400-419. Haas, Tanni, and Linda Steiner. "Public journalism a reply to critics." *Journalism* 7.2 (2006): 238-254. Refer to the dissertation bibliography for definition of the term.

³⁹ Official Muslim (Islamic) establishment – The body of people ordained by Islamic training and recognized by the state as ritual and spiritual leaders of Russia's Muslim community, the clergy. For discussion of the history of the official Muslim establishment in the Soviet Union, see Bennigsen, Alexandre, and Chantal Lemercier-Quelquejay. "'Official' Islam in the Soviet Union." *Religion, State and Society: The Keston Journal* 7.3 (1979): 148-159.

Figure 1: *The Dynamics of Post-Soviet Islamic Revival*

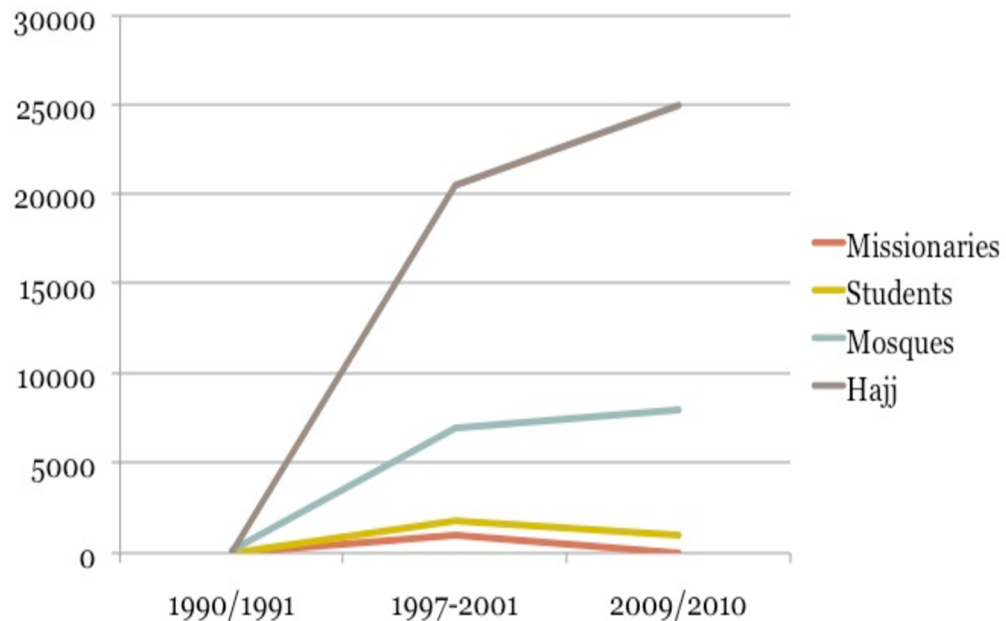


Table 4: *The Dynamics of Post-Soviet Islamic Revival*⁴⁰

	1991	1997	2009
Total number of mosques	160	7,000	8,000
Hajj (Annual number of pilgrims to Mecca)	40	20,500	25,000
Total number of Islamic missionaries from abroad	0	1,000	n/a
Total number of students abroad	4	1,800	<1,000

⁴⁰ The number of mosques in Russia increased from about 160 in 1991 to more than 8000 in 2009. In 1991, there were 40 Muslims from the Russian Federation who went on Hajj. In 2009, there were 25,000 Muslims from Russia who traveled officially. The number of missionaries entering Russia and providing the viewpoints of particular Islamic schools of thought was zero in 1991. This number has been over a thousand each year since then. The number of Muslims studying abroad at Muslim universities such as al-Azhar and in the madrasahs of Southwest Asia and South Asia was four in 1991. In 2009 it was just under a thousand, but figures ran as high as 1800 in the late 1990s. More than 22,000 of those people have returned to Russia (Testimony of Paul Goble at the public hearing before The Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe: U.S. Helsinki Commission. December 17, 2009).

The paradox is that, despite strong allegations in various human rights reports and international media of unprecedented repression of some Muslim religious groups in Russia, since the late 1990s and early 2000s, the Russian state has increasingly supported development of “mainstream” Islam in the country, both materially and discursively.⁴¹ While the list of banned Muslim groups and Islamic literature has significantly expanded during the 2000s, the state has also invested in strengthening ‘traditional Islam’ as one of the pillars of the Russian state.⁴² In 2006, the nonprofit charitable foundation “The Fund for support of Islamic culture, science and education” (hereafter the Fund) was established on the initiative and with the support of the state. In 2007 alone, 800 million rubles were allocated through the Fund for the promotion of ‘traditional Islam’ in Russia.⁴³ The Fund has invested more than 400 million rubles specifically into development of Islamic education. Later, nearly one billion rubles (more than \$300 million) were granted for training of Islamic history and culture specialists over the next three years.⁴⁴

Building on the comparison of the time periods, before and after 1997, this study aims to find out what actors, processes, and institutions have promoted this divergence. The next section will describe the puzzle in more detail and introduce a new comparative conceptualization of state policies toward religion. Accordingly, the time span between

⁴¹ See, for example, annual reports of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom and of the Sova Center reports on the misuse of anti-extremism laws, statements on racism and xenophobia, as well as articles on religion and secular society in Russia.

⁴² See chapter three for a detailed discussion of the meaning of the concept of ‘traditional Islam’ and its various interpretations.

⁴³ For the charter of the Fund and description of its activities refer to their official website: <http://www.islamfund.ru/index.php> (Last access March 5, 2015).

⁴⁴ The Russian government allocated the funds. The Russian Ministry of Education distributed between several public universities the responsibility for training specialists with in-depth knowledge of the history and culture of Islam and financed their work. See Fayzullina, Albina R., and Regina M. Mukhametzyanova-Duggal. "Multi-Confessional Societies in Russia and India: Models of Relations between the State and Religious Associations." *Review of European Studies* 7.1 (2014): p12.

the Soviet collapse and 1997 is categorized as a period of “neutral policies” toward Islam. This was an era of open access to the Russian public sphere for all Islamic religious groups and equal treatment of them by the state. On the other hand, the period from 1997 onwards was marked by a differentiation of state attitudes toward “traditional” and “non-traditional” forms of Islam and the groups that practice such beliefs. Therefore, this period is described in this study as an era of “regulatory policies.”⁴⁵

Building on the existing scholarship on the subject, this study takes an historical institutionalist perspective to explain the evolution of state policies toward Islam in Russia. The study suggests that over the first two decades since the breakup of the Soviet Union, the key factor that accounts both for the stability of and the change of state attitudes toward Islam was an ideological struggle between competing national philosophies. Two distinct ideological paths separated by a critical juncture allowed for development of two different ethno-confessional regimes that guided state policies toward Muslims and Islamic religion during the 1990s and the 2000s.⁴⁶ From this standpoint, neutral policies toward Islam in the 1990s were possible because of the relative dominance of a Western liberal ideology that allowed for development of a multiethnic passive secular regime.⁴⁷ A commitment of the late Soviet and post-Soviet

⁴⁵ Disclaimer: The terms ‘neutral’ and ‘regulatory’ are relative rather than absolute and dominance of one or another during the period of investigation (1990-2012) is a matter of degree.

⁴⁶ Critical junctures, according to James Mahoney “are moments of relative structural indeterminism when willful actors shape outcomes in a more voluntary fashion than normal circumstances permit” (Mahoney 2001:7). Mahoney, James. *The legacies of liberalism: Path dependence and political regimes in Central America*. JHU Press, 2001. According to Kuru, a critical juncture is “a moment when both agency and structural conditions are available for a systematic change” (Kuru 2009:27). For Kuru, “when the new system becomes consolidated, it creates a path dependence. In the aftermath of this transformation, a new change becomes difficult and requires a new critical juncture” (Kuru 2009:28). Kuru, Ahmet T. *Secularism and state policies toward religion: the United States, France, and Turkey*. Cambridge University Press, 2009.

⁴⁷ In the context of this study, Western liberalism is an ideology that focuses on the promotion of human rights, civil liberties, market economy, and democratic government broadly defined. While liberalism has

reformers to western liberal norms and principles led them to transform key aspects of social and political life in Russia, which resulted in adoption of neutral/accommodationist policies toward all faiths, including Islam. On the other hand, regulatory policies toward Islam in the 2000s were an outcome of a statist ideology, which in its turn has adopted a non-ethnic confessional collaboration regime for managing Russia's diverse population.⁴⁸

A consistent set of ideas related to restoring Russia as a sovereign state and a "great power" guided the overwhelming majority of political actors across the Russian political spectrum, which ended up in adoption of regulatory measures in religious matters, including Islamic affairs.⁴⁹

2. Describing and Defining the Puzzle: Neutral Vs. Regulatory Policies toward Islam

Over the course of the 1990s, the Russian state pursued neutral policies toward Islam in several major areas of religious observance and practice. Primarily this neutrality was reflected in the state's attitude toward religious/Islamic education. The right to open religious schools at home and to receive such education abroad was granted to religious

indigenous intellectual history in Russia, it borrows heavily from the Western philosophical tradition and experience. Multiethnic passive secularism is a type of ethno-confessional regimes, which allows unrestricted access to the public sphere for all religious groups and legally as well as institutionally recognizes multiple ethnic categories. For details, see chapter two. Refer to the dissertation glossary for definitions.

⁴⁸ In the context of this study, statism is an ideology, according to which the state should have substantial centralized control over social and economic affairs. Non-ethnic confessional collaboration model is a type of ethno-confessional regime, according to which certain religious communities have privileged access to the public sphere and multiple ethnic categories are not supported legally and institutionally. For details, see chapters three and four. Refer to the dissertation glossary for definitions.

⁴⁹ According to Hill and Gaddy, by mid-1996 "practically every political group and party across the Russian political spectrum, from right to left, felt that the post-Soviet dismantling of the state had gone too far and advocated the restoration of Russian "state power." Even some of the liberal economists around Yegor Gaidar who were at the forefront of pulling apart the old Soviet economy in 1992-93 had moved in this direction" (Hill and Gaddy 2013:34). Hill, Fiona, and Clifford G. Gaddy. *Mr. Putin: operative in the Kremlin*. Brookings Institution Press, 2013.

groups in 1990, thanks to the new Law On Freedom of Religion. The aforementioned law also allowed using public school premises outside regular business hours for religious education of the general public. Furthermore, it permitted introduction of religion-related subjects into the public schools curriculum on the condition that this would not be accompanied by religious rituals and had an ‘informative’ character (Article 9 of the RSFSR Law).

Of particular importance for religious observance and practice were places of worship. According to the provisions of the new law, technically, every Islamic community which had financial means to do so could build its own mosque and appoint own *imams* (Islamic preachers), including foreigners, to lead the service. If registered as a religious organization, religious communities also obtained the right of ownership of the property (Article 26 of the RSFSR law). According to some estimates, overall across Russia, between 1990 and 1997, the number of functioning mosques increased from 160 to over 7,000 (Goble 2009).⁵⁰ Mosques were freely built by various Islamic communities both in Muslim-majority and predominantly Russian populated areas.⁵¹ Moreover, the 1990 law allowed for religious worship in military units, hospitals, all kinds of nursing homes, prisons, and many other public premises (Article 22 of the RSFSR law).

⁵⁰ For comparison, note that at the time of the 1917 Revolution, there had been an extensive Muslim establishment on the territory of the Russian Empire, with some 26,000 mosques served by over 45,000 imams (mullahs). In the region of Turkestan (Central Asia) alone, there were some 8,000 Islamic primary and secondary schools (mekteps and madrasas), another 5,000 establishments of Islamic learning were found in the regions of Kazan, the Crimea, and the Caucasus. For details, see Takeyh, Ray and Nikolas Gvosdev, 2004. *The Receding Shadow of the Prophet: The Rise and Fall of Radical Political Islam*. London: Praeger. Pp.106. Also see Bennigsen, Alexandre and Marie Broxup, *The Islamic Threat to the Soviet State*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1983, P.43; Haghayeghi, Mehrdad, *Islam and Politics in Central Asia*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1995, P.9.

⁵¹ Many of these mosques turned into local centers of Islamic education, some of which soon developed into formal religious schools known as *madrasas*.

More broadly, the legal recognition of private ownership and the transition to a market economy had a huge impact on the development of the Islamic consumer industry. A wide range of products from *halal* groceries (religiously acceptable according to the Muslim law) to alcohol-free perfumes and Islamic women's clothing became available for private consumption. As both supply and demand in the *halal* market increased, no attempt was made to centralize or supervise this area in the early 90s.⁵²

Overall, for several years Muslim communities thrived, regardless of their association with official Islamic institutions or their doctrinal preferences. After surviving decades of an atheistic Soviet regime, many Russian Muslims enjoyed a flowering of Islamic spirit, education, and culture. Despite growing concerns of communists and other ultra-secularist groups about the proliferation of Islamic movements and sects, and worries of conservative members of the established Muslim clergy, who disliked the competition of newly emerging Islamic authorities, the state did not intervene in religious affairs. A diversity of Islamic communities thrived across the country until the late 1990s. The official discourse at the federal level during this era maintained a neutral tone with respect to Islam and avoided making any deliberate distinctions between different Islamic schools of thought or traditions.

Contrary to the accommodationist attitude of the state in the early 1990s, state policies toward Islam in the post-1997 period had a more interventionist character. First of all, the 1997 law on religion created two principal categories: 'religious organization' and 'religious group'. To enjoy the full benefits of a legal personality and a range of other rights, religious communities were required to register with the state as 'religious

⁵² For more detailed discussion of Islamic practices in the early 1990s, see chapter two.

organizations'.⁵³ Without registration as religious organizations religious communities were denied the rights that they enjoyed under the 1990 law.⁵⁴ Unregistered religious groups, among other things, could no longer organize public worship services, disseminate religious literature, or hire foreign clergy. Religious bodies created outside the borders of the Russian Federation or 'foreign religious groups' were altogether denied the right to 'engage in liturgical or other religious activity'.⁵⁵ Furthermore, the state reserved the right to liquidate a registered religious organization for any number of reasons, including but not limited to threatening the integrity of the Russian Federation, infringing on the health of Russian citizens, encouraging believers to disobey civic duties, or restricting members from leaving or converting to other faiths. Finally, the 1997 law technically allowed the restoration of close regulation of religious life. The ban on creation of government organs or posts devoted to freedom of conscience issues was lifted.⁵⁶ State registration would also follow a procedure requiring extensive information about a religious organization's history, beliefs and activities, as well as the particulars of at least ten founders (Fagan 2012:68).

⁵³ To register as a religious organization, a religious community had to obtain an approval from a local state authority that it had existed in the vicinity for at least 15 years, or confirmation from a centralized religious organization of the same creed. Fully registered religious organizations would enjoy a range of rights denied religious groups: to produce, obtain, import, export or distribute religious literature, audio and video material; to produce liturgical literature and other religious items; to found mass media; to conduct religious rites in various public institutions; to invite foreign citizens for professional purposes, etc. For a full list of rights and privileges, see the text of the 1997 law. Also, see Fagan, Geraldine. *Believing in Russia: Religious Policy After Communism*. Routledge, 2012. Pp.66-68. Previously registered religious organizations were required to re-register by 2002. Failure to do so would result in liquidation of a religious organization.

⁵⁴ The only rights that the 1997 law granted religious groups were to conduct religious rites and to teach religion to existing followers using premises and property provided by the group.

⁵⁵ According to the 1997 law, independent religious activity by foreign citizens was outlawed. Religious bodies created outside the borders of the Russian Federation would only be able to open representations in Russia attached to local religious organizations. By contrast, the 1990 law had explicitly granted foreign citizens and persons without citizenship the right to found religious associations.

⁵⁶ One of the intents of the 1990 Law on Religion was to establish a barrier to reconstitution of the Council for Religious Affairs.

The 1997 Law paved the way for introduction of further rules regulating religious life in Russia. Soon, the change was reflected in the adoption of new norms regarding religious education and the accreditation of *imams*. Secular authorities had long suspected that foreign-educated clergymen had been spreading radical Islam in the country. In light of growing concern that ‘alien’ interpretations of Islam were gaining a foothold in Russia, state authorities initially revised the education curricula and activities of several Islamic religious institutions, which in a number of cases led to closures or mergers of the institutions.⁵⁷ Moreover, the state got actively engaged in the establishment of new Islamic education institutions and the development of a standardized religious curriculum.⁵⁸ Some regions introduced regulatory measures that would require imams educated abroad to have their diploma certified by local authorities before they could start preaching in Russia. In 2003, for example, the local Muslim spiritual board of the Republic of Tatarstan conducted its own re-licensing program.⁵⁹

Furthermore, the 2000 update of the National Security Concept of the Russian Federation stated that ensuring national security included “countering the negative influence of foreign religious organizations and missionaries.”⁶⁰ In 2002, the Federal Law on Combating Extremist Activity was adopted. This law targeted some religious groups by criminalizing a broad spectrum of their activities. As a result, individuals adhering to

⁵⁷ For some details of this process, see chapter 4. Also, for discussion of cases related to infamous Islamic madrasas ‘Yoldyz’ and ‘Al-Furqan’, see Silantyev, R. *Islam v Sovremennoi Rossii: Entsiklopediia*. Moscow: Algoritm. 2008.

⁵⁸ “Edinyj standart islamskogo obrazovaniya v Tatarstane: za granicu ne poedem, budem učit' v svoih medrese,” 27 January 2015. <http://kazanfirst.ru/feed/38486> (Last access March 5, 2015)

⁵⁹ By 2004, about 800 of 1,200 imams in the Republic of Tatarstan passed the re-licensing program. <http://www.portal-credo.ru/site/print.php?act=news&id=17429> (Last access March 5, 2015)

⁶⁰ The National Security Concept of the Russian Federation, 2000 (Kontseptsiiia Natsional'noi Bezopasnosti Rossiiskoi Federatsii). Approved by Presidential Decree No. 24 of 10 January 2000.

marginal Islamic factions such as *Nursists* (followers of Said Nursi and Fethullah Gulen) or *Tablighi Jamaat*, as well as those groups claiming their superiority over mainstream Islam, became a subject of various allegations. To the present day, according to Alexander Verkhovsky, a leading human rights activist in Russia and the director of the SOVA Center, the anti-extremist legislation is being used as a powerful instrument to limit freedom of conscience in the country.⁶¹ On top of that, in 2006, the government passed the Law on Public Associations, which mandated new reporting requirements for religious organizations. The required reporting included information about "organized events and activities" and funds received from abroad. Failure to file reports or to complete them adequately could result in the eventual suspension of the organization's activities. This wide range of restrictions is often interpreted as an attempt to limit foreign Islamic influence on indigenous Muslims.

In the meantime, specific Islamic religious terminology and the 'traditional/non-traditional' dichotomy gradually made their way into Russian public debates, often in vaguely defined or outright misleading forms. Although no official or expert definitions were provided, notions of "traditional" and "non-traditional" Islam started widely circulating in public discourse and finally entered the country's rhetoric. A content analysis of more than eight thousand Russian national and regional news sources, including newspapers, magazines, and radio and television transcripts, during the period between 1990 and 2012 reveals increasing reference to terms such as 'wahhabism,'

⁶¹ Verkhovsky, A. Reports on Inappropriate enforcement of the anti-extremist legislation in Russia from 2009 to 2013. For example, see the report for 2009: <http://www.sova-center.ru/en/misuse/reports-analyses/2010/04/d18482/> (Last access March 5, 2015)

‘salafism,’ and ‘traditional’ and ‘non-traditional Islam’. The results are particularly striking when one notes that Russian media very rarely used these terms before 1995.

Figure 2: *The dynamics of reference to the concepts of ‘Traditional Islam’ and ‘Non-traditional Islam’ in the Russian media*

Number of references

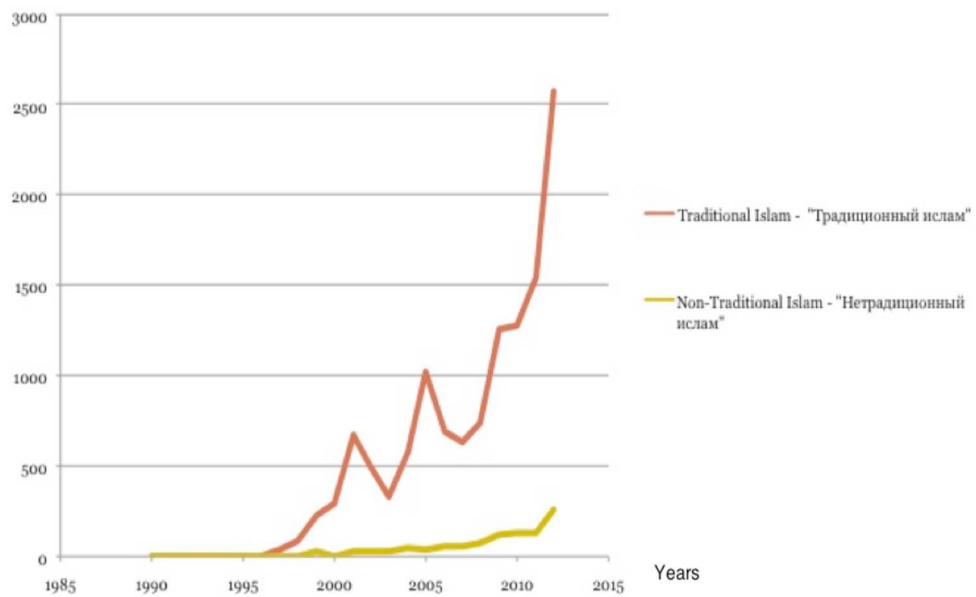
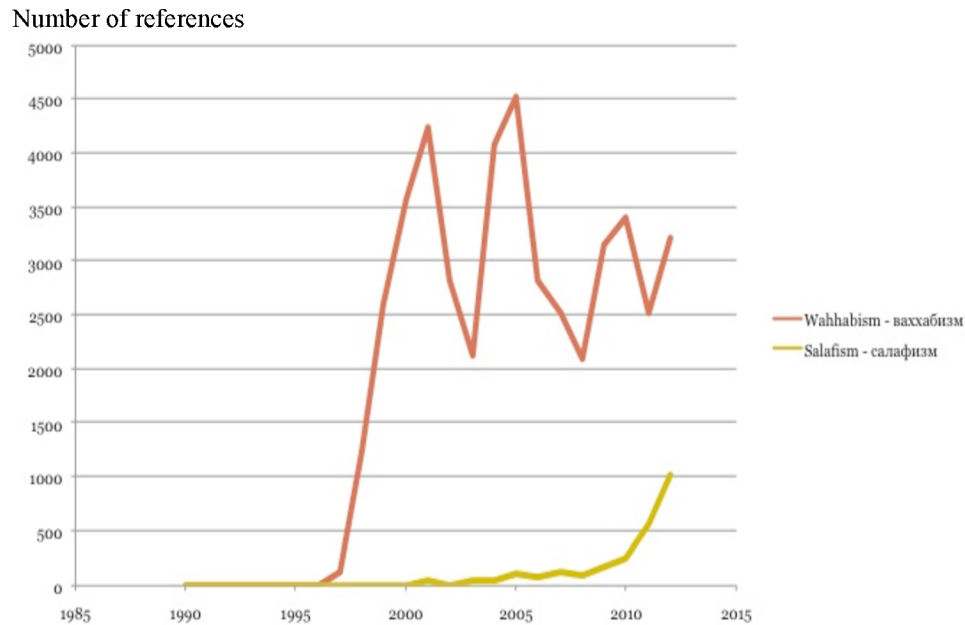


Figure 3: *The dynamics of reference to the concepts 'Wahhabism' and 'Salafism' in the Russian media*



In sum, regulations in the post-1997 period had a major impact on the dynamics of Islamic revival in post-Soviet Russia. Focusing on several major areas of Islamic observance and practice, the following table contrasts state policies toward Islam during the 1990s and the 2000s.

Table 5: *Variation of Russian state policies toward Islam*

Policy domains	1990s	2000s
<i>1) Religious Education</i>	Neutral	Regulatory
<i>2) Religious Education in Public Schools</i>	Neutral	Regulatory
<i>3) Funding and construction of mosques</i>	Neutral	Regulatory
<i>4) Religious press</i>	Neutral	Regulatory
<i>5) Dress code and religious symbols in public sphere</i>	Neutral	Regulatory
<i>6) Registration of religious</i>	Neutral	Regulatory

<i>organizations</i>		
7) <i>Religion in the military</i>	Neutral	Regulatory
8) <i>Islam in the official rhetoric</i>	Neutral	Regulatory
9) <i>Property rights</i>	Neutral	Regulatory

The post-Soviet relationship between the Russian state and Islam invites the following intriguing questions: *Why did the Russian secular regime change its policy in relation to Islam toward the end of the 1990s? Why have Russian state policies become more regulatory? What explains Russia’s attempt to support “traditional” Islam vis-à-vis its alternative interpretations?*

I am not arguing that the change in state attitudes toward Islam happened overnight with the passage of the 1997 Law or led to a complete, wholesale transformation of state-religion relations. Rather, I observe a gradual shift from policies of relative neutrality in the 1990s toward policies of relative regulation in the 2000s. Moreover, the analysis demonstrates the extreme difficulty of changing state-religion regimes completely. Even the exceptional coincidence of ideational and structural conditions for change might not be enough for a wholesale transformation of state-religion regimes that encompasses all policies on religion. As a close study of debates on the issue reveals, very few people advocated for the return to the Soviet-style regulation of religious affairs and even fewer supported a totally laissez-faire approach toward religion. Despite major differences between the 1990s and the 2000s examined in this study, I would argue that Russia became a hybrid regime between passive secular and so-called confessional collaboration models, which I will define below.

Finally, the analysis below will also demonstrate that not all policy areas were equally debated by Russian policymakers, the expert community, and the general public. For example, while the issue of foreign influence on religious education drew a significant and constant attention of policymakers at the national level and resulted in adoption of legal measures, the question of Islamic dress code came up sporadically, what in part accounts for legal ambiguity on the matter, as evidenced in variation of practices across the regions.⁶² In addition, it will show that some issues are better understood in the context of interfaith relations rather than state policies toward religion. Thus, the issue of difficulties in constructing mosques in traditionally non-Muslim regions since the late 1990s has been more often debated in the context of Church-Islam relations that state attitudes toward Islam.⁶³

In my study, I will review the dominant political preferences in each period by examining the platforms, statements, and demands of key players. Through analysis of the daily press, magazines, legal documents, and official statements, I track the process by which the different policy trends were established in the 1990s and 2000s, respectively, and the change that happened in between.

Building on a comparison of the two periods described above, the main purpose of this study is to explain the change of state attitudes toward Islam, and identify the

⁶² See chapters three and four for details on the debate that led to the ban on wearing Islamic headscarves in schools in Stavropol region. In Chechnya, on the other hand, authorities are enforcing a compulsory Islamic dress code for women. Moreover, women were reportedly targeted for immodest outfit choices. See “Chechnya enforcing Islamic dress code,” Human Rights Watch, March 10, 2011. <http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/03/10/russia-chechnya-enforcing-islamic-dress-code> (Last accessed on March 15, 2015). Also see http://rus.azattyq.org/content/chechnya_kadyrov_muslim_dress_code_school_/3549566.html (Last accessed on March 15, 2015); and <http://newsland.com/news/detail/id/516383/> (Last accessed on March 15, 2015).

⁶³ See chapters three and four for details on the debates about construction of Mosques in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Sochi, Maloyaroslavets and other “Muslim-minority” areas of Russia.

actors, processes, mechanisms, and institutions that have promoted this policy shift. The next step is to conceptualize the difference in the policy trends toward Islam in Russia during the two periods by introducing the notion of *state-religion regime*.

2.1. Neutral Policies toward Religion, Regulatory Policies toward Religion, and State-Religion Regime

For analytical purposes, I would like to differentiate the two periods described above as periods dominated by two distinct types of state-religion regimes. This distinction, nevertheless, is relative rather than absolute and does not represent Weberian “ideal types.”⁶⁴ To be more specific, the state-religion regime of the early 1990s, which represents an era of neutral policies toward religion, is called passive secularism.⁶⁵ Under passive secularism the state allows public visibility of religion and refrains from intervening in religious affairs. The state respects religious pluralism in general and provides equal access to the public sphere for all religious communities. Therefore, the goal of these neutral policies is the accommodation of all religious groups and their religious practices.

⁶⁴ Weber introduces an ideal type as “a unified *analytical* construct” that “cannot be found empirically anywhere in reality” (Weber, 2011, p. 90). But, it “will help to develop our skill in imputation in *research*: it is no “hypothesis” but it offers guidance to the construction of hypotheses. It is not a *description* of reality but it aims to give unambiguous means of expression to such a description”(Weber, 2011, p. 90). In other words, an ideal type is a *utopia*, and constructed to address a researchers’ “task of determining in each individual case, the extent to which this ideal-construct approximates to or diverges from reality” (Weber, 2011, p. 90).

⁶⁵ For discussion of different types of state-religion regimes and original definition of passive secularism, See Kuru, Ahmet T. *Secularism and state policies toward religion: the United States, France, and Turkey*. Cambridge University Press, 2009.

On the other hand, the post-1997 period, which was dominated by regulatory policies, can be categorized as an era of collaboration between the state and “traditional” religious organizations.⁶⁶ Under the confessional collaboration model the state may allow for public visibility of religion, but it is less tolerant toward religious pluralism. Specifically, it grants a privileged access to the public sphere for some religious communities, often by conferring on them exclusive rights such as permission to use mass media (broadcasting and the press) and public premises.⁶⁷ For example, the state under the confessional collaboration model need not ban religious education, but it may either indirectly influence the religious learning process through its leverage over public infrastructure, service network, and media, or directly intervene in the process by requiring standardization of the curriculum or the accreditation of instructors.

⁶⁶ By confessional collaboration I mean the relationship between the state and traditional religious organizations (most notably between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Kremlin) which manifests itself in cooperation taking place in selected areas of the public sphere, in education and social care. In this study, the term ‘traditional religious organizations’ refers to state-registered religious organizations representing traditional religions in Russia. More broadly, these are religious organizations that have demonstrated that they had significantly influenced the formation and development of Russian statehood, played an important historical role in the development of national consciousness and that a significant proportion of Russian citizens belonged to or expressed a preference for it. For details, see chapters three and four. For definitions, refer to the dissertation glossary

⁶⁷ See chapter three for a detailed discussion of ‘traditional religions paradigm’ – a pattern of thought based on the assumption that some religious communities deserve special privileges because of their size, geographical range, as well as the history of presence in Russia. The idea has been established in the preamble of the Russian Federation 1997 “Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations.”

Table 6: *Five Symptoms of State-Religion Regime Type in Post-Soviet Russia.*

Types of State-Religion Regimes in Post-Soviet Russia		
	Neutral policies / Passive Secularism (Russia in the 1990s)	Regulatory policies / Confessional Collaboration (Russia in the 2000s)
1. Toleration of pluralistic religious education in Religious schools	High	Low
2. Toleration of pluralistic religious education in Public schools	Medium	Low
3. Toleration of religious pluralism in the public sphere	High	Low
4. Toleration of religious dissent	High	Low
5. Likelihood of persecution for religious practice	Low	High

The existence of different state-religions regimes and their characteristics in various contexts have been well-researched and documented over the past two decades (Wald 2002; Sezgin 2003, 2007; Monsma and Soper 1997; Kuru 2007, 2009).⁶⁸ The

⁶⁸ Sezgin, Yuksel. "Can Israeli Status Quo Model Help the Post-February 28 Turkey Solve its Problem?" *Turkish Studies* 4.3 (2003): 47-70.

Sezgin, Yuksel. *The State's Response to Legal Pluralism: The Case of Religious Law and Courts in Israel, Egypt and India*. Ph.D. Dissertation. University of Washington, 2007.

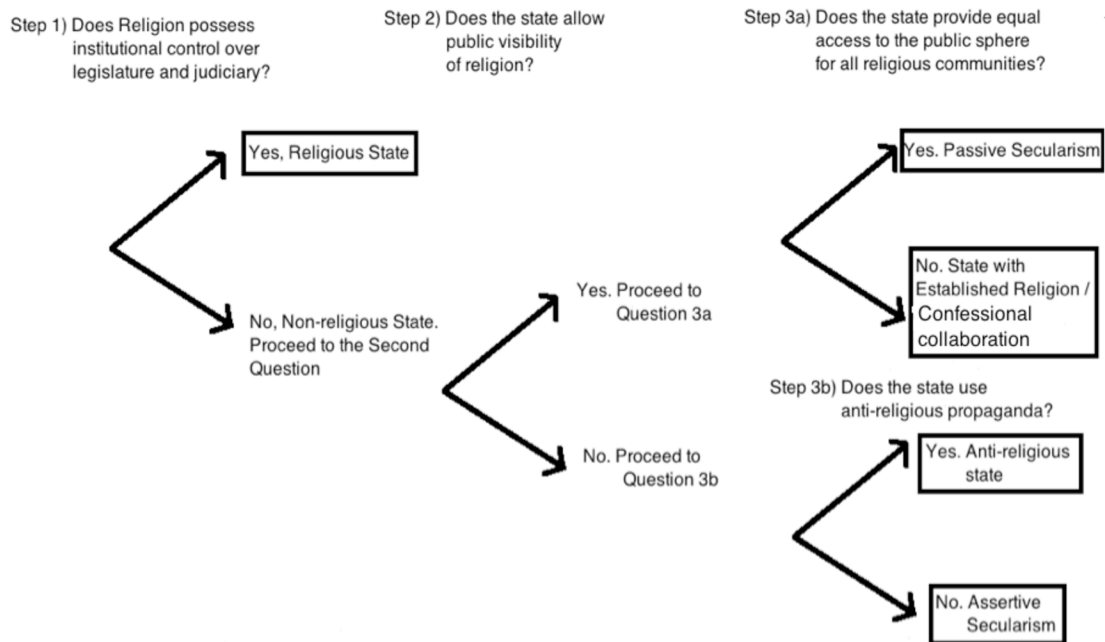
Wald, Kenneth. "The religious dimension of Israeli political life." *Religion and Politics in Comparative Perspective: The One, the Few and the Many* (2002): 99-122.

Stephen V. Monsma, and J. Christopher Soper. *The Challenge of Pluralism: Church and State in Five Democracies*. Rowman and Littlefield, 1997.

Kuru, Ahmet T. *Secularism and state policies toward religion: the United States, France, and Turkey*. Cambridge University Press, 2009.

deductive test presented in the figure below will help to identify the differences between five most-commonly cited state-religion regimes.

Figure 4: *Deductive Test of State-Religion Regimes and Secularism*⁶⁹



Nevertheless, a thorough explanation is still lacking for how and why states change their approach toward religion over time. In that respect, the post-Soviet Russian experience is exemplary. A partial transformation of state attitudes toward Islam in Russia during the first two decades of post-Soviet rule finds elements of two different types of state-religion regimes together in one case (passive secularism in the 1990s and the confessional collaboration model in the 2000s). Therefore, the change of religious policies over time may potentially explain the *dynamics* or *elasticity* of a secular regime.

Kuru, Ahmet T. "Passive and assertive secularism: Historical conditions, ideological struggles, and state policies toward religion." *World Politics* 59.04 (2007): 568-594.

⁶⁹ Various types of state-religion regimes were previously discussed in the scholarly literature, but no comparative framework was offered. The deductive test developed in this dissertation aims to graphically demonstrate similarities and differences between five models of state-religion relations.

By defining and describing the two periods (Russia in the 1990s and the 2000s) as eras dominated by passive secularism and a confessional collaboration model, respectively, I aim to explain why Russian state policies toward Islam changed over time. What actors, processes, and institutions caused this divergence? Why did the Russian state pursue “neutral policies” toward Islam until roughly the end of the 1990s and why did it change its attitudes and followed relatively “regulatory policies” starting in the 2000s? More broadly, why—and under what conditions—does a secular state transform its religious policies?

3. Literature Review: Islam and the state approach toward religious pluralism in a post-communist secular society.

The topic of Islam in Russia has long been a focus of scholarly research. Several generations of historians and ethnographers have made invaluable contributions to our understanding of indigenous Muslim communities in Russia.⁷⁰ However, the relationship of Muslim religious organizations with the Russian state on the institutional level has

⁷⁰ See, for example, Bennigsen, Alexandre and Chantal Lemerrier-Quellejay. *Islam in the Soviet Union*. New York, Praeger, 1967; Carrère d'Encausse, Hélène. (1988). *Islam and the Russian Empire: Reform and Revolution in Central Asia*, tr. Quintin Hoare. Berkeley: University of California Press; Kappeler, Andreas. (1992). “Czarist Policy Toward the Muslims of the Russian Empire.” In *Muslim Communities Reemerge: Historical Perspectives on Nationality, Politics, and Opposition in the Former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia*, ed. Andreas Kappeler et al. Durham, NC: Duke University Press; Frank, Alan J. (1998). *Islamic Historiography and “Bulghar” Identity among the Tatars and Bashkirs of Russia*. Leiden, Netherlands: Brill; Ro'i, Yaacov. (2000). *Islam in the Soviet Union: From the Second World War to Gorbachev*. New York: Columbia University Press; Malashenko, Aleksei Vsevolodovich. *Islamskoie vozrozhdeniie v souremennoi rossii*. Moskovskii Tsentr Karnegui, 1998; Khalid, Adeeb. (1998). *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia*. Berkeley: University of California Press; Khalid, A., *Islam after communism: religion and politics in Central Asia*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007.

been largely neglected until recently.⁷¹ Moreover, state-Islam relations in the context of the turbulent post-Soviet transformations still remain largely underexplored. This study demonstrates that an investigation of Russia's more recent experiences accommodating Islamic religious practices helps understand and explain both the historical dynamics in Russia and some of the contemporary dilemmas facing other secular states as they seek to ensure and protect religious freedom. First, I discuss broader themes in the religion and politics literature to provide a framework for the analysis of secularism and state policies toward Islam in Russia. Then I review the Russian area studies literature to place post-Soviet experience in historical context. Analysis of Russia's encounter with Islam during the first two decades after the Soviet collapse provides useful insights that advance the extant literature in both directions.

3.1. Secularism and State Policies toward Religion

The growing complexity of our world as well as the rapid pace of socio-political and economic transformations observed in the post-Cold War era make studying religion an increasingly challenging but nonetheless very interesting task (Curanovic 2010).⁷² With the rise of the modernization theory in the 1950s, religion gradually seemed to lose its explanatory power and was fading away as a focus of scholarly research for many social scientists. The emerging secularization paradigm predicted that the importance of religion in public affairs would inevitably decline. However, a series of political events in the 1970s and 1980s came as a shock to many who had believed that religion was

⁷¹ Crews, Robert D., *For Prophet and Tsar: Islam and Empire in Russia and Central Asia*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006; Tasar, Eren Murat. *Soviet and Muslim: the institutionalization of Islam in Central Asia, 1943-1991*. Diss. Harvard University, 2010.

⁷² Curanovic, A., "Relations between Orthodox Church and Islam in Russian Federation," *Journal of Church and State* (2010) vol. 52 no. 3, pp. 503–539.

spent as a political force. The Iranian revolution, the rise of the Christian Right in the United States, and the active involvement of the Pope and the Catholic Church in supporting the Solidarity movement in Poland were some of the early indicators of religion's resurgence as a moral and political force. Today, many acknowledge that the impact of religion on politics has not declined but, rather, has changed in complex ways (Bruce 2003; Casanova 1994; Mohseni and Wilcox 2006). Notably, as higher levels of socioeconomic development throughout the world correlate with the decreasing separation of religion and the state, modernization and global processes only seem to be contributing to the growth of religion's role in politics (Fox 2006).⁷³

The phenomenon of the post-Soviet religious revival in Russia became a novel case for traditional as well as emerging theories of secularism and the study of state accommodation of religious practices (Norris and Inglehart 2004, Fetzer and Soper 2005, Fox 2008, Kuru 2009). Given the history of state-enforced atheism, the Russian experience presents a valuable case for the examination of state attitudes toward religion in the public and private spheres and the meaning of secularism in general (Calhoun et al. 2011).

One of the most illuminating studies in the recent scholarship on religion and politics has identified different models of interaction between religion and a secular state

⁷³ It is important to note, however, that there are important West European exceptions. For more on the return of religion to the public sphere, see Casanova, José. *Public religions in the modern world*. University of Chicago Press, 2011; Casanova, José. "Religion, the new millennium, and globalization." *Sociology of religion* (2001): 415-441; Stark, Rodney. 1999. "Secularization: RIP." *Sociology of Religion* 60 (3): 249-273; Bruce, Steve. 2001. "Christianity in Britain, R.I.P." *Sociology of Religion* 62(2):191-203; Keddie, Nikki R. 1998. "The New Religious Politics: Where, When, and Why do "Fundamentalisms" Appear?" *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 40, 4 (October): 696-723; Ferguson, Niall. 2004. "Economics, Religion and the Decline of Europe." *Economics Affairs* (December): 37-40; Kim, Andrew E. 2000. "Korean Religious Culture and its Affinity to Christianity: The Rise of Protestant Christianity in South Korea." *Sociology of Religion* 61(2): 117-133.

(Kuru 2009). Kuru's discovery of passive and assertive types of secularism offers an original perspective on religious policies under secular regimes. Passive secularism, according to Kuru, implies that the state maintains neutrality toward various faiths and allows for the public visibility of all religions. Assertive secularism, on the other hand, suggests that the state "favors a secular worldview in the public sphere and aims to confine religion to the private sphere" (Kuru 2006:137).⁷⁴ This typology is useful in explaining variation across secular states. However, as this study of Russia's post-Soviet experience shows, these models are less able to explain the dynamics of change in state attitudes toward religion. Thus, Russian state attitudes toward Islam during the 1990s resemble the *passive* model of secularism, whereas state policies in the 2000s, in many ways, signify a departure from this accommodationist state-religion regime. Rather, as this study suggests, Russian state-Islam relations since the late 1990s approximate to a hybrid mode of interaction between religion and the state, which I call a confessional collaboration model. Similar to passive secularism, the state under the confessional collaboration model allows public visibility of religion. However, it does not provide equal access to the public sphere for all religious communities.

Having said that, if states may change their religious policies over time, what accounts for this transformation? Scholars of religion and politics have produced several theories that provide valuable insights into the possible variation of states' attitudes toward religion. Particularly, the insights from resource mobilization theory, political opportunity structures, church-state relations, and rational choice approaches have all

⁷⁴ In contrast to the public sphere defined earlier, the private sphere is widely perceived as an area of individual choice and autonomy. According to Graham, the private domain is the domain of the home, where social relations are based on family and kin. See Graham, Hilary. "The concept of caring in feminist research: the case of domestic service." *Sociology* 25.1 (1991): 61-78. Refer to the dissertation glossary for definitions of the public and private sphere.

proven useful in explaining the accommodation of Muslim religious practices in the West (Tatari 2009). Thus, *resource mobilization theory* argues that relations between the state and certain religious groups may depend on the political resources that any given group possesses (Fetzer and Soper 2005). This theory predicts that prosperous and politically significant religious communities might have greater bargaining capacity than relatively indigent groups. Religious policies, as a result, take shape under the influence of these dynamics.

The *political opportunity structure approach*, on the other hand, suggests that political institutions may largely define communities' capability for political involvement and activism. Thus, the activities of religious groups would depend on the larger system, which either constrains or facilitates them (Tatari 2009). A *church-state relations approach* argues that a dominant religious institution (e.g. a Church in Christian-majority countries) may significantly influence state policies toward religious minorities in any given society (Ferrari 2003, Cesari 2004, Nielsen 2005, Vetvik 1992). As Fetzer and Soper described in their analysis of the demands of Muslim minorities in Britain, France, and Germany, it is primarily Church-state structure that informs states policies toward Islam in these countries (Fetzer and Soper 2005). In addition, national ideas about citizenship, nationhood, and assimilation may also influence state attitudes toward minority religions (Tatari 2009). According to these so-called *ideological theories*, in France, for instance, the republican ideals of citizenship and *laïcité* guide state policies toward minority faiths (Kuru 2009). Last but not least, according to Tatari, relations between religious groups and the state may also depend on the internal dynamics of particular religious communities (Tatari 2009). In her study on the accommodation of

Muslim religious practices in the West, Tatari demonstrates that the institutional framework of Islam partly accounts for the success and failure of Muslim minorities in advancing their religious agenda.

In addition to the historical institutionalist approaches described above, Anthony Gill has explored the role of institutional incentives in state-religion relations. Gill employs rational choice theories to show that the interests of civic and religious leaders must be considered in explaining both the development of religious liberty and why governments choose varying levels of regulation of religious markets (Gill 1999, 2008; Gill and Keshavarzian 1999).⁷⁵ He offers several propositions to explain the rise (or decline) of religious liberty in any society (Gill 2008). His analysis is sophisticated and nuanced, but at its root is the conviction that religious and political leaders support religious liberty when it is in their interest to do so. Thus, for him, cooperation between secular and religious institutions is likely in the initial stages of the state-building process (Gill and Keshavarzian 1999).

All of the above theories and approaches have strong explanatory power in accounting for state attitudes toward religion in different societies. However, none of them alone can fully explain the experience of post-Soviet Russia, whose encounter with Islam since 1991 has been complicated by outbreaks of violence, internal splits, ideological confrontations, personal grievances, and multifaceted after-effects of state-enforced atheism. Deeper knowledge of the history of Islam in Russia is, therefore,

⁷⁵ Religious market is a physical and virtual space where Islamic religious ideas and goods are exchanged. See Sengers, Erik. "The religious market and its regulation: A sociological perspective." *Ecclesiastical Law Journal* 9.03 (2007): 294-301.

required in order to assess the dynamics of the post-communist era. Hence, I turn to an analysis of the Russian area studies literature.

3.2. Islam and the Russian Area Studies Literature

Russian area studies specialists in the West as well the scholarly community in Russia have devoted much time and energy to studying the daily life and experiences of Muslim minorities in Russia. Anthropologists, ethnographers, sociologists, theologians, and, above all, historians have deeply explored various aspects of religious life in the country. Their subjects have ranged from the geography and demography of Russia's Muslim population throughout its history to interfaith-dialogue and sophisticated theological debates about Islamic practice in a Christian-majority state.⁷⁶ Much less attention, however, has been paid to state-Islam relations in Russian history at the institutional level (Crews 2006). Despite growing interest in the issue during the first two decades following the Soviet collapse, many political science questions about the state's approach toward Islamic religious pluralism and institutions in Russia remain largely unexplored.

Part of the reason why state-Islam relations in Russia have just recently become a topic of interest for political scientists is that political science research on national minorities living in Russia has traditionally focused on their secular ethnic identity rather than their religious identity (Graney, 2009; Gorenburg, 1999; Hale, 2004;

⁷⁶ For a good review of the scholarship on the subject since the Soviet collapse, see Gregory L. Freeze, "Recent Scholarship on Russian Orthodoxy: A Critique," *Kritika* 2, 2 (2001): 269–78 and Werth, Paul W. "Lived Orthodoxy and Confessional Diversity: The Last Decade on Religion in Modern Russia." *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 12.4 (2011): 849-865.

Sharafutdinova, 2000). This is to be expected: citizenship and national identities have traditionally been regarded as central elements of political systems and still remain key themes in nation-state building projects (Duchesne 2005, Akturk 2011). As Paul Werth suggests, since the rise of nationalism, there emerged other and seemingly better ways of conceptualizing human collectivities in Russia than classifying people in religious terms. “Nationality,” in his words, “became a privileged category of analysis” for scholars (Werth 2014: 5-6).⁷⁷

Additionally, historical studies on Islam in Russia in the pre-revolutionary and Soviet eras mostly in the Western scholarship have often focused on the conflict between the state and its Muslim subjects and have thus largely omitted discussion of the state’s efforts to forge cooperative links with indigenous Muslims through Muslim Spiritual Boards (Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejey 1967).⁷⁸ Many studies of the post-Soviet era follow a similar pattern (Yemelianova 2010, Dannreuther 2010, Hahn 2007, Pilkington and Yemelianova 2003, Siant’yeu 2008).

Geographically speaking, most of the extant literature on Islam in Imperial and Soviet Russia examines the dynamics of life in the traditional Muslim areas of Central Asia; indigenous Muslims residing along the Volga River, in the North Caucasus, and across Siberia have remained on the margins of scholarly attention (Khalid 2007, Crews 2006, Akiner 1996, Roi 2000, Saroyan, 1997, etc.).

⁷⁷ According to Werth, scholars recognized that the national idea grew in significance over the course of the nineteenth century, and to a growing degree the imperatives of nationalism shaped the actions and perspectives of both tsarist administrators and the empire’s subjects. Analyses of the Soviet period and the collapse of the USSR pulled scholars inexorably toward “nationality” as a category of analysis.

⁷⁸ Bennigsen, Alexandre and Chantal Lemercier-Quelquejey, *Islam in the Soviet Union*. New York: Praeger, 1967.

Last but not least, although many students of Islam in Russia agree that the official treatment of Islam by the Russian state has varied historically, few studies thus far have attempted to identify objective criteria that would explain the historical dynamics of state-Islam relations in Russia or state-religion regimes more broadly. Nevertheless, the enormous success of earlier scholarship in pointing out some of the most persistent trends in Russia's historical encounter with Islam presents a strong foundation for this kind of research. On the one hand, there were periods, such as during the reign of Ivan the Terrible, when Islam was repressed and believers faced systematic discrimination (Khalid 2004). On the other hand, there have also been intervals when the religion has been tolerated and even protected. One of the conventional explanations has been that, since the reign of Catherine the Great, state rulers used officially sponsored Islamic religious institutions to regulate indigenous Muslim community and thus strengthen the stability of the Russian Empire (Crews 2006). However, few studies so far have attempted to address the issue of Islamic diversity in Russia and examine the role of loosely integrated Islamic groups in the formation of different state-religion regimes.⁷⁹

With the revival of religious life after the Soviet collapse, Russia became an excellent laboratory for developing, testing, and refining various social science theories. This has generated a new wave of scholarship on the topic of Islam in Russia. Scholars

⁷⁹ Many important distinctions between local Islamic practices in Russia's Volga-Ural region and the North Caucasus have been covered in detail. However, the diversity of Islamic cultures within those traditionally Muslim-populated areas, especially its changing nature in the post-Soviet era, is yet to be fully elucidated. For a brief introduction to the debates about local popular religion, see Yarlykapov, Akhmet A. "'Folk Islam' and Muslim Youth of the Central and Northwest Caucasus." *Anthropology & Archeology of Eurasia* 46.3 (2008): 9-35; Ware, Robert Bruce, and Enver Kisriev. "The Islamic Factor in Dagestan." *Central Asian Survey* 19.2 (2000): 235-252; Ware, Robert Bruce, and Enver Kisriev. "Ethnic parity and democratic pluralism in Dagestan: A consociational approach." *Europe-Asia Studies* 53.1 (2001): 105-131; Knysh, Alexander. "Contextualizing the Salafi-Sufi conflict (from the Northern Caucasus to Hadramawt)." *Middle Eastern Studies* 43.4 (2007): 503-530; Mukhametshin, Rafik. "Islam v obshchestvennoi i politicheskoi zhizni tatar i Tatarstana v XX veke." *Kazan: Tatar Book Publishing* (2005); Khakimov, Rafael. "Where is our Mecca." *Kazan: Magarif* (2003): 40.

have examined many new questions and revisited older debates about Islamic practice in the country. Their work has led to cutting-edge investigations of local religious traditions and the modernization of Islamic thinking in Russia (Tuna 2009; Colak 2011); the role of officially sponsored Islamic institutions in relations between the state and Muslim population (Crews 2006; Tasar 2010); sources of Islamic fundamentalism (Yemelianova 2010) and religious freedom (Fagan 2012); linguistic aspects of the Islamic revival (Bustanov and Kemper 2012), and even a political-geographic perspectives on faith (Derrick 2012). In addition, the post-Soviet Islamic resurgence has given new life to some broader dilemmas that students of Russian politics have been debating for decades. Academics have begun to rethink, *inter alia*, Russian national identity (Brubaker 1994, Smith 1998), reconsider the Russian nationalities policy (Smith 1996, Trenin and Malashenko 2010, Akturk 2012), reexamine religious pluralism and Church-state relations in the context of a multi-confessional state (Papkova 2011, Baran 2006), as well as re-contextualize Russia's relations with the wider Muslim world (Dannreuther 1993, Trenin 2007, Malashenko 2007, Katz 2006).

Overall, both the scholarship on secularism and studies on the history of indigenous Muslims offer important insights into the analysis of post-Soviet state building in Russia. However, no theory has yet been able to offer a clear explanation for emergence, development, and the change of state-religion regimes in the country during the first two decades after the Soviet collapse.⁸⁰ This study aims to engage with both scholarly domains to systematically examine the phenomenon of Islamic revivalism and explore the Russian state response to it. It suggests that the analysis of domestic

⁸⁰ For a brief discussion of strengths and weaknesses of modernization and rational choice theories and the civilizational approach in the study of state-religion regimes, see Kuru (2009).

ideological debates may offer a nuanced reading of different policy trends in the 1990s and the 2000s.

4. Struggling Ideologies: Western Liberalism and Statism

I argue that state policies toward Islam in post-Soviet Russia are the result of ideological struggles. Similar to many other societies, where the key sources of public policy making on religion have historically been either various interpretations of the communist ideology (North Korea, China, Cuba, or Russia between 1918 and 1990), diverse understandings of Islamism (Iran and Saudi Arabia), or struggles between leftist and rightist groups (Greece and Denmark), in post-communist Russia, I argue, the main contestation that guided religious policies has been between advocates of Western liberalism and proponents of Statism.⁸¹

Indeed, the analysis of local archival records, expert interviews, and more than eight thousand Russian national and regional news sources between 1990 and 2012 points to the significance of ideological struggles in the formation of Russian state policies toward Islam during the first two decades after the Soviet collapse. Policy implications of ideological debates over the nature of Russian national identity and the direction of its future development, as this study suggests, largely explain the persistence of neutral attitudes toward Islam in the early 1990s and the establishment of regulatory measures in the 2000s. Thus, relative dominance of ideas and ideals of Western liberalism in the late *perestroika* and early post-Soviet years led to the adoption of passive secular state-

⁸¹ For broader discussion of various sources of public policy making on religion, see Kindopp and Hamrin 2004; Fetzer and Soper 2005; Kuru 2009.

religion regime, which guided accommodationist policies of the state toward Islam in Russia. Renouncing the ideology of Westernism in favor of the norms and principles of Statism in the late 1990s resulted in a change of state-religion regime, which then gradually took the shape of a collaboration between state institutions and “traditional” religious organizations. Transition to the confessional collaboration model accounts for more interventionist attitude of the state toward Islam in the 2000s.

A transition from Western liberalism to Statism, as described in this study, was compelled by structural imperatives, which represent a critical juncture between the two ideological paths. In this framework, I discuss the economic hardships of the 1990s and the violent upheaval in the Northern Caucasus to emphasize the structural underpinnings of the ideological shift in Russian politics at the turn of the 21st century.

A theoretical foundation of the argument that ideology has major explanatory power is rooted in the historical institutionalism literature. This approach sees institutions as the mechanism that structures options and preferences through rules and norms. Institutions, therefore, are inclusive of factors such as ideas, beliefs and culture (Tatari 2009:280). Historical institutionalism explains ‘the way institutions shape the goals political actors pursue and the way they structure power relations among them, privileging some and putting others at a disadvantage’ (Hall and Taylor 1996: 940).

According to some scholars, ideology can be seen as a crucial “independent variable” in explaining institutional outcomes (Hanson 2010, Kuru 2009). Despite the fact that many social science paradigms downplay the causal significance of ideas [ideologies], ideologies play an important role in the formation of individuals’

preferences (Kuru 2009: 237). If there are human actors who embrace particular ideologies, form specific policy preferences based on them, and struggle to realize these policy preferences, ideologies can impact policies and form the regimes. In part, for these reasons, according to Hanson, ideologies must be placed at the very center of inquiry in political science and should be treated as a major driver of political outcomes (Hanson 2010: xix).

Moreover, in a social science research, which relies on causal relationships, ideologies can also be a “dependent variable” (Kuru 2009). The establishment of a new ideological dominance either requires a long historical process or an exogenous shock that could have a universal impact on the social actions of the people who lived through it. In the context of this study, the ideological dominance of western liberalism, for example, was established largely as a result of the collapse of communism. The emergence and development of the ideas of statism, on the other hand, developed in the context of a post-Soviet economic turmoil, international “humiliation,” and a major security threat spreading from the North Caucasus to the rest of the country.

As a rule, ideologies first emerge in the works of some native thinkers, or they are imported from other intellectually influential countries. Then they find followers among the elite and policymakers through publications, the electronic media, and public discussions. Next, these followers organize and mobilize to challenge the dominant ideology. Finally, these activists replace the dominant ideology with the new one. The last step usually requires suitable structural conditions. (Kuru 2009: 238).

In the context of this study, I define ideology as a set of ideas that refer to an ideal socio-political system.⁸² According to Hanson, what makes ideology distinct from culture is its formal, explicit, and relatively consistent nature (Hanson 2003: 356). From this perspective, the ideological approach suggests that it is primarily national ideas about citizenship, nationhood, assimilation, and belonging to the society that determine state attitudes toward religion.

I identify two major ideologies that, in one way or another, inform some of the key debates about state policies toward Islam in post-communist Russia. These are Western liberalism and Statism. Roots of these ideologies reach back to the 19th-century Russian philosophical debate between Westernizers and Slavophiles. Broadly defined, Westernizers were advocates of the Western-oriented path for Russia's development, who supported the expansion of political and civil freedoms. Their intellectual critics and ardent policy rivals, the Slavophiles, defended a nativist course for Russia's evolution, arguing that Russia should follow its own special path. In the 1920s, Eurasianists joined the conversation between the two, claiming that Russia possessed a hybrid and encompassing Eurasian identity. Westernizers, Slavophiles, Eurasianists, and their intellectual heirs have historically held significantly different perspectives on the role of religion in the society.⁸³ Post-Soviet state policies toward Islam, as this study suggests,

⁸² In a narrow sense, ideology is a set of proposals made by individuals to define clear and consistent criteria for membership in a proposed polity. More broadly, and in the context of this study, ideology is a collection of ideas that refer to an ideal socio-political system. Ideologies need to be formal, explicit, and relatively consistent. See the dissertation glossary for definition of the key term. In that sense, my definition of the concept agrees with Kuru's interpretation of the term (Kuru 2009:10). Unlike Kuru, however, I don't refer to ideology as a utopia. In my opinion, not all ideologies are tied to utopias.

⁸³ For discussion of Westernism, Slavophilism, and Eurasianism as Russia's major philosophical traditions and their historical perspectives on religion, see Edie, James M.; Scanlan, M. P.; and Zeldin, Mary-Barbara, eds. (1965). *Russian Philosophy, Vol 1: The Beginnings of Russian Philosophy: The Slavophiles; The Westernizers*. Chicago: Quadrangle Books; Walicki, Andrzej. (1975). *The Slavophile Controversy: History of a Conservative Utopia in Nineteenth-Century Russian Thought*, tr. Hilda Andrews-Rusiecka. Oxford:

can also be read as the continuation of their struggle for dominance in the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

5. Post-Soviet State-Religion and Ethnicity Regimes

To elaborate on the causal link between post-Soviet ideologies and state policies toward Islam I focus on the dynamics of state-religion and ethnicity regimes in Russia between 1990 and 2012. First, I explain how the transformation of the post-communist state-religion regime in Russia was reflected on the expression of Islamic religious pluralism. More specifically, I demonstrate how a transition from passive secularism to the model of confessional collaboration between the state institutions and traditional religious organizations affected activities of various Islamic groups in the country. I argue that the emergence and strengthening of a so-called ‘traditional religions’ paradigm led to compartmentalization of Islam according to the attitudes of Muslim communities toward the secular regime and the Russian Orthodox Church.⁸⁴ “Traditional” Islamic organizations were granted privileges by the state, whereas non-conformist Islamic

Clarendon; Walicki, Andrzej. (1979). *A History of Russian Thought: From the Enlightenment to Marxism*, tr. Hilda Andrews-Rusiecka. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press; Devlin, Judith. (1999). *Slavophiles and Commissars: Enemies of Democracy in Modern Russia*. London: Macmillan; Shnirelman, Viktor, and Panarin, Sergei. (2001). “Lev Gumilev: His Pretensions as a Founder of Ethnology and his Eurasian Theories.” *Inner Asia* 3:1–18; Florovsky, Georges. *Ways of Russian Theology*. 2 vols., tr. Robert L. Nichols. Belmont, MA: Nordland; Kline, George. (1968). *Religious and Anti-Religious Thought in Russia*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press; Zenkovsky, Vasilii. (1953). *A History of Russian Philosophy*, 2 vols., tr. George L. Kline. New York: Columbia University Press.

⁸⁴ In this study the term ‘traditional religions paradigm’ refers to a pattern of thought based on the assumption that certain religions in Russia deserve special privileges because of their size, geographical range, as well as the history of presence in Russia. The idea has been established in the preamble of the Russian Federation 1997 “Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations.” For definition of the key term, see the dissertation glossary.

groups were marginalized and deprived of access to the public sphere.⁸⁵ The desire of state authorities, inspired by the statist ideology, to cultivate a patriotic version of Islam through Muslim Spiritual Boards explains greater involvement of state authorities into Islamic affairs in Russia since 1997. The vision of a strong state with multiconfessional patriotic society replaced the earlier model, in which religion was considered merely as an element of culture.

Importance of ethnicity in self-determination of Russia's indigenous Muslim communities is the reason why I also examine ethnicity regimes to explain the state's policy toward Islam. I suggest that a movement from a multiethnic toward a non-ethnic regime reflects the change in how state authorities treated indigenous Muslims in the 1990s and the 2000s. More specifically, I show how the Russian state's full support for institutionalization of ethnicities in the 1990s relates to perception of Islam as an element of indigenous ethnic cultures. Similarly, I explain how the emergence and strengthening of a civic 'Rossiyanin' identity, an indicator of a movement toward a non-ethnic regime, relates to the development of a 'traditional religions' paradigm and the increasing reliance of the state on "traditional" Muslim organizations to foster patriotism.⁸⁶

The combined analysis of state-religion and ethnicity regimes leads me to suggest that two distinct ethno-confessional regimes can be identified in the post-Soviet history of Russia. These are Multiethnic Passive Secularism and Non-ethnic Confessional

⁸⁵ In this study, the term 'traditional religious organizations' refers to state-registered religious organizations representing traditional religions in Russia. More broadly, these are religious organizations that have demonstrated that they had significantly influenced the formation and development of Russian statehood, played an important historical role in the development of national consciousness and that a significant proportion of Russian citizens belonged to or expressed a preference for it. For definition of the key term, see the dissertation glossary.

⁸⁶ These discussions will also reveal the evolution of the perception among secular policymakers about the essence of a religion (what it is) and its function (what it can do in the society).

Collaboration model between secular state institutions and “traditional” religious organizations. The table below summarizes the dynamics of Russia’s ethno-confessional regime since the end of the communist era.

Table 7: *Matrix of Ethno-confessional Regimes*

		Ethnicity Regimes ⁸⁷		
		Mono-ethnic	Multi-ethnic	Non-ethnic
State-religion regimes	Religious State			
	Established Religion/ Confessional Collaboration			Russia, 1997-2012
	Passive Secularism		Russia, 1990-1997	
	Assertive Secularism			
	Anti-religious			

6. Preparing the Conditions: Structural underpinnings of the shift

A transition from Multiethnic Passive Secularism to Non-ethnic Confessional Collaboration model, which reflected a shift from Western liberalism to Statism, was instigated by a set of structural factors. These factors, I argue, prepared necessary conditions for an ideological change to take place. In this framework, I discuss the economic hardships of the 1990s and the outbreak of a violent conflict in the Northern

⁸⁷ The literature on nationalism and state policies toward ethnicities identifies several models of ethnicity regimes. According to this typology states can either be monoethnic, multiethnic, or antiethnic (non-ethnic). See Aktürk, Şener. *Regimes of ethnicity and nationhood in Germany, Russia, and Turkey*. Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Caucasus to show how circumstances like these contributed to the formation of the environment that led to a major shift in Russian politics at the turn of the 21st century.

The liberal ideology of the early 1990s, having in many ways deconstructed the economic, social benefit, and most importantly the upward mobility systems of the Soviet era, was largely unable to establish a well-functioning and efficient market economy. It also failed to deliver security as the violence in the North Caucasus spread into other Russian regions and organized crime gradually turned into business. The statist approach, which came to replace the liberal ideology in the late 1990s, promised to reestablish the order. Being able to stabilize the economy and restore control over the situation in the North Caucasus, statism gained legitimacy in rising popular demands for the rule of law, discipline, and preservation of traditional values. Relying on the confessional collaboration with traditional faiths, the statist ideology sought to build a patriotic consensus based on morality.⁸⁸ Nevertheless, growing concerns about transparency and accountability of decision making under statism and increasing public awareness of corruption and opaque system of cover-ups raised questions about the persistence of statism as a dominant ideology in Russia.

To summarize, every nation-state follows its own independent path, defined, among other things, by particular structural configurations, ideological variations, and

⁸⁸ See chapter three for the discussion of a collaboration between the state and official institutions of Islamic administration in contemporary Russia. For an historical perspective on earlier models of state-religion relations in the country, see Paul Werth, *The Tsar's Foreign Faiths: Toleration and the Fate of Religious Freedom in Imperial Russia*. Oxford University Press, 2014; Robert D. Crews, "Empire and the Confessional State: Islam and Religious Politics in Nineteenth-Century Russia," *American Historical Review* 108, 1 (2003): 50-83. According to Paul Werth, for example, religious institutions were key mediators between the state and its subjects in imperial Russia. To describe the system of governing the diverse people in the country between the late 18th and early 20th centuries, Werth uses the term "multi-confessional establishment." In part, the present analysis of Russia's ethno-confessional regime between 1997 and 2012 relies on inferences drawn from Werth's historical account of religious policies in late imperial Russia.

ethno-confessional regimes. These factors, according to this study, determine the tone of the relationship between religion and the state and its level of stability. I suggest that the changing dynamics of state policies toward Islam in Russia during the first two decades after the collapse of communism depended on the ideological struggle between Western liberalism and Statism. Two distinct ethno-confessional regimes, which formed under the influence of dominant ideologies, explain the persistence of neutral policies in the 1990s and the interventionist attitude of the state in the 2000s. The continuity of the ideological dominance of Western liberalism in the early 1990s was in part obstructed by structural impediments. Thus, security and economic concerns prepared structural conditions for replacement of Western liberalism with Statism as a guiding set of principles for secular decision-making. The discussion of these dynamics sheds light on the developments of the past two decades in Russia.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ This approach can also be helpful in interpreting earlier periods of state-Islam relations in Russia. For further discussion, see the conclusion chapter.

Table 8: *The Model*

Structural Conditions →	Western Liberalism →	Multiethnic Passive Secularism →	Neutral policies toward Islam
	Statism →	Non-ethnic Confessional Collaboration →	Regulatory policies toward Islam

Transformation of state policies toward Islam in Russia between 1990 and 2012		
Policy periods	1990-1997	1997-2012
State policies toward Islam	Neutral (non-involvement)	Regulatory/interventionist (compartmentalization of Islam)
Ethno-confessional Regimes	Multiethnic Passive Secularism	Non-ethnic Confessional Collaboration
State-religion regime	Passive Secularism	Confessional Collaboration with state-approved traditional faith organizations
Ethnicity regime	Multiethnic	Non-ethnic
Dominant Ideology	Western Liberalism	Statism
Islam	Element of culture	Foundation of a patriotic consensus among indigenous Muslims Subordinated to the state
Catalyst / Structural conditions	Security threat to the regime and economic hardships	

7. Methodology and Sources

The logic of my comparison of the two time periods is based on Mill's method of agreement and difference (Mill 1851). The method of difference looks for causes of different results in similar cases, while the method of agreement compares similar results in different cases. My cases relate to each other according to the method of difference. As described above, the two periods evolved in one country, Russia, and ended with two

different results in terms of the state's attitudes toward Islam. Having said this, I also acknowledge the hardship of "the absolute elimination of adventitious elements," and that "one can never be even approximately certain that two societies [cases] agree or differ in all aspects save one" (Durkheim, Solovay, Mueller, & Catlin, 1938, pp. 129-130). In fact, my two case periods contrast with each other on a number of points. However, in my assumption, these differences all serve as complementary factors. In other words, many other differences between the periods existed—but ideological struggles held greater sway over state policies and behavior.

Taking into consideration the inherent and potential difficulties in making effective use of Mill's method in the context of one country and being aware of the challenges associated with the comparative method in general (Lijphart, 1971, 1975; George & Bennett, 2005, pp. 153-160; Mill, 1851), I employ process-tracing methodology as "an essential supplement to all forms of case comparisons to reduce the dangers of false positives and false negatives" (George & Bennett, 2005, p. 159). Process-tracing "attempts to identify the intervening causal process—the causal chain and causal mechanisms—between an independent variable (or variables) and the outcome of the dependent variable" (George & Bennett, 2005, p. 208). In other words, it "can identify single *or different* paths to an outcome, point out variables that were otherwise left out in the initial comparison of cases, check for spuriousness, and permit causal inference on the basis of a few cases or even a single case" (George & Bennett, 2005, p. 215). My aim in using process-tracing is to overcome two challenges. First, showing the primacy of ideological debates and, second, displaying the link between them and the

adoption of particular policies—neutral or regulatory—toward Islam in Russia in the 1990s and 2000s, respectively.

My research is also designed according to George and Bennett’s “method of structured, focused comparison” (George & Bennett, 2005). The method is structured in a way that the researcher is expected to ask “general questions that reflect the research objective; these questions are asked of each case under study to guide and standardize data collection, thereby making systematic comparison and cumulation of the findings of the cases possible” (George & Bennett, 2005, p. 67). The method is “focused” in that it deals only with certain aspects of the cases under examination (George & Bennett, 2005, p. 67). Following this method, I ask the same questions for each time period and focus on only one aspect of the two cases: state policy toward Islam.

This study uses data gathered from three main sources. Primarily it depends on primary sources, such as political and legal documents. I examined the late Soviet and post-Soviet era laws, relevant committee reports, meeting proceedings, and court decisions on the federal and regional levels. In particular, I focused on the contents of and the discussions on the 1990 and 1997 Russian laws on religion. The research also extended to the memorandums and speeches of politicians and senior members of the established clergy. I gathered these data through archival research (e.g. National Archive of the Republic of Tatarstan and Central Historical Archive of the Republic of Bashkortostan), online sources (e.g. the Official website of the President of Russia or the website of the Council of Russia’s Muftis), and anthologies (e.g. Arapov 2011, *Islam i Sovetskoe Gosudarstvo*, a collection of documents related to the Soviet state policy

toward Islam between 1944 and 1990).⁹⁰ I also, surveyed newspapers and magazines through the largest Russian-language database of national and regional newspapers (Integrum).⁹¹

The second data source is the elite interviews that I conducted during my field research in Russia (Moscow, Kazan, and Ufa) with academics, politicians, bureaucrats, and religious leaders. The third source is books and articles (secondary literature) on the theory of state-religion regimes in general and the history of and current debates on state-Islam relations in Russia in particular.

8. Conclusion

This chapter has laid out a theoretical framework for the analysis of two distinct policy trends toward Islam in Russia between 1990 and 2012. Seeking to explain the transformation of neutral policies in the early 1990s into regulatory policies in the 2000s, I propose that the main reason behind the transformation was an ideological shift from Western liberalism to Statism. Two different ethno-confessional regimes that formed under the influence of dominant ideologies describe the persistence of *laissez faire* attitudes of the state toward Islam from 1990 until around 1997 and the state's continuous involvement with Islamic affairs since then onwards. I particularly emphasize the importance of structural factors that ultimately prepared necessary conditions for an ideological change.

⁹⁰ <http://kremlin.ru/> - the Official website of the President of Russia (last access March 9, 2015)
<http://www.muslim.ru/> - the website of the Council of Russia's Muftis (last access March 9, 2015)
Arapov, D. Yu. *Islam i Sovetskoe Gosudarstvo (1944-1990): Sbornik Dokumentov. Vypusk 3.* Moscow: Mardzhani. 2011.

⁹¹ Integrum World Wide. <http://www.integrumworld.com/> (last access March 9, 2015)

The next two chapters will separately discuss state-Islam relations during the 1990s and the 2000s in the context of dominant ethno-confessional regimes: Multiethnic passive secularism and Non-ethnic confessional collaboration between the state and “traditional” religious organizations. The third empirical chapter will examine Russia’s post-Soviet ideologies in more detail and elaborate on the reasons of their persistence and change. Finally, the concluding chapter will review the empirical chapters and discuss their generalizable results.

Chapter 2

Russia's Muslims and Islam under the Multiethnic Passive Secularism, 1990-1997

“Ever since they came to power in 1917, the Soviet Union's Communist rulers fought hard to expel God from their new society. Then [under Gorbachev's rule] they astonished the world by agreeing to let Him in.”

The Economist
September 15, 1990⁹²

Ikhtilāf al-umma rahma
(Difference within the Islamic tradition is the sign of God's mercy)
—the Prophetic tradition

Abstract

What explains Russia's benevolent state approach toward Islam during the 1990s? Research on the political dynamics in Russia in the early post-Soviet era frequently refers to liberal and democratic norms that guided state's social policies but seldom provides a conceptual framework or explains the mechanism of religious policy-making in the country. This chapter begins to fill this gap. I advance the hypothesis that state policies toward Islam in Russia between 1990 and 1997 were a product of a new ethno-confessional regime that was designed according to Western liberal norms and principles. Employing process tracing techniques and historical data, I argue that judgment about religion, and particularly Islam, as an element subordinated to national identities induced the late Soviet-era reformers to adopt norms of passive secularism and to maintain the multiethnic ethnicity regime. Adoption of multiethnic passive secular regime entailed noninvolvement in religious affairs and reliance on ethnic federalism to govern Russia's diverse population. Granting all religious groups equal access to the Russian public sphere and supporting the institutionalization of ethnic diversity facilitated the Islamic revival in the country.

⁹² "Gorbachev, Glasnost and the Gospel." *The Economist* [US] 15 Sept. 1990: 117. *Gale Biography In Context*. Web. 1 Mar. 2013.

Introduction

The Acem mosque is often referred to as a gemstone among the Muslim places of worship in the middle Volga city of Kazan'. Built in the architectural style of national romance eclecticism and decorated in the Medieval Oriental traditions, the mosque is one of the most admired prayer houses in the city. Since its opening in the late 19th century, the prayer house served the local Muslim community until the Soviet authorities converted it to a secular use in the 1930s. For the following six decades, for many local believers, the mosque became one of the symbols of a struggle against the atheist regime. In 1992, Acem was returned to believers and in less than a decade has restored its status as one of the most vibrant Islamic centers in the region. Hundreds of Muslims, young and old, began regularly attending weekly Friday sermons, filling the mosque to overflowing capacity, as its calls for prayer from a 51-meter minaret echoed throughout the district and in the elders' memories.⁹³

⁹³ A minaret is a tall slender tower of a mosque with a balcony from which Muslims are called to prayer. 51 meters equals to about 167 ft.

Figure 5: *The Acem Mosque exterior.*



(Source: Author's own picture, taken during the fieldwork. Summer 2013)

Figure 6: *The Acem Mosque interior.*



(Source: Author's own picture, taken during the fieldwork. Summer 2013)

The resurrection story of the Acem mosque is not the only one of its kind in Russia's post-Soviet history. It is exemplary of hundreds of other places of worship that reopened throughout the country soon after the Gorbachev regime dramatically changed state attitudes toward religion and introduced an era of unprecedentedly high religious freedom in the country. Arguably, every other town and village with a significant Muslim population has an "Acem story" of its own. Over the course of several years, after the fall of communism, Muslim communities not only restored abandoned prayer houses and built larger mosques.⁹⁴ They founded new religious schools, published religious literature, raised charity for social services, and, along with other elements of Muslim lifestyle, publicly celebrated religious festivities (Derek Davis 1997). Most importantly, they did these under legal protection of the state, which granted religious communities unrestricted access to the public sphere and guaranteed basic human rights and freedoms. In the words of local believers, after decades of suffering, Allah blessed them with their dreams.⁹⁵

One of the earliest puzzles, which perplexed some observers of a post-Soviet religious revival in Russia at the time, was the question of why the collapse of an anti-religious ideology gave rise to a centrifugal trend within the country's indigenous Muslim community, resulting in an emergence of a number of discordant Islamic groups instead of a stronger Muslim ummah united around the Islamic faith (Silantyev 2002).⁹⁶ Indeed, although many Muslims shared the negative view about Communism's anti-religious

⁹⁴ Since 1990, the number of Islamic prayer houses in Russia increased from about 160 to more than seven thousands by 1997. See Filatov 2005

⁹⁵ Allah is the name of God in the Islamic faith.

⁹⁶ For a brief introduction to the topic of the post-Soviet disintegration of Russia's Muslim community, see Silantyev, Roman. "Etnicheskii aspekt raskola islamskogo soobshchestva Rossii," Institut Etnologii I Antropologii Rossiiskoi Akademii Nauk (Russian Academy of Sciences), N149, Moscow, 2002

ideology and welcomed the return of religious freedom, far from all hurried to unite under the leadership of the established clergy. Instead, many, relying on new state regulations, sought to challenge the Soviet-era religious authorities and struggled to set up autonomous religious institutions. As a result, in less than a decade a total number of Muslim Spiritual Boards in Russia exceeded forty (Malashenko 1998, Silantyev 2008).

Several explanations have been offered for this phenomenon. Some experts interpreted the proliferation of Islamic institutions as a natural outcome of elimination of the state control mechanisms. A number of other analysts pointed to the internal struggle for power and resources within the Muslim clergy. Still few observers prioritized either generational differences between the young and older cohorts of Muslim believers, the impact of the burgeoning nationalisms that burst out during the Gorbachev era, or deepening ideological disagreements within the Muslim community as the causes of the split (Silantyev 2007).⁹⁷ Interestingly, however, very few commentators at the time paid close attention to the state's response to these dynamics. To this date, no systematic study has been conducted to investigate why, despite recurring instances of dramatic intra-faith clashes and looming security concerns, the state did not directly intervene in Muslim religious affairs during the first half of the 1990s.

This chapter will explore in detail the reasons of state neutrality toward dissolution of the Soviet era Islamic hierarchy and the general accommodation by the state of all religious groups in Russia. It will argue that the state's holding back from

⁹⁷ For a comprehensive discussion of various reasons of a split within Russia's Muslim community in the post-Soviet era, see part 2 in Silantyev, Roman. *Noveishaia Istorii Islama v Rossii*, Moscow: Algoritm, 2007. Also, see Filatov, S. *Atlas Sovremennoi Religiozoi Zhizni Rossii*, Moscow, 2005; Malashenko, A. V. *Islamskoe Vozrozhdenie v Sovremennoi Rossii*, Moscow, 1998; and Malashenko, A.V. *Islamskie Orientiry Severnogo Kavkaza*, Moscow, 2001.

involvement in religious affairs was dictated by the establishment of a multiethnic passive secular regime in the country. This type of ethno-confessional regime developed in the late Soviet era, when many secular authorities were convinced that religious identities of the Soviet people were subordinated to ethno-national cultures. Inspired by democratic reforms and liberal ideals, late Soviet-era reformers envisioned Russia's future as a multiethnic federation open to the public visibility of all religious beliefs and practices. The conviction that religious identities had been successfully subordinated to national cultures and could not become a mobilizing factor for Russia's ethnic Muslims led secular decision-makers to assume that the Soviet ethnicity regime would be sufficient to organize Russia's diverse population.⁹⁸

In what follows I will attempt to demonstrate that the dominance of a particular ethno-confessional regime largely describes Russia's state neutrality toward Islam between 1990 and 1997. Part I will discuss some of the specificities of the Islamic practice in Russia during the late Soviet era and provide the framework for the analysis. It will refer to the past in order to explain the development of a cultural definition of Islam, which guided the thinking of policymakers during the transition period. Part II will begin to examine the dynamics of Russia's post-Soviet ethno-confessional regime. It will discuss the emergence and development of passive secularism in Russia in the 1990s in the historical context of state-religion regimes in Russia. Part III will continue to examine

⁹⁸ According to Aktürk, many academics, policymakers, and ordinary people in the Soviet Union were accustomed to thinking of ethnicity as a primordial fact. This, in his opinion partly explains the continuity of the Leninist/Soviet approach toward ethnicity in post-Soviet Russia. Slezkine has also argued that the state actively promoted a primordialist understanding of ethnicity in the Soviet Union for generations, leaving behind not only an institutional, political, and ideological legacy but also a socio-psychological and mental legacy premised on primordial ethnic identities. For details see, Aktürk, Şener. *Regimes of ethnicity and nationhood in Germany, Russia, and Turkey*. Cambridge University Press, 2012; Slezkine, Yuri. "The USSR as a communal apartment, or how a socialist state promoted ethnic particularism." *Slavic Review* (1994): 414-452.

the characteristics of Russia's ethno-confessional regime. It will discuss some of the reasons of persistence of the multiethnic regime of ethnicity in the country.⁹⁹ Having explored the basic features of Russia's post-Soviet ethno-confessional regime and its reflections on state policies toward Islam in the country, the conclusion will summarize the findings and reassess the perception of Islam as an element of local indigenous cultures during the attempts to construct Russia's post-Soviet identity in the early 1990s. It will provide a different perspective on how the early post-Soviet Russian leadership, confused by a fundamental ambiguity about Russian national identity and the state's legitimacy, sought to rebuild a vast country with its troubled political history.

Part I: Dealing with the Soviet Legacy: Russia's Muslims, Islam, and Culture in the 1990s.

The Soviet legacy had a great impact on the dynamics of Islamic revival in Russia during the first two decades after the collapse of the communist regime. The brutal Soviet state propaganda of atheism has had a transformative effect not only on Islamic institutions and the infrastructure of religious communities but also directly on the Muslim religious practice. During several decades of ruthless anti-religious campaign, thousands of mosques were destroyed or given over to "more socially productive" uses such as youth clubs, museums of atheism, or warehouses; Islamic endowments were confiscated; religious schools closed; and the cadre of religious clerics was dramatically reduced (Khalid 2004).¹⁰⁰ Moreover, connections between Soviet Muslims and the Islamic world were cut, religious knowledge was vastly circumscribed and the site of its

⁹⁹ In using the term 'ethnicity regime' or 'regime of ethnicity' I rely on the work of Sener Akturk *Regimes of ethnicity and nationhood in Germany, Russia, and Turkey*. Cambridge University Press, 2012.

¹⁰⁰ Khalid, Adeb. "Islam" in James Millar, *Encyclopedia of Russian History*. Thomson Gale, 2004

preservation and transmission was pushed into private or covert realms. As a result, by the 1980s, for many indigenous Muslims, Islam became synonymous with local “tradition” and “culture” (Khalid 2007).¹⁰¹ This chapter argues that such perception of Islam was one of the key factors in formation of state attitudes toward the religion in the 1990s.

1. The Soviet transformative impact on the Islamic practice

Under Soviet rule, communist ideologists sought not only to eliminate religion from the public sphere, but also to remove it from the private life of the Soviet people. Guided by the Marxian view of religion as an “opium of the people” and Lenin’s vision that religion was “merely a product and reflection of the economic yoke within society,” Bolsheviks wanted to build a community based on strictly non-spiritual beliefs. As they vigorously discouraged religious practice, one of the main goals of the regime was to bring into being the Soviet man, who would not only be loyal to the state, but would also abandon his/her faith in the supernatural.¹⁰²

Throughout the Soviet era, ideologists of atheism used various tactics and methods to fight the “spiritual loyalties” of the masses.¹⁰³ Initially, they separated religion

¹⁰¹ In fact, the roots of cultural definitions of Islam rest deeper in the history. Much of the practice of Islam in the region still is a fusion of pre-Islamic and Islamic practices that, during the preceding five hundred years, local jurisprudence had come to justify as acceptable. The Soviet era, however, has made the most profound impact on the religious component of these practices, eroding its spiritual purpose and content.

¹⁰² This was one of the distinctions of the Soviet Russia from Imperial Russia. Under the Tsarist rule, Muslims could maintain their religious lives and remain good citizens through the service to the state.

¹⁰³ See Smolkin-Rothrock, Victoria. “A Sacred Space Is Never Empty: Soviet Atheism, 1954-1971.” Ph.D. Dissertation. University of California, Berkeley (2010).

from state institutions and secular education.¹⁰⁴ The state's secular bureaucracy took over from religious clergy the critical function of keeping the record of the population and registering changes civil status (such as births, marriages and deaths).¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, the 1918 decree stipulated that activities of the government and social organizations were no longer to be accompanied by public religious rituals or ceremonies. Subsequent laws and regulations went beyond separation of Church and state and directly interfered with religious affairs.¹⁰⁶ The 1929 Law on Religious Organizations put numerous limitations on religious institutions. All charitable work and various forms of social action were prohibited. Organizations that were not registered with the state were deemed illegal. Soon thousands of places of worship were destroyed and their property was confiscated.¹⁰⁷ In addition, the state prohibited religious proselytism and launched massive anti-religious propaganda.

The geopolitical context of WWII and a gradual adaptation of the surviving religious bodies to the Soviet regime opened a limited space for religious practice under a close supervision of state authorities. Communists realized that they needed support of the religious clergy to turn the tide of battle in the war. They came to a certain compromise with religious authorities, assigning both to the Church and Muslim

¹⁰⁴ Decree "On the separation of church from state and school from church" January 23, 1918. (Dekret Soveta Narodnyh Komissarov ob otdelenii Tserkvi ot gosudarstva i shkoly ot Tserkvi ot 23 janvarja 1918 g.)

¹⁰⁵ Smolkin-Rothrock, Victoria, *"A Sacred Space Is Never Empty": How Soviet Atheism Was Born, Lived, and Died.* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, forthcoming)

¹⁰⁶ The resolution of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and the Government of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic "On religious associations," with additional instructions from People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD) in the regions. April 8, 1929. (Postanovlenie Vserossijskogo Tsentral'nogo Iсполnitel'nogo Komiteta (VTsIK) i Soveta Narodnyh Komissarov Rossijskoj Sovetskoj Federativnoj Socialisticheskoj Respubliki (SNK RSFSR) "O religioznyh ob'edineniiah").

¹⁰⁷ This was done under the pretext of fighting the Russian famine of 1921.

Muftiyates a strictly circumscribed role within the Soviet system.¹⁰⁸ Throughout the rest of the Soviet era, the Orthodox Church as well as Muslim spiritual assemblies had to tread a thin line between satisfying the requirements of the state and ensuring a space in which religious institutions could legally exist.¹⁰⁹

In 1983, the Institute of Scientific Atheism of the Academy of Social Sciences of the CPSU Central Committee published a special report on the state of Islamic affairs in the Soviet Union and the process of secularization in the Soviet Muslim majority republics.¹¹⁰ The report reflected the evolving Soviet view about the daily lives of indigenous Muslims. According to the official account, many Soviet Muslims had become largely secularized. Islam for the indigenous population of the country's Muslim majority areas had come to serve as a set of rituals rather than a spiritual guidance in this life and hereafter. Islamic religious rites and holidays had become largely associated with national customs and traditions (Filimonov 1983:5).

The impact of the Soviet experience on indigenous Muslims was indeed transformative in many ways. For example, by 1980, female participation in labor force among traditionally Muslim groups had reached an unprecedented level of 40%.¹¹¹ Almost every third registered marriage was either an interfaith or an interethnic marriage between representatives of various ethnic and religious groups.¹¹² One Soviet expert drew

¹⁰⁸ In part, to serve this purpose, the Patriarchate was reestablished in 1943. In addition to the Muftiyat in Ufa, Muslim spiritual assemblies were opened in Makhachkala, Tashkent, and Baku.

¹⁰⁹ For a more detailed analysis of Islam under Soviet rule, see Ro'i, Yaacov, *Islam in the Soviet Union: from the Second World War to Gorbachev*, London: Hurst, 2000.

¹¹⁰ Filimonov, E.G. et. al. *Islam v SSSR: Osobennosti protsesssa sekulyarizatsii v respublikah Sovetskogo Vostoka*. Moskva: Mysl', 1983. Also see the 31st issue of *Voprosy Nauchnogo Ateizma* "Sovremenniy Islam i problemy areisticheskogo vospitaniya" (1983).

¹¹¹ The country's average at the time was 51% (Filimonov 1983:33, 64).

¹¹² Mixed marriages varied 24 and 35% depending on the region.

attention to the fact that traditionally non-Muslim names such as Albert, Robert, Alfred, Artur, Emil, Ernest, and Rudolf (for boys) and Elvira, Elmira, Elina, Albina, Klara, Violetta, Lyucia, and Eleonora (for girls) became widely spread among the children born to families, in which at least one of the parents was an ethnic Muslim (Nikonov 1974).¹¹³ With the state support, the Soviet holidays such as anniversaries of the October revolution, Labor Day, International Women’s Day, etc. became more and more popular among the Soviet indigenous Muslims.¹¹⁴ In addition, the Russian language, in practice, became the dominant language of the state, culture, and education for all the peoples of the USSR.¹¹⁵ All these were interpreted as symbols of declining Muslim religious convictions and abandoning of traditional Muslim lifestyles. As the late Soviet era experts accurately pointed out, in the context of a developing Soviet society, Islam was rapidly losing its old functions as a reference point in the daily lives of indigenous Muslim communities (Filimonov 1983:39).¹¹⁶ As the Soviet model of development, including its education system, professional life, as well as its scheme of upward mobility

¹¹³ Nikonov, V.A. *Imya i obschestvo*. Moskva 1974

¹¹⁴ For the discussion of integration of Soviet holidays in the life of Muslim societies see the 1983 report of the Institute of Scientific Atheism of the Academy of Social Sciences on Islam in the USSR. For details, see Filimonov, E.G. et. al. *Islam v SSSR: Osobennosti protsessy sekulyarizatsii v respublikah Sovetskogo Vostoka*. Moskva: Mysl’, 1983. Also see the 31st issue of *Voprosy Nauchnogo Ateizma* “Sovremenniy Islam i problemy areisticheskogo vospitaniya” (1983).

¹¹⁵ From the late 1930s until the late 1980s, Soviet language policy increasingly promoted Russification. National languages remained equal in declarations, but in practice Russian became the dominant language of the state. It was only at the end of the 1980s, when a measure of political and cultural self-determination was restored, that the various Soviet nations and their languages acquired a higher status. (Reznik in Millar 2004)

¹¹⁶ In fact, this process was under way since the Tsarist era, when secular norms had gradually started to penetrate into daily lives of the Empire’s Muslims. For an excellent review of some of these processes in Tsarist Russia, see Crews, Robert D. *For prophet and tsar: Islam and empire in Russia and Central Asia*. Harvard University Press, 2009. For the review of the Soviet era, see Tasar, Eren Murat. *Soviet and Muslim: the institutionalization of Islam in Central Asia, 1943-1991*. Ph.D. Dissertation. Harvard University, 2010.

matured, religion was pushed further into a private sphere until its total melting away as a phenomenon.¹¹⁷

The late Soviet era policymakers, nevertheless, acknowledged that some elements of Islamic religious practice remained deeply entrenched in traditional Muslim societies.¹¹⁸ As one Soviet editorial put it, although the overwhelming majority of the population “has broken away from religion,” Islam continued to “exert its pernicious influence on some of the population.”¹¹⁹ Thus, while the degree of observance of daily prayers and fasting were noted to be very modest, customary practices of Muslim male circumcision, wedding and burial ceremonies, reportedly, were highly observed (Filimonov 1983: 71). As of the early 1980s, male circumcision was almost universal among Muslim boys, regardless the level of religiosity of their parents.¹²⁰ A similarly high level of observance was noted in Muslim wedding rituals, burial ceremonies, and festivities commemorating the 3rd, 7th, and 40th days of a person’s passing away.¹²¹ Still about 15% of urban adults in Tadjikistan, for example, were estimated to be fasting during Ramadan.

Persisting religious practices have always been a target of the Soviet ideologists. In the early stages of the Soviet development they were seen as a direct threat to the communist ideology. As the Soviet state strengthened, these religious rites and rituals

¹¹⁷ See chapter four for a more detailed analysis of some other structural factors.

¹¹⁸ Despite the declining trend, the level of religiosity among the university and secondary school graduates was reported to be ten times higher among the Muslim than among the non-Muslim population of the country. See James Critchlow, 'Minarets and Marx', *The Washington Quarterly*, vol. 3, No. 2, Spring 1980, pp. 47-57, quoting T. S. Saidbaev, *Islam i obshchestvo: opyt istoriko-sotsiologicheskogo issledovaniya*. Moscow, 1978, p. 181

¹¹⁹ Editorial, *Sovetskaya Kirgiziya*, 27 December 1981.

¹²⁰ Up to 17% of adult Tajiks of various age groups between 16 and 40 considered circumcision a national ritual (Filimonov 1983: 74).

¹²¹ In many cases religious rituals were performed even for self-proclaimed atheists upon their death as a final wish of their relatives (Filimonov 1983:76)

were increasingly regarded as remnants of medieval feudal patriarchal social order and a consequence of bypassing the internal Muslim bourgeois revolution in the pre-Soviet era. The fact that oftentimes certain rituals were practiced in families of self-proclaimed atheists, among the intelligentsia, and even by members of the party strengthened the belief of Soviet authorities that religious and national-cultural traditions were interconnected in the consciousness of the Muslim peoples (Ro'i 1984:40). As Yaacov Roi pointed out, in Central Asia, "the many centuries of Islam's domination meant that many rites had become customary, fixed in people's consciousness and interwoven with customs." As a result, they had become part of people's lifestyle and were "observed not only by believers but also by many non-believers" (Ro'i 1984:31).¹²²

Communist policymakers were convinced that the social progress was largely in control of the socialist regime. Available data on rising urbanization rates, growing literacy, and relatively low levels of religiosity contributed to the strengthening of this belief among the Soviet leadership. Islam, for them, did not and could not function as a regulator of socio-political activity among Soviet Muslims. Religious practices were expected to wither away through the socialist mode of development, Soviet socio-economic policies, cultural reforms, and popularization of the Soviet lifestyle (Ul'yanovski 1979: 72; Garadzha 1983: 15). A class struggle and a common effort to build socialism were seen as key elements that could and would unite Soviet people. Some of the ideological hardliners were critical even of the rare attempts of some Soviet Islamic authorities to adapt Islamic lifestyle to modern Soviet way of life.¹²³ According to

¹²² Ro'i, Yaacov. "The task of creating the new Soviet man: 'Atheistic propaganda' in the Soviet Muslim areas." *Europe-Asia Studies* 36.1 (1984): 26-44.

¹²³ Some Islamic preachers, for example, called for fasting pointing out its positive medical effects.

socialist thinkers, it was nothing more than an effort to climb on the bandwagon of the socialist progress (Madzhidov 1983: 225).

2. Islam as a potential threat

The belief in a transformative impact of the Soviet experience, a widely spread perception that Islam in the Soviet Union had acquired cultural definitions, and the conviction that religion would ultimately wither away didn't mean that Islam had totally ceased to be an issue of concern for communist planners. The Soviet expert community observed with anxiety the role that the Islamic faith played in political developments in Iran and Afghanistan starting in the late 1970s.¹²⁴ In addition, Soviet authorities grew increasingly suspicious of the “Western bourgeoisie's” attempts to use “human rights rhetoric” among Soviet ethnic minorities to weaken the socialist regime from within (Filimonov 1983:152). They thought that the West was seeking out for religious fanatics and extremists among Soviet citizens who would question the legitimacy of the Soviet order and the regime.¹²⁵

The Iranian Revolution and mobilization of Islamic mujahideen in Afghanistan in the late 1970s taught Soviet policymakers that the Islamic factor could take multiple forms and play different roles in various conditions. Soviet authorities observed that in

¹²⁴ See Iy.P.Zuev's speech at the all-Russia conference at the Russian Academy of State Service (RAGS). <http://www.rusoir.ru/2009.php?action=view&id=486> (accessed on December 10, 2014). Zuev presented a report on the activities of the Institute of Scientific Atheism between 1964 and 1991.

¹²⁵ This was also reflected in several academic studies in the West. In the final two decades of the Soviet Union, a number of western Sovietologists argued that Islam represented a powerful counter-ideology to communism, which constituted with the increased demographic weight of Muslims in the Soviet Union a serious threat to the Soviet regime. See, for example: Alexandre Bennigson and Marie Broxup, *The Islamic threat to the Soviet state* (New York: St Martin's, 1983); Alexandre Bennigson and Chantal Lemerrier-Quellejey, *Islam in the Soviet Union* (New York: Praeger, 1967); Hélène Carrère d'Encausse, *Decline of an empire: the Soviet Socialist Republics in revolt* (New York: Newsweek Books, 1979); Muriel Atkin, *The subtlest game: Islam in Soviet Tajikistan* (Philadelphia: Foreign Policy Research Institute, 1987); Nancy Lubin, *Labour and nationality in Soviet Central Asia: an uneasy compromise* (London: Macmillan, 1985).

the Iranian case religious clergy took the position against pro-American regime of the Shah. In Afghanistan, Islamic extremists rallied against the revolutionary Socialist government. Partly driven by the concern that Islamist ideologies might spread into Soviet Central Asia and the Caucasus, the Soviets realized the necessity to keep Islam under close watch. The issue of “Islamic threat” was brought up at the 26th Congress of the Communist Party.¹²⁶ Later, a special issue was prepared by the Institute of Scientific Atheism of the Academy of Social Sciences, which presented some information that Soviet experts had to take into account while drafting counter-measures against Western efforts to “speculate on religious matters” in Soviet Central Asia and beyond. In part, it discussed the potential threat of Wahhabism – a conservative branch of Islam – and the Islamist anti-Soviet propaganda.¹²⁷

The above and preceding reports of the Soviet Institute of Scientific Atheism reveal that the Soviet leadership became increasingly wary of numerous “research institutes” around the globe that conducted research on Soviet Muslims and disseminated anti-communist propaganda.¹²⁸ According to Ro’i, Soviet authorities were suspicious of ‘bourgeois clerical centers,’ which allegedly directed hostile propaganda at the USSR and the Central Asian Republics in particular, seeking ‘to propagate religious sentiments and mystical dogmas (Ro’i 1984:32).¹²⁹ Reportedly, these research institutes published

¹²⁶ The Congress was held on February 23, 1981.

¹²⁷ “O tak nazyvaemom Vahhabizme,” Information bulletin of the Institute of Scientific Atheism N20. Pp.26-29. 1988. Also see earlier publications of the Institute: Filiminov, E.G. et. al. *Islam v SSSR: Osobennosti protsessy sekulyarizatsii v respublikah Sovetskogo Vostoka*. Moskva: Mysl’, 1983; and the 31st issue of *Voprosy Nauchnogo Ateizma* “Sovremenniy Islam i problemy areisticheskogo vospitaniya” (1983).

¹²⁸ Reportedly, many of these centers were funded by Saudi and Western endowments and located in countries such as Pakistan, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Indonesia, Turkey, and Germany.

¹²⁹ Ro’i, Yaacov. “The task of creating the new Soviet man: ‘Atheistic propaganda’ in the Soviet Muslim areas.” *Europe-Asia Studies* 36.1 (1984): 26-44.

articles, which discussed, among other things, the methods of fight against the Marxist ideology and Soviet colonialism; called for establishment of ties between Muslim brothers, who suffered under the despotic Soviet regime, and the Islamic world; and encouraged Soviet Muslims to demand political and economic rights and to raise the question of Turkestan in the United Nations.¹³⁰ As one Soviet editorial put it, “bourgeois propaganda” tried to inspire Soviet people with views and ideas which contradicted the Marxist-Leninist world view, endeavoring in particular to transfer “the flame of the Islamic regeneration” into the Soviet Union in order to destabilize the position in the republics of Central Asia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and the Caucasus, to inflame nationalistic prejudices in these regions and to arouse among believers dissatisfaction with the policy of the Communist Party and the Soviet state (*Sovetskaya Kirgiziya*, 27 December 1981).¹³¹ In part, as a result of these collective “foreign” efforts, in 1974 some of the international Islamic groups declared Communism an anti-Muslim ideology (Filimonov 1983:157). Occasionally, foreign reporters did not hesitate to accuse the Soviet Muslim clergy of betrayal of Islamic principles.

3. The Soviet state’s response to a potential Islamic threat

The reaction of the Soviet state to the potential threat of an Islamist ideology was prompt and thorough. The Soviet leadership actively engaged in preparation of adequate counter-measures to ensure that indigenous Muslims remained loyal to their state.

¹³⁰ Perception that the main goal of foreign research on Soviet Muslims was to hinder Soviet plans in the Muslim world and weaken the ideological grip over indigenous Muslims in the country fed the Soviet skepticism even about academic studies on Islam in the Soviet Union.

¹³¹ Editorial, *Sovetskaya Kirgiziya*, 27 December 1981. For more details, see Ro'i, Yaacov. "The task of creating the new Soviet man: 'Atheistic propaganda' in the Soviet Muslim areas." *Europe-Asia Studies* 36.1 (1984), p.33.

However, the beginning of a comprehensive *perestroika* initiative put a lid on the communist regime's final anti-religious campaigns. Despite clear signs of the unfolding danger, the late Soviet leadership was committed to the liberalization of religious policy.

The Communist leadership was vigilant against the Western efforts to revive nationalist fever among Soviet Muslims. As a counter-measure against foreign propaganda tools such as Radio Free Liberty, which allegedly called for religious uprising in Soviet Central Asia and portrayed the US and the UK as protectors of Islamic interests and Muslim people, communists launched a comprehensive counter-offensive campaign. Discursively, in response to accusations of massively abusing religious freedoms and pursuing anti-religious policies, they argued that the secularization of Soviet society was not a result of the Soviet administrative pressure. Rather, for them, it was a product of development, enlightenment, and socio-economic transformations under the socialist regime.¹³² They also pointed to the principles of secularism enshrined in the Soviet constitution and the distinctiveness of the socialist regime.¹³³ The Soviet authorities rejected the criticism that the communist regime prosecuted people for religious beliefs. For them, the regime, at the most, could only penalize those who hid behind religious banners while pursuing anti-state activities. Socialist authorities also argued that the Soviet state did not discriminate against the clergy, who were free to benefit from political and civil rights granted to them by the civil law. Moreover, the regime proudly claimed that religious clergy in the Soviet Union supported the socialist

¹³² To a certain extent, this indeed reflects the evolution of the Soviet thinking about religion. From 1917 to 1990, Soviet religious policies varied between militant atheism and scientific enlightenment projects. For more details, see Smolkin-Rothrock dissertation (2010).

¹³³ Soviet laws and the Constitutions never officially banned religion. This is the reason why technically the Soviet era regime may be considered close to an assertive secular model of state-religion relations. However, the use of state resources for anti-religious propaganda makes it distinct from secular regimes that observe clear separation of church and state and don't interfere into religious affairs.

order, reflecting the popular will. According to them, if the clergy didn't support the socialist regime, religious institutions would lose parishioners. Indeed, loyal Islamic clergy actively called for respect and love for the motherland, praised Soviet rule for strengthening the brotherhood among the peoples, preached about the compatibility of Islam with the Soviet lifestyle, and blamed Western imperialism and colonialism for setting some nations against others. Mufti of Central Asia Babakhanov, for example, publicly spoke in defense of Soviet regime preaching that the main goal of Soviet Muslims was to strengthen economic, scientific, and cultural potential of the Soviet Union and to contribute to the growth of its prestige. Some clerics went so far as to claim that Muslim values were in harmony with the moral code of the builder of communism.¹³⁴

To support the rhetoric, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) issued respective orders "About taking additional measures with regards to the activation of militant Islam in Asia and Africa"¹³⁵ and "About strengthening of fight with Islamic influence."¹³⁶ As late as in May 1988, in his letter to the Central Committee, head of the Council for Religious Affairs Kharchev still called for the Party to take active measures in order to counter anti-Soviet foreign propaganda among Soviet Muslims, especially in the context of an ongoing crisis in Afghanistan and the situation in Iran.¹³⁷ Among other things, the Council for Religious Affairs

¹³⁴ See *Sovet Sharki Musulmonnari* 1976, N2, p.3

¹³⁵ CPSU Central Committee order from 21 October 1985. Postanovlenie TsK KPSS ot 21 oktjabrja 1985 goda "O dopolnitel'nyh meroprijatijah v svjazi s aktivizaciej v stranah Azii i Afriki 'voinstvujushhego islama'."

¹³⁶ CPSU Central Committee order from 18 August 1986. Sekretnoe postanovlenie TsK KPSS ot 18 avgusta 1986 g. "Ob usilenii bor'by s vlijaniem islama."

¹³⁷ Kharchev's letter to the CPSU Central Committee dated 16 May 1988. Pis'mo predsedatelya Soveta po delam religij pri SM SSSR K.M. Kharcheva, napravlennoe v TsK KPSS. 16 Maya 1988.

recommended increasing the number of students in state-approved Islamic schools in Bukhara and Tashkent, reducing the duration of receiving education for prospective Muslim clerics from 7 to 5 years, and increasing the funding of state-approved Muslim Spiritual Boards.

4. Commitment to liberalism

In the meantime, while the expert community watched the religious dynamics in the Soviet Muslim republics with a fair amount of anxiety and worry, Mikhail Gorbachev launched “the most ambitious, sweeping and, from the West's point of view, promising program of reform in the history of the Soviet Union” (Mandelbaum 1989).¹³⁸ Neither warnings about a looming threat of Islamic resurgence, nor the early signs of ethnic strife during Gorbachev’s tenure could deflect the Soviet reformers from the liberalization path. In fact, for many of them, phenomena such as the clash between Armenians and Azeris over the status of Nagorno-Karabakh, protests in the Baltic republics, and the 1986 street riots in Almaty came as a surprise.¹³⁹ Gorbachev himself believed that the nationality question in the Soviet Union was “solved in principle”.¹⁴⁰ For him, the virus of enmity was cultivated not by masses but by intellectuals, who were the bearers of nationalism.¹⁴¹ Many in the political leadership were convinced that the overwhelming majority of the country’s population had acquired the feeling of belonging to a single family, the Soviet

¹³⁸ Mandelbaum, Michael. "Ending the cold war." *Foreign Affairs* (1989): 16-36.

¹³⁹ In June 1987, a small demonstration was held in Riga to mark the anniversary of the deportation of thousands of Latvians to labor camps. In February 1988, a nationalist demonstration was held in Estonia. The 1986 riots in Almaty revealed sensitivity of Kazakhs towards the ethnicity of an appointed party leader. For more on Kazakh nationalism, see Sarsembayev, Azamat. "Imagined communities: Kazak nationalism and Kazakification in the 1990s." *Central Asian Survey* 18.3 (1999): 319-346.

¹⁴⁰ Gorbachev, Mikhail Sergeevich. *October and Perestroika: The Revolution Continues*. No. 276. Novosti Press, 1987.

¹⁴¹ Walker, Edward W. *Dissolution: Sovereignty and the breakup of the Soviet Union*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2003.

people, and were totally loyal to the state.¹⁴² Ironically, this turned out to be nothing more than another example of a wishful thinking. The deepening of the ideological crisis gave liberal voices more and more opportunities to express alternative visions for religious policy making, suggest the new limits of religious pluralism, and discuss the possibility of opening up the public sphere for religious practice.¹⁴³

The following sections will demonstrate that both religious and nationality policies are essential for understanding Russian state approach toward indigenous Muslims and Islam in the early post-Soviet era. They will show that in the context of political liberalization, thinking of religion in general and Islam in particular as a cultural phenomenon prompted the reform-era policymakers to adopt a particular kind of ethno-confessional regime that was intended to continue administer Russia's diverse society based on institutionalized multinationality (Brubaker 1996). The multiethnic passive secular regime emerged as a result of key decisions taken about 1) the criteria for membership and expression in a newly emerging post-Soviet society, and 2) the criteria for access of religious groups to the public sphere. As a result, norms of passive secularism and the multiethnic system of governance formed the basis of an ethno-confessional regime that guided state policies toward Islam through 1997. The accommodative stance of secular authorities that prevailed between 1990 and 1997, as this study suggests, should be attributed to the rulings of the multiethnic passive secular

¹⁴² In fact, as some scholars of Soviet Central Asia pointed out, there was no necessary contradiction between being Muslim and a loyal Soviet citizen. Most Soviet Muslims, according to them, had no ambition to challenge, let alone overthrow, the Soviet state. See, for example: Muriel Atkin, *The subtlest game: Islam in Soviet Tajikistan* (Philadelphia: Foreign Policy Research Institute, 1987); Nancy Lubin, *Labour and nationality in Soviet Central Asia: an uneasy compromise* (London: Macmillan, 1985); Dannreuther, Roland. "Islamic radicalization in Russia: an assessment." *International Affairs* 86.1 (2010): 109-126.

¹⁴³ Garadzha, "Pereosmyslenie," *Nauka i Religii* 1989

regime and liberal reforms that led to its establishment. The table below summarizes the regime's conceptual components.

Table 9: *Multiethnic Passive Secularism and Islam, 1990-1997*

State-religion regime	Ethnicity regime
Passive secularism	Multiethnic ethnicity regime
Unrestricted access of all religious groups to the public sphere	Official support for institutionalization of ethnicities
Non-involvement in religious affairs	
Cultural Islam (religion subordinated to ethnic identities)	

Part II: Islam under passive secularism

By the mid-1980s it became clear that the decades-long efforts to eliminate religion from the private lives of the Soviet people had failed. Leading atheist ideologues of the Communist Party publicly admitted that neither militant atheism nor modernization and “scientific enlightenment” were able to root out the religion and replace it with the belief in the communist ideology.¹⁴⁴ As Gorbachev launched his comprehensive perestroika initiative, the state sought to renegotiate its relations with religion. Rapid social changes and democratization of the Soviet society required development of a new legal approach toward religion. Wide range of proposals came from various segments of the population including the clergy, academics, the general public, and even former propagandists of atheism. Some of the key concerns had to do with granting legal status

¹⁴⁴ Garadzha, V. “Pereosmyslenie,” *Nauka i Religiya*, N1, 1989, pp. 2-6.

to religious organizations and the return of religion to the public life.¹⁴⁵ In academic terms, this implied a conceptual transition from an anti-religious regime toward another form of state-religion regime.

According to the available typology of state-religion regimes, discussed in chapter one, Russia, in theory, could either become a religious state, a state with an established religion, or a truly secular country. The key criterion that would determine the direction in which the country would develop further was the level of visibility that religion would have in the public sphere and the role it would play. If Christian Orthodox dogmas were to become a basis for legislation and jurisdiction under the new regime, then Russia would become a religious state. If Russian Orthodoxy or any other religion were granted a special status that would give them access to exclusive privileges unavailable to other faiths, then the country would become more like a state with an established religion. If, on the other hand, the state maintained control over governmental institutions and restrained itself from interfering into religious affairs, it would become a secular state. Within the category of secular states it was also important to define whether religion would be confined to the private sphere or be allowed a public presence and visibility.¹⁴⁶ In theory, passive secularism describes regimes that maintain separation of church and state but allow public visibility of religion. In contrast to other types of state-religion regimes, it does not aim to confine religion to the private sphere, nor does it provide privileges to any particular confession (Kuru 2009).

¹⁴⁵ This included meeting legal demands of religious communities with respect to returning religious buildings and property, construction of places of worship, publishing religious literature, receiving religious education, celebrating religious holidays, etc.

¹⁴⁶ For more detailed analysis of state-religion-regimes, see Kuru 2009, pp. 30-31

These questions became a subject of intense debates when the Soviet leader pledged in April 1988 that the state would start a broad dialogue with society, including religious actors.¹⁴⁷ Transition into a religious model of government *a la* Iran has never really been an option for Russia. Possibility of turning the country into a state with an established religion was also very dim. Neither the state nor the Church seemed to be interested in such a model. Metropolitan Kirill, who at the time represented the interests of the Church at the meetings on the future of state-religion relations, pointed out that the Church did not seek a special status. He acknowledged that historically the Church was most comfortable when it did not depend on the state.¹⁴⁸ Rather, Metropolitan pointed out, attaining a legal/juridical status for the Church was one of the main priorities for the Russian Orthodox clergy. Therefore, at the time, the most feasible option to reform state-religion relations within the Soviet constitutional boundaries seemed to be through abandoning state-sponsored atheist propaganda and preserving the secular order.

For the secular authorities this task of renegotiating multiple balances and redefining roles of the state and religion in a secularist framework was much more complicated and painful than it may initially seem. Coming to terms with the Soviet legacy required not only renouncing anti-religious propaganda, but also allowing

¹⁴⁷ On the 29th of April 1988, Gorbachev met in the Kremlin with the Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia Pimen and members of the Synod of Russian Orthodox Church. Gorbachev noted: "The mistakes that were made concerning the church and believers in the 30s and the following years are being corrected... extensive public dialogue became possible... The state's relation to the church, to believers has to be defined by interests of strengthening the unity of all workers, all our people". (M. S. Gorbachev, volume 6, p. 201). See, Mikhail Gorbachev, "Sobranie Sochinenii," Volume 6. Gorbachev-Fond. Moscow: Ves' Mir, 2008. Also see the interview with Patriarch Pimen in *Izvestiia*. "Tysiacheletie. Beseda s partiarkhom Moskovskim i vseia Rusi Pimenom," *Izvestiia*, April 8, 1988.

¹⁴⁸ Metropolitan Kirill could have referred to the lessons learned in 1917, when people did not protest against the state clamp on the Church.

religious proselytism, defining criteria for religion's access to the public sphere, and ensuring equal treatment of all religious groups.

In the late 1980s, leading state ideologists organized multiple roundtables to discuss state-religion relations in the context of socio-political transformations and democratizing reforms. One of such meetings took place at the headquarters of the “Communist” journal – the main ideological outlet of the Communist Party.¹⁴⁹ The core team of communist thinkers, which included the director of the Institute of Scientific Atheism Viktor Garadzha, editor of the journal *Science and Religion* N.A. Koval'skii, leading expert of the Institute of Philosophy Mr. Solov'ev, Secretary of the Institute of State and Law Mr. Yakovlev, editor-in-chief of the journal *Communist* Mr. Bikkenin and a few others, was accompanied by two representatives of faith – Archbishop Kirill and Lithuanian Catholic priest Alyulis.¹⁵⁰ Meeting proceedings reveal the breadth and depth of the ideological crisis the Soviet system was experiencing. In the spirit of an academic inquiry, objectivity, and professionalism, participants reflected on the past communist experience and the nature of the emerging ideological pluralism.¹⁵¹ Discussions, heavily laced with self-criticism, made frequent references to international norms, Russian history, and the history of western philosophical thought.¹⁵² The group identified some of the concerns and important principles that would need to be taken into account while drafting the new law on religion. Some of the most contested debates evolved around

¹⁴⁹ “Svoboda sovesti i vozrozhdenie gumanizma,” *Kommunist*, N3 (1355) February 1990.

¹⁵⁰ Note that no representatives of Islam were present at the meeting. This was brought up as an issue during the meeting. Representatives of the Muslim clergy were invited, however, at later stages of negotiations.

¹⁵¹ For details, see *Kommunist*, N3 (1355) February 1990 and *Svobodnaya Mysl'*, N2 (1609) 2010, pp.125-145.

¹⁵² For further analysis of self-criticism of Soviet atheist ideologists, see Garadzha's “Pereosmyslenie” article in January 1989 issue of *Nauka i Relegiia*. The article and discussion that it provoked symbolize the change in Soviet thinking about religion. For publishing this article Garadzha lost his job at the journal.

questions regarding the legitimacy of state-led atheist propaganda, rights and responsibilities of believers and nonbelievers in the emerging order; opportunities for religious proselytism; and the legal status of religious organizations.¹⁵³

On many points the consensus was hard to achieve. Those who hoped to save the socialist order went back to Marx's and Lenin's statements on religion, inviting others to rethink whether socialism and religion were incompatible¹⁵⁴. Many others criticized the Soviet approach and focused on the low effectiveness of methods that were used to fight religion since 1917. Still few others reiterated their faith in the power modernization that would ultimately wither the religion anyway. One point, however, that the majority could agree upon was that the emerging more liberal regime had to remain secular and ensure equal access of all religions to the public sphere.¹⁵⁵ Realizing the burden of an earlier (mis)treatment of all religions, the main goal was reconciliation with the faith and ensuring neutrality of the state towards all religions and confessions. This liberal approach toward religion, which developed during the *perestroika*, had a lasting effect on religious revival in the post-Soviet era.

1. The legal foundations of unrestricted public religious practice

¹⁵³ Ultimately, when the new laws on religion were adopted in the USSR and the RSFSR, it became evident that the two took different approaches with respect to atheism. The RSFSR law deals explicitly with atheism, while the USSR law avoids this term (see, for instance, Articles 3, 4, 8 in the RSFSR law). In addition, the RSFSR law did not prohibit material assistance by state organs to religious associations. Article 16 of the RSFSR Law includes an explicit prohibition on the conducting of atheistic activities in places used by believers for worship. Such a prohibition does not exist in the USSR law. For more details on differences and similarities between the USSR and the RSFSR laws, see Lukasz Hirszowicz, "A note on the New RSFSR law on religion." *Soviet Jewish Affairs*, Vol. 20, No 2-3, 1990, Pp. 39-43.

¹⁵⁴ See comments on Garadzha's "Pereosmyslenie" article in subsequent issues of *Nauka i Religii* and follow the debate that it caused.

¹⁵⁵ *Svobodnaya Mysl'*, 2 (1609) 2010, pp.125-145.

In many ways, the 1988 celebrations of the Millennium of the ‘Baptism of Rus’ became a symbol of a major change in Russian state attitudes toward religion. In her pioneering work on Soviet atheism Victoria Smolkin Rothrock calls the commemoration of the anniversary “a litmus test for the sincerity of Gorbachev’s perestroika reforms.”¹⁵⁶ At least, these celebrations were perceived as such by many observers of religious life in the Soviet Union, including numerous indigenous Muslims.¹⁵⁷ The Millennium became the first major religious event in decades publicly celebrated on a mass scale and widely covered in the Soviet press and television. Despite strong skepticism of some observers, the events have indeed marked the beginning of a new era in state-religion relations.¹⁵⁸ Celebrations were attended by high-ranking state officials and took place at the Bolshoi Theater and other state property with all the signs of state approval. By inviting the Orthodox Church to take part in *perestroika* and offering the religious clergy to play an active role in the moral revival of the society, Gorbachev, in fact, allowed the return of religion to Soviet public life. Retrospectively, according to Smolkin-Rothrock, this moment can be regarded as an end of state-sponsored atheism in the Soviet Union in the name of ideological pluralism.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ Smolkin-Rothrock, Victoria, “*A Sacred Space Is Never Empty*”: *How Soviet Atheism Was Born, Lived, and Died*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, forthcoming)

¹⁵⁷ See House, Francis. *Millennium of Faith: Christianity in Russia, AD 988-1988*. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1988. Also see Victoria Smolkin-Rothrock, “*A Sacred Space Is Never Empty*”: *How Soviet Atheism Was Born, Lived, and Died*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, forthcoming).

¹⁵⁸ Keston College scholars and other well-informed agencies maintained concerns about imprisoned Christians and those sent to penal work-camps or internal exile. In April 1987 it was announced that 42 prisoners of conscience had been released before completing their sentences. They included Alexander Ogorodnikov and Gleb Yakunin.

¹⁵⁹ Smolkin-Rothrock suggests that “The state's break with atheism in favor of “universal values” and “ideological pluralism,” and the state-sanctioned return of religion to Soviet public life, signaled the end of the Communist Party's ideological monopoly, and therefore its moral and political legitimacy”. See Smolkin-Rothrock, Victoria, “*A Sacred Space Is Never Empty*”: *How Soviet Atheism Was Born, Lived, and Died*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, forthcoming)

The following year, in 1989, Soviet Muslims, though on a much smaller scale, organized similar celebrations. By fate or destiny, that year corresponded to a 1100th anniversary of adoption of Islam by the Volga Bulgars and the 200th anniversary of the establishment of the first Muslim Spiritual Assembly in Russia.¹⁶⁰ Talgat Tadzhuiddin, head of the Central Spiritual Board of Muslims in Ufa, a successor organization of the Assembly, led a sizable group of Muslims to the ruins of an ancient city of Bolgar in Tatarstan to commemorate Khan Almysh's meeting with Ibn Fadlan's delegation from the Abbasid Caliph and voluntary conversion of indigenous tribes to Islam. For the first time in several decades indigenous Muslims attained a chance to gather for a collective public prayer of a large scale and invite foreign Muslim guests to join and lead the religious service. In the same year Mufti Tadzhuiddin, a public religious figure, was awarded a title of "Tatar of the Year."¹⁶¹

Preparations for public celebrations of the Orthodox Millennium and the 1100th anniversary of the adoption of Islam by Volga Bulgars took place in the context of heated discussions about the Party's diminishing claims to spiritual authority. Adoption of laws on religion in October 1990, both for the USSR and RSFSR, finally declared Party's renouncement from atheism and laid foundation of a new secular order, where religious marketplace would be competitive and no religion, including Russian Orthodoxy and atheism, would have a state support.¹⁶² Many commentators universally

¹⁶⁰ Note that the 1100th anniversary was calculated according to the Islamic calendar.

¹⁶¹ Mukhetdinov, D.V. and A.Yu. Khabutdinov. *Islam v Rossii v XVIII – nachale XXI vv.: Modernizatsiia i traditsii*. Nizhnii Novgorod: Izdatel'stvo NNGU im. N.I.Lobachevskogo, 2011.

¹⁶² On October 1 and 25, 1990, respectively, the USSR Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations and the RSFSR Law on Freedom of Religion were adopted. Despite some differences between the two, both documents implied a dramatic shift in Soviet policy toward religion toward liberalization of religious life. For a detailed discussion of a difference between the USSR and RSFSR

agree that these laws have had a far-reaching impact on religious revival in post-Soviet Russia (Verkhovsky, Anderson 1994, Bourdeaux 1990). The laws marked a major transition from a regime guided by an anti-religious ideology to passive secularism, which implied that the state would no longer intervene in religious affairs and allow visibility of religion in the public sphere. More importantly, this meant that the state would recognize religious pluralism and provide equal access to the public sphere for all religious communities.¹⁶³ For example, religious groups obtained permission to broadcast on radio and TV and use school infrastructure outside regular business hours for religious education of the population.¹⁶⁴ No legal or administrative discrimination could be made with regard to the groups practicing various forms of the Islamic faith or depending on their affiliation with the established Muslim spiritual administrations.

The language of the 1990 laws on religion, which gave much-needed breathing room to practice Islam in Russia, mainly followed stipulations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights, as well as other European conventions (Shterin and Richardson, 2000).¹⁶⁵ With respect to individual rights, the RSFSR law, among other things, prohibited the entering of any reference to a citizen's attitude to religion in official documents (Article 6 of the RSFSR law).¹⁶⁶ It guaranteed the secrecy of confession and forbade the questioning of a clergyman about

versions of the 1990 law, see Lukasz Hirszowicz, "A note on the New RSFSR law on religion." *Soviet Jewish Affairs*, Vol. 20, No 2-3, 1990, pp. 39-43.

Religious market is a physical and virtual space where religious ideas and goods are exchanged. Refer to the dissertation glossary for the definition and references.

¹⁶³ Refer to the deductive test in chapter one to assess the difference between anti-religious state-religion regime and passive secularism.

¹⁶⁴ See the RSFSR Law on Freedom of Religion.

¹⁶⁵ For details, see the Convention for Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

¹⁶⁶ Article 4 of the USSR law permits this at citizen's request.

circumstances that became known to him (e.g. during the religious service).¹⁶⁷

Furthermore, the law allowed for private (non-state) religious education and permitted introduction of religion-related subjects into the public schools curriculum on condition that this is not accompanied by religious rituals and has an ‘informative’ character (Article 9 of the RSFSR Law). It authorized state organs to declare important religious festivals additional non-working days at the request of religious mass associations (Article 14 of the RSFSR law). Also, it allowed religious worship in military units, health establishments and all types of homes for the aged and infirm, prisons, etc. (Article 22 of the RSFSR law). In sum, the law was a major departure from the Soviet-era practice of regulation of religious affairs.¹⁶⁸ It broke the ice and paved the way for a gradual filling of a “religious vacuum.”¹⁶⁹ One of its most visible implications was the return of religion to the public sphere.

The Russian Constitution, adopted after the collapse of the communist state, reaffirmed central provisions of the 1990 RSFSR law by providing guarantees of individual liberties. Several articles of the Constitution speak specifically to the issue of religion and conscience. Article 14, for example, establishes the Russian Federation as a secular state and states that “[n]o religion may be established as a State religion or obligatory.” In addition, the Article holds that “[r]eligious associations shall be separate from the State and equal before the law.” Article 15 proclaims that the Constitution will

¹⁶⁷ Article 13 of the RSFSR law. Article 30 of the USSR law, which bears the same title, includes no such provisions.

¹⁶⁸ For more on religious policy of liberalization under Gorbachev see John Anderson’s *Religion state and politics in the Soviet Union and successor states* (1994: 137-81) and Michael Bourdeaux *Gorbachev Glasnost and the Gospel* (1990).

¹⁶⁹ For further discussion of the 1990 Law, see Shterin and Richardson (1998) “Local Laws Restricting Religion in Russia: Precursors of Russia’s New National Law.” *Journal of Church and State*, 40(2) pp. 319-341.

“have the highest legal force” and that all other laws or legal actions “must not be contrary to the Constitution of the Russian Federation.” As Preston has put it, “one cannot read the 1993 Constitution of the Russian Federation and not feel that the document was truly intended to protect people’s rights to believe as their conscience dictated” (Preston 2001: 783). Together, the 1990 law on religion and the Russian Constitution guaranteed basic human rights and liberties, including the right to engage in public proselytism. Liberal principles outlined in these documents became a backbone of defenders of religious freedom in the coming decade.

2. Islamic practice under passive secularism

Adoption of the 1990 law on religion was of huge importance to Russia’s faithful Muslim community. For the established clergy, more than anything else, it implied liberation from the tight supervision of the Council for Religious Affairs (CRA) and escaping from heavy financial dues to the Peace Foundation [Sovetskii Fond Mira].¹⁷⁰ For groups aspiring to challenge the Soviet-era Islamic establishment, liberal reforms and the spirit of perestroika served unprecedented opportunities in the Russian history to form autonomous religious organizations. For Russia’s Muslim laypeople, liberalization of religious policy, first and foremost, allowed to fulfill their dearest and deepest spiritual

¹⁷⁰ For discussion of the structure and functions of the Council for Religious Affairs (CRA) refer to John Anderson (1991), "The Council for Religious Affairs and the Shaping of Soviet Religious Policy" *Soviet Studies* 43 (4): 689–710. For a brief discussion of the Soviet Peace Foundation, see Mukhetdinov, D.V. and A.Yu. Khabutdinov. *Islam v Rossii v XVIII – nachale XXI vv.: Modernizatsiia i traditsii*. Nizhnii Novgorod: Izdatel'stvo NNGU im. N.I.Lobachevskogo, 2011. For many years one third of the revenues of the Muslim Spiritual Board in Ufa was transferred to the Soviet Peace Foundation [Sovetskii Fond Mira]. According to Mufti Tadzhuddin, annual payments exceeded 250,000 rubles. See interview with Mufti Tadzhuddin. “Obratimsia k nashemu mnogovekovomu opytu,” *Nauka i religii* N1, 1991.

needs and desires, such as receiving Islamic education, traveling to Mecca for Hajj¹⁷¹, restoring Islamic heritage at home, and reconnecting with fellow Muslims abroad.

Although many had their own vision for the future of Islam in Russia, what united most of Muslim believers was the desire to bring Islam back into the public sphere.

In the first decade after the Soviet collapse, in many Russian regions, numbers of Muslim communities, mosques, and Islamic schools have substantially increased. Especially notable increase was recorded in historically Muslim populated areas of the country. Thus, with respect to Muslim communities, in Bashkortostan, for example, their number between 1987 and 1997 increased from 19 to 490 (a 25-fold increase). In Tatarstan, the growth between 1988 and mid-90s was from 18 to 700 (a 39-fold increase).¹⁷² In Dagestan, according to Bobrovnikov, over the same period, the number of Islamic congregations raised from 27 to 1,557 (a 57-fold increase)¹⁷³. Most of these communities sought to open their own mosques. Overall across Russia, between 1990 and 1997, the number of functioning mosques increased from 160 to over 7,000.¹⁷⁴

Muslim communities have also invested in restoring Islamic education and publishing, development of *Halal* food industry, and other aspects of Muslim lifestyle and culture. With respect to Islamic schooling, for example, as of 1988, no formal Islamic education institutions existed in Russia. The only two institutions on the territory of the Soviet Union that provided such education, namely the Islamic *madrassa* “Mir-Arab” in

¹⁷¹ The Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca that takes place in the last month of the year (according to the Islamic calendar), and that all Muslims are expected to make at least once during their lifetime.

¹⁷² See Mukhametshin 2009: 76; Sagitova 2009: 129.

¹⁷³ Most of Islamic institutions in Dagestan, however, did not have state registration at the time (Bobrovnikov, 2006).

¹⁷⁴ Testimony of Paul Goble at the public hearing before The Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe: U.S. Helsinki Commission. December 17, 2009.

Bukhara (1945) and Islamic Institute in Tashkent (1971), became inconvenient and difficult to access after the Soviet collapse.¹⁷⁵ In 1988, the first Islamic school – *madrasa* “Ismailiya” – opened in Moscow. Within a year, another two *madrasas* opened in Ufa and Kazan. By 1991 several similar schools emerged in Dagestan and Chechnya. By the end of 1995 up to 30 Islamic schools were registered with the Russian Ministry of Justice. Towards the end of the decade, such schools were present in almost every city in Dagestan and in many other places across Russia.¹⁷⁶ The quality of these schools and their faculty, however, remained to be ascertained.

Despite a visible effort to catch up with the growing demand for qualified religious personnel, the problem of cadres soon emerged as the most vital problem for Russia’s Muslim community. According to Silantsev, religious schools in Russia were unable to meet even 5% of the demand at the time.¹⁷⁷ The evident lack of opportunities to receive quality Islamic education at home has led many young Muslim believers to explore readily available opportunities abroad. Reportedly, many Arab countries provided scholarships and stipends to students from the Former Soviet Union. It is these foreign educated students later became a focus of some of the most heated debates about politicization and radicalization of Islam in Russia.

Islamic broadcasting, media, and other means of mass communication, which were practically nonexistent during the Soviet period, also experienced a revival. Before 1989, the only regular Islamic periodical in the Soviet Union was *Muslims of the Soviet*

¹⁷⁵ In exceptional cases, Soviet Muslims could receive such education abroad, in friendly to the Soviet Union Muslim states. One of such Muslim leaders was Talgat Tadzhuddin, a prospective head of the Central Spiritual Board of Muslims in Ufa.

¹⁷⁶ Silantsev, Roman. *Islam v Sovremennoi Rossii: Entsiklopediia*. Moscow: Algoritm, 2008, pp.97

¹⁷⁷ According to the report of the Muslim Spiritual Board of the European Part of Russia, one of major Islamic colleges in Russia awarded 34 diplomas in 6 years. For detailed discussion, see Silantsev 2008:98.

East (Sovet Sharki Musulmonlari), the content of which was regulated by strict censorship rules. Occasionally, relatively objective articles on the Islamic faith appeared in a secular journal *Science and Religion (Nauka i Religiya)*. One of the earliest independent Islamic printed publications that emerged on the eve of the Soviet collapse was a newspaper *Tawhid*. It became known as an outlet of the newly emerging Party of the Islamic Revival. In 1990, the Muslim Spiritual Board in Ufa resumed publication of its old periodical *Maglumat*. The first Islamic publishing house in post-Soviet Russia, *Iman*, opened in Kazan in 1991. After the break up of the Soviet-era central Muslim spiritual boards in Ufa and Dagestan, their multiple successors founded their own presses. Thus, in 1992 and 1994 newspapers *Islam and Society* and *Islam Minbare* were launched in Bashkortostan and Moscow respectively. Within a few years, many newly established Muslim organizations founded their own newsletters and periodicals to publish religious articles and keep their communities up-to-date on the latest news about their organizations, accomplishments, and meetings. About 40% of these newspapers were published in national languages of respective minorities. A big portion of the printed material in Russian language was translated from Arabic.¹⁷⁸ Although, the reach of these resources was relatively restrained – most issues ran on a monthly basis and were distributed in a limited number of copies – all these sources freely circulated across Russia's regions, spreading Islamic religious messages.¹⁷⁹ At the time, Islamic TV, radio broadcasting, and the Internet could not contribute to the process as much, largely due to financial, technical, and technological constraints.

¹⁷⁸ See Silantyev 2008:116-122. For an excellent analysis of the linguistic aspect the post-Soviet Islamic revival in Russia, see Bustanov and Kemper 2013.

¹⁷⁹ See Silantyev 2008:107-116.

Development of the Islamic consumer industry is directly related to the Russian transition to market economy. Some of the first butcher shops in Russia emerged in Dagestan in 1990. They were specializing on producing *Halal* (religiously acceptable according to the Muslim law) meat and meat products. With the growing demand on such commodities, similar shops and cafes opened in other Russian regions. Over time, many grocery items became available with self-proclaimed *Halal* certification and consumer products such as alcohol-free perfumes and women's dress arrived in stores.¹⁸⁰ Some of the boutiques started to specialize exclusively on *Halal* products.¹⁸¹ Soon tourism and medical services with gender segregation became available.¹⁸² Possibility of Islamic banking in Russia has become a topic of serious discussions.¹⁸³ While both supply and demand in the *Halal* market increased, no attempt was made to centralize or supervise this area in the early 90s.

Visibility of Islam in the Russian public sphere also increased due to public celebrations of religious holidays. After 1992, two major Islamic holidays, Uraza Bayram (*Eid ul-Fitr*) and Kurban Bayram (*Eid ul-Adha*) were announced public holidays in most of Muslim-majority republics.¹⁸⁴ Although these days were not regarded as national

¹⁸⁰ Brands such as *Zhiner* and *Albarakat*, for instance, became very well known for their alcohol-free perfumes and women's clothing.

¹⁸¹ *Apel'sin* chain stores could be an example.

¹⁸² Companies such as Idel-Hajj, for example, specialized in organization of the tours to Saudi Arabia for Hajj and Umrah.

¹⁸³ For discussion of the prospects of Islamic finance and banking in Russia, see Bekkin, Renat I. "Islamic insurance: National features and legal regulation." *Arab Law Quarterly* 21.1 (2007): 3-34; and Bekkin, R. "There's the only Economy in the World with Totally Islamic Financial System,—Sudan. Islamic Economy in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Public speech, the Institute of Ethnology and Antropology of the Russian Academy of Sciences." (2010).

¹⁸⁴ Zakon Respubliki Bashkortostan ot 27 fevralja 1992 g. N VS-10/21 "O prazdnichnyh i pamjatnyh dnjah v Respublike Bashkortostan."

Rasporjzhenie Pravitel'stva Respubliki Bashkortostan ot 2 nojabrja 2012 g. N 1400-r.

Postanovlenie Pravitel'stva Respubliki Bashkortostan ot 28 oktjabrja 2013 g. N 488 "O nerabochnih prazdnichnyh dnjah v 2014 godu."

holidays on the federal level, Muslims living in traditionally Russian populated areas celebrated these days in their local communities. In daily routine life Islamic religious symbols became more and more visible. Scripts in Arabic and Islamic calligraphy not only decorated the interior of mosques, but also often adorned traditionally secular venues and art galleries.¹⁸⁵ In addition, Islamic religious themes were increasingly illustrated in the movies and theaters.

Moreover, some of the most active and ambitious members of Russia's Muslim community, such as Geidar Dzhemal, Muhammed Salakheddin, Shamil Sultanov, Valiakhmet Sadur, and Mukaddas Bibarsov, went as far as to establish political movements and religious parties. Thus, with the introduction of political liberalization, Islamic political movements such as the Party of Islamic Revival, Union of Russia's Muslims, *Nur*, *Refakh*, and several other movements emerged on the Russian political scene.¹⁸⁶ Until the enactment of the Federal Law on Political Parties of the Russian Federation in 2001, technically, the creation of political parties on the grounds of ethnic or religious affiliation was allowed.¹⁸⁷

On the whole, much of what was legally done in the name of Islamic revival in the period between 1990 and 1997 was largely achieved due to liberal religious laws that

For a full list of Russia's public holidays and relevant legal documentation, see <http://base.garant.ru/4029129/> (Last access March 17, 2015).

For a brief commentary on the topic, see "Kurban Bairam i Uraza Bairam v Bashkirii ostanutsya vyhodnymi dniami" *Ria Novosti* 21 December 2011 <http://ria.ru/society/20111221/522411432.html> (Last accessed on January 9, 2015).

¹⁸⁵ Read, for instance, about the life and work of Vladimir Popov. <http://vladimir-popov.ru/index.html> (Last accessed on March 17, 2015).

¹⁸⁶ Among these movements only *Nur* took part in the 1995 parliamentary elections independently, barely winning 0.5% of the votes. Others with a variety degree of success entered into coalition with other secular parties of Russia. For details, see Silantyev 2008:63-96.

¹⁸⁷ Federal Law on Political Parties of the Russian Federation. Enacted By the State Duma On June 21, 2001. Approved By the Federation Council On June 29, 2001.

passed in 1990. Three aspects of the RSFSR Law on religion were particularly important. One was minimization of formal procedures that were required to establish a religious group.¹⁸⁸ A second was abolishment of the Council for Religious Affairs (CRA), which interfered in the internal life of religious bodies. By 1990, religious dissidents, many public figures, and even some employees of the CRA itself argued for the abolition of the institution on the grounds that in a free society religion needs no regulation. The third aspect, most importantly, was the freedom to access the Russian public sphere for all religious communities. According to Anderson, the state has eventually come to recognize that even opium has its uses (Anderson 1991: 707). Throughout the 1990s the federal government remained committed to the norms of passive secularism spelled out in the 1990 law. Despite early warning signals about politicization and radicalization of Islam as well as emerging unintended consequences of religious liberalization, proponents of the 1990 law relied on provisions of the 1993 Constitution and stipulations of international agreements in order to protect individual rights and liberties of the people.

3. *Déjà vu* or not? Passive secularism in Russian history

In some ways, state-Islam relations in the early 1990s were unique. Never before has Russia's indigenous Muslim community had such extensive opportunities to interact with various branches of the Islamic faith and practice them publicly across Russia under the legal protection of the state. Rules and regulations of the 1990 law on religion and the 1993 Russian Constitution provided the necessary permissive conditions for religious

¹⁸⁸ In fact, many Islamic communities in the country did not even seek state registration between 1991 and 1997.

flourishing all over the country. Russia's various Muslim communities have never been exposed to the range of theological views within Islam that they got to know after fall of the Iron Curtain and reconnection with the Muslim world. Establishment of an unprecedented level of religious freedom has not only set religion free from the state control but also tremendously diversified the religious marketplace in the country. This was especially visible in the context of a devastating impact that decades of Soviet atheistic propaganda have had on people.

Nevertheless, in some ways, the reemergence of Islam in the Russian public sphere since the late 1980s resembles a brief earlier period in the Russian history. During the last decade of imperial rule there was a brief attempt to bring the norms of passive secularism to public life in Russia. In 1905, as part of the government's response to mounting demands for civil rights by an increasingly urban and educated population, Tsar Nicholas II issued the Edict of Toleration, which gave legal status to religions that were not Russian Orthodox.¹⁸⁹ This gave Russia's Muslims new opportunities for religious expression. Dozens of new Muslim newspapers and journals were founded. Some of the most popular periodicals such as *Tarakki*, *Tudjor*, and *Al-Ikhlās* became major venues for public debates among Muslim intellectuals. A new vehicle for articulation of collective demands on behalf of Russia's Muslims became the first Islamic political movement *Ittifaq al-Muslimin*. One of its aims was to represent the interests of the country's Muslims in the Duma. Reforms were also carried out in Islamic education, where the *Jadids*, the late Tsarist era Islamic reformers, sought to introduce new education methodology. New Muslim publishing houses opened in Kazan, Astrakhan,

¹⁸⁹ Pospelovsky, Dmitry (1984). *The Russian Church Under the Soviet Regime*. Crestwood: St. Vladimir Seminary Press. p. 22

Ufa, and Orenburg.¹⁹⁰ Later in the same year, the October Manifesto hinted at the possibility of granting total religious freedom to the population. The promise, however, was never legally ratified (Werth 2014).¹⁹¹

Finally, it is important to note that the main focus of the religious policy debates in Russia has historically been the Russian Orthodox Church. Both because of its long history of the relationship with the Russian state and the fact that the overwhelming majority of the population has always identified with various forms of Orthodox Christianity, the Church was at the center of debates on state-religion relations. In that sense, the *perestroika* era was not a complete exception. Having demonstrated their allegiance and usefulness in international affairs in the decades following World War Two, key members of the established clergy came to be seen by the late Soviet leadership under Gorbachev as premier partners in planning the comprehensive “restructuring” of the Socialist order (Nichols 1990).¹⁹² The approaching Millennium of Orthodox Christianity in Russia in 1988 became an opportunity for the Soviet regime to engage with the Russian Orthodox Church and involve religion into the comprehensive social reform.¹⁹³ Policies toward Islam in Russia largely shaped as a result of formulated

¹⁹⁰ Khabutdinov, Aidar. “Obschestvennoe dvizhenie rossiiskikh musul’man v dooktiabr’skii period: idei i metody,” *Forumy rossiiskikh musul’man na poroge novogo tysiacheletia*. Nizhnii Novgorod, 2003:41

¹⁹¹ Werth, Paul W. *The Tsar's Foreign Faiths: Toleration and the Fate of Religious Freedom in Imperial Russia*. Oxford University Press, 2014. Until its last days, the imperial rule relied on religious institutions to perform certain functions of local governance. According to Werth, as the Church and Muftiyates continued to perform important administrative functions on behalf of the state bureaucracy, the capacity of the autocratic state rested on the “multi-confessional establishment” (Werth 2014). Not until the Bolshevik revolution and the establishment of the Soviet rule did the state give up the confessional system of governance. Among all, the Russian Orthodox Church remained the state’s most trusted and effective bridge to the people.

¹⁹² Nichols, Robert L. “Dissent and conformity in the Russian Orthodox Church, 1943-1988,” in Leong, Albert, ed. *The Millennium: Christianity and Russia, AD 988-1988*. St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1990.

¹⁹³ The process of preparation for celebration of the millennium anniversary of Christianization of Rus’ turned out to be the beginning of a major change in state-religion relations that formalized in adoption of the 1990 law on religion.

church-state and state-religion regimes. Norms of passive secularism that came to dominate the 1990s were principally aimed at ensuring the equality of all faiths and to avoid domination of any particular faith group.¹⁹⁴ Secular leadership's commitment to liberalism, coupled with the belief in transformative impact of the Soviet era on religion and Islam and particular, which by then has largely attained cultural definitions, as well as the trust in loyalty of the people to the state exceeded the fear of a looming threat from growing Islamic activism.

Part III: Muslims and Islam under post-Soviet multiethnic ethnicity regime

Two decades after the Soviet collapse it is hard to disagree with Rogers Brubaker, who stated that by establishing a country based on *institutionalized multinationality*, the Soviet state “prepared the way for its own demise” (Brubaker 1996: 23).¹⁹⁵ Back in 1988, for many, the emergence of nationalist movements in several Soviet republics came as a big surprise (Motyl 1990:174).¹⁹⁶ Many in the Soviet leadership under Gorbachev had genuinely believed that the nationality problem had been more or less solved (Walker 2003:58).¹⁹⁷ Reportedly, Gorbachev himself shortly after becoming general secretary stated that “Into the consciousness and heart of every [Soviet citizen] there has deeply entered the feeling of belonging to a single family – the Soviet people.”¹⁹⁸ To what extent he was right or wrong may still be open to debate. Be that as it may, in March 1991, when the communist leadership attempted to use a nationwide referendum to address a

¹⁹⁴ *Svobodnaya Mysl'*, 2 (1609) 2010, pp.125-145.

¹⁹⁵ Brubaker, Rogers. *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*. Cambridge University Press, 1996.

¹⁹⁶ Motyl Alexander J. 1990. *Sovietology, rationality, nationality: Coming to grips with nationalism in the USSR*. New York: Columbia University Press.

¹⁹⁷ Walker, E. 2003. *Dissolution: Sovereignty and the Breakup of the Soviet Union*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

¹⁹⁸ Quoted in Walker 2003:58

critical question about the future of the USSR, the overwhelming majority of the Soviet population, indeed, supported the idea of preserving the Union. At the time, Muslim-majority areas demonstrated some of the strongest bonds of loyalty to the state.

In less than a decade after Gorbachev's statement the Soviet Union collapsed and full-fledged nationalist uprisings unfolded across its former territory, including in Muslim-majority provinces.¹⁹⁹ Centrifugal tendencies swept across the newly independent countries and autonomous republics, fundamentally transforming both secular and religious life and institutions. As it will be demonstrated below, in Russia, as a result of disintegration of the Soviet-era Muslim spiritual boards, within a few years, every ethnic Muslim republic established its own Muftiyat. According to Malashenko, by 1998, Muslim Spiritual Boards had been founded in almost every subject of the Russian Federation with a sizable Muslim population.²⁰⁰ This section will explore whether and how religious and nationalities policies with respect to Muslim minorities in post-Soviet Russia were interrelated.

1. Multiethnicity as a Soviet legacy

Russia inherited from the Soviet state a culturally, ethnically, and religiously diverse population. According to the Soviet census of 1989, up to 20% of the RSFSR natives represented non-Russian minorities, many of which were ethnic Muslim groups.²⁰¹ This demographic reality was at the heart of many complicated questions about

¹⁹⁹ This is not to say that ethnic-Muslim nationalism led to the Soviet break up. In fact, the most serious challenge to the Soviet state came from Eastern European nationalist movements. See Dannreuther 2010: 110.

²⁰⁰ Malashenko, A. V. *Islamskoe Vozrozhdenie v Sovremennoi Rossii*, Moscow, 1998

²⁰¹ Barbara A. Anderson and Brian D. Silver, "Growth and diversity of the population of the Soviet Union", *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 510, No. 1, 155-177,

post-Soviet nation-building and identity that Russian policymakers had to deal with. Should have Russia continued to attach political significance to ethnic identity? Was the category of *natsional'nost'* (nationality) still necessary in the context of post-Soviet nation-building?²⁰² What kind of political system had to be introduced? What policies the state had to adopt to address the questions of majority and minority? Was a post-Soviet Russia a nation-state and whether should it have been one?²⁰³ Dilemmas like these preoccupied the minds of Russian policymakers and constitutional theorists during the transition from communism. Ever since, the complexity of these issues has only increased and some still have not been resolved.

Nevertheless, as a matter of fact, the Russian Federation has not only taken over the population, but also adopted the multiethnic ethnicity regime of the Soviet Union based on the official institutionalization of ethnic diversity. According to Akturk's tripartite typology of ethnicity regimes, discussed in chapter one, "In institutional, legal, and symbolic terms, Russia preserved the Soviet legacy of multiethnic statehood" (Akturk 2012:230). Despite suggested proposals for promoting a non-ethnic, territorial, and civic nationalism, post-Soviet reformers decided to preserve the system of ethnic federalism in Russia. Yeltsin and his supporters deliberately opposed the arguments that ethnicity should be much less visible in post-Soviet Russia than it was in the USSR (Akturk 2012:231).

1990. Also, see Ralph S. Clem, Ed., *Research Guide to Russian and Soviet Censuses*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986; and Eberstadt, Nick. *Russia's peacetime demographic crisis: Dimensions, causes, implications*. Seattle, WA: National Bureau of Asian Research, 2010.

²⁰² Akturk 2012:231

²⁰³ Miller, Alexei. "The Nation as a Framework for Political Life," *Russian Politics and Law*, 47, 2 (March-April 2009):8-29, p.15. Also see Rutland, Peter. 2010. "The Presence of Absence: Ethnicity Policy in Russia." In *Institutions, Ideas, and Leadership in Post-Soviet Russia*, edited by Julia Newton, and William Tompson, Pp. 116–136. London: Palgrave Macmillan

The extant literature provides multiple reasons to explain the rationale of policymakers at the time for keeping the Soviet multiethnic structure intact. Some observers refer to systemic factors, arguing that the divided leadership in Moscow sought to win the support of ethnic autonomies, which could determine the fate of the struggle for presidency (Giuliano and Gorenburg 2012).²⁰⁴ Yeltsin, according to Akturk, in his struggle against Gorbachev and later in opposition to communists and rivals in the Duma, relied on the votes from ethnic republics, many of which wanted to maintain their privileged status. Others analysts suggest that it was the persistence of the Leninist/Soviet approach to ethnic diversity what defined the course of post-communist development in Russia. For them, Soviet era policymakers were accustomed to think of ethnicity as a primordial category. As Slezkine argued, the state actively promoted a primordialist understanding of ethnicity in the country for decades. This, according to him, left behind not only institutional, political, and ideological legacy but also a socio-psychological and mental legacy (Slezkine 1994).²⁰⁵

Nevertheless, few studies attempted to look at the autonomous role that religion played in the political dynamics of the country. The following section will explore how Islam and the Muslim clergy affected the relationship between federal and local secular authorities. It will argue that the convergence of interests between secular elites and the religious clergy in Muslim majority republics in the early 1990s had a significant impact on the formation of the post-Soviet order in Russia. Ultimately it will demonstrate how

²⁰⁴ Giuliano, Elise, and Dmitry Gorenburg. "The Unexpectedly Underwhelming Role of Ethnicity in Russian Politics, 1991-2011." *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization* 20.2 (2012): 175-188.

²⁰⁵ Slezkine, Yuri. "The USSR as a communal apartment, or how a socialist state promoted ethnic particularism." *Slavic Review* (1994): 414-452.

and why the adoption of the multiethnic ethnicity regime limited the involvement of state authorities in religious affairs during the 90s.

2. Secular “ethnic Muslim” nationalisms

The scholarship on religion and politics has rarely identified religion as a single most important cause of political behavior.²⁰⁶ On that account, two decades after the fall of communism, few can argue that the Islamic revivalism brought down the Soviet regime. According to Khalid, “the Soviet Union collapsed without its Muslims making a lot of trouble” (Khalid 2007:17). The initial period of Islamic revival after the Soviet collapse was also largely perceived as a non-political phenomenon. Local state authorities seemed to be in control of the evolving social and political change. The secular state bureaucracy gradually adapted to the conditions of political pluralism and market economy. Daily life of the majority of Russia’s ethnic Muslims, according to Khalid, remained largely de-Islamized and profoundly secular (Khalid 2007:121). For the first several years after the Soviet collapse, despite alarmist calls about politicization of Islam, especially in the Northern Caucasus, most religious groups showed little sign of disputing the established secular environment in the country.

In the early 1990s, at least two factors contributed to the strengthening of the perception that “ethnic Muslim” nationalisms were secular in nature. One important

²⁰⁶ Unless one looks at the debates through the essentialist perspective, religion alone cannot explain the complexity of various social phenomena. On the contrary, many agree that political decisions may have a decisive impact on religious practices. See, for example, Williams, Rhys H. "Religion as political resource: Culture or ideology?" *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* (1996): 368-378. Sherkat, Darren E., and Christopher G. Ellison. "Recent developments and current controversies in the sociology of religion." *Annual Review of Sociology*(1999): 363-394. Iannaccone, Laurence, Rodney Stark, and Roger Finke. "Rationality and the “religious mind”." *Economic Inquiry* 36.3 (1998): 373-389. Sharot, Stephen. "Beyond christianity: a critique of the rational choice theory of religion from a weberian and comparative religions perspective." *Sociology of Religion* 63.4 (2002): 427-454.

reason that added to the persistence of a secular order in Russia's Muslim-majority areas, as this study suggests, has been the transformative impact of the Soviet era on the majority of indigenous Muslims. Acquired cultural definitions of religion and secularization allowed the majority of Soviet Muslims to feel about Islam as an integral part of their way of life while maintaining loyalty to the state and its secular order. Pride in Islam as a national heritage, according to Khalid, could coexist with limited or even complete lack of religious observance, let alone a desire to live in an Islamic state (Khalid 2007:121). Therefore, revival of Islam as an element of national identity was not perceived as an issue of concern.

Another reason that explains the dominance of a secular order in Russia's Muslim-majority regions is a constructive dialogue that secular authorities and some religious groups managed to develop in the early post-Soviet period.²⁰⁷ For several years after the introduction of liberal reforms, both the secular nationalist and religious activists relied on each other and pursued a common goal of attaining more freedom and autonomy from the Soviet-era centralized administrations.²⁰⁸ In many of Russia's various Muslim-majority republics, national minority leaders sought to extract benefits from the federal center and consolidate their own political power. In doing so they often took advantage of both the nationalist rhetoric and religious fervor of Islamic groups. Islamic activists, in their turn, strove to reorganize the Soviet-era religious administration and to instill religion into the public sphere. Many of them enjoyed the support of local state authorities and benefited from the administrative backing.

²⁰⁷ It is important to note, however, that regional state-religion dynamics in the Middle Volga and the North Caucasus evolved independently and often differently from each other. See sections below for a more detailed discussion.

²⁰⁸ This aspect of the relationship between regional secular and religious elites has so far been largely neglected in the literature

3. The rise of “ethnic Muslim” nationalisms and decentralization of Islamic administration

In the analysis of Russia’s first decade of post-Soviet independence scholars usually highlight several factors and impulses that could have triggered the rise of nationalist feelings among ethnic minorities.²⁰⁹ Many experts emphasize long-standing historical grievances and institutional legacies (Roeder 1991, Bunce 1999, Dunlop 1998, King 2001).²¹⁰ Others call attention to the importance of economic factors and demographic trends (Toft 2003, Treisman 1997, Stoner-Weiss 1997, Hale 2000, Giuliano 2011).²¹¹ In addition, some specialists draw attention to the interests of political entrepreneurs and their role in these processes.²¹² Rogers Brubaker, for example, suggests that even though interests of those who speak on behalf of communities often do not correspond with interests of all or even the majority of the population, they are being able to lead the masses in a particular direction.

²⁰⁹ For a brief discussion of the trends in the literature on this issue, see George, Julie A. "Contingent Communities: Regional Ethnic Mobilization in the Yeltsin Era." *Russian History* 39.3 (2012): 379-391.

²¹⁰ Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996)

John Dunlop, 1998, *Russia Confronts Chechnya: Roots of a Separatist Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998)

Charles King, "The Benefits of Ethnic war: Understanding Eurasia’s Unrecognized states," *World Politics* 53, no. 4 (July 2001): 524-552

Philip Roeder, "Soviet federalism and ethnic mobilization," *World Politics* 43, no. 2 (January 1991): 196-232

Valerie Bunce, *Subversive Institutions: The Design and the Destruction of Socialism and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)

²¹¹ Toft, Monica Duffy. *The Geography of Ethnic Violence: Identity, Interests, and the Indivisibility of Territory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

Daniel Treisman, "Russia’s ‘Ethnic Revival’: The Separatist Activism of Regional Leaders in a Postcommunist Order," *World Politics*, 49, no. 2 (January 1997): 212-249.

Kathryn Stoner-Weiss, "Federalism and Regionalism," in *Developments in Russian Politics 4*, Stephen White, Alex Pravda, and Zvi Y. Gitelman, eds. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 229-250.

Henry Hale, "The Parade of Sovereignties: Testing Theories of Secessionism in the Soviet Setting," *British Journal of Political Science* 30, no. 1 (September 2000): 31-56.

Giuliano, E. *Constructing Grievance: Ethnic Nationalism in Russia’s Republics*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2011.

²¹² Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006).

What many of these studies agree upon is that Islam played one of the central roles in the rise of “ethnic Muslim” nationalisms in Russia during the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s. Since the late 1980s, Islam has indeed become salient in the life of Russia’s Muslims. According to Malashenko, it was a natural consequence of people’s return to the roots. As he puts it, “Their national consciousness is tied to their religious feeling.”²¹³ Ro’i argues that ethnic minorities that were traditionally associated with Islam were turning to religion because they “saw in it an alternative to everything that the Soviet regime represented and stood for.”²¹⁴ Goble points out that ethnic groups “have turned to Islam . . . as the only overarching identity that could give them the chance to define themselves and to achieve their goals.”²¹⁵ In addition, several other experts suggest that some political groups, seizing an opportunity to turn faith into political returns, used Islam to promote nationalist struggles.²¹⁶ They argue that many local secular elites used a comprehensive slogan of restoring national heritage in challenging respective central authorities.

The epic statement that Yeltsin made in Kazan in August 1991, as a chairman of the Supreme Council of the RSFSR, “take as much sovereignty as you can swallow” is

²¹³ Malashenko, Alexey. "Does Islamic Fundamentalism Exist in Russia?" *Muslim Eurasia: Conflicting Legacies*, edited by Yaacov Ro'i. London: Frank Cass (1995).

²¹⁴ Ro'i, Yaacov. "The Secularization of Islam and the USSR's Muslim Areas." In Ro'i, Yaacov, ed. *Muslim Eurasia: Conflicting Legacies*. Vol. 3. Psychology Press, 1995: 5.

²¹⁵ Paul Goble, *Russia: Analysis from Washington—Nationalism and Islam, Islam and Nationalism*, Radio Free Europe (Aug. 9, 1999) <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1091934.html> (Last accessed March 18, 2015).

²¹⁶ Aleksei Malashenko, “Russian Nationalism and Islam,” in Waller, Michael, Bruno Coppieters, and Aleksei Vsevolodovich Malashenko, eds. *Conflicting loyalties and the state in post-Soviet Russia and Eurasia*. Psychology Press, 1998:46. Alexei Zverev, “Qualified Sovereignty: The Tatarstan Model for Resolving Conflicting Loyalties,” in Waller, Michael, Bruno Coppieters, and Aleksei Vsevolodovich Malashenko, eds. *Conflicting loyalties and the state in post-Soviet Russia and Eurasia*. Psychology Press, 1998: 134-135. In particular, see Yemelianova (1999). She examined the role of Islam in the process of national, political, and cultural self-determination among the peoples of Russia’s Muslim-majority republics. Yemelianova, Galina M. "Islam and nation building in Tatarstan and Dagestan of the Russian Federation." *Nationalities Papers* 27.4 (1999): 605-629.

widely regarded as one of the most consequential and controversial declarations in his political career. Ramifications of an extended process of political decentralization that it is believed this statement has triggered are still debated. Not only did it encourage secular elites to consolidate their power in the regions, it also gave a strong incentive to nationalist and religious groups to pursue more assertive tactics. Internal cracks that already existed within Muslim community rapidly developed along with the process of political decentralization. Disintegration of the Soviet era Muslim Spiritual Boards gained additional momentum with the support of nationalist groups and local political elites (Yemelianova 1999; Silantyev 2002).

At the forefront of both political and Islamic spiritual decentralization in Russia stood Muslim-majority republics of the North Caucasus and the Middle Volga regions. To a varying extent, the ruling elites in the republics of Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia, and a number of other regions relied on the support of religious and nationalist groups in building new terms of relationship with the federal center. Some demanded greater autonomy; some sought outright independence.²¹⁷ As Giuliano puts it, “Islam served to shore up the claim to sovereign status” (Giuliano 2005: 200). One component in these regional nation-(re)building processes was the establishment of local Muslim spiritual boards. Reportedly, many leaders of ethnic Muslim republics encouraged local Islamic clergy to set up independent Muftiyats in the republics.

²¹⁷ It is often asserted, for example, that Dzhokhar Dudayev, a former Soviet commander who led the Chechen rebellion against Russia after the Soviet collapse, used religious rhetoric in order to mobilize Chechen strongmen for taking up arms. According to Giuliano, “Dudaev was attempting to link Chechnya’s late-20th century nationalist rebellion to Shamil’s *jihad* in order to win popular support for his goal of republican secession” (Giuliano 2005:199). The political leader of Tatarstan Mintimer Shaimiev has also relied on local ethno-religious groups in consolidating his power and in the struggle for gaining a special political status for Tatarstan.

Initially, it seemed that the internal split of Russia's Muslim community indeed followed ethno-territorial principles.²¹⁸ Thus, the first Muftiyat to fall apart in Russia largely along ethnic-territorial lines was the Spiritual Board of Muslims of the North Caucasus (DUMSK).²¹⁹ The campaign aimed at removing the Soviet-era Mufti Gekkiev began before the Soviet collapse in March 1989. By the end of the year, independent Muftiyats were established in Checheno-Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, and Dagestan. Later, with the strong support of local secular authorities, a Muslim Spiritual Board was also established in Karachevo-Cherkessia and Stavropol. Tensions along ethnic lines continued further even within breakaway Muftiyates. In Dagestan, for example, different ethnic groups (mainly Dargins, Avars, and Kumyks) started to compete with each other to acquire control over the Muslim Spiritual Board in Makhachkala (Yemelianova 1999:619; Giuliano 2005: 204; Silantyev 2008:292-298).²²⁰ According to Yemelianova, the conditions of extreme multiethnicity led to the emergence of four ethnic Islamic Spiritual Boards in Dagestan. They represented Dagestan's largest ethnic communities: Avars, Kumyks, Laks, and Dargins. From 1992 to 1994 the Lezgins also pressed for the formation of their own Spiritual Board. Yemelianova notes that in this early period of post-Soviet political and ideological confusion, "there was an alliance between these national/ethnic religious boards and the respective national/ethnic movements"

²¹⁸ For discussion of other reasons of disintegration of Russia's Muslim community, see chapter three and especially Silantyev, Roman *Noveishaia istoriia islama v Rossii*. Moscow: Algoritm, 2007. According to Silantyev, in addition to ethnic motives, political, financial as well as personal factors became salient.

²¹⁹ Prior to disintegration of DUMSK, similar events took place in Tashkent, where Muslims rallied against the leadership of the Spiritual Board in Uzbekistan.

²²⁰ According to Yemelianova, the actual political and economic power has been monopolized by five or six ethnic mafia-nomenklatura groupings. Avars and Dargins have occupied the top and most lucrative jobs in the republic (Yemelianova 1999:613).

For example, on the 8th of September 1994 deputy-prime minister Said Amirov called a meeting of Muslim spiritual authorities of the republic to hold elections for the leadership of DUMD. As a result, an ethnic Avar Muhammad Darbishev, activist of Islamic Democratic Party, was elected a Mufti. Registration of other boards in Dagestan except DUMD was refused. For details, see Silantyev, Roman. *Islam v Sovremennoi Rossii: Entsiklopediia*. Moscow: Algoritm, 2008.

(Yemelianova 1999: 619).²²¹ Similar disputes also took place in Kabardino-Balkaria.²²² In Checheno-Ingushetia, where the most dramatic story unfolded, the initial split of the Muslim community also followed the ethnic line. Following the partition of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR into two separate republics, an autonomous Muftiyat was established in Chechnya. Tragic efforts of local secular authorities led by Dzhokhar Dudayev to secure the loyalty of religious authorities and further exploit Islam to realize nationalistic ambitions largely defined the course of events in the republic and a wider region in the next several years. Overall, some observers of Islam in Russia describe these processes in the Northern Caucasus as a “sovereignization of the Islamic administration,” which acquired an ethnic dimension (Yemelianova 1999:619). According to Yemelianova, once disintegration had started, regional Islamic organization was no longer realistic in the North Caucasus.

Soon, similar dynamics reached Russia’s another Muslim enclave in the Mid-Volga basin. In 1992, Muslim activists of Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, led by Gabdulla Galiullin and Nurmuhammad Nigmatullin respectively, declared their independence from the Central Spiritual Board of Muslims headed by Mufti Tadzhuiddin (DUMES) and established local Muftiyates in Kazan and Ufa. The first President of Tatarstan, Shaimiev, who regarded foundation of an independent Muftiyat in Tatarstan an important attribute of sovereignty, supported the initiative of the local Islamic clergy to secede from the umbrella organization (Yemelianova 1999: 611). Leaders of the Tatar national movement, after an unsuccessful attempt to move the headquarters of the Central

²²¹ “Since 1994 there has been only one officially recognized Muftiyat in Dagestan – the Spiritual Board of the Muslims of Dagestan (SBMD), represented by the Avar Islamic elite and supported by the government. In reality, the SBMD has been accepted as a Dagestan Muftiyat only by Avars” (Yemelianova 1999: 619)

²²² However, the process there stopped short of complete fragmentation.

Spiritual Board of Muslims (DUMES) from Ufa to Kazan, also supported the decision.²²³ On September 15, 1992, the Spiritual Board of Muslims of the Republic of Tatarstan (DUMRT) was founded. According to Yemelianova, Tatarstan's authorities accommodated rapid construction of mosques, Islamic schools (*madradas*), and other Islamic institutions in the republic. Furthermore, "an Islamic theme has been consistently introduced into Tatar national symbols, architecture, monuments, and design" (Yemelianova 1999: 611). Finally, Tatarstan's secular leadership supported the claims of the Tatar Islamic officialdom to represent Tatars outside Tatarstan, *i.e.* within the mythological borders of the Idel-Ural.²²⁴

Secular authorities in Bashkortostan have also supported the idea of reviving a "national" Spiritual Board of Muslims (DUMRB), which actually existed up until the 1930s. The ethnic makeup of the Bashkir republic, however, complicated their task.²²⁵ While the areas mainly populated by Bashkirs readily approved the idea of 'sovereign' Bashkir Muftiyat, settlements inhabited by Tatars tended to preserve their loyalty to the DUMES headed by an ethnic Tatar, Mufti Talgat Tadzhuddin. As a result, when the Bashkir Muftiyat was established, the Republic of Bashkortostan became a host to two Muftiyates, what further aggravated the tension between Tatar and Bashkir nationalists.

At the time, observers of Islam in Russia, such as Aislu Yunusova, interpreted these developments as an attempt of the local political leadership in ethnic Muslim republics to obtain their 'pocket' muftiates (Yunusova 1999b). Other observers of

²²³ The attempt has failed largely because the Board was initially designed as a supra-ethnic structure.

²²⁴ Yemelianova, Galina M. "Islam and nation building in Tatarstan and Dagestan of the Russian Federation." *Nationalities Papers* 27.4 (1999): 605-629.

²²⁵ According to the 1989 census, ethnic Tatars represented 28.4% of the total population of Bashkortostan. Ethnic Bashkirs made up 21.9% of the republic.

Russian politics perceived these developments merely as “a by-product of the ‘parade of sovereignties’ in Russian politics” (Matsuzato 2007:785).²²⁶ Breakaway Muftiyates soon spread across the country. Thus, by the end 1994, a number of regional Muftiyates opened outside ethnic Muslim homelands. Institutions of Islamic administration were established in Orenburg and Ulianovsk Oblasts, Udmurtia, Perm, Samara, Saratov, Nizhniy Novgorod, Penza, Chuvashia²²⁷, Adygeya²²⁸, Rostov Oblast²²⁹, Astrakhan²³⁰, and a few other places²³¹. According to Malashenko, by 1998, several dozens Muftiyates were present in the country.²³²

Overall, at the time when post-Soviet principles of state approach toward regulation of Russia’s diverse population were formulated, religious identities were perceived as subordinate to much stronger ethnic cultures. For many people, adherence to Islam meant a “return” to national tradition and (re)discovery of a cultural heritage. As Adeeb Khalid described it, the turn toward religion was an element of the recovery of national memories and national legacies (Khalid 2007: 117). Partly for that reason, both federal and local secular governments did not resist popular initiatives aimed at reviving Islamic faith in public life. Remaining within the framework of secularism, state authorities showed good faith effort in accommodating the needs of religious groups.²³³

²²⁶ See Kimitaka Matsuzato (2007)

²²⁷ In some of the regions more than one Muftiyat were functioning. Thus, in Orenburg and Ulianovsk Oblasts three competing structures existed. In Mordovia and Penza - two. See Silantyev (2008) for more details.

²²⁸ Muftiyat of the republic of Adygea and Krasnodar region was established in 1993.

²²⁹ Don Muftiyat was founded in 1994 (under auspices of Muslim authorities in Ufa).

²³⁰ Spiritual Board of Muslims of Astrakhan Oblast was established in 1994 (RDUM AO under auspices of Muslim authorities in Ufa).

²³¹ Spiritual Board of Muslims of Volgograd Oblast was established in 1995 (RDUM VO under auspices of Muslim authorities in Ufa).

²³² Malashenko, A. V. *Islamskoe Vozrozhdenie v Sovremennoi Rossii*, Moscow, 1998

²³³ Also, see Yemelianova (1999) for a discussion of the position of intelligentsia on the issue. According to Yemelianova, the national/ethnic origins of the representatives of the intelligentsia have affected their

With a degree of variation across the republics, they all tended to return religious property, recognized some of the religious holidays, assisted with administrative questions related to organizing religious education, building mosques, traveling to Mecca for Muslim pilgrims, etc. Regional authorities seeking autonomy were especially glad to obtain local Muftiyats, instead of dealing with spiritual umbrella organizations. One could also observe active cooperation between ethno-nationalist groups and locally established Muftiyates as a confirmation of a thesis that Islam was a cultural phenomenon and did not pose a threat to the secular regime as a force that could unite Russia's ethnically diverse Muslim population and mobilize them toward any political goal.²³⁴

4. Challenges for the Multiethnicity regime in practice

Post-Soviet political liberalization had many unintended consequences. Some of the ramifications of both spiritual and political decentralization became apparent already in the 1990s. In some parts of Russia, especially in the republics of the Northern Caucasus, the atmosphere of religious freedom encouraged some Muslim activists to challenge the norms of a secular order. These instances were recorded in the regions with highly religious population. In their attempt to face some of the emerging problems, secular leadership in the regions sought to develop their own approaches toward religion, which, in fact, were quite distinct from attitudes in Moscow. Several local governments sought to introduce regulatory measures on religious affairs on their territories. Thus,

views on the optimal degree of "Islamization" of the society and its specific forms. In Tatarstan, for example, the majority of Tatar-speaking Tatar intellectuals have stressed the importance of Islam in the national self-identification of Tatars. The intelligentsia of various Islamic peoples of Dagestan has had even greater expectations of Islam, which has often been perceived as a crucial factor in the moral salvation of a society that has been socially degraded and criminalized (Yemelianova 1999:622)

²³⁴ See chapter three for a brief discussion of the attempts to establish Islamic political movements and their performance in national elections.

since 1994, multiple subjects of the federation, including both Muslim-majority and Muslim-minority districts, made several attempts to adopt restrictive measures against religious activism.²³⁵ Moscow, on the other hand, often limited itself to broad policy lines and did not intervene in regional dynamics. The following chapters will explain in more detail how and why federal and regional attitudes toward religion, and Islam in particular, were dissimilar in a number of ways.

This section has demonstrated that neutral state attitudes toward Islam in the 1990s were in part a result of a multiethnic ethnicity regime that the new Russian state adopted as a basis for a new social contract with its diverse population. Adoption of multiethnic ethnicity regime reflected not only liberal views of the late Soviet era reformers, but also the prevalence of cultural definitions of Islam among the decision makers. In part, the multiethnic framework carried over from the Soviet era was maintained because it allowed preservation of a secular order and the room for ethnic revival. Thus, it served both central and local authorities as well as for pro-active religious actors, many of whom were united in their commitment to deconstruct the Soviet legacy of atheism and totalitarian control.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the principles that guided Russian state policies toward Islam from *perestroika* until the late 1990s. It shows that norms of passive secularism in state-religion relations and the multiethnic ethnicity regime determined the state approach

²³⁵ According to Shterin and Richardson (1998), local law proposals were often “diametrically opposed” to the federal regulations (Shterin and Richardson 1998). Also, see the report on the *Freedom of Conscience Violations in the Russian Federation* (1994-1996), presented at the OSCE Review Meeting in Vienna in November 1996.

toward the post-Soviet Islamic revival between 1990 and 1997. The multiethnic passive secularism allowed unrestricted access of religious groups to the public sphere and put the burden of regulating the diverse society and maintaining the balance between various identities on a multiethnic ethnicity regime. A strong belief among the policymakers in a deep transformative impact of the Soviet era on Muslims and the Islamic practice in the country led them to assume that religion had acquired cultural definitions and was subordinated to much stronger ethnic identities.

The 1990 law on religion and the 1993 Russian Constitution provided a necessary legal base for a full-fledged religious revival. The number of religious communities and mosques grew, Islamic education was partly restored, religious literature as well as religious goods of public consumption became much more available than in the past. As a result, the overall visibility of Islam in the public areas significantly increased. Since no criteria were set out for the access of various Islamic groups to the Russian public sphere, shortly the Islamic religious market became increasingly diverse and no less divided.

The initial split of the Muslim community that seemed to follow ethnic lines led to the formation of a loose system of “ethno-regional” muftiyates. Since, the process largely followed the pattern of political decentralization, in other realms, it was not perceived as an issue of big concern for secular policymakers and, in fact, confirmed their assumption that Islam had largely become an element of national cultures. As Russia’s “ethnic Muslim” republics strived for sovereignty, many Islamic groups aligned with secular nationalists to deconstruct the Soviet-era control mechanisms.

Soon, however, it became clear that the phenomenon of Islamic revival had many layers of complexity besides ethnic component. As intra-faith quarrels within Muslim communities took ideological, theological, and personal forms, it increasingly turned into a security concern and came to be perceived by secular authorities as a threat to a secular social order. The following chapter will explore how this secular perception of Islam as a cultural phenomenon has been altered over time. It will analyze the emergence and development of the notion of “traditional Islam” that carries a distinct meaning from the idea that Islam is a means of ethnic identification bearing something of a "folk" character (Yalykapov, *Economist* Sept 1, 2012). The introduction of regulatory measures toward religion, as I will suggest, was largely an outcome of debates about the kind of Islam that should have access to the Russian public sphere and what role it would play there.

Chapter 3

Russia's Muslims and Islam under Non-ethnic Multiconfessionalism, 1997-2012

Society is unity in diversity

George Herbert Mead

Khubb ul'-Watan min al'-Iman ("Love for the Fatherland is a testimony of the faith")

The Prophetic Tradition

Abstract

What explains Russian state's interventionism in Islamic affairs since the late 1990s? Research on the political dynamics in Russia in the first decade of the 2000s frequently refers to the return of authoritarian practices and reestablishment of the state-centric approach in social policymaking. However, these frameworks rarely explain the mechanism of religious policy-making in the country or present a conceptual framework for interpreting the relationship between religion and the state. This chapter continues to develop the matrix of ethno-confessional regimes to explain Russian state policies toward indigenous Muslim population and Islam. I advance the hypothesis that state attitudes toward Islam in Russia between 1997 and 2012 reflected a transition to a non-ethnic multi-confessional regime. I argue that realization that religion, and particularly Islam, could serve as a tool for maintaining the patriotic consensus induced Russian policymakers to reject the ethnic model of development and embrace morality as the foundation of the Russian state. Within this framework, "traditional Islam" and the established Muslim clergy play an essential role in providing the Russian state with ideological legitimacy among the indigenous Muslims and the institutional means to govern a diverse society. Reconstruction of a Tsarist-era "multi-confessional establishment," as this study suggests, is one of the reasons why the Russian state continues to actively regulate the access of religious groups to the Russian public sphere and aims at legal uniformity.

Introduction

On November 4, every year since 2005, Russia has celebrated the National Unity Day, a symbolic date that marks the expulsion of Polish invaders in 1612 and the end of the ‘Time of Troubles’.²³⁶ The fact that the Russian President commemorates the event alongside the leaders of the country’s “traditional religions” does not escape the attention of careful observers of Russian politics.²³⁷ For many people, it primarily signals that religion has become essential to Russia’s political legitimacy and social cohesion. Secondly, the fact that it is usually Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church who opens the celebration with a prayer for the fatherland hints that Orthodoxy is particularly marked as the first among equals because of its central role in Russian historical development. Indeed, today, as Burgess put it, “the Russian Orthodox Church is reclaiming its place as an integral part of Russian society” and enjoys social and political privileges (Burgess 2009:5).²³⁸ As is spelled out in the preamble of the country’s 1997 law on religion, Orthodoxy made a special contribution to the history of Russia and to the establishment and development of the country’s spirituality and culture.

Nonetheless, in symbolically charged events like these, which represent the efforts to come up with a compelling national idea to fill the ideological vacuum that opened up after the Soviet collapse, a significant role is also reserved for Russia’s

²³⁶ The Time of Troubles (Russian: Smutnoe Vremia) was a period of Russian history comprising the years of interregnum between the death of the last Russian Tsar of the Rurik Dynasty, Feodor Ivanovich, in 1598, and the establishment of the Romanov Dynasty in 1613. In 1601–03, Russia suffered a famine that killed one-third of the population, about two million. At the time, Russia was occupied by the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth in the Dimitriads, and suffered from civil uprisings, usurpers and impostors.

²³⁷ Victoria Smolkin-Rothrock, “What are Russians celebrating when they celebrate National Unity Day?” www.opendemocracy.net (Last accessed on 5 November 2014).

²³⁸ Burgess, John P. "Orthodox resurgence: Civil religion in Russia." *Religion in Eastern Europe* 29.2 (2009): 1-14.

Muftis.²³⁹ The significance of the day for indigenous Muslims is that it also highlights their own role in ‘liberating’ the country from foreign aggressors and emphasizes that native followers of Islam should therefore be considered co-constructors of Russian statehood.²⁴⁰ Leaders of the established Islamic institutions, who represent the majority of Russia’s Muslims, readily participate in such meetings and make sure to make careful public statements on the occasion. Thus, they contribute to the construction of Russia's shared historical narrative, in search of which architects of the country’s new ideology reach as far as to the 17th century.²⁴¹

Whether or not major representatives of Russia’s Islamic community think that the new ideological configuration of the state is being built on a confessional-religious model, they all realize the growing influence of the Orthodox Church on Russian politics and society, while still being unable to overcome the internal disputes that led to the fragmentation of Russia’s Muslim community in the 1990s. Under the deep influence of historical memories about forced Christianization, Muftis not only rely on the state as a guardian of secularism but also compete with each other for the right to speak on behalf of all Russia’s Muslims. The state in its turn, which also has come to increasingly rely on the established religious institutions as important tools of governance and moral

²³⁹ Earlier attempts to come up with a compelling national idea produced little but cynicism and mockery, as most Russians didn't understand what, or who, they were expected to reconcile with. For details, see chapter four. Also, for more on the 1996 contest for the ‘Russian idea’ and the Day of Accord and Reconciliation, see Linda Delaine, “Day of Accord and Reconciliation,” *Russian Life*. November 7, 2000. <http://www.russianlife.com/blog/day-of-accord-and-reconciliation/> (Last Accessed on March 15, 2015).

²⁴⁰ Dannreuther, Roland. "Islamic radicalization in Russia: an assessment." *International Affairs* 86.1 (2010): 109-126. Also see Vitaly Naumkin, ‘Evroislam kak naslednik dzhadidizma’, in D. V. Mukhetdinova, ed., *Forumy Rossiskiykh musul'man na poroge novogo tysyacheletiya* (Nizhnii Novgorod: Medina, 2006).

²⁴¹ For sample statements of the leaders of the three major Muslim Spiritual Boards of Russia, Sheikh-ul-Islam Talgat Tadzhuddin, Mufti Ravil Gainutdin, and Ismail Haji Berdiev, see: <http://www.muslim.ru/articles/115/6137/> (last access on January 19, 2015) <http://cdum.ru/news/44/5413/> (last access on January 19, 2015) http://www.vrns.ru/society/3375/#.VIDPbmTF_WU (last access on January 19, 2015)

discipline, sees the vital importance of maintaining confessional peace among “traditional religions” and “protect” the established clergy from internal dissent and foreign influence.²⁴²

These delicate issues were largely absent from the calculus of religious and secular authorities in the early 1990s, when religion was treated merely as an element of culture and the Russian public sphere was unrestrictedly open to all religious groups and communities. What changed in the relationship between the Church, state, and Russia’s Muslims during the first decade after the Soviet collapse? More importantly, how did developments within country’s Muslim community affect the state’s attitude toward Islam? This chapter will explore further evolution of Russia’s post-Soviet ethno-confessional regime since the late 1990s and examine its impact on state-Islam relations.

The first part of the chapter will demonstrate the evolution of secular thinking about the Islamic faith and describe some of the transformations in Muslim religious practice in Russia over the 1990s. It will explain why Islam, which was largely perceived by Russian policymakers as a subordinate element of largely secularized and westernized cultures of indigenous Muslims in the late Soviet era and the early 1990s, came to be seen as a powerful ideology that could guide human behavior both in positive and negative ways. The second part will start to examine the state’s response to these perceived challenges. It will focus on the emergence and development of a “Confessional collaboration model” in Russia’s state-religion relations.²⁴³ I will explain the formation of

²⁴² Vladimir Putin’s speech at a meeting with muftis from Russia’s Muslim spiritual administrations on October 22, 2013. <http://eng.kremlin.ru/transcripts/6157> (Last access February 23, 2015).

²⁴³ Confessional collaboration refers to the relationship between the state and traditional religious organizations (most notably between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Kremlin) which manifests itself

a concept of “traditional Islam” and the development of a patriotic definition of religion, which guided the thinking of policymakers about Islam in the post-1997 era. This section will also demonstrate that the adopted model is largely based on the historical precedent known as the “multi-confessional establishment,” which was developed in the 18th century (Werth 2014). The third part will analyze the origins and development of a non-ethnic ‘ethnicity regime’ in post-Soviet Russia. The conclusion will summarize the findings and reassess the rise of the concept of “traditional Islam” as a new phenomenon in the construction of Russia’s post-Soviet identity. Overall, the chapter should clarify how the post-Soviet Russian leadership, attempting to overcome the confusing ambiguity about Russian national identity and the state’s legitimacy, seeks to rebuild a vast country with its troubled political history.

Part I: Learning to deal with the Islamic Diversity: From Cultural Islam to Islamic Patriotism

In October 2013, President Putin delivered a speech in Ufa at the event commemorating the 225th anniversary of the foundation of the Muslim Spiritual Assembly – the first state-recognized Islamic institution in Russia.²⁴⁴ Alas, he had to begin his address calling for a minute of silence to pay respect to the victims of a deadly terrorist attack in Volgograd that happened the day before.²⁴⁵ The tragic attack, which

in cooperation taking place in selected areas of the public sphere, in education and social care. See discussion below. Also refer to the dissertation glossary for the definition of the term and references.

²⁴⁴ Vladimir Putin, Speech at a celebratory event marking the 225th anniversary of the founding of the Central Spiritual Administration of Muslims in Russia. October 22, 2013.

<http://www.kremlin.ru/transcripts/19473> (Last accessed on February 3, 2015)

²⁴⁵ The attack took life of 7 civilians and left 37 more wounded. “V rezul'tate terakta v Volgograde raneny 37 chelovek - utochnennye dannye MChS,” *ITAR-TASS*. 21 October 2013. <http://itar-tass.com/proisshestviya/693737> (Last accessed on January 20, 2015); “V Mahachkale ubit organizator terakta v Volgograde,” *RIA-Novosti*, 20 November, 2013. <http://ria.ru/incidents/20131120/978323651.html> (Last accessed on January 20, 2015)

was reportedly carried out by Islamist radicals, reminded many of a series of similar assaults throughout the 90s and the 2000s that left behind a heavy toll of dead and wounded civilians. The event in Volgograd turned the public's eyes to the President's remarks, which were expected to give an official perspective not only on issues of concern to Russia's indigenous Muslim community, but also provide a broader perspective on the role of Islam in the country and some of the challenges that the larger society was facing with respect to Islamic extremism. The President's talk at the ceremony and his comments at a subsequent meeting with the heads of Russia's major Muftis did indeed reveal the position of the state with respect to key policy matters and, more importantly, vividly demonstrated the transformation of the official rhetoric toward Islam since the early 1990s.²⁴⁶

The bulk of President Putin's address stressed the importance of cultivating the sense of patriotism among the indigenous Muslim population and especially the youth. In his speech, Putin quoted indigenous Islamic scholars to remind Muslims that "the love of Homeland," according to the prophetic tradition, was "part of Muslim faith."²⁴⁷ Putin underlined the important role of the established clergy in educating the population about the common values. "Our common goal," he said, "is to raise the youth in the spirit of mutual respect, which is founded on the feelings of common citizenship, patriotism, and shared national identity."²⁴⁸ At a separate meeting with the country's leading Islamic

²⁴⁶ Vladimir Putin's Speech at a celebratory event marking the 225th anniversary of the founding of the Central Spiritual Administration of Muslims in Russia. <http://eng.kremlin.ru/transcripts/6155> (Last access February 3, 2015)

²⁴⁷ President Putin quoted Mufti Rasulev, who preached that love for the motherland was part of Muslim's faith.

²⁴⁸ Vladimir Putin's speech at a celebratory event marking the 225th anniversary of the founding of the Central Spiritual Administration of Muslims in Russia. <http://eng.kremlin.ru/transcripts/6155> (Last access February 3, 2015).

authorities, the President reiterated his vision of the future of Islam in Russia. He pointed out the historical role of Muslim Spiritual Boards in educating Muslims as true patriots of Russia and called on the Muftis to unite the efforts to strengthen traditional Islam. He also emphasized the importance of cooperation between Muftiyats and the Church, especially in questions pertaining to protection of the country from unfavorable foreign influence. For Putin, spiritual authority had to remain in hands of the established clergy. In this context, Mr. President underlined the importance of establishing a homegrown Islamic school of thought that would guarantee the “sovereignty” of Russia’s spiritual space. He admitted that secular efforts to do this had often been unproductive.²⁴⁹ Finally, he emphasized that the Russian public sphere remained open to the established clergy and invited them to make use of available resources to socialize indigenous Muslims and achieve other stated goals.²⁵⁰

This section will examine the evolution of secular thinking about Islam in Russia from the idea that it was merely an element subordinated to ethnic cultures to the idea that it was a leading social force that disciplined the society in collaboration with the state. First, I will discuss some of the reasons for fragmentation of the Muslim community beyond ethnic lines. Then I will describe important transformations in Muslim religious practice in the country and explain re-emergence of debates about Islam in the context of a security discourse. Finally, I will discuss the formation and development of a concept of “traditional Islam” in Russia. I will suggest that the belief of secular authorities in 1) the ability of the established Muslim clergy to build patriotic

²⁴⁹ He mentioned the controversies about banning of the Islamic literature.

²⁵⁰ Vladimir Putin’s Speech at a meeting with muftis from Russia’s Muslim spiritual administrations. <http://eng.kremlin.ru/transcripts/6157> (Last accessed on March 18, 2015).

consensus among indigenous Muslims and 2) a potential threat stemming from non-traditional Islamic communities has come to dominate policymakers' thinking about the religion in the post-1997 era.²⁵¹

Table 10: *Non-ethnic Multi-confessionalism and Islam, 1997-2012*

State-religion regime	Ethnicity regime
Confessional collaboration	Non-ethnic
Access to the public sphere is reserved for “traditional” religious organization	Civic nationalism; Declining support for institutionalization of ethnicities
Regulation of religious affairs	
Patriotic Islam (religious organizations as junior partners of secular state institutions)	

1. Islamic diversity beyond ethnic politics

By the mid-1990s it became clear that many policymakers underestimated the role that Islam could play in the Russian society under the liberal regime. In his study on the post-Soviet fragmentation of the Russian Muslim community, Roman Silantyev argues that over time the explanatory power of the “ethnic factor” was rapidly fading away.²⁵² As intra-faith disputes within Russia’s Muslim community deepened, theological and political motives became important in the analysis of Muslim behavior (Silantyev 2002). Silantyev’s study reveals that ethnic diversity was indeed only one of many

²⁵¹ For one of the best discussions about different interpretations of Islam in the contemporary world, see Mamdani, Mahmood. *Good Muslim, bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the roots of terror*. Three Leaves, 2005.

²⁵² Simantyev, Roman. *Etnicheskii aspekt raskola islamskogo soobshchestva Rossii*. Moscow: Institut etnologii i antropologii RAN, 2002.

disagreements among the country's Muslim clergy and various Islamic groups.²⁵³ The division of indigenous Muslims into multiple competing factions was also due to generational differences, ideological and theological disagreements, as well as divergence in financial and political interests. Many disputes seemed to be further complicated with personal idiosyncrasies.

The first observation that began to challenge the perception that religious identities were totally subordinated to local cultures was a generational dispute between younger and older cohorts of indigenous Muslim clergy. So-called "young Imams" challenged older Islamic authorities, at times accusing them of incompetence in religious matters, excessive loyalty to the secular authorities, and even corruption.²⁵⁴ Indeed, in a religion that does not have a church-like hierarchy, seniority counts far less than religious knowledge in defining the authority. Therefore, some of the young Muslims, who took the opportunity to obtain Islamic education abroad, could easily challenge the authority of often religiously poorly educated Soviet-era elderly imams. The exact number of students who left Russia to receive Islamic education is unknown. According to various estimates, over 20,000 people returned to the country with such an education.²⁵⁵ This, according to Goble, has split Islamic communities in many Russian regions. Observers of Islam in Russia note that to a certain extent a strong sense of a usurpation of religious authority by an older generation of Soviet-trained elite, which is rarely justified by their

²⁵³ It is important to note that Silantiev's hypotheses are highly contested both in the academic community as well as among the members of Russia's Muslim clergy.

²⁵⁴ Silantiev 2008:172, Yemelianova 1999. According to Yemelianova, the low standards of professionalism of the official Islamic clergy – many of whom were former party and Komsomol chiefs – triggered popular Islamic protest, especially in the Northern Caucasus, where the indigenous Muslim population was much more religious than in the Volga-Urals area (Yemelianova 1999: 612).

²⁵⁵ Testimony of Paul Goble at the public hearing before The Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe: U.S. Helsinki Commission. December 17, 2009

theological or religious knowledge, exists among the younger generation of Muslims (Dannreuther 2010).

Often generational conflicts overlapped with other disagreements within Russia's Muslim community. Some observers interpreted these divergences as splits along various theological doctrines. According to Almazova, religious activists could be categorized as adherents of the reformist, conservative-traditional, secular-nationalist, and radical interpretations of Islam (Almazova 2015).²⁵⁶ Thus, for example, the established clergy continued to preach that Islam was rooted in local ethno-cultural traditions and for the most part was based on *Sufism* or on the *Hanafi* or *Shafi* schools of *Sunni Islam*.²⁵⁷ A younger generation of Muslims became exposed to other interpretations of the religion. Some of them found *Wahhabism* and *Salafism* to be more appealing. In terms of Islamic theology, *Wahhabism* and *Salafism* represent the "pure" Islam observed during the times of Prophet Muhammad and the four Righteous Caliphs. The *Wahhabis* advocate strict monotheism (*tawhid*) and regard innovations in religion and *tariqatism* (a form of Sufism) as deviations from "true" Islam. In particular, they insist on the mandatory observance of all five pillars of Islam and reject customary religious rituals such as sermons commemorating the 3rd, 7th, and 40th days after a believer away. In doing so, *Wahhabis* often come into conflict with local established Islamic authorities.

Moreover, the post-Soviet Islamic resurgence revived some other local theological debates that were silenced during the Soviet era. One of such debates emerged in the Volga-Urals area between *qadimists* – an Islamic camp concerned with

²⁵⁶ Almazova, Leyla. "The Positions of Muslim scholars in the Volga-Ural Region in the Context of Islamic Ideologies of the 20th and 21st Centuries." *Islam and Citizenship Education*. Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden, 2015. 259-272.

²⁵⁷ Also *muridism*, depending on the region.

the preservation of the old system and resisting religious innovation, and *jadidists* – Islamic reformers.²⁵⁸ Historically, according to Kanlidere, *jadidists* saw *qadimists* as traitors and considered themselves as the real preservers of the line of tradition. Ironically, however, *qadimists* accused their counterparts of the same faults (Kanlidere 1997).²⁵⁹ The old rivalry between the two schools of Islamic thought that dates back to the 19th century revived soon after the Soviet collapse. The established Muslim clergy aimed primarily to defend Islam against supposedly "foreign cultural currents" and struggled against any kind of deviation from their accustomed Islamic practice. Some of the newly emerging Islamic groups played into the local theological debate and claimed their own authority. In addition, the leading Tatar official theoretician, Rafael Khakimov, came up with a concept *EuroIslam* as a viable basis for restoration of Tatar reformist Islam and the Tatar national idea (Yemelianova 1999: 612).²⁶⁰ Public debates over these issues contributed to the strengthening of the idea that Islam was not merely an element of ethnic identities.

The idea that Islam was subordinated to ethnic and local cultures continued to suffer serious blows as disputes within Russia's Muslim community deepened. In addition to generational, theological, and ideological differences that contributed to the crystallization of "traditional" and "non-traditional" Islamic groups, critical differences soon emerged among representatives of Russia's established Islamic clergy

²⁵⁸ Abdullin, Yahya G. "Islam in the history of the Volga-Kama Bulgars and Tatars." *Central Asian Survey* 9.2 (1990): 1-11.

²⁵⁹ Kanlidere, Ahmet. "Reform Within Islam." *The Tajid and Jadid Movement among the Kazan Tatars (1809–1917). Conciliation or Conflict* (1997). Also see Mukhametshin, Rafik "Musul'manskoe obrazovanie u Tatar v dorevolucionnoi Rossii: Sostoyanie, problemy i perspektivy." *Minbar*, 2009:79.

²⁶⁰ Rafael Khakimov is the author of the concept of *EuroIslam*, which is described as a synthesis of Tatar *jadidism* and postmodernism. See Khakimov, R. 2003. *Where Is Our Mecca? Manifest of Euroislam*, Kazan: Institute of History at the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan

(representatives of “traditional Islam”). Key disagreements on the status of Islam in Russia, representation of the religion on the federal level, and the relationship with the Orthodox Church led to the grouping of Islamic communities around several major state-approved Muftiyats. Differences in opinion as to whether Islam is a regional phenomenon or has a national perspective, whether it should be considered an equal or a junior partner to the Russian Orthodox Church, as well as the rights of Muslims in Muslim-minority regions became subjects of contention between the Central Spiritual Board of Muslims in Ufa, the Council of Russia’s Muftis in Moscow and several strong Muftiyats in the Muslim-majority republics (Curanovic 2014).

In the meantime, Islamic pluralism in Russia grew fast and strong. In addition to the points mentioned above, several factors facilitated gradual development of independent religiously motivated communities in the country. In part, diversification of the religious marketplace happened due to the growing public demand for religious services and unpreparedness of the established clergy to meet the needs of the society.²⁶¹ Secondly, a growing number of people receiving Islamic education abroad and a massive influx of foreign Islamic missionaries facilitated the spread of new religious ideas. In addition, the proliferation of Islamic literature and the financial independence of new Islamic groups contributed to the process that has finally broken the perception that Islam was subordinated to the indigenous cultures.

2. Transformations of Muslim religious behavior and Islamic practices

²⁶¹ Religious market(place) is a physical and virtual space where religious ideas and goods are exchanged. See the dissertation glossary for the definition and references.

The expanding religious marketplace over the course of the 1990s was reflected in a great variation in Muslim religious behavior. For many Muslim believers this process presented an opportunity for private spiritual growth and building a closer relationship with the Divine.²⁶² For some others, however, this was a chance to assert the public visibility and practice of Islam and even a reason to challenge the secular regime. Trends in Muslim religious behavior and Islamic practices became a topic of heated parliamentary discussions at the regional level. Public debates in Muslim-majority republics covered themes ranging from religious holidays to religiously motivated clashes between various Islamic groups. In this respect, developments in the republics of Dagestan and Tatarstan are exemplary.

In Dagestan, for example, various Islamic groups sought new ways to become involved in public life, including active political participation. In March 1990, the first Islamic party of the republic '*Dzhamaatul Muslimin*' was registered. It was aimed at representing the interests of the fundamentalist wing of Dagestani Muslims. Soon, on the 20th of October, *Islamic Democratic Party of Dagestan* was founded and sided with the state-backed Spiritual Board of Muslims of Dagestan (DUMD).²⁶³ In a relatively short period of time numerous other movements that also underlined their ties with Islamic values emerged in the republic. Among them were '*National Front*', Avar People's Society "*Dzhamaat*", Avar National Council, Kumyk '*Tenglik*', '*Vatan*', *Milli Medzhlis*, National Front of Chechens-Akkins, '*Birlik*', and others (Silant'ev 2006:230).

²⁶² Available data suggests that in 1990 34% of urban Tatars identified themselves as believers. This number increased to 66% in 1994 and reached the level of 81% in 1997. The study suggests that these numbers varied according to different age groups. Levels of religious observance, nevertheless, were much lower. See Musina, R. "Islam i problemy identichnosti Tatar v postsovetskii period," in ed. Iskhakov, D. *Konfessional'nyi factor v razvitii Tatar*. Kazan: Mardzhani, 2009.

²⁶³ The party has later changed its name to the *Islamic Party* and joined the All-Russia Public Muslim Movement Nur.

In May 1991 ‘Dzhamaatul Muslimin’ organized the first public protest campaign against the regional Spiritual Board and secular authorities. The rally that occupied the central square of the capital Makhachkala lasted 12 days. The original disputed issue was a 6-fold increase on the price for a Hajj (a Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca).²⁶⁴ Over time, demands developed into a criticism of the local Spiritual Board and calls for resignation of the republic’s secular leadership. High-ranking officials failed to pacify the protesters and on the 13th of June demonstrators attempted to besiege the building of the Supreme Council of Dagestan. In the history of modern Dagestan this day is recorded as a “Black Thursday”. One person died as a result of a violent clash between protesters and security forces (Silant’ev 2008).

The organizer of the demonstration, ethnic Dargin Khasbulat Khasbulatov, was soon arrested in Moscow. However, before long he was released upon the appeals of arriving pilgrims. According to Roman Silant’ev, releasing Khasbulatov was a critical event that had far-reaching consequences. He suggests that some Islamic groups in Dagestan perceived this gesture as a weakness of the secular state and realized that Islamic movements could effectively put pressure on secular authorities (Silant’ev 2006:231). By May 1998 representatives of the Islamic opposition, including extremists, became so powerful that a crowd of Islamists installed the green banner of Islam over the Dagestani Parliament in Mahachkala. In July 1998, several villages in Buynakskii district proclaimed themselves Islamic territory, based on *Sharia* (Islamic law).²⁶⁵

²⁶⁴ The price for Hajj was 5 thousand rubles per person in 1990. 345 people from Dagestan performed it. In 1991, 900 people planned to perform Hajj, but the price for Hajj increased to 30 thousand rubles (Moskovskie Novosti, 11 August 1991).

²⁶⁵ Yemelianova, 1999.

Not only religious movements and groups demonstrated political activism. Encouraged by the public support of religious revival, Dagestan's Muftiyat has also gradually developed a rather conservative approach. Demands of the clergy ranged from an increase in Islamic broadcasting on television and radio to making Friday an official holiday, establishing an Islamic educational system, and to the introduction of at least some elements of *Sharia* into the legal system (Sackman Eaton 2005, Yemelianova 1999).

Similar, albeit not identical, dynamics also evolved in Tatarstan. Encouraged by the growing popularity, the Mufti of a newly established Spiritual Board of Muslims of Tatarstan (DUMRT), Gabdulla Galiullin, pressured secular authorities for financial benefits such as significant cuts in utility fees for mosques and Islamic religious schools, as well as assistance in establishment of the new system of Islamic education in the republic.²⁶⁶ Unhappy with delays in meeting his demands, Galiullin began criticizing regional secular authorities and President of the Republic of Tatarstan Mintimer Shaimiev. The conflict reached its apogee in the "Muhammadiya" affair. The dispute developed over property rights on building of the Islamic school "Muhammadiya" in Kazan in 1995. In September, Mufti Galiullin demanded the return of the premises to the school. As city administration responded ambiguously, students seized the facility. The scandal took on a federal dimension when Galiullin's move found support of the Orthodox Church. Despite all his efforts, Galiullin was unable to secure the property for too long. The secular leadership ordered security forces to empty the building and the command was immediately executed. Subsequent attempts of Galiullin and several other

²⁶⁶ See materials of the second meeting of DUM RT held on 22 January, 1995.

Islamic groups beyond control of DUM RT to challenge the secular leadership were in vain.²⁶⁷

In the secular domain, arguably, the strongest campaigner for the thorough re-Islamization of the local indigenous population has been the Republic of Tatarstan's parliamentary deputy Fanavil Shaymardanov. He was the initiator of local parliamentary discussions on issues such as creation of Islamic schools, hospitals, maternity wards, food stores, and cafes, as well as special places for prayer in various places of work and recreation; the formation of Muslim units in the Russian army; the introduction of a ban on alcohol sales during the Islamic holidays, and a ban on the use of Islamic symbols in the labeling of alcohol and travel tickets, etc. These initiatives, however, received little support and had practically no effect on government policies (Yemelianova 1999).

A number of similar initiatives have been tried in other Muslim majority republics and across the country. However, without a collectively accepted religious authority, the Russian Muslim community was neither able to present a coherent view on policy matters nor offer a vision for the future of Islam in Russia. On the contrary, disagreements within Russia's Islamic communities turned increasingly intense and even violent.

3. Politicization and Securitization of Islam

The outbreak of violence in the Northern Caucasus, two bloody wars in Chechnya, and deadly terrorist attacks across the country throughout the 1990s and the

²⁶⁷ See Yemelianova 1999 and Silantyev 2008 for discussion of Galiullin's attempts to establish an Islamic party based on a movement "Musul'mane Tatarstana" and similar efforts of several other Islamic groups beyond control of DUM RT (e.g. *Saf Islam* and *Tabligh*).

following decade have become a focus of public attention and intensive scholarly research. The purpose of this study is not to offer an alternative explanation of the vicious conflicts and heartless assaults on civilians that took many lives. Nor does this work aim to engage in a debate about the causes of Islamic radicalization and politicization of religion in general. Rather, one of its important goals is to show what has changed in how secular authorities perceived Islam in the early 1990s and the 2000s and what principles guided state policies toward the religion in the two periods. It will suggest that Islam, which was largely perceived by Russian policymakers as a subordinate element of highly secularized and westernized cultures of indigenous Muslims in the late Soviet era and the early 1990s, came to be seen as a powerful ideology that could guide human behavior both in positive and negative ways. The transformation of a peaceful fragmentation of the Muslim community into an armed conflict between various Islamic groups; the increasing involvement of religiously motivated combatants in a secular nationalist conflict in the Northern Caucasus; and the growing pressure of Islamic activists on secular authorities in the Muslim-majority regions contributed to the shift in decision-makers' thinking about what Islam could be and what it could do.²⁶⁸

Roland Dannreuther suggests that the situation in the early 1990s “gave little indication that Islamic radicalism would become a major internal threat to the nascent post-Soviet Russian state” (Dannreuther 2010:111). The new Yeltsin administration did not view the indigenous Muslim population within Russia prone to Islamic extremism. Their assumption was that the problem of Islamist fundamentalism was left in backward

²⁶⁸ For discussion of the perceptions about Islam in the West in the 1990s and the 2000s and particularly about the origins of the concept of *securitization of Islam*, see Cesari, Jocelyne. *The securitization of Islam in Europe*. Vol. 15. CEPS, 2009.

Afghanistan and did not pose a serious threat to Russia's own largely westernized and secularized Muslims, who constituted a much smaller portion of the country's total population than before the separation of Central Asian republics. Russia's Muslims were treated as recognized minorities and were welcome to benefit from the religious freedoms and civil liberties that the new regime offered (Dannreuther 2010). A peaceful process of disintegration of Muslim Spiritual boards initially along ethnic and territorial administrative borders was not an issue of major concern. In fact it could be seen as a "logical and even healthy development", given that loosening of the Soviet straightjacket allowed the flourishing of egalitarian theological principles of Islam (Dannreuther 2010:113). This was also consistent with the overall goal to develop Russia into a "normal power" with liberalizing and westernizing agenda.²⁶⁹

The outbreak of violence between competing Islamic groups and the transformation of a secular nationalist conflict in Chechnya into a battlefield for religiously motivated combatants was arguably the most tragic aspect of the post-Soviet Islamic revival. In his book, *Chechnya: From Nationalism to Jihad*, James Hughes explores how the initial struggle for independence in Chechnya, which was set in motion by secular nationalist demands, turned into a religious fight.²⁷⁰ Hughes argues that toward the beginning of the second Chechen War in 1999, "leading protagonists on the two sides no longer conceptualized the conflict as a secular nationalist struggle, but rather saw it as a confrontation, where the 'Islamic factor' was predominant" (Hughes 2007:xiii). While the author mainly blames the brutality of Russia's military response, he also draws

²⁶⁹ *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 20 Aug. 1992. Also see Shleifer, Andrei. *A normal country: Russia after communism*. Harvard University Press, 2005; Shleifer, Andrei, and Daniel Treisman. *A normal country*. No. w10057. National Bureau of Economic Research, 2003; and Dannreuther 2010:112.

²⁷⁰ Hughes, James. *Chechnya: from nationalism to jihad*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007.

attention to the influence of foreign militant Wahhabi Islamists, “who attempted to transform the core issue from secession, a concept that was grounded in a territorialized idea of the nation-state, into one based on a concept of a theocratic solidarity of the Muslim community (ummah) across the wider North Caucasus region” (Hughes 2007:xiii).

Dannreuther agrees that during the first Chechen war, from 1994 to 1996, the religious element was marginal compared to the overarching nationalist-defined struggle (Dannreuther 2010). However, rather than solely holding the Russian aggression and foreign militant Islamists responsible for Islamization of the conflict in the region, he also draws attention to internal disputes among the local Muslims. He discusses some of the reasons why some Muslims find radical Islamist approaches theologically appealing. According to Dannreuther, the attraction of Salafist Islamic thought “lies precisely in its purity and austerity, its emphasis on monotheism, its rejection of innovation (*bid'a*) and its rejection of any popular, ethnic or national accretions” (Dannreuther 2010:121). Initially, the radical Islam found supporters among the Chechens (Tishkov 2004: 164-180).²⁷¹ Nevertheless, since competition between various interpretations of Islam was not confined to a particular territory or communities, radical Islam rapidly spread across the country and integrated into the global transnational jihadist movement (Dannreuther 2010:109). Soon religious violence spread beyond the North Caucasus (Silantyev 2008). Moscow and a number of other cities and regions in Russia suffered a series of deadly Islamist-inspired terrorist attacks, such as apartment explosions in Moscow, Buynaksk, and Volgodonsk in 1999, the theatre hostage crisis in 2002 and the Beslan siege in 2004.

²⁷¹ Tishkov, Valerii Aleksandrovich. *Chechnya: Life in a war-torn society*. Vol. 6. Univ of California Press, 2004.

Not all the disputes on religious grounds turned violent. In some regions, the process played out in institutionalized and rather peaceful forms. Thus, for example, some newly organized Islamic groups sought to mobilize people around faith by establishing religious movements and political parties, used the public sphere to criticize the secular leadership and to put pressure on regional authorities about meeting religious demands (Silantyev 2008). In some cases, as in Tatarstan, for example, the process of religious revival developed rather peacefully. In other regions, as was seen in the case of Dagestan, Islamic resurgence led to significant popular riots (Dannreuther 2010, Yemelianova 1999). In all cases, however, developments suggested that Islam could no longer be perceived as an element of culture.

4. Conclusion: Rediscovering Islam

Significant transformations in the internal dynamics of Russia's Muslim community over the first half of the 1990s, partly affected by the external influence from the Muslim world, compelled the country's secular authorities to revise their approach toward Islam. On the one hand, the state could no longer ignore the role of Islam in the public sphere. The events demonstrated that religion could thrive not only in the private domain but could also motivate indigenous Muslims to organize independently and even provide ideological basis for questioning secular norms and the regime. Despite the transformative impact of the Soviet-era, Russia's Muslims maintained strong spiritual attachments to Islam. On the other hand, as some scholars and representatives of the religious clergy pointed out, there was no necessary contradiction between being a

Muslim and being a loyal Russian citizen (Dannreuther 2010, Gainutdin 2009).²⁷² As Danneuther has put it, “there is no deterministic inevitability in Muslim disloyalty to the Russian state, nor any inevitable contradiction between being a Muslim and a loyal Russian citizen” (Dannreuther 2010:126). Therefore, the Russian state had to find a balanced strategy to embrace its Muslim population and to neutralize Islamic radicalism. More importantly it had to develop a new discourse that would reflect the way the state would deal with its diverse population. The following sections will attempt to conceptualize the state response to the transformations in the Islamic religious practice and belief.

Part II: Islam under Multi-confessionalism or the Rules of the “Confessional collaboration”

In 2012, the construction of a major Islamic center ‘*Yardam*’ in Kazan was drawing to an end. For his outstanding service to the public, the imam of the center was publicly praised and would soon be awarded the prestigious title “Tatar of the Year.”²⁷³ Around the same time, state security services conducted a search in another mosque of Kazan, *Al-Ikhlās*. Upon capturing a few items from the list of banned literature and identifying the extremist content in the lectures delivered at the mosque, *Al-Ikhlās* was soon closed and its imam sentenced to prison.²⁷⁴ The story about the state pressure on *Al-*

²⁷² Dannreuther, Roland. "Islamic radicalization in Russia: an assessment." *International Affairs* 86.1 (2010): 109-126.

Nancy Lubin, *Labour and nationality in Soviet Central Asia: an uneasy compromise* (London: Macmillan, 1985).

²⁷³ “Pobeditelem konkursa ‘Tatarin Goda – 2012’ stal zammuftiia Ildar Khazrat Baiazitov” (9 July 2013) http://www.suleiman.ru/news/pobeditelem_konkursa_tatarin_goda_2012_stal_zammuftija_ildar_khazrat_bajazitov/2013-07-09-714 (Last accessed on March 19, 2015)

²⁷⁴ Prikhod kazanskoi mecheti ‘Al-Ikhlās’ likvidirovan za ekstremizm (15 May 2013) <http://www.newsru.com/religy/15may2013/verbot.html> (Last accessed on March 19, 2015). See discussion below for the analysis of the debates about the ban on Islamic literature.

Ikhlas and support to the *Yardam* center clearly demonstrates a difference in state attitudes toward various Islamic communities. What explains the ability of some religious groups to continue religious service and enjoy full access to the public sphere and what prevents others from benefiting from the same rights?

This section will discuss the emergence and development of a new model of relationship between the state and religious organizations, which manifests itself in cooperation taking place between secular and religious authorities in selected areas of public life, in education and social care. I call this relationship a “Confessional collaboration” model in Russia’s state-religion relations.²⁷⁵ The section will conceptually explain the transition from passive secularism to a new form of state-religion regime and put it into a historical perspective. I will argue that introduction of the notion of “traditional religions” into the Russian legal framework was key in responding to the religious revival in the country.²⁷⁶ By doing so, the state defined what groups would be allowed to be present in the public sphere and rely on the state support in pursuing their religious mission, and what groups would face administrative charges and become the target of repressive measures.²⁷⁷ More importantly, the new conceptualization formed a basis for development of a new regime that was in part based on Russia’s pre-

²⁷⁵ Refer to the dissertation glossary for definition of the key term – “Confessional collaboration” model. The term refers to the relationship between the state and traditional religious organizations (most notably between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Kremlin) which manifests itself in cooperation taking place in selected areas of the public sphere, in education and social care.

²⁷⁶ Refer to the dissertation glossary for definition of the key term – “traditional religions.” In this study the term refers to four religions – Russian Orthodoxy, Islam, Judaism, and Buddhism. In the Russian legal context, the concept is not defined. It is widely accepted that the notion was inspired by the preamble of the Russian Federation 1997 “Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations.”

²⁷⁷ Refer to the dissertation glossary for definition of the key term – “public sphere.” In this study the term refers to a space to which all citizens have access and in which all issues of concern to citizens and all available opinions can be articulated and deliberated.²⁷⁷ According to Taylor, it is “a common space in which the members of society are deemed to meet through a variety of media: print, electronic, and also face-to-face encounters to discuss matters of common interest and thus to able to form a common mind about these.”

revolutionary “multi-confessional establishment” model – a framework wherein the state relied on state-approved religious organizations to socialize the population and provide moral discipline (Werth 2014).²⁷⁸

1. The legal foundation for a privileged access to the public sphere

According to the classification of ‘State-Religion Regimes and Secularism’ presented in chapter one of this study, the visibility of religion in the public sphere and whether some religious groups have a privileged access to it determines what kind of state-religion regime dominates in a given non-religious system of governance. As the example above demonstrates, toward the late 1990s, secular authorities in Russia renounced the neutrality that allowed equal access to the public sphere for all religious communities. Certain groups began to enjoy privileges in accessing the public sphere, while others faced new administrative obstacles. This section will explain how the adoption of the 1997 law on religion at the federal level and a number of consecutive legal measures at the local level have affected the state-religion regime in Russia, which began to gradually shift from passive secularism to a model of Confessional collaboration between the state and “traditional” religious organizations.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁸ Refer to the dissertation glossary for definition of the key term – “multi-confessional establishment.” The term refers to a religious order that framed the exercise of faith and defined the scope of religious freedom in Russia from the reign of Catherine II (1762-96) through that of Nicholas I (1825-55) until the end of the Tsarist era. It implies recognition of religious institutions and production of legal statutes for the regulation of spiritual affairs. In other words, it is a framework wherein the state relies on state-approved religious organizations to socialize the population and provide moral discipline.

²⁷⁹ Refer to the dissertation glossary for definition of the key term – “traditional religious organizations.” In this study, the term refers to state-registered religious organizations representing traditional religions in Russia. More broadly, these are religious organizations that have demonstrated that they had significantly influenced the formation and development of Russian statehood, played an important historical role in the development of national consciousness and that a significant proportion of Russian citizens belonged to or expressed a preference for it.

Over the course of the early 1990s observers of Islam in Russia witnessed how various Islamic communities divided along multiple lines despite shared ethnic and cultural roots. The outbreak of violence among these groups and the rejection of a secular order by some Islamic communities made the benevolent state approach that allowed equal access to all religious groups to the public sphere increasingly unsustainable. As the pressure on the federal government to intervene into religious affairs mounted from various segments of the society, including the Church, the experiment with “passive secularism” rapidly drew to an end.

The main argument for adoption of a more regulatory approach toward religion was that if left unregulated by the state new religious groups might infringe on people’s constitutional rights. For many critics of Russia’s rapid liberalization, the reliance on the "invisible hand" of the market forces could lead to many “troublesome problems” (Shterin and Richardson, 1998). Their attacks focused on newly emerging religious movements, which were seen as bogus faiths. Reportedly, by the mid 1990s, some 6,000 “totalitarian sects” with three to five million participants operated in Russia (Dvorkin, 1998). These “sects” were accused of imposing a threat to the people’s psychological and physical health, social well-being, and the national security. Therefore, according to supporters of regulatory measures, assertive stance toward such groups on the part of the state was required.²⁸⁰

²⁸⁰ During the 1995 election campaign, the political movement "Our Home Russia" published a leaflet in which all religious organizations were divided into three categories: a) the Russian Orthodox Church, entitled to "full necessary support"; b) "all traditional confessions in Russia", “deserving” harmonic and peaceful co-existence; and c) "totalitarian sects and foreign missionaries." The third category was destined to restrictive measures because the movement [Our Home Russia] was "against their activities on Russian territory."

Secondly, critics of unregulated religious market raised a national-security argument against it. There were several meetings and conferences under the auspices of political parties, parliamentary and governmental organizations, which discussed possible changes to the law on religion. In a letter to President Yeltsin the Duma declared "religious security of Russia an important priority of national security, along with military, political, economic, ecological, and social security."²⁸¹

Another argument came from representatives and advocates of the Russian Orthodox Church. They argued that in an open competition with other religions, the Orthodox Church (ROC) inevitably found itself in a materially disadvantageous situation because of the oppression of the Church during the Soviet period and because of the fact that foreign religious organizations were much better off financially (Shterin 1998). It was clearly expressed by Patriarch Alexii II: "I am of the opinion that the Freedom of Conscience Committee of the Supreme Council must take legal measures to act as a barrier in the way of a network of various financially well supported foreign religious organizations."²⁸²

Finally, advocates of introducing regulatory measures argued that Orthodox Christianity was "the embodiment of the Russian national tradition, the core of the Russian national identity, and the guardian of the psychological well-being of the nation" (Shterin 1998). Therefore, according to them, any kind of proselytizing activities of alien faiths might be interventionist and detrimental. Often this view was supported by

²⁸¹ *Voskhod*, N3, August 1997.

²⁸² Patriarch's letter to Vyacheslav Polosin, Chairman of the Freedom of Conscience Committee of the Supreme Council, 28 April 1993. Also, Patriarch Alexi II proposed that the Ministry of Justice "should establish a committee formed of government officials and representatives of religious organizations who have respect and authority in society, and are connected with the historic fate of Russia, and give such a committee the right to "veto" registration and activity of foreign religious organizations for 5 to 7 years."

reference to those Western European countries where the traditional churches are given privileged status compared to other religions, and where various restrictions are allegedly put on the activities of nontraditional churches.²⁸³

The established Muslim clergy has also expressed its support for the adoption of restrictive measures in the 1997 law on religion. Head of the Central Spiritual Board of Muslims in Ufa, Talgat Tadzhuiddin has been a long-time advocate of introducing regulation to the religious sphere. As a Chair of the Council of Muftis of Russia, Ravil Gainutdin also described Russia's 1997 law on religion as a notable step towards support for “traditional religions”, which recognized Islam, along with Orthodox Christianity, Buddhism, and Judaism, the inalienable part of the heritage of the Russian people.²⁸⁴

Before adoption of the new law on religion at the federal level, several attempts to move away from the liberal model of state-religion relations were made in the Russian provinces. Relying on the decentralized nature of the political system, several regions took legal measures to limit the access of certain religious groups to the public sphere, without necessarily seeking the consent of the federal center. Particularly, they wanted to protect the religion of the local titular ethnic group (Shterin and Richardson 1998).²⁸⁵ Thus, local policymakers in Tver’ and Kaliningrad, for example, were among the first to raise concerns about proliferation of new religious groups on their territories. Their fear was that the primary intention of those who join new religious communities was in fact non-religious. Some groups, in their opinion, were likely to unite followers "not because

²⁸³ The UK, Greece, and Germany were frequently cited as examples of such regimes.

²⁸⁴ Refer to the dissertation glossary for definition of the key term – “traditional religions.”

²⁸⁵ In their survey of regional legislation between 1990 and 1997, Shterin and Richardson, among other things, observe that local laws “protected religion of the local title ethnic group.” In the regions populated predominantly by Russians, protection seems to have been applied in relation to the Russian Orthodox Church (Shterin and Richardson 1998).

of common creed but because of affiliation with foreign organizations."²⁸⁶ In Tula proponents of non-mainstream beliefs were denounced for arousing ethnic, racial and religious discord among the public.²⁸⁷ In Kalmykia the activities of marginal religious communities were considered as "challenges to the national customs, traditions, and morals of society."²⁸⁸ Allegedly, religious freedom was being exploited by "emissaries from various sects and beliefs far from the humanitarian spirit of both Christianity and other principal religions" (Shterin and Richardson 1998:326). This would amount to "corruption of the spirit."²⁸⁹

Restrictions on religious groups ranged from outright prohibition of religious practices "in all public places" (Perm region, the Republic of Udmurtia), to various mechanisms of controlled access to the meeting places (Sverdlovsk region). In addition, Shterin and Richardson note that many regional procedures were much more hostile toward foreigners than to Russian citizens. Certain laws required submission of documents, which were impossible to obtain (e.g. a certificate of registration of the foreign religious organization in the country of origin). In many cases, regional rulings required that the missionaries had to have an invitation from local authorities or a religious organization registered with the state. Occasionally, regulations went so far as to reserve the right for regional authorities to revoke the registrations of a religious

²⁸⁶ Tver' and Kaliningrad Duma Resolutions. Cited in Shterin, Marat S., and James T. Richardson. "Local Laws Restricting Religion in Russia: Prosecutors of Russia's New National Law." *J. Church & St.* 40 (1998): 326.

²⁸⁷ From a letter of the acting prosecutor of the Tula region, Report, 21. Cited in Shterin, Marat S., and James T. Richardson. "Local Laws Restricting Religion in Russia: Prosecutors of Russia's New National Law." *J. Church & St.* 40 (1998): 326.

²⁸⁸ Republic of Kalmikia Law, Preamble. Cited in Shterin, Marat S., and James T. Richardson. "Local Laws Restricting Religion in Russia: Prosecutors of Russia's New National Law." *J. Church & St.* 40 (1998): 326.

²⁸⁹ Interview with the chairman of Tula Duma; *Rossiyskaya Federatsia Journal*, N22. Cited in Shterin, Marat S., and James T. Richardson. "Local Laws Restricting Religion in Russia: Prosecutors of Russia's New National Law." *J. Church & St.* 40 (1998): 327.

organization, which, according to the 1990 law on religion, could only be done by a decision of a court (Shterin and Richardson 1998).

Arguably, one of the most consequential aspects of regional policymaking in 1990s was introduction of a major distinction between traditional and nontraditional faiths to the Russian legal debates. Legislative drafts in Ryazan', Arkhangelsk, Sverdlovsk, and Yaroslavl oblasts were among the first legal documents that contained these notions.²⁹⁰ Local authorities in these regions sought to regulate activities of 'sects', defined as being those other than unnamed 'traditional religions' (Fagan 2012: 61). Committed to the goal of "preserving social tranquility", regional authorities barred those sects from using state premises.²⁹¹ In Tver and Kaliningrad, local Dumas passed similar resolutions.²⁹² In the Khabarovsk krai regulations limited the activity of religious organizations which were "canonically or in any other way under the jurisdiction of foreign religious organizations."²⁹³ Fagan suggests that similarities between the various laws and drafts might stem from regional-level coordination (Fagan 2012:61).

²⁹⁰ See Article 7 in Yaroslavl' draft and Article 14 in Sverdlovsk law. Cited in Shterin, Marat S., and James T. Richardson. "Local Laws Restricting Religion in Russia: Prosecutors of Russia's New National Law." *J. Church & St.* 40 (1998)

²⁹¹ See Shterin, Marat S., and James T. Richardson. "Local Laws Restricting Religion in Russia: Prosecutors of Russia's New National Law." *J. Church & St.* 40 (1998)

²⁹² "On religious organizations operating as structural divisions of foreign religious organizations beyond the jurisdiction of the Russian Federation." See Shterin, Marat S., and James T. Richardson. "Local Laws Restricting Religion in Russia: Prosecutors of Russia's New National Law." *J. Church & St.* 40 (1998). Also see Fagan, Geraldine. *Believing in Russia: Religious Policy After Communism*. Routledge, 2012.

²⁹³ Article 5 of the "Law on Religious Organizations" in Khabarovsk krai. See Shterin, Marat S., and James T. Richardson. "Local Laws Restricting Religion in Russia: Prosecutors of Russia's New National Law." *J. Church & St.* 40 (1998). Also see Fagan, Geraldine. *Believing in Russia: Religious Policy After Communism*. Routledge, 2012.

In many regions, various local councils were involved in preparation of the new regulatory measures.²⁹⁴ In Udmurtia, for example, new religious policy proposals were drafted at the "Expert-Consultative Council for Cooperation with Religious Associations." In Sverdlovsk Oblast' it was a responsibility of an "Expert-Consultative Council on Questions of Freedom of Conscience and Creeds" to oversee religious activism in the region. In Yaroslavl Oblast' a similar task was assigned to the "Expert-Consultative Council for Religious Affairs". Usually, these institutions were authorized to investigate and evaluate beliefs and practices of religious organizations, and give recommendations and/or decide about their registration. Overall, according to Uzzel, in the mid-1990s about quarter of regions adopted their own legislations regulating missionary activity (Uzzel 1996).²⁹⁵ However, they had a limited effect since the federal law still maintained a liberal attitude.

Most of Muslim-majority republics, in part due to a strong link between national and religious revival in the early 1990s, had somewhat different state-Islam dynamics. During the first several years after the Soviet collapse, both religious and secular authorities were engaged in local nation-building processes. When religious and secular perspectives on the future of Islam in Muslim-majority republics began to diverge, state authorities in these regions also started to express similar concerns with their counterparts across Russia. On the pretext of being worried about the negative impact of the fragmentation of the Muslim community and the influence of foreign missionaries, in September 1994 deputy-prime minister of Dagestan Said Amirov called a meeting with

²⁹⁴ No regulatory institution existed on the federal level since abolishing the the Council for Religious Affairs in 1990.

²⁹⁵ For details, see Lawrence Uzell, "Religious Freedom Loses Grounds in Russian Provinces," Keston News Service, Issue 96/9, October/November 1996.

Muslim spiritual authorities of the republic. As a result of the meeting, a united Spiritual Board of Muslims of Dagestan was established and its Mufti elected.²⁹⁶ Establishment of other Muslim Spiritual Boards in the republic was prohibited. Similarly in Tatarstan, roughly after signing off the Treaty with Moscow in 1994, the Shaimiev regime began to view independent religious activity as a danger to modernization and political stability (Filatov 1998).²⁹⁷ Public disputes between President Shaimiev and local Mufti Galiullin turned increasingly ominous as the religious leadership openly challenged secular elites on the political arena. Nevertheless, despite all the efforts to contain religious activism locally, the efforts of regional authorities had a limited effect largely because of the liberal attitude of the federal center.

Due to the growing pressure from the regions and mainly the Orthodox Church, the discussions about the reform of religious affairs shifted to Moscow. The major move away from the liberal model of state-religion relations was the replacement of the 1990 law on religion with the 1997 version, which introduced the notion of “traditional religions” into the Russian legal framework at the federal level.²⁹⁸ The preamble of the law has identified Orthodox Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and Judaism as inseparable parts of the historical heritage of Russia’s peoples and in effect provided them with the

²⁹⁶ The Spiritual Board of Muslims of Dagestan (DUMD) received official recognition as a public organization under resolution number 161 of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Dagestan. For details, see Abkhaliev. *Istoriia Dukhovnogo Upravleniia Musul'man Dagestana*.

²⁹⁷ The Treaty on Delimitation of Jurisdictional Subjects and Mutual Delegation of Authority between the State Bodies of the Russian Federation and the State Bodies of the Republic of Tatarstan (February 15, 1994). Some observers see 1994 as a year when conflict between mufti Galiulin and Shaimiev emerged. For details, see Filatov, 1998.

²⁹⁸ In fact, the Russian Federation 1997 “Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations” does not define the concept of “traditional religions.” It is widely accepted that the notion was inspired by the preamble of the 1997 law, which acknowledges “the special role of Orthodox Christianity in the history of Russia, and in the establishment and development of its spirituality and culture, ...respecting Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism and other religions, that comprise the inalienable part of the heritage of the Russian people.”

status of “privileged” religions (Preston 2001:784).²⁹⁹ After the process of registration, religious organizations representing these religions were guaranteed the right to access the Russian public sphere. Those religious groups that did not belong to traditional religions or were not willing to be associated with the established clergy of recognized religions had to face administrative restrictions imposed by secular authorities and thus were denied the access to the public sphere. Their activities were portrayed as an ideological threat to Russian society and harmful for traditional values. Often they were accused of damaging the morality of the indigenous people, destroying families, causing psychological harm to the youth, nudging the people to suicide, and ultimately terrorism (Yunusova 1997). The efforts to contain or even forbid the activity of nontraditional religious groups became the main reason for the development of the new law, which became the founding element of the so-called “traditional religions” paradigm.³⁰⁰

Adoption of a restrictive law at the federal level triggered a new wave of local initiatives. Thus, in Dagestan, since 1998, local policymakers adopted a series of local provisions that gave a state-backed Muslim Spiritual Board the authority to control Muslim public life in Dagestan. The republic's January 1998 Religion Law permitted

²⁹⁹ In addition, the document gave special recognition to the Orthodoxy, which “made a special contribution to the history of Russia and to the establishment and development of Russia’s spirituality and culture” (Preston 2001:784).

³⁰⁰ Traditional religions paradigm is a pattern of thought based on the assumption that traditional religions deserve special privileges because of their size, geographical range, as well as the history of presence in Russia. For a detailed discussion of the 1997 law and its provisions, see Lekhel, Arina. "Leveling the Playing Field for Religious Liberty in Russia: A Critical Analysis of the 1997 Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations." *Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law*. 32 (1999): 167; Durham Jr, W. Cole, and Lauren B. Homer. "Russia's 1997 Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations: an analytical appraisal." *Emory International Law Review*. 12 (1998): 101.; Davis, Derek H. "Russia's new law on religion: Progress or regress?" *Journal of church and state* 39.4 (1997): 645-655.; Shterin, Marat S., and James T. Richardson. "Effects of the Western anti-cult movement on development of laws concerning religion in post-communist Russia." *Journal of church and state*. 42 (2000): 247.; Shterin, Marat S., and James T. Richardson. "Local Laws Restricting Religion in Russia: Prosecutors of Russia's New National Law." *Journal of church and state*. 40 (1998): 319.

only one Islamic umbrella organization in the republic (Article 10). Under the same law, both religious educational materials and study abroad programs were subject to approval by the Spiritual Board (Article 9). The law also required that all Islamic literature be endorsed by the republic's muftiyat (Article 21). Moreover, in September 1999, Dagestani politicians adopted a law that banned Wahhabism altogether.³⁰¹ According to the same law, all Islamic communities in the republic would need to obtain the endorsement of this umbrella organization in order to register (Article 4).³⁰² Similarly, in 1999, the Republic of Tatarstan updated its own law on religion, which granted monopoly privileges in the Islamic spiritual domain to the newly established state-approved Muslim Spiritual Board.³⁰³ In May 2000 and June 2001, Karachay-Cherkessia and Kabardino-Balkaria adopted their own laws against "religious extremism."³⁰⁴

According to Fagan, the Kabardino-Balkaria law revealed that "the target of the whole

³⁰¹ On 16 September 1999, the Dagestani Parliament adopted a law "On the ban of the Wahhabi and any other Extremist Activity on the Territory of the Republic of Dagestan." For details, see Yemelianova, Galina M. "Islam and nation building in Tatarstan and Dagestan of the Russian Federation." *Nationalities Papers* 27.4 (1999): 605-629; Yemelianova, Galina M., ed. *Radical Islam in the Former Soviet Union*. Routledge, 2009; Ware, Robert Bruce, et al. "Political Islam in Dagestan." *Europe-Asia Studies* 55.2 (2003): 287-302; Bobrovnikov, Vladimir. "'Ordinary Wahhabism' versus 'Ordinary Sufism'?: Filming Islam for Postsoviet Muslim Young People." *Religion, State and Society* 39.2-3 (2011): 281-301; Ware, Robert Bruce. "Why Wahhabism went wrong in Dagestan." *Central Asia Caucasus Monitor* (2000).

³⁰² According to the head of the Oriental Manuscripts Department at the Institute of History, Archaeology and Ethnography of the Dagestan branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Shamil Shikhaliyev, as of 2010 many in Dagestan believed that the 1999 Law was a mistake "because in practice it determined the state's priorities in the religious sphere".

³⁰³ This was later struck down as unconstitutional. A 1999 provincial Law on Religion Law, permitting only one centralized religious organization per confession in Tatarstan, was annulled in October 2003 for being at odds with the federal Law.

For a discussion about a standoff between Mufti Galiullin and President Shaimiev of Tatarstan, the 1998 joint congress of Muslims of the Republic, and a subsequent subordination of the spiritual Board to secular authorities, see Yemelianova, Galina M. "Islam and nation building in Tatarstan and Dagestan of the Russian Federation." *Nationalities Papers* 27.4 (1999): 605-629; Yemelianova, Galina M. "Shaimiev's' Khanate'on the Volga and its Russian Subjects." *Asian Ethnicity* 1.1 (2000): 37-52; Ponarin, Eduard, and Irina Kouznetsova-Morenko. "Russia's Islamic Challenge." *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*. 7 (2006): 21.

³⁰⁴ For more details on local drive against Wahhabism, see Fagan, Geraldine. *Believing in Russia: Religious Policy After Communism*. Vol. 41. Routledge, 2012. P. 161. Also see "Kabardino-Balkaria outlaws religious extremism," Keston News Service. 31 May, 2001.

<http://www.keston.org.uk/kns/miscnew/KNS%20RUSSIA%20Kabardino-Balkaria%20outlaws%20religious%20extremism.html> (last accessed on March 24, 2015)

counterterrorism drive was not just violent activity, but ‘non-traditional’ belief (Fagan 2012:161).

2. Islam under the “Traditional religions” paradigm

Departure from the norms of passive secularism had a dual impact on Islam in Russia. On the one hand, regulating access of religious groups to the public sphere helped to raise the profile of the state-recognized Islamic establishment. On the other hand, this put a limit on Islamic diversity by restricting religious practice of many other Islamic groups that were not affiliated with “traditional” religious organizations. As we shall see below, the rise of “traditional Islam” rhetoric facilitated strengthening of Muftiyats and legitimized the use of repressive measures against alternative sources of Islamic knowledge and authority.

2.1 – What does “traditional Islam” mean?

Regarded by many observers of religious life in Russia as a watershed event in post-Soviet religious affairs, the adoption of the 1997 law on religion opened a new era in state-religion relations in general and had a major impact on state-Islam relations in particular. The law not only introduced a distinction between traditional and non-traditional religions in Russia, but also added an additional level of complexity to the intra-faith dispute within the indigenous Muslim community. The ability to comply with a contested definition of “traditional Islam” increasingly became a criterion for Islamic groups to benefit from privileges provided by the state. Those groups that did not meet the definition were marginalized, denied access to the public sphere, and even persecuted.

The concept of “traditional Islam” has been used at home and abroad in various contexts since Grand Mufti Talgat Tadjuddin reintroduced it to the public in the early 1990s. According to several experts on Islam in Russia, Mufti Tadjuddin used it to underline the difference between Islam practiced in the post-Soviet area and other interpretations of religion promoted by foreign missionaries (Goble 2014, Batrov 2013, Safargaleev 2014).³⁰⁵ Not until the mid-1990s, however, did the concept become popular in public discourse or enter the official rhetoric. The establishment and strengthening of the “traditional religions” paradigm brought up the term to the public use. However, the irony is that despite its wide use, there is still no agreement on what exactly “traditional Islam” means. As Goble has put it, “a certain confusion has set in not only among Muslim leaders, civil officials, and the population but even among experts” (Goble 2014).

Analysis of the contemporary use of the concept suggests that “traditional Islam” has at least four distinct meanings in Russia (Batrov 2013, Safargaleev 2014). The first meaning, according to Rustam Batrov, the first deputy mufti of Tatarstan, is a synonym for “Russian [Rossiikii] Islam.” State officials, according to Batrov, often use the term in this sense. For them it is important that indigenous Muslims “lived in peace and concord with representatives of other confessions” and “respected the statehood and sovereignty of their homeland” (Batrov 2013). The second meaning of traditional Islam can be defined as “folk Islam.” As a rule, it refers to religious practices of ethnic Muslims who

³⁰⁵ Goble, Paul. “‘Traditional Islam’ now has four distinct meanings in CIS countries, Moscow expert says,” *The Interpreter*, June 27, 2014. <http://www.interpretermag.com/traditional-islam-now-has-four-distinct-meanings-in-cis-countries-moscow-expert-says/> (Last access February 2, 2015).

Batrov, Rustam. “Traditsionnyi islam v Rossii – eto Akhliu sunna wal dzhamaa,” *Golos Islama*, October 26, 2013. <http://golosislama.ru/news.php?id=20054> (Last access February 2, 2015).

Safargaleev, Ildar. “Konnotacii al’ternativ religioznomu ekstremizmu na postsovetском prostranstve,” *Materik*, June 25, 2014. <http://materik.ru/rubric/detail.php?ID=18042> (Last access February 2, 2015).

often learned about the religion from their practicing grandparents. This kind of Islam is a subject of the most lively interest of ethnographers and the object of angry attacks by proponents of “pure” Islam. The third connotation refers to Islam as a religion of a particular nation, such as the Tatars. Sometimes it is viewed simply as “part of the historical heritage” of a specific people, and sometimes as “the basis of its survival” (Goble 2014). The intellectual debates on *jadidism* (Islamic modernism) and *qadimism* (Islamic conservatism) often rely on this definition of traditional Islam. Finally, the fourth meaning of traditional Islam refers to orthodox Sunni Islam as it has existed for centuries in the entire Muslim world. In other words, it is Islam based on “canon law, dogmatic theology and spiritual ethics” (Goble 2014). Although some experts insist on using the concept of “traditional Islam” to describe Sunni Islam of the Khanafi and Shafii legal schools as well as Sufism, many contemporary observers of Islam in Russia reject this narrow definition on the grounds that excluding followers of other legal schools of Sunni Islam and downplaying multiple forms of Sufism weakens the utility of the concept of “traditional Islam.”³⁰⁶

2.2 – State support for “Traditional Islam”

While the Muslim clergy and the expert community continued to debate what “traditional Islam” means, policymakers both at the regional and federal levels put it to practical use. The concept became a direct reference in providing support for Russia’s Muslim communities, most notably through the federal Fund for Islamic Culture and Education and the Interreligious Council, a consultative body founded in January 1999

³⁰⁶ Malashenko A.V. Islam v Rossii: religiya i politika // Islamovedenie. 2010. No. 3. P. 67–85. Malashenko defines “traditional Islam” as 1) Sunni Islam represented by two religious and legal schools widely accepted among Muslims of Russia – a Khanafizm and a Shafiizm, 2) Sufism. Safargaleev, Ildar. “Konnotacii al’ternativ religioznomu ekstremizmu na postsovetском prostranstve,” Materik, June 25, 2014. <http://materik.ru/rubric/detail.php?ID=18042> (Last access February 2, 2015).

which embraces representatives of Russia's traditional confessions.³⁰⁷ The Fund was intended to assist the projects of *traditional* Muslim religious organizations of Russia aimed at the development of Islamic culture and education. In addition to obtaining a monopoly power in the Islamic religious marketplace, “traditional” Muslim religious organizations became partners of the state in promotion of religious tolerance, prevention of Islamophobia, development and strengthening of social harmony, spiritual and moral education of children and youth, and empowering families in the Russian society. In fact, according to Dannreuther, much of the funding was directed “towards supporting the official Islamic establishment and the promotion of a moderate Russian Islam” (Dannreuther 2010:120).³⁰⁸

Efforts of the state to promote “traditional Islam” in the country have had a certain degree of success. The overall position of the established clergy, despite persisting internal disagreements, has significantly improved in comparison with their condition in the 1990s. Representatives of traditional Islamic organizations received both material and

³⁰⁷ Several state bodies attached to the presidential administration, government and parliament over the years proved to be of little relevance to formation of state policies toward Islam in Russia. For discussion of some of the activities of the Presidential Council for Cooperation with Religious Associations, the government’s Commission for the Affairs of Religious Associations, and the State Duma’s Committee on Social Associations and Religious Organizations, see Fagan, Geraldine. *Believing in Russia: Religious Policy After Communism*. New York: Routledge, 2012. According to Fagan, these structures were ineffective and for a number of reasons were unable to replicate the Soviet Council for Religious Affairs (Fagan 2012: 173).

³⁰⁸ See chapter four for discussion of some of the policy areas that show a clear contrast between state treatment of “traditional” and “non-traditional” religious groups. For example, legal provisions in the Russian North Caucasus republic of Dagestan restricting religious education are a major element in the near monopoly on Muslim public life enjoyed by the Spiritual Directorate of Muslims of Dagestan. Some local Muslims maintain that the restrictions prevent qualified people from teaching. Referring to Shamil Shikhaliyev, head of the Oriental Manuscripts Department at the Institute of History, Archaeology and Ethnography of the Dagestan branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Forum 18 reports that a very well-educated imam returning from Syria or Egypt won't get a position at a mosque because it is the unwritten law of the Directorate that anyone who studied abroad is Wahhabi and can't become an imam. For details, see Fagan, G. “Dagestan’s controls on religious education,” Forum 18 News Service. 2 June 2010. http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=1453&layout_type=mobile (Last accessed on March 15, 2015).

oral support from the secular leadership. More importantly, from the perspective of this study, they maintained access to the Russian public sphere. These measures have not only significantly contributed to the growth of Muslim educational and scholarly activity but also made the radical opposition less attractive and more costly. As Dannreuther has put it, “the official Muslim establishment feels more secure than was the case during the Yeltsin period” and “its role as a recognized intermediary with the state has been confirmed” (Dannreuther 2010:120).

On February 1, 2013, President Putin reiterated the position of secular state authorities toward “traditional religions.” He pointed out that “The Russian Orthodox Church and our other traditional faiths must have all the possibilities for carrying out full and real service in important areas such as supporting families and mothers, raising and educating children, youth policy, resolving the many social problems we still face, and strengthening patriotic spirit in the Armed Forces. This is a response to people’s vital need for moral support and spiritual guidance.”³⁰⁹ According to Nabiev, the role of traditional religious institutions in contemporary Russia is no longer confined to spiritual matters, but is increasingly vital to areas such as organization of philanthropic activities, social work, and upbringing the youth (Nabiev 2014).³¹⁰ Traditional religious organizations actively participate in state programs aimed at preservation and restoration of important historic sites and monuments. Moreover, the presence of the established

³⁰⁹ Vladimir Putin’s speech at the meeting with delegates to the Bishops’ Council. February 1, 2013. <http://eng.kremlin.ru/transcripts/4926> (Last accessed on March 15, 15).

³¹⁰ See, for instance, the official website of Russia’s Council of Muftis, “Osnovnye polozenija social’noj programmy rossijskih musul’man,” May 25, 2001. <http://muslim.ru/articles/109/1087/> (Last accessed on March 15, 2015). Also see, Nabiev, Rinat. *Vlast’ i religioznoe vozrozhdenie*. Kazan: Kazan (Volga region) Federal University, 2014. In addition to the 1997 law on religion, activities of religious institutions in certain areas are regulated by the 1995 law “On Charitable Activities and Charitable Organizations,” N135-FZ from August 11, 1995; the law “On Non-Commercial Organizations,” N7-FZ from January 12, 1996, and other relevant documents.

religious clergy has significantly increased in hospitals, homes for the aged and infirm, as well as military units. Many of these activities occurred in the context of various mutual social partnership agreements between state bodies and traditional religious organizations both at the federal and provincial levels.³¹¹

This, in part, explains the positive attitude of the state-supported Muslim clergy to the establishment of “traditional religions” paradigm. “Traditional” Muslim organizations endorse provisions of the 1997 law and regard it as a success (Preston 2001:785). Reportedly, the Council of Russian Muftis participated in the preparation of the law, where its opinion and proposals were carefully considered (Preston 2001). Concerned by proliferation of newly established religious groups and the spread of alien interpretations of Islam in the country, Mufti of the Central Spiritual Board of Muslims in Ufa, Talgat Tadzhuddin, also supported the legislation.

Nevertheless, the fact that secular authorities assisted the efforts of “traditional” Muslim organizations makes these religious institutions and their leaders vulnerable to the accusation that they have been co-opted and corrupted by the state. Bitter memories of the Soviet past, when the religious clergy was used by the communist regime, are still lingering in the minds of believers. Therefore, many often question the position of “traditional” Muslim organizations on matters of social and political importance. In the age of mobile communication and the internet, Dannreuther argues, the message about Islam “specific to Russian culture and traditions appears parochial and limited,” particularly for those who are engaged with the intellectual excitement of theological debates in the wider Muslim world.

³¹¹ For more details on this, see chapter four.

2.3 – State repression of “non-traditional Islam”

In her study of the roots of radical Islam in Central Asia, Martha Olcott refers to a “potentially useful government approach” to decide whether any Muslim activist or cleric is a radical Muslim. According to that approach, any Muslim who rejects the leadership of the official religious establishment in the country could be deemed radical (Olcott 2007).³¹² Rejecting the establishment’s leadership is to question the authority and the legitimacy of the state. Following this approach, Olcott traces the history of Islamic radicalism in Russia and the Soviet Union back to 1920. According to her, the modern history of “underground Islam” begins with the Bolsheviks’ elimination of public role for religion and their banning Sharia as a basis of jurisprudence among the local population. Despite the best efforts of Soviet antireligious propagandists, illegal Islamic schools (*hujras*) continued to survive for the whole Soviet period in Central Asia (particularly in Tashkent and the Ferghana Valley). According to Olcott, these schools, somehow managing to “stay below the Soviet radar screen,” continued to provide Islamic education of equivalent or even higher quality than the two schools run by the established clergy.³¹³

In the first few years after the Soviet collapse, the perception among Russia’s leadership was that radical Islamic elements remained abroad. When it became evident that these expectations were unfounded and radicalization of some indigenous Muslims posed a threat to public safety, the secular leadership developed a distinct approach toward “non-traditional Islamic groups,” which were labeled as radical Islamist

³¹² Olcott, Martha Brill. *Roots of Radical Islam in Central Asia*. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2007.

³¹³ The only two Islamic schools in Soviet Union were located in Bukhara and Tashkent

extremists and Muslim sects alike.³¹⁴ So-called ‘securitization of Islam’ led not only to deprivation of these groups from accessing the Russian public sphere but also served as a reason taking repressive measures against them.

In the European context, Joceline Cesari describes securitization of Islam as a process that involves actors who propose that Islam is an existential threat to political and secular norms and thereby justifies extraordinary measures against it. This characterization of Islam in the public debates, according to her, has prompted institutionalizing the notion of Islam as a security threat. The distinction between radical, ‘bad’ Islam and law-abiding, ‘good’ Islam, Cesari maintains, has become a common political framing in many European countries. She argues that the fact that Muslims must be named as good or law-abiding means that there is an underlying assumption that Islam is a potential menace to society.

In Russia, securitization of Islam has “justified” legal measures which have had multiple effects on Muslim religious practice in the country. State policies not only effectively restrained the civil liberties of practicing Muslims, including the right to use the Russian public sphere, but also led to increased surveillance and police activity, banning religious literature, persecution and banning of some religious groups. For example, according to Yemelianova, the secular leadership of Dagestan has opted for ruthless political and administrative suppression of *Wahhabism* and entered into an open confrontation with it. Since the end of 1997 “state authorities have unleashed a comprehensive political, military, and propaganda campaign against *Wahhabis*”

³¹⁴ Valiulla Yakupov. *Neoficialnyi Islam v Tatarstane*. Kazan: Iman, 2003; Valiulla Yakupov, *Musulmanskie Sekty*. Kazan: Iman, 2004.

(Yemelianova 1999:625). In September 1999, the people's assembly of the Republic of Dagestan adopted the law banning Wahhabism on the territory of the republic.

Formulation of the title and the language of the law implied that Wahhabism and extremism were interconnected phenomena.³¹⁵ Since activities of anti-state extremist organizations had to be regulated by the Criminal code, religious groups identified as extremist became a subject of criminal investigation.³¹⁶

On the federal level, a significant reversal of the *laissez-faire* policy of the early 1990s has become primarily evident in enforcement of the rulings of the 1997 law on religion. Upon expiration of the deadline to register with the state, in January of 2001, the cases of thirty-seven Muslim communities were brought in court.³¹⁷ According to a report of an institute that tracks Russia's religions closely, these were the first known cases set to be the victims of mandatory liquidation.³¹⁸ In the meantime, various Islamic charities with private or foreign state support that had been active in the 1990s, such as *al-Haramayn*, *al-Iqra'a*, *al-Igasa*, *Taiba*, and *Ibrahim al-Ibrahim* Foundation, were closed down (Malashenko 2007, Silantyev 2008).³¹⁹

In January 2000, a new national security policy was adopted, which cited "cultural-religious expansion of neighboring states into Russian territory" among the threats to national interests and security. In particular, it called for "the counteraction of

³¹⁵ On 16 September 1999, the Dagestani Parliament adopted a law "On the ban of the Wahhabi and any other Extremist Activity on the Territory of the Republic of Dagestan."

³¹⁶ Reportedly, Russia's Security Council "recommended that national legislation on the freedom of conscience and religious organizations be amended to outlaw Wahhabism" (Vladimir Radyuhin, *Russia Plans Ban on Fundamentalist Group*, HINDU, Aug. 6, 2000) Cited in Preston (2001)

³¹⁷ In total, following the 1997 Law's end of 2000 deadline, some 2,000 religious organisations were subject to liquidation for failing to re-register.

³¹⁸ Tatyana Titova, "Russia: Muslims First for Mandatory Liquidation," Keston News Service. January 24, 2001. <http://www.keston.org/010124RU.htm> (Last accessed on March 20, 2015).

³¹⁹ Malashenko, *Islam dlya Rossii*. 2007:143; Silant'ev, *Islam v sovremennoi Rossii*. 2008:141

the negative influence of foreign religious organizations and missionaries.” Nevertheless, it was not until the passage of the “Federal Law on Combating Extremist Activity” in the summer of 2002 that the state began to penalize particular religious groups and individuals for extremist activities. Broadly known as an “anti-extremism law,” it provided for specific punishment guidelines applicable to all types of non-governmental (including religious) groups and mass media outlets found guilty of extremism. In combination with Articles 282 and 2822 of the Criminal Code and Article 20.29 of the Code of Administrative Offences, the “anti-extremism” law formed a legal basis for intolerance and persecution of activists representing “non-traditional” Islamic movements.³²⁰

In February 2003, by the decision of the Supreme Court of Russia, 15 Islamic organizations, including the Muslim Brotherhood and *Hizb-ut-Tahrir*, were declared terrorist and prohibited on the territory of the country.³²¹ *Tablighi Jamaat*, the world’s largest Muslim proselytizing organization, has reportedly been stigmatized. In addition, foreign-funded schools, including those known as Gulen schools, became a target of an increasing pressure.³²² According to Verkhovsky, the 2006 and 2007 amendments to the law have expanded the definition of extremism and further restricted civil liberties in

³²⁰ Broadly stated, Article 282 of the Russian Criminal Code criminalizes public statements aimed at inciting various kinds of enmity. Article 2822 criminalizes organization of an extremist group. Article 20.29 of the Code of Administrative Offences punishes “Production or distribution of extremist materials.”

³²¹ *Hizb-ut-Tahrir* is a pan-Islamic organization that seeks to create a transnational caliphate. It was banned in Russia by the Supreme Court on 14 February 2003.

³²² Following a religious extremism investigation, some 50 Turkish teachers in Russia were refused visa extensions in 2008 to work in secular Tatar-Turkish high schools with a high reputation among the local public and government elite of the Republic of Tatarstan. For details, see Fagan, G. “Raids continue as doubts grow over Nursi ban,” Forum 18 News Service. 16 July 2009.

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=1328 (Last accessed on March 15, 2015).

Naumkin, V. “Russia, Turkey agree on Gulen,” Al-Monitor. June 1, 2014. <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/06/russia-turkey-davutoglu-syria-crisis-ukraine-tatar.html> (Last accessed on March 15, 2015).

Russia (Verkhovsky 2007, Dannreuther 2010: 117).³²³ According to Hahn, Putin-era amendments to the Russia's *Federal Law on Combating Extremist Activity* gave the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB), Ministry of Interior (MVD), Justice Ministry, and the General Prosecutor's office broad leeway in holding suspects and determining what constitutes "extremist literature" (Hahn in Almanac 2011: 608).

According to careful observers of religious life in Russia, the anti-extremist legislation was applied, first and foremost, to the *Hizb ut-Tahrir* party. According to Verkhovsky, about two-thirds of more than three dozen jailed Muslim activists were convicted on the charge that they were *Hizb ut-Tahrir* members.³²⁴ Several other Muslim activists who participated in another banned Muslim organization, *Tablighi Jamaat*, were given suspended sentences. Several Muslims who read Said Nursi's works faced charges under Criminal Code Article 282.2.³²⁵

In 2004, the Russian Ministry of Justice started to compile a federal list of extremist literature.³²⁶ One of the first bans was issued in April 2004 by the Savelovskii

³²³ Alexander Verkhovsky, "Anti-extremist legislation and its enforcement", Sova Center, 2007. <http://www.sova-center.ru/en/xenophobia/reports-analyses/2007/09/d11595/> (Last accessed on March 20, 2015). Note that initially, the 2002 Law stipulated that "incitement of religious discord" had to be committed in connection with violence or the threat of violence. Prosecution of activities that had no association with violence became easier, however, when this stipulation was removed in July 2007.

³²⁴ People, accused of participating in *Hizb ut-Tahrir*, are most often charged under the Criminal Code Article 282.2 for membership in a banned organization. Referring to Elena Ryabinina of the Human Rights Institute, Verkhovsky argues that as of 2012 about 20 Muslim activists in Russia were jailed due to membership in *Hizb ut-Tahrir*. See Verkhovsky "Inappropriate enforcement of anti-extremist legislation in Russia in 2011," Sova Center. April 27, 2012. <http://www.sova-center.ru/en/misuse/reports-analyses/2012/04/d24302/> (Last accessed on March 15, 2015)

³²⁵ For discussion of the best known cases and a list of readers of Nursi's works in Russia, who were convicted and received prison terms, suspended prison terms, and tried in the court but had their cases dropped, see Corley, Felix. "Prisoner of conscience freed but not exonerated," Forum 18 News Service. 20 January 2012. http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=1658 (Last accessed on March 24, 2015). Also see other relevant posts on Russia on the Forum 18 News service website <http://www.forum18.org/> (Last accessed on March 24, 2015).

³²⁶ Based on Article 13 of the Federal law N 114-FZ "On combating extremist activity" from 25 July 2002, point 7 of the Provision on the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation, approved by the Decree of the

Court of Moscow, which ruled Mohammed Abdul-Wahhab's *The Book of the Unity of God (Kitab at-Tawhid)* illegal in Russia. In May 2007, the Koptevskiy Court of Moscow outlawed Russian translations of more than a dozen (14) Islamic religious texts authored by a Turkish theologian Said Nursi.³²⁷ The list was expanded by decisions of the Buguruslan Court in Orenburg in 2007, the Demskii Court in Ufa, and a several other regional and federal courts. In February 2009, the powers of the Expert Council for Conducting State Religious-Studies Expert Analysis for the Russian Ministry of Justice were considerably expanded. It was authorized to investigate the activity, doctrines, leadership decisions, literature and worship of any registered religious organization and recommend action to the Ministry.³²⁸

Later, in June 2012, the Lenin district court of Orenburg ignited a controversy in several Muslim-majority regions of Russia with its decision regarding dozens of Islamic texts, allegedly for their extremist and radical content. The court's provocative decision to ban the books, which included works by well-regarded Islamic scholars, quickly made headlines in the regional press and triggered a broad public debate. While secular conservative groups alarmed by the growth of radical Islam in the country supported the

President of the Russian Federation N. 1313 from 13 October 2004, the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation is responsible for maintaining and publication of the federal list of extremist materials.

³²⁷ Fedosenko, Vladimir. "Interpreters of the Koran: The Legacy of a Theologian Is Held to Be Extremism," *Statutes and Decisions*, vol. 43, no. 1, January–February 2008, pp. 63–65. In April 2008, Russia's Supreme Court banned a so-called "Nurdzhular" movement. According to Forum 18, Russia's anti-Nursi campaign became apparent in 2005 and as of 2013 the state investigation has not been able to present a clear pattern of evidence that readers of Said Nursi's works pose a threat to the Russian state. For details, see Fagan, G. "What's the matter with Said Nursi?" Forum 18 News Service. 5 March 2013. http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=1811 (Last accessed on March 15, 2015)

³²⁸ On 11 March 2009, Mufti Ravil Gainutdin, who chairs the Council of Muftis, raised the issue of outlawed Islamic literature at a high-profile meeting of the Council for Co-operation with Religious Organizations, a consultative body for religious communities attached to the presidential administration. President Dmitri Medvedev, who chaired the meeting, replied that "the quality of expertise in these sorts of problems should be the highest possible." He supported Gainutdin's suggestion for a federal expert council to deal with the situation and said he would order one to be created.

decision and advocated the toughening of security measures, human rights activists, a liberal wing of the official Muslim establishment, and wider public expressed their deep concern over increasing involvement of state authorities in religious affairs and published several open letters protesting the ban on literature and excessive reliance on anti-extremist legislation.³²⁹ As of August 2014, there were 2,500 items on the list of banned extremist materials.³³⁰ Many of them are Islamic texts, which include works by globally recognized Islamic scholars, some Arabic language learning material, and translations of the Qur'an.

According to Article 20.29 of the Code of Administrative Offences that was put into practice in July 2007, "Production or distribution of extremist materials" is punished with a fine of up to 3,000 Rubles or up to 15 days' detention for individuals and the confiscation of the materials. Organizations can be punished with a fine of between 50,000 and 100,000 Rubles or a ban of up to 90 days, as well as confiscation of the materials.

Finally, it is also important to note that while not targeted at religious communities directly, new visa rules introduced in October 2007 allowing foreigners with a business or humanitarian visa - which includes religious work - to spend only 90 out of every 180 days in Russia have embittered many religious communities and organizations, particularly those which for one reason or another depend upon foreigners.

³²⁹ "Otkrytoe pis'mo musul'manskoi obschestvennosti prezidentu V.V. Putinu." *Izvestiya*. N38. 5 March 2007.

"Musul'mane Dagestana prosyat Vladimira Putina otmenit' zapret na knigi Nursi" 26 December, 2007. <http://www.portal-credo.ru/site/?act=news&id=59378> (Last accessed on March 20, 2015).

"Musul'mane Sankt-Peterburga napravili otkrytoe pis'mo muftiyu Raviliu Gainutdinu" 16 January 2008. <http://www.islamnews.ru/news-9142.html> (Last accessed on March 20, 2015).

³³⁰ "Federal'nyi spisok ekstremistskikh materialov," *Russian Ministry of Justice*. http://minjust.ru/ru/extremist-materials?field_extremist_content_value=&page=12 (Last accessed on Nov 24, 2014)

The legal obstacles, according to Fagan, are avoidable, “but the procedures for obtaining temporary residency or a work permit - which allow an unbroken stay in Russia - are lengthy and time consuming” (Fagan 2008).³³¹

Arguably, the limited effectiveness of these measures prompted some policymakers to propose further toughening the 1997 law. In October 2009, Justice ministry suggested forcing religious communities to issue licenses to anyone wishing to promote their beliefs away from places of worship. It proposed to make state registration compulsory for all religious communities, possibly rendering unregistered religious activity illegal.³³² These attempts suggest that a fundamental ambiguity of the state officials on how to deal with “non-traditional” religious communities is still unresolved.

According to long-time observers of religious affairs in the country, ambiguous state policies engendered resentment and misunderstandings among the indigenous Muslim population. Experts argue that the Russian government’s broad-brush approach toward religious groups was problematic, due to its arbitrary application of “vague anti-extremism laws against religious adherents and others who pose no credible threat to security” (USCIRF 2011, Verkhovsky 2007). Aislu Yunusova, for example, compared the attempts to limit or even outlaw the activity of “non-traditional” religious groups with

³³¹ For a brief discussion of the issue, see Fagan, G. “Religious freedom survey, October 2008,” *Forum 18 News Service*, 1 October 2008. http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=1196 (Last accessed on March 15, 2015).

³³² As of 2012, attempts to toughen the 1997 Law continued to reach the new Duma. Communist deputy Andrei Tychinin's May 2012 draft would raise the minimum membership of a religious organisation from 10 to 50, and the minimum composition of a centralised religious organisation from three to 30 communities. It would also subject religious worship in private homes to regional law, which opponents of religious freedom have found far easier than federal law to amend to their liking. According to Fagan, in Russia's new political climate of popular protest and government clampdown, the Kremlin has neither sufficient concern nor incentive to head off such proposals. For a brief discussion of this, see Fagan, G. “Religious freedom survey, July 2012” *Forum 18 News Service*. 19 July 2012. http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=1722 (Last accessed on March 15, 2015).

the Soviet efforts to ban jazz, rock, and karate, which were also described as harmful to the youth and society (Yunusova 1997).³³³

Experts also point out that the attempt to divide believers to adherents of suitable or unsuitable religions for Russian citizens contradicts the country's Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which protects the right of individuals not only to practice any religion but also to change their beliefs (Yunusova 1997). The Declaration proclaims that the rights of people to receive and spread ideas cannot be bound by state borders.³³⁴ This expert criticism speaks to the attempt of Russian policymakers to limit the rights of foreign religious missionaries. Yunusova underlines the poly-confessional nature of the country, which she argues cannot be limited by a particular number of allowed religions. She warns that this could inevitably lead to the conflicts between adherents of various faiths, between the federal center and the regions, and between Russia and the outside world (Yunusova 1997).

3. Moving forward towards the past? The road from the “multi-confessional establishment” to “traditional religions.”

The emergence and strengthening of a so-called ‘traditional religions’ paradigm since the late 1990s resembles the pre-revolutionary “multi-confessional establishment” model. According to Paul Werth, this model was a framework that the Russian autocracy developed to regulate spiritual affairs in the empire during the reign of Catherine the

³³³ Yunusova refers to the 1981 decree banning sports clubs that taught “ideologically dangerous” karate. Aislu Yunusova. “Svoboda Sovesti I Svoboda Veroispovedanii,” NG-Religii, N9, 25 September 1997.

³³⁴ Article 19 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Great (1762-1796).³³⁵ The model granted a series of significant collective rights to recognized religious groups and accepted ‘foreign confessions’ as state religions entitled to certain forms of government patronage and protection. Non-Orthodox communities were thus “integrated into the broader imperial order through the establishment of confessional institutions as a crucial mediator between individual subjects and the state” (Werth 2014: 4).³³⁶ This section will examine some of the similarities and differences between the state approach toward Muslims and Islam in Russia during the early 19th century and the 2000s.

As noted in chapter one, the concept of “multi-confessional establishment” was developed by Paul Werth to describe Russian state approach toward the Orthodox Church and religious minorities in Tsarist Russia since the late 18th century. Analysis of state-religion regimes in post-Soviet Russia suggests that the concept still provides an excellent framework for the study of Russian state policies toward religion in the 2000s. First, it helps to place the debates about the role of religion in post-Soviet Russian national identity in historical context. According to Werth, one of Russia’s greatest identity challenges is rooted in its character as a multi-confessional state. Whether Russia is a truly poly-confessional state or a polity that embraces several religions while elevating only one of them as dominant has been at the center of many historical debates on the status of religious minorities in the country. Second, the approach developed by Werth is

³³⁵ The term ‘multi-confessional establishment’ in this study refers to a religious order that framed the exercise of faith and defined the scope of religious freedom in Russia from the reign of Catherine II (1762-96) through that of Nicholas I (1825-55) until the end of the Tsarist era. It implies recognition of religious institutions and production of legal statutes for the regulation of spiritual affairs in the country. In other words, it describes a framework wherein the state relies on state-approved religious organizations to socialize the population and provide moral discipline. Refer to the dissertation glossary for details.

³³⁶ This framework, according to Werth, was at best only partially compatible with the norms of “freedom of conscience.”

useful in emphasizing the importance of both religious and nationalities policies in the state's management of its diverse population. Werth suggests that when religious modes of self-identification are central to many of the country's subjects, the state's approach to management of the diversity may rely substantially on confessional institutions and categories. According to Werth, until its last days the Tsarist regime was still heavily dependent on religious institutions despite the fact that "the national idea grew in significance over the course of the 19th century" (Werth 2014:7).

The idea of Islam as a "building block of the empire" in the late 18th and early 19th centuries and the contemporary idea of "traditional Islam" is highly comparable. Several historical studies have explored in detail the effort of the tsarist regime to instrumentalize religion. Robert Crews, for example, in his works discusses significant efforts of the state to build cooperative links with pious Muslims in the name of "true religion" in the Tsarist Russia (Crews 2003, 2009).³³⁷ He describes the country as a confessional state that created "a religion-centered framework for its subjects to engage with the autocracy" (Crews 2009). Observers of state-religions relations point to similar mechanisms of cooperation between the contemporary state and representatives of "traditional" religious organizations (Curanovic 2014, Dannreuther 2010). Similarly, present-day treatment of some "non-traditional" Islamic communities as extremists resembles efforts of the Tsarist regime in the 19th century to depict non-conformist Islamic communities as fanatics.³³⁸

³³⁷ Crews, Robert. "Empire and the confessional state: Islam and religious politics in nineteenth-century Russia." *The American Historical Review* 108.1 (2003): 50-83.

Crews, Robert D. *For prophet and tsar: Islam and empire in Russia and Central Asia*. Harvard University Press, 2009.

³³⁸ According to Khalid, for Konstantin Kaufman, the first governor-general of Russian Turkestan (in office 1867–1881), Islam was irredeemably connected with fanaticism (Khalid 2004).

Ultimately, the historical model of “multi-confessional establishment” and the emerging “traditional religions” framework correspond to each other in the standardized typology of state-religion regimes presented in this study. In both cases, institutional control over the legislature and judiciary does not belong to a religious authority. Religion is generally allowed to be present in the public sphere, but not all religious groups may equally benefit from this right. In this regard, both “traditional religions” approach and “multi-confessional establishment” framework operate under a regime that subordinates religion to a secular authority.

3.1 – “Traditional religions” from the historical perspective

Religious and secular state institutions in Russia have historically had their own interests, which did not always overlap. While the Russian state depended on the Orthodox Church and saw it as an ally since Christianization of Kievan Rus, over time autocrats came to see in Patriarch a competitor that could either support or undermine the political authority of the ruler. Peter the Great, who grew up in the wake of the Old Believer Schism in the Orthodox Church, realized that competing centers of authority could inflict on the land and its people. The Emperor believed that consolidation of the state depended on the subordination and subjugation of the Church. Peter utterly rejected the idea of Moscow being the Third Rome. Instead, inspired by western examples, he initiated a comprehensive modernization project of Russia, which envisioned a different role for the Church. After Peter’s Church reforms in the early 18th century, the quasi-medieval Muscovite Russia centered on the Church and headed by the Tsar and the Patriarch came to its end.

Peter's modernization and secularization efforts were aimed at creating a rational state, where Church would function as a "department" of the state. For him, "the discipline was more important than any kind of religious values" (Zhivov 2009: 352).³³⁹ Thus, the state's involvement in religious affairs was more about discipline and order rather than piety and spirituality (Zhivov 2009, Shevzov 2004).³⁴⁰ In a broader sense, Peter laid the foundation of a new vision for an ideal Russian state or ideology, where religion was subordinate to the state. He reoriented the outlook and history of his country. His aim was to transform a backward medieval state and society into a power comparable to the kingdoms of Western Europe. As a Western-style rationalist, he regarded the Church as a major obstacle to modernization. In Francis House's words, Peter "beheaded the Church", first by refusing to allow the election of a patriarch, and then, after it had been leaderless for twenty years, abolishing patriarchate altogether and replacing it with a committee called 'The Holy Synod.' (House 1988:24).³⁴¹ In effect, this made the Church subject to the authority of a state bureaucracy run by a layperson.

The rise of the statist ideology and a gradual development of a new state-religion regime opened up new opportunities for minority peoples under the Tsarist regime. Service to the state, rather than Christianization, became the ultimate measure of loyalty and the source of privilege. Those Muslim subjects who survived the dispossession of the earlier periods obtained a chance to keep their land and were even able to own Orthodox

³³⁹ For a brief analysis of the historical role of the church and the state in disciplining the population in imperial Russia, see Viktor Zhivov, "Distsiplinarnaia revoliutsiia i bor'ba s sueveriem v Rossii XVIII veka: 'provaly' i ikh posledstviia," *Antropologiia revoliutsii: Sbornik statei po materialam XVI Bannykh chtennii zhurnala "Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie,"* eds. I. Prokhorova, A. Dmitriev, I. Kikulin, and M. Maiofis (Moscow: NLO, 2009), 327-361.

³⁴⁰ Shevzov, Vera. *Russian Orthodoxy on the Eve of Revolution*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004

³⁴¹ House, Francis. *Millennium of Faith: Christianity in Russia, AD 988-1988*. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1988.

serfs. It was not until Catherine the Great, however, that the state recognized the utility of non-Orthodox religions as sources of order and stability (Werth 2014: 49).³⁴² By making religious tolerance an official policy, legalizing and institutionalizing Islam, she created a basis for loyalty to the Russian state in the Muslim lands.³⁴³ The Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly, at the time an organizational structure unique in the Muslim world, became an essential mediator between the state and its Muslim subjects.³⁴⁴ Moreover, in the spirit of Peter's modernization reforms, Catherine further secularized the state bureaucracy and limited the influence of the Church on state affairs by reforming the property rights and allocating budget. In recognition of her role in changing the state's relationship with its non-Orthodox subjects, Tatars to the present day still regard Catherine the Great as "Ebi-Patsha" (Grandmother-Queen).

Having attained legitimacy as a tolerated religion under the "multi-confessional establishment" framework, Islam in Russia developed in a fashion unparalleled since before the conquest of Kazan. Some of the greatest indigenous Islamic thinkers lived and worked in Russia in the late 18th and 19th centuries. A spiritual and intellectual chain of these Muslim thinkers, which included Abdunnasir Al-Qursawi (1776-1812), Qayyum Nasiri (1835-1902), Alimjan Barudi (1857-1921), Rizaetdin Fakhretdin (1859-1936),

³⁴² Werth, Paul W. *The Tsar's Foreign Faiths: Toleration and the Fate of Religious Freedom in Imperial Russia*. Oxford University Press, 2014.

³⁴³ Hanafi-Maturidi theologians in Central Asia accepted the idea that Muslims could be ruled by someone who was either a *ghayr-i din* (nonbeliever) or a *kafir* (infidel) so long as the leader allowed mosques and madrassas to remain open, allowed Muslims to observe their rituals, and allowed Muslims to be judged by Sharia. As a result, the majority of the region's Hanafi clerics, known as traditionalists or conservatives, accepted Russian rule as legitimate.

³⁴⁴ According to Khalid, this was intertwined with the goal of bringing Central Asia under closer Russian control and outflanking Ottoman diplomacy there (Khalid in Milner 2004). The Spiritual Assembly, headed by a mufti appointed by the state, was responsible for appointing and licensing imams as teachers throughout the territory under its purview, and overseeing the operation of mosques.

Ismail Gaspirali (1851-1914), and Musa Jarullah Bigi (1875-1949) developed uninterrupted until the Soviet assault on religion.

Introduction of a “multi-confessional framework” to govern the growing empire’s diverse population provided unprecedented opportunities for Russia’s indigenous Muslims to practice their own faith. Nevertheless, the new “institutional and statutory arrangement still upheld a clear distinction between a “ruling” Orthodoxy and subordinate foreign confessions” (Werth 2014:48). The autocracy’s political identity continued to be connected with Orthodoxy, which retained the status of an established religion. The Church maintained its privileged place at the top of the confessional hierarchy and continued its spiritual mission by aggressively promoting conversion to Orthodoxy on a mass scale (Werth 2014, Khalid 2004). Under Nicholas I, the state’s Orthodox identity was made more explicit after adoption of the official ideology “Orthodoxy, Authority, Nationality.” This vision of an ideal model for Russia’s future enshrined Orthodoxy as the autocracy’s legitimating ideology.

As it has been discussed earlier, the last decade of imperial rule showed several signs of a possible transition to passive secularism in state-religion relations. In 1905, as part of the government’s response to mounting demands for civil rights by an increasingly urban and educated population, Tsar Nicholas II issued the Edict of Toleration, which gave legal status to religions not of the Russian Orthodox Church.³⁴⁵ This seemed to break the monopoly of religious organizations. Various religious

³⁴⁵ Pospelovsky, Dmitry (1984). *The Russian Church Under the Soviet Regime*. Crestwood: St. Vladimir Seminary Press. p. 22

movements emerged that sought different platforms for religious expression. One of group was the first Islamic political movement in Russia, *Ittifaq*.

The promise of religious freedom that was made in the October Manifesto, however, was never fully delivered. Proposals of religious freedom never became a law. Until its last days, imperial state continued to rely on religious institutions to perform certain functions of local governance. Religion continued to do the work for the state rulers by performing certain administrative functions and legitimizing their authority. The bureaucratic capacity of the autocracy was too weak to do without what the historian Paul Werth calls the "multi-confessional establishment."³⁴⁶ Among all, the Russian Orthodox Church remained the state's most trusted and effective bridge to the people.

4. Challenges to the “Confessional collaboration” model

The policies of the Russian state toward religion since 1997 resemble the country's experience with the “multi-confessional establishment” framework. However, the ability of this model to overcome the legacy of the 20th and address the challenges of the 21st centuries is questionable. The first major question that the state would need to address with respect to managing the diverse population, including indigenous Muslims, is the status of Russian Orthodox Christianity vis-à-vis Islam and other religions. While the Russian government maintains a commitment to secularism and has sought to avoid a particular closeness between church and state, the Russian Orthodox Church has an

³⁴⁶ The notion of "multi-confessional establishment" developed by Paul Werth provides a valuable intellectual framework for the analysis of the post-Soviet “traditional religions” paradigm and the “confessional collaboration” model presented in this study. To see how religious institutions became key mediators between the imperial Russian state and its diverse peoples in the late 19th century, see Paul Werth, *The Tsar's Foreign Faiths: Toleration and the Fate of Religious Freedom in Imperial Russia*. Oxford University Press, 2014

undoubted politico-moral authority and considers itself *primus inter pares* among the ‘traditional’ religions.³⁴⁷ Its own conceptualization of Russia, according to Dannreuther, is as an ‘Orthodox country’, with Muslims as a recognized minority.

For some members of the traditional Muslim clergy, assuming a spiritually subordinate role is acceptable. In part, for this reason the church hierarchy privileges relations with Talgat Tadzhuddin, the head of the Central Spiritual Board of Muslims in Ufa.³⁴⁸ For many others, who argue for the equality of indigenous Muslims and Orthodox Christians, no special status of the Orthodox Church may be acceptable. This group of Muslims led by Ravil’ Gainutdin, the head of the rival Council of Muftis of Russia, has a more nuanced relations with the Church. On several occasions, in his public statements Mufti Gainutdin reflected the concerns about the government’s “preferential treatment” of the Russian Orthodox Church.³⁴⁹ Close to the surface of these inter-confessional tensions, according to Dannreuther, is an Orthodox fear of Islam as representing a threat to the Russian people, and Muslim fears that they are being progressively reduced to a second-order status in a state dominated by the Russian Orthodox Church. As Dannrether has put it, “there is here the potential for a spiral of radicalizing sentiments as perceptions of Russian Christians and Muslims become more mutually suspicious and distrustful” (Dannreuther 2010:124).

³⁴⁷ See, for example, Kovalskaya, Kristina. "The Traditional and the Non-Traditional in the Religious Life of the Russian Federation." *Mundo Eslavo* 12 (2013): 69-78.

³⁴⁸ Aleksandr Verkovskii, ‘Publichniye otnosheniya pravoslavnykh i musul’manskiikh organizatsii na federal’nom urovne’, in Aleksei Malashenko, ed., *Islam v Rossii: vzgliad iz regionov* (Moscow: Aspekt, 2007).

³⁴⁹ See, for example, the statement of Mufti Gainutdin on the position of the Council of Muftis of Russia on the federal law project “On Military Priests.” Moscow, 11 March 2006. Also see Mufti Gainutdin’s statement on the proposals to introduce courses on “Russian Orthodox Culture” at state schools in Gainutdin, *Islam: Otvet na vyzovy vremeni* (Moscow, 2011), 457-461.

The second question that the state would need to address with respect to organizing the diverse population, including indigenous ethnic Muslims, is the nationalities question. The attempt to fill the ideological void by basing the legitimacy of the state mainly on confessional grounds is unlikely to deliver the expected results as long as the new approach does not address the nationalities question. Despite the increasing prominence of religion, national identities remain salient and continue to be sources of contention and one of the main challenges to political developments in Russia, as we shall see in the final part (Part III) of this chapter.

5. Conclusion: Collaboration between the state and traditional Islamic organizations

The era of passive secularism in Russia led to many unintended consequences on the religious front. On the one hand, recognizing constitutional rights of all believers and abandoning state-led anti-religious propaganda boosted political legitimacy of the secular reformers. The 1988 Millennium celebrations were of huge importance for the success of Gorbachev's *perestroika* initiative. Maintaining the liberalization rhetoric was a key element in strengthening Yeltsin's hold on power during the transition and early post-Soviet periods. On the other hand, many of the assumptions that were made regarding the "transformative impact" of the Soviet era and the role of religion in society turned out to be inaccurate. One of such imperfect expectations was that religion was largely subordinate to ethnic cultures. The other misleading assumption was that Islam could not assume a leading role in social life, or in Dugin's words, "become a *logos*" for Russia's

own indigenous Muslims (Dugin 2010:146).³⁵⁰ In both cases, failure to realize that religion could take a life of its own, especially in the context of ideological crisis and fundamental ambiguity about Russia's national identity, destined the country's experiment with passive secularism to failure.

The "traditional religions" framework that came to replace norms of passive secularism became a basis for construction of a new state-religion regime in the country. The state's embrace of "traditional" confessions and reserving for them a privileged access to the public sphere symbolized a movement toward a confessional collaboration/established religions regime. This regime also resembles Russia's pre-revolutionary "multi-confessional establishment" model wherein, the state relied on religious organizations to perform some bureaucratic functions. Religious freedom, a core principle that guarantees equal access to the public sphere for all religious groups, was excluded by Russian model of confessional collaboration. In this collaboration, subordination of religious institutions to the state is a criterion for maintaining legal personality and public visibility. The concept of "traditional Islam" to a large degree developed into a calling card for Islamic groups that perform these functions on behalf of the Islamic faith.

The model based on collaboration with "traditional religions," however, has major limitations in governing Russia's diverse population, including indigenous Muslims. The first challenge is interfaith relations. How Russia's indigenous Islamic community and representatives of other religions will react to the growing influence of

³⁵⁰ Dugin A.G. *Logos i mifos. Sotsiologiya glubin* [Logos and Mythos. The sociology of depths]. Moscow, 2010.

the Orthodox Church as a first among the four equal traditional religions is difficult to predict. The second limitation is a question of nationalities. Given a strong sense of ethnic nationalism among Russia's ethnic minorities and increasingly ethnic Russians, how viable it is to place the political legitimacy on confessional foundations is also not clear.³⁵¹ The following section will discuss the state efforts in this direction.

Part III: Muslims and Islam under the non-ethnic regime

The same day that President Putin participated in the ceremony commemorating the 225th anniversary of the Spiritual Board of Muslims in Ufa, he also chaired a meeting of the Council for Interethnic Relations.³⁵² If the focus of his address to the Muslim clergy was the importance of "traditional" religious organizations in maintaining the societal harmony in the country, the main theme of the meeting with representatives of secular state bureaucracy was implementation of the goals stated in the National Ethnic Policy Strategy through 2025. The strategy that the President was referring to reflected the vision of state authorities on the future of interethnic relations in the country.

What unites these two seemingly distinct events in Ufa? This section will explain how the state's ethnic policy fits into the ethno-confessional regime of the post-1997 era. It will show that the attempt to build a non-ethnic regime complements the state's efforts to manage Russia's diverse population based on the confessional model. State support for public visibility of the established Muslim clergy and curbing public assertion of ethnic nationalisms reflect the contours of the statist ideology and its approach toward Islam.

³⁵¹ See, the conclusion chapter for further discussion of the limits of Russia's contemporary ethno-confessional regime.

³⁵² Meeting of Council for Interethnic Relations. October 22, 2013 <http://eng.kremlin.ru/transcripts/6156> (Last access February 5, 2015).

I will examine the recent efforts of Russian state authorities and ideologists to transform the country from a multiethnic federation into some sort of a “melting pot,” where along with legal uniformity the state is seeking to build a patriotic consensus based on supremacy of the state. Within this framework, both the construction of a non-ethnic regime and support for “traditional” Muslim organizations play an essential role in providing the Russian state with ideological legitimacy among the indigenous Muslims and the institutional means to govern a diverse society.

1. Non-ethnic nationhood and civic nationalism

In December 2012, President Putin signed a decree approving the National Ethnic Policy Strategy through 2025. In addition, the federal target program on “Strengthening the unity of the Russian nation and the ethnic and cultural development of the peoples of Russia (for 2014-2020)” was adopted.³⁵³ These two documents were the latest attempts to formalize the concept of the Russian nation as a non-ethnic community uniting its diverse population (Barkov, Serikov, Chernous 2013).³⁵⁴ Nevertheless, a consensus on the debate over nationality policy or ethnicity regimes – the discussion that lasted for over twenty years – has yet to be achieved.³⁵⁵ Most recently, the return of “Novorossiia” to the

³⁵³ “On endorsing the federal targeted program on Strengthening the unity of the Russian nation and ethnic and cultural development of the peoples of Russia in 2014-2020” Government decisions, 25 August 2013. <http://government.ru/en/docs/4022/> (Last accessed on March 15, 2015). “Meeting of Council for Interethnic Relations” February 19, 2013. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/17536> (Last accessed on March 15, 2015).

³⁵⁴ Barkov, Fedor Aleksandrovich, Anton Vladimirovich Serikov, and Victor Vladimirovich Chernous. “Competing of Civic and Ethnic Forms of Identity in Russia (Based on Regional Empirical Studies).” *World Applied Sciences Journal* 27.3 (2013): 324-328.

³⁵⁵ Clunan, A.L., 2009. *The Social Construction of Russia’s Resurgence: Aspirations, Identity and Security Interests*. The Johns Hopkins University Press, pp: 22-53; Taras, R., 2013. *The Power of Images and the Images of Power: Past and Present Identity in Russia’s International Relations*. N.Y.: Routledge, pp: 1-10; Billington, H.J., 2004. *Russia: In the Search of Itself*. Woodrow Wilson Center Press, pp: 47-67; Tishkov, V.A., 2013. *Russian Nation: History and Sense of National Self-Conscience*. M: Nauka, pp: 300-322; Sanina, A.G., 2012. *The Formation of Russian Identity: civic and state approach*. Sotsiologicheskie

popular lexicon and the attempts to re-define what is meant by “Russkii Mir” in the context of a Ukrainian crisis in 2014 again revealed the fragile and contentious character of the social contract in present day Russia. Some continued to stress the importance of building a civic national identity based on common values and symbols (Tishkov 2013, Barkov et al. 2013).³⁵⁶ For some others, Tishkov’s idea of “Rossiyane” has never been fully embraced and finally collapsed with the rise of Russian nationalism (Akhmetov 2014).³⁵⁷

According to Akturk, ethnic criterion for acquisition of citizenship and legal-institutional limits on expression of ethnic identities define the kind of ethnicity regime that dominates in a given political system.³⁵⁸ Accordingly, for most of the countries, the presence or absence of an institutional support for ethnic identification largely defines whether their political systems have adopted a civic or a multiethnic ethnicity regime. The analysis of the first two post-Soviet decades suggests that Russian legal-institutional norms on expression of ethnic identities have been changing. More interestingly, this change has been taking place roughly around the same timeframe as the shift in the state’s religious policy. According to Akturk, toward the end of the 1990s, Russia’s multiethnic regime was stigmatized and even perceived by many as a security threat. By

issledovaniia, pp: 12-57; Drobizheva, L.M., 2011. Russian Identity and Trends in Interethnic Attitudes for 20 Years of Reforms. In *Russia is Reforming*. Institute of Sociology of RAS, pp: 73; Guroff, G. and A. Guroff, 1994. The Paradox of Russian National Identity. In *National Identity and Ethnicity in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*. N.Y.: Szporluk, pp: 78-100.

³⁵⁶ Tishkov, V.A., 2013. *Russian Nation: History and Sense of National Self Conscience*. M: Nauka, pp: 300-322; Barkov, Fedor Aleksandrovich, Anton Vladimirovich Serikov, and Victor Vladimirovich Chernous. "Competing of Civic and Ethnic Forms of Identity in Russia (Based on Regional Empirical Studies)." *World Applied Sciences Journal* 27.3 (2013): 324-328.

³⁵⁷ Goble, Paul. "Putin’s ‘Russian World’ Death Knell for Civic Russian Identity, Tatarstan Editor Says," *The Interpreter*. 29 September, 2014. <http://www.interpretermag.com/putins-russian-world-death-knell-for-civic-russian-identity-tatarstan-editor-says/> (last accessed on March 21, 2015).

³⁵⁸ According to Akturk, whether membership in any particular society is limited to one ethnicity and whether institutionalization of ethnicities is encouraged determines whether any given polity could be categorized as mono-ethnic, multiethnic, or anti-ethnic (non-ethnic) (Akturk 2014:7-8)

1997 calls for a change in state policies toward ethnicity in Russia materialized into a major reform, which Akturk termed as “the passport reform” (Akturk 2014:230).

Today, the question whether there should be a legal and institutional support for multiple ethnic categories is still a topic of heated debates. While some politicians and intellectuals continue to defend the principles that allowed flourishing of an ethnic federalism in the country during the 1990s, ideologists of non-ethnic national identity made significant advances in formalizing the idea of civic nationalism. The fact is that many symbols of ethnic distinctiveness no longer enjoy the level of institutional support that they had in the early 90s. This section will explain how a series of reforms, starting with a passport reform in 1997, has changed the ethnicity regime in Russia from a multiethnic toward a non-ethnic model, and how this shift has affected Islam in Russia.

2. The road from ethnic federalism towards a non-ethnic statehood

The Russian Federation inherited many elements of the Soviet multiethnic ethnicity regime. In addition to the ethnic federal structure, these were the indication of ethnicity in the internal passports and a number of programs for cultural development of national minorities. However, in less than a decade after the Soviet collapse some of these elements have been abandoned. One of the most illustrative examples of the change is the “passport reform” of 1997 (Akturk 2012). For the first several years after dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation continued the old practice of indicating a citizen’s ethnicity in the individual’s internal passport. The so-called “fifth line” in the document explicitly identified the ethnic background of all Russian/Soviet citizens. Some observers believe that a continuation of this practice reflected convictions

and habits centered on the Leninist/Soviet approach to ethnic diversity (Slezkine, 1994; Filatova, 1997). According to many others, the persistence of this tradition until 1997 was largely a result of strong lobbying from ethno-nationalist autocrats in Russia's ethnically defined regions, Communists, and liberal advocates of minority rights (Akturk 2010, 2012). Leaders of ethnic minority republics such as Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, who were most ardent defenders of retaining "line five," regarded the attempts to remove the mark as a step toward destroying ethnic minority identities.³⁵⁹ For one reason or the other, the Russian Federation has largely preserved the Soviet legacy of multiethnic statehood in institutional, legal, and symbolic terms.

Over time, however, the multiethnic structure of the state came to be seen as a threat to the stability of the country. The rise of ethnic separatism in some regions brought the country to the brink of collapse (Treisman 1997, Gorenburg 1999, Lapidus 1999).³⁶⁰ Calls to change Soviet-era state policies on ethnicity in Russia gained momentum and acceptance among some politicians. This was reflected in the growing criticism of the parade of sovereignties and strengthening of the arguments in support of civic nationalism.³⁶¹ In 1997, despite strong objections, indication of ethnicity was

³⁵⁹ Many of the 21 autonomous republics with their respective titular ethnic groups were against a reform in this direction (Petrov and Slider, 2007, p. 77). Petrov, Nikolai and Darrell Slider, "Putin and the Regions," in Dale R. Herspring, ed., *Putin's Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007.

³⁶⁰ Treisman, Daniel S. "Russia's "Ethnic Revival": The Separatist Activism of Regional Leaders in a Postcommunist Order." *World Politics* 49.02 (1997): 212-249.
Gorenburg, Dmitry. "Regional separatism in Russia: ethnic mobilisation or power grab?." *Europe-Asia Studies* 51.2 (1999): 245-274.
Lapidus, Gail W. "Asymmetrical federalism and state breakdown in Russia." *Post-Soviet Affairs* 15.1 (1999): 74-82.

³⁶¹ Parade of sovereignties is a political movement by the unrepresented peoples of the Soviet Union in the 1990s

removed from internal passports.³⁶² This policy change from a mandatory recording of individual ethnicity to an uncompromising prohibition against recording individual ethnicity symbolized a dramatic shift in the country's ethnicity regime (Akturk 2010:324).³⁶³

Throughout the post-Soviet era, one of the main intellectual proponents of the idea of creating a non-ethnic national identity in Russia was Valeriy Tishkov, the head of the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology (IEA). Starting in 1992, when he served as Minister of Nationalities under the Yeltsin regime, Tishkov advocated a concept of territorial, as opposed to ethnic, nationhood (Tishkov, 1997b, pp. 246–271). For him, “territorial nationalism” based on a civic ‘Rossiyanin’ identity was crucial in order to transcend ethnic differences, build up patriotism that could claim the allegiance of Russia’s non-Russian citizens, and ultimately create a homogeneous society loyal to the state and its principles.³⁶⁴ Eventually, it would become a foundation of a nation-building

³⁶² On March 13, 1997, Yel'tsin eliminated ethnicity in the internal passport with a presidential decree (No. 232), “On the Basic Document Certifying the Identity of the Russian Federation Citizen on the Territory of the Russian Federation” (Sadkovskaya, 1997).

According to the opinion polls, the idea of removing the indication of ethnicity from the internal passports was not popular. Public opinion polls conducted in 1995–1996 indicate that 45 percent of Russian citizens favored keeping “nationality” (i.e., ethnicity) in the passport, while only 23 percent were against retaining it. See Andreyev, Andrei, “Land and State: Russian National Consciousness as a Factor in Today’s Politics,” English-language version of A. Andreyev in *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, March 19, 1996, p. 2, in *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, 48, 11:14-15, April 10, 1996.

³⁶³ Akturk, Sener “Passport Identification and Nation-Building in Post-Soviet Russia,” *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 2010, 26, 4, pp. 314–341

³⁶⁴ This seems similar to the invention and propagation of the *sovetskiy narod* concept in the USSR. For further details, see: Tishkov, Valeriy A., “An Assembly of Nations or an All-Union Parliament? (An Ethnopolitical Analysis of the USSR Congress of People’s Deputies and Supreme Soviet),” *Journal of Soviet Nationalities*, 1, 1:101–127, Spring 1990; Tishkov, Valeriy A., “Tyazhelo Soyuz sokhranit’, eshche trudneye razrushit’ (It’s hard to preserve the Union, even harder to destroy it),” *Novoye vremya*, 3, September 1991; Tishkov, Valeriy A., “‘Smertel’nyy gambit’ natsional’noy politiki (Ethnicity policy’s deadly gambit),” *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, February 7, 1992; Tishkov, Valery, “Nationalities and the Passport,” English-language version of V. Tishkov in *Izvestiya*, November 4, 1997, p. 5, in *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, 49, 44:12, December 3, 1997a; Tishkov, Valery, *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Conflict in and after the Soviet Union: The Mind Aflame*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1997b; Tishkov, Valery Aleksandrovich, “Carte Blanche: Farewell to Line Five. The Absence of an Indication of Nationality in a Passport Is a Sign of Democratization, Not Discrimination,” English-language version of

project.³⁶⁵ The passport reform seemed to be an important step in that direction (Akturk 2010).

Having broken with one of the key legacies of the Soviet ethnicity regime – the passport ethnicity, the Russian governments continued the work of “demolishing the multiethnic institutional architecture” of the country (Akturk 2012:252). Under Vladimir Putin’s presidency the Ministry of Nationalities was abolished, some ethnic autonomous *okrugs* were merged with Russian oblasts, seven “super regions” with appointed *polpreds* were established, and the system of popular elections of regional governors was replaced with political appointments from the federal center. In addition, a number of regional initiatives aimed at promoting national language and culture came to a halt as a result of the pressure from the federal center.

For example, in 1991, the Ministry of Education of Tatarstan approved a “Plan for the Development of Tatar Education,” which was in part aimed at the expansion of the Tatar language in secondary and higher education.³⁶⁶ However, despite a very strong support for the plan among the Tatars, with the beginning of centralization efforts in 2000, the Tatar-language schools started closing down and regional education curricula in general went through major revisions. According to Faller, 111 Tatar schools were shut

V. A. Tishkov in *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, October 22, 1997, p. 2, in *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, 49, 42:10, November 19, 1997c; Tishkov, Valeriy A., *Etnologiya i politika* (Ethnology and politics). Moscow: Nauka, 2001a; Tishkov, Valeriy A., “Chto yest’ samoopredeleniye (What is self-definition?)?” in V. Tishkov, ed., *Etnologiya i politika* (Ethnology and politics). Moscow: Nauka, 2001b.

³⁶⁵ For a discussion of distinction between *mnogonarodnaya natsiya* and *mnogonatsional’nyy narod*, see Akturk 2010:324. Akturk, Sener “Passport Identification and Nation-Building in Post-Soviet Russia,” *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 2010, 26, 4, pp. 314–341.

³⁶⁶ Gorenburg, Dmitry. “Tatar language policies in comparative perspective: Why some revivals fail and some succeed.” *Ab Imperio* 1 (2005): 257-284.
Veinguer, Aurora Alvarez, and Howard H. Davis. “Building a Tatar elite Language and national schooling in Kazan.” *Ethnicities* 7.2 (2007): 186-207.

down between 2007 and 2009 (Faller 2009: 44-46).³⁶⁷ Moreover, in 1999, the State Council of the Republic of Tatarstan adopted an alphabet for the Tatar language based on Latin script.³⁶⁸ However, on February 22, 2002, the Russian State Duma's Committee on Nationality Affairs recommended the approval of a draft bill, according to which ethnic minorities living in Russia could only make use of the Cyrillic script.³⁶⁹ In November 2002, the Russian parliament passed a law requiring all official languages within the Russian Federation to use the Cyrillic alphabet.³⁷⁰ Later, the Federal law N309-FZ of December 1, 2007 amending the Federal Law 'On Education' stipulated a removal of "an ethnic component" (ethnic language and culture classes) from public schools' curricula throughout Russia.³⁷¹ This created a wave of protests in Tatarstan and was temporarily amended by the Republic's government.³⁷² In her study on Muslim Tatar women's piety stories Liliya Karimova points out that this kind of federal policies, which limit the rights of Russia's ethnic minorities, inevitably affect the relationship of those people and

³⁶⁷ Faller, Helen M. *Nation, language, Islam: Tatarstan's sovereignty movement*. Central European University Press, 2011. For more details on ethnic minority schools in Russia, see Goble, Paul. "Putin Purges the (Non-Russian) Peoples Libraries and Schools," *Window on Eurasia*, December 5, 2014. <http://windowoneurasia2.blogspot.com/2014/12/window-on-eurasia-putin-purges-non.html> (Last access February 8, 2015); Also see <http://www.rferl.org/content/impact-tatar-schools-financial-optimization/25007680.html> (Last access February 8, 2015)

³⁶⁸ The law went into effect in September 2001.

³⁶⁹ The members of the Committee had previously rejected a draft bill proposing the right to choose scripts by ethnic groups.

³⁷⁰ For example, for debates on the transition of the script of Tatar language from Cyrillic to Latin, see Sebba, Mark. "Ideology and alphabets in the former USSR." *Language problems & language planning* 30.2 (2006): 99-125; Garipov, Y., and Helen Faller. "The politics of language reform and bilingualism in Tatarstan." *Nation Building, Ethnicity and Language Politics on Transition Countries*. Budapest: LGI/ECMI (2003): 163-184.

³⁷¹ N309-FZ "O vnesenii izmenenij v otdel'nye zakonodatel'nye akty Rossijskoj Federacii v chasti izmenenija ponjatija i struktury gosudarstvennogo obrazovatel'nogo standarta," from 1 December 2007.

³⁷² Dashkovskaia, O. "Bor'ba za komponent," *Pervoe Sentyabrya*. 28 February 2009. http://ps.1september.ru/view_article.php?ID=200900406 (Last accessed on March 15, 2015). Also see Federica Prina "Homogenisation and the 'New Russian Citizen': A Road to Stability or Ethnic Tension?" *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe* Vol 10, No 1, 2011, 59-93; Gordeev, I. 'Tatarstan gotov prikrytsya khartiei' ('Tatarstan is ready to benefit from the charter'). *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* 96, 19 May 2009.

especially of women with the faith.³⁷³ With the 2009 introduction of a new form of high school graduation examinations (which are also entrance exams into universities) that can be taken only in Russian, schools with ethnic-language instruction might simply become irrelevant. Although many of these reforms did not target the ethnicity regime per se, political centralization in the 2000s, according to Akturk, “increased the capacity of the federal state to unilaterally impose ethnic regime changes in the future” (Akturk 2012:253).

All in all, since the late 1990s Russian state policy toward ethnicity has been moving away from the multiethnic regime, which was a distinctive feature of the Soviet model, toward a non-ethnic mode. One of the clearest manifestations of the rollback in institutional support for ethnic diversity was the ‘passport reform’ of 1997. A series of subsequent initiatives throughout the 2000s contributed to deemphasizing ethnic differences and discouraged indigenous ethnic minorities from manifestations of nationalism. What does this movement toward non-ethnic nationhood mean for Islam in Russia? The following section will discuss how the state’s simultaneous support for both civic nationalism and “traditional Islam” aims to facilitate the growth of ‘patriotic Islam’ in Russia.

3. Non-ethnic nationalism and Islam

One may think that non-ethnic regime is incompatible with the notion of “traditional Islam,” which for many carries the meaning of a “folk Islam” or a religion of a particular nation. Instead, the assimilationist nature of a non-ethnic regime seems to

³⁷³ Karimova, Liliya V. *Muslim Tatar women's piety stories: A quest for personal and social transformation in Tatarstan (Russia)*. Ph.D. Dissertation. University of Massachusetts Amherst, 2013.

better tally with the *Salafi* interpretation of Islam, which largely regards religion as a non-ethnic category and denies ethnic differences.³⁷⁴ The problem with this superficial judgment is that it doesn't account for political motives behind religious expressions. While "traditional" Muslim imams have historically helped the state to make indigenous Muslims "true patriots of Russia," *Salafism* and *Wahhabism* over the course of the 1990s have proved to be an ideology of protest (Knysh 2007).³⁷⁵

"Love for the Fatherland is a testimony of the faith" (*Khubb ul'-Watan min al'-Iman*). This instruction of the Prophet Muhammad has been a guiding principle of many imams in Russia since the beginning of WWII, when Gabderrakhman Rasulev, the head of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims in Ufa, publicly referred to the above-mentioned *hadith* and proclaimed *jihad* of Soviet Muslims against Nazi Germany. At the time, Mufti's declaration that patriotism is part of Islamic faith has been an important step in renewing a working relationship between the established clergy and the Soviet state. Today this principle continues to play a central role in the rhetoric of the established clergy representing "traditional Islam" in the country.

For example, leaders of Russia's Islamic officialdom Muftis Ravil Gainutdin, Talgat Tadzhuddin, and Ismail Berdyev in many of their written statements and oral sermons often refer to historical episodes such as victory against Nazi Germany in WWII in order to bolster a sense of patriotism among the indigenous Muslims. Mufti Gainutdin constantly calls the multi-million Russian Umma to pray to the Almighty for the peace in

³⁷⁴ For discussion of Salafism and the Salafi-Sufi conflict, see Knysh, Alexander. "Contextualizing the Salafi-Sufi conflict (from the Northern Caucasus to Hadramawt)." *Middle Eastern Studies* 43.4 (2007): 503-530.

³⁷⁵ Knysh, Alexander. "Contextualizing the Salafi-Sufi conflict (from the Northern Caucasus to Hadramawt)." *Middle Eastern Studies* 43.4 (2007): 503-530.

common Fatherland (Gainutdin 2011: 295-299).³⁷⁶ In its “Basic Principles of the Social Program of Russian Muslims” the Council of Muftis, which Gainutdin heads, stresses its willingness to cooperate with the government, the importance of Russian unity, and its condemnation of all kinds of disobedience to the law (Staalesen 2005:311).³⁷⁷

Talgat Tadzhuiddin, the head of the Muslim Spiritual Board in Ufa, not only calls for patriotism, but also disapproves the expression of ethnic minority nationalism (Staalesen 2005:311).³⁷⁸ During the debates on changing the Tatar alphabet to Latin script, for instance, he opposed the regional initiative. Despite popular support for the program among the Tatars, Tadzhuiddin claimed that the introduction of the Latin script “could destroy the integrity of the Tatar nation and cause other nations in Russia to oppose Tatars.” Instead he declared that he was “proud of the fact that Cyril and Methodius, the founders of the Cyrillic script, were Bulgars, and [that Tatars] share historical roots with them” (Sebba 2006).³⁷⁹ Tadzhuiddin has even supported the idea of making the anniversary of the 14th-century battle of Kulikovo, where the Russians defeated the Mongolian Tatars, a public holiday. This proposal has met with fierce opposition from Tatar intellectuals.

In their pioneering study on Islamic texts in post-Soviet Russia, Michael Kemper and Alfrid Bustanov explore the linguistic aspect of the Islamic revival in the country.

³⁷⁶ Also see Kemper, M. "Mufti Ravil'Gainutdin: The Translation of Islam into a Language of Patriotism and Humanism." (2012): 105-141, in Bustanov, Alfrid K., and Michael Kemper. *The Russian orthodox and Islamic languages in the Russian federation*. Amsterdam: Pegasus (2013). Ummah is a community of Muslims bound together by ties of religion. Refer to the dissertation glossary for a definition.

³⁷⁷ Staalesen, Atle. "Orthodoxy and Islam in Post-Soviet Russia: Opposing Confessional Cultures or Unifying Force?." *Nation-Building and Common Values in Russia* (2005): 301.

³⁷⁸ Staalesen, Atle. "Orthodoxy and Islam in Post-Soviet Russia: Opposing Confessional Cultures or Unifying Force?." *Nation-Building and Common Values in Russia* (2005): 301.

³⁷⁹ Sebba, Mark. "Ideology and Alphabets in the former USSR." *Language Problems & Language Planning*, Volume 30, Number 2, 2006, pp. 99-125(27). Sebba refers to RFE/RL Daily Review from Tatarstan, 23 July 2002

The study, among other things, reveals that Russia's Islamic leadership is rapidly adapting to the new role of the Russian language as an emerging *lingua franca* of the all-Russian Islamic discourse (Bustanov and Kemper 2012:7).³⁸⁰ Some of the apparent reasons for a growth in the use of the Russian language as a means of Islamic communication since the Soviet collapse are the status of the Russian as the best known common language among Russia's various peoples (Pavlenko 2006), a rapid spread of Islam into new regions far beyond its "ethnic homelands" (Bustanov and Kemper 2012), and the influx of Central Asian immigrants and other foreigners, who usually don't speak the language of Russia's ethnic Muslim minorities (Laruelle 2007, Myhre 2014).³⁸¹

4. Challenges for the non-ethnic regime in practice

Movement toward a non-ethnic nationhood raises many concerns among secular nationalists, some members of the religious clergy, and public intellectuals. On the one hand, over the first decade of the 2000s, legal-institutional limitations on the expression of ethnicities have significantly affected the development of ethnic minority languages and cultures. This, according to careful observers of Islam in Russia, may have major consequences for the development of "traditional Islam" in the country. Titular language and customs, according to them, are very important in transmitting the indigenous traditions of local Islamic culture, which have been developing in Russia for centuries.

³⁸⁰ Bustanov, A.K. and Kemper M. (eds.), 2012: *Islamic Authority and the Russian Language: Studies on Texts from European Russia, the North Caucasus and West Siberia*. Amsterdam: Pegasus, Pegasus Oost-Europese Studies No. 19.

³⁸¹ Pavlenko, Aneta. "Russian as a lingua franca." *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 26 (2006): 78-99. Bustanov, Alfrid K., and Michael Kemper. *The Russian orthodox and Islamic languages in the Russian federation*. Amsterdam: Pegasus, 2012.

Laruelle, Marlène. "Central Asian Labor Migrants in Russia: The 'Diasporization' of the Central Asian States?." *The China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*. Vol. 5. No. 3. 2007.

Myhre, Marthe Handå. "Labour migration from Central Asia to Russia." (2014): 143.

They argue that cuts in ethno-cultural programs may facilitate the rise of religious radicalism. On the other hand, the ambiguity of the Russian leadership about the rise of Russian nationalism seems to pose even greater constraint on the prospects of non-ethnic nationhood in Russia.

In June 2013 it was reported that religious leaders in the 14 mosques of the Moscow region intended to stop using Kazan Tatar, the language they have employed since the 1940s, and would soon begin using Russian for all parish activities, including sermons and other parts of religious services (Goble 2013).³⁸² This picture is not unique to Moscow. In many mosques across Russia, including those in Muslim-majority republics, imams already deliver religious services at least partly in Russian. Apart from the reason that Russian is a *lingua franca* among Russia's indigenous and migrant communities from near abroad, this transition can also be explained by the decrease in active bearers of a Tatar language. According to the census data, the number of Tatar language speakers has fallen by 20% between 2002 and 2010.³⁸³

Although a causal link between Russian language and Islamic radicalism cannot be inferred, according to Goble, this shift in languages may directly or indirectly contribute to radicalization of Muslims near the Russian capital. On the one hand, there is a strong belief that one of the sources of radicalism is an influence of foreign missionaries and their followers, who are far more likely to use Russian than any other language of indigenous Muslims in Russia. On the other hand, there are many proponents

³⁸² Goble, P. "Three Bellwethers of Russia's Future," *Window on Eurasia*. June 13, 2013. <http://windowoneurasia2.blogspot.com/2013/06/window-on-eurasia-three-bellwethers-of.html> (Last accessed on March 21, 2015)

³⁸³ In absolute numbers, this is a fall from 5,347,706 to 4,280,718. <http://www.perepis2002.ru/index.html?id=17>
http://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/perepis2010/croc/perepis_itogi1612.htm

of the idea that values of traditional Islam can only be transmitted in the native language of indigenous Muslims. According to Valiulla Yakupov, one of the biggest threats to a moderate Muslim religious identity stems from the radical Islamist ideology (Yakupov 2009:55). For Yakupov, preservation and support of local traditions, languages, and cultures is essential for continuation and development of the indigenous Islamic school of thought.

Finally, according to Kazan-based historian Damir Iskhakov, the more ethnic identity is suppressed, the more religious identity is manifested (Iskhakov 2013).³⁸⁴ In other words, religion, as a readily available ideology, may attract many of those people who cannot find enough opportunities to express themselves in a secular nationalist domain. In many cases radical interpretations of Islam become the first choice of dissidents because *Salafism/Wahhabism* has proved to be more effective (and fashionable) as an ideology of protest (Knysh 2007). Given the goal of secular authorities to support traditional Islam and contain radicalism, pushing forward the idea of non-ethnic regime for some people seems to be counter-productive.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that state attitudes toward Islam in Russia between 1997 and 2012 took shape in the context of a transition of the Russian ethno-confessional regime from multiethnic passive secularism to a non-ethnic multi-confessional mode. Disaffection with the passive secular multiethnic model of governance that allegedly

³⁸⁴ Iskhakov, Damir. "Kontsept traditsionnogo Islama," *Zvezda Povolzhya*. 25 February 2013. <http://zvezdapovolzhya.ru/obshestvo/kontsept-traditsionnogo-islama-25-02-2013.html> (Last accessed on March 21, 2015).

helped bring the country to the brink of collapse and an understanding that religion could be utilized to maintain a non-ethnic patriotic consensus prompted Russian policymakers to assume morality as the foundation of the new regime. Within this framework, “traditional Islam” came to play a key role in providing the state with ideological legitimacy among indigenous Muslims and the means to govern a diverse society. The effort to build a new ethno-confessional regime, similar to the Tsarist-era “multi-confessional establishment” model, is one of the main reasons why the Russian state has been actively regulating the access of religious groups to the Russian public sphere and been cultivating the non-ethnic nationalism.

The chapter has demonstrated the evolution of secular thinking about the Islamic faith and described some of the transformations in Muslim religious practice in Russia over the 1990s. It attempted to explain why Islam, which was largely perceived by Russian policymakers as a subordinate element of largely secularized and westernized cultures of indigenous Muslims in the late Soviet era and early 1990s, came to be seen as a powerful ideology that could guide human behavior both in positive and negative ways. Cooptation of the established Islamic clergy and marginalization of non-conformist religious groups were the main strategies of the secular leadership in responding to perceived challenges and regulating the Islamic affairs. In doing so the state was guided by historical memories and the principles of a statist ideology, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

The chapter has also argued that in the 2000s the state’s efforts to manage Russia’s diverse population based on the confessional model were combined with attempts to build a non-ethnic regime. The state support for increasing the public

visibility of “traditional” religious groups and curbing the public assertion of ethnic nationalisms reflect the contours of a new ethno-confessional regime in the country. Accordingly, Russian state authorities and post-Soviet ideologists sought to transform the country from a multiethnic federation into some sort of a “melting pot,” where along with legal uniformity the state is seeking to achieve a patriotic consensus based on supremacy of the state.

How does this all explain the involvement of state authorities into Islamic affairs in Russia since the late 1990s? I suggest that the decision of secular authorities to cultivate a patriotic version of Islam through Muslim Spiritual Boards was in part guided by historical memories and experiences. Subordination of the Church by Peter the Great and institutionalization of Islam by Catherine the Great served as an historical precedent for establishment of a confessional collaboration model between secular state institutions and religious organizations. The vision of a strong sovereign state with a multi-confessional patriotic society replaced the early post-Soviet Western liberal model, where religion was considered merely as an element of culture.

Nevertheless, while speaking of “traditional Islam” as an important element construction of Russia’s post-Soviet identity, it is important to keep in mind that “traditional” religious organizations and the established clergy are not just tools of the state. Rather, they are themselves powerful social actors and institutions. If religious organizations withheld or even withdrew their support from the regime, the Russian state might find itself without an essential social base, and its moral claims would lose much of their power, thereby undermining the current patriotic consensus.

Arguably, an even more important aspect of the confessional mode of governance is its dependence on inter-faith peace and dialogue. Whether representatives of traditional religions agree on their respective roles and duties in the society will determine if Islam will be treated as an equal partner of Russian Orthodoxy or remain a local phenomenon that is relevant only in Muslim-majority republics. According to the rector of Moscow Islamic University Marat Murtazin, “the majority of the Muslim subjects of the federation will not find it to their liking to live under the Christian Orthodox banner and according to Christian Orthodox laws” (Murtazin 2000). This, according to him, would lead to nothing but Russia’s disintegration.³⁸⁵

In part, in order to achieve this delicate balance, the state demands total subordination of the religious clergy to the secular regime. Ironically, in the long history of Islam in Russia, the Muslim faith has been able to prosper only under the secular rule and state protectorate. Under the clerical regime, with unchecked power of the Church, it faced massive purges. Under the anti-religious communist rule it suffered a devastating damage that brought it to the brink of extinction. Under passive secularism with high levels of religious freedom it was internally split into multiple competing factions.

A major concern regarding complete subordination of the established clergy to the secular regime and the state’s reliance on “traditional” religious organizations in disciplining its Muslim population is that Islamic authorities may find it difficult to satisfy the demands of the population in an ever-changing Islamic landscape. Trying to put a straightjacket on Islamic interpretation may backfire and lead to stigmatization of “traditional” Islamic institutions. Although Russia’s Muslim community generally

³⁸⁵ Murtazin, Marat. "Muslims and Russia: war or peace?." *Central Asia and the Caucasus* 1 (2000): 133.

follows the established clergy, other interpretations of Islam exist and are popular among certain groups of Russia's Muslims. One of the consequences of sharply limiting established clergy's room for maneuver may result in the (re)emergence of a distinctive phenomenon of *dvoeverie* or "double faith."³⁸⁶

Finally, it is important to note there are some demands that most of Islamic groups in Russia share. Regardless of their doctrinal preferences, they all value order and justice. As a representative voice of "traditional Islam" in Russia, rector of the Moscow Islamic University Marat Murtazin claims, "The Muslims of Russia want law and order in their country ... they want a government that would give them a chance to work and earn, and to ensure freedom of conscience."³⁸⁷ Political Islamism, on the other hand, while challenging the hegemony of secular political and cultural norms, also places the issues of social justice, legitimate power, and ethical life at the center of their discourse (Buck-Morss 2003).³⁸⁸ As history demonstrates, when systematic problems emerge and state institutions weaken, ideational struggles revamp and the existing order is called into question. Russian post-Soviet history verifies this claim. Criticism of multiethnic ethnicity regime and norms of passive secularism, which dominated in the early 90s, rose along with mounting security threats to the regime and the economic turmoil. The next chapter will discuss structural factors and guiding ideologies that led to the shift of ethno-confessional regimes in Russia in the late 1990s.

³⁸⁶ *Dvoeverie* is a name for bifurcation of religion into officially sponsored mainstream and an unofficial underground culture censored and persecuted by the state. This happened in Russia in the past as described in *Slovo o Polku Igoreve* (Igor's Tale) written in the 12th century (existence of Christian and pagan elements). Similarly, the Bolshevik seizure of power in 1917 drove the Russian Orthodox Church underground as Marxism and atheism were established as the official creed of the Soviet state.

³⁸⁷ Murtazin, Marat. "Muslims and Russia: war or peace?" *Central Asia and the Caucasus* 1 (2000): 133.

³⁸⁸ Buck-Morss, Susan. *Thinking past terror: Islamism and critical theory on the left*. Verso, 2003.

Chapter 4

Ideologies, Security, and the Economy: Ideational and Structural Constraints on the Stability of Ethno-confessional Regimes in Russia, 1990-2012

Losing an illusion makes you wiser than finding a truth.

Ludwig Borne, 1840³⁸⁹

No doubt Russia will not cease to be a great power. But it will be a normal great power

Andrei Kozyrev, 1992³⁹⁰

For Russians, a strong state is not an anomaly to fight against. Quite the contrary, it is the source and guarantor of order, the initiator and the main driving force of any change.

Vladimir Putin, 1999³⁹¹

Abstract

What explains the continuity and change of ethno-confessional regimes in post-Soviet Russia? In the period since the Soviet collapse, the academic literature has referred to various theories and approaches, ranging from modernization and transitology to decolonization, state collapse and state rebuilding, in order to characterize the trajectory of post-communist transformations. Despite many important contributions that these studies have made to the scholarly knowledge about the institutional stability and change in Russia, few hypotheses have been tested for their ability to explain the transformation of ethno-confessional regimes in the country or interpreting the relationship between religious minorities and the state. Building upon the analysis of state-religion and ethnicity regimes in Russia between 1991 and 2012, this chapter will show that the persistence and change of ethno-confessional regimes in Russia were a result of ideological struggles and structural constraints. I argue that the emergence of a major security threat and economic turmoil in the 1990s have undermined the dominance of liberal principles that guided Russian state policies toward indigenous Muslims and Islam in the early post-Soviet years. Reassertion of a popular patriotic consensus around the idea of a strong state facilitated the rise of an alternative ideology that is based on Russia's historical autocratic traditions. Economic stability, reinstatement of order, and strengthening of the rule of law in the 2000s largely explain the recurrence of what I call the "statist approach" toward managing the ethno-confessional diversity.

³⁸⁹ Gesammelte Schriften von Ludwig Börne, Volume 6: Fragmente und Aphorismen, (In German), (Collected Writings of Ludwig Boerne, Volume 6: Fragments and Aphorisms), P. 11, Hoffmann und Campe, Hamburg, Germany, 1840

³⁹⁰ Kozyrev, Andrei. "Russia: a chance for survival." *Foreign Affairs* (1992b).

³⁹¹ Putin, Vladimir. *Millennium Message* (Rossiya na rubezhe tysyacheletii), December 29, 1999, available in Russian on the Nezavisimaya Gazeta website at http://www.ng.ru/politics/1999-12-30/4_millenium.html (last access February 14, 2015).

Introduction

“Our goal is to establish a genuine civil society,” declared in 1992 Andrei Kozyrev, Russia’s first post-Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs, calling to support the government’s efforts in promoting democracy and human rights (Kozyrev 1992a:288, Clunan 2009).³⁹² Less than a decade later Vladimir Putin, as a prime-minister under the Yeltsin regime, reformulated the country’s objective by proposing that the Russian society “desires the restoration of the guiding and regulating role of the state” (Putin 1999, Hill and Gaddy 2013).³⁹³ What went right and wrong in Russia during the 1990s remains a matter of academic debates and public speculation (Gans-Morse 2004, Trenin 2006, Shevtsova 2007).³⁹⁴ Many commentators still debate whether institutional factors (Hale 2005, Ross 2011, Akturk 2012) or agency of powerful individuals better explains the political evolution in post-Soviet Russia (Hill and Gaddy 2013, Shevtsova 2007, Politkovskaya 2005, Steen 2004).³⁹⁵ What many observers agree upon is that important continuities and discontinuities became visible in state policies that regulated various

³⁹² Kozyrev, Andrei V. "Russia and Human Rights." *Slavic Review* (1992a): 287-293.

Kozyrev, Andrei. "Russia: a chance for survival." *Foreign Affairs* (1992b): 1-16.

Clunan, Anne L. *The social construction of Russia's resurgence: aspirations, identity, and security interests*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009.

³⁹³ “Obshchestvo zhelaet vosstanovleniya napravljajushhej i regulirujushhej roli gosudarstva.” Putin, *Millennium Message* (Rossiya na rubezhe tysyacheletii), December 29, 1999, available in Russian on the Nezavisimaya Gazeta website at http://www.ng.ru/politics/1999-12-30/4_millennium.html (last access February 14, 2015).

Hill, Fiona, and Clifford G. Gaddy. *Mr. Putin: operative in the Kremlin*. Brookings Institution Press, 2013.

³⁹⁴ Trenin, Dmitri. "Russia leaves the West." *Foreign Affairs* (2006): 87-96.

Shevtsova, Liliia Fedorovna. *Russia--lost in transition: the Yeltsin and Putin legacies*. Carnegie Endowment, 2007.

³⁹⁵ Hale, Henry E. *Why not parties in Russia?: democracy, federalism, and the state*. Cambridge University Press, 2005

Ross, Cameron. "Regional elections and electoral authoritarianism in Russia." *Europe-Asia Studies* 63.4 (2011): 641-661.

Shevtsova, Liliia Fedorovna. *Russia--lost in transition: the Yeltsin and Putin legacies*. Carnegie Endowment, 2007.

Politkovskaya, Anna. *Putin's Russia: Life in a failing democracy*. Macmillan, 2005.

Steen, Anton. *Political elites and the new Russia: The power basis of Yeltsin's and Putin's regimes*. Routledge, 2004.

aspects of Russian domestic and foreign affairs.

This chapter aims to explore some of the reasons that led to the shift of ethno-confessional regimes in Russia. It will demonstrate that state policies toward indigenous Muslims and Islam between 1990 and 2012 were guided by ideological principles, factors that have been largely neglected in the study of post-Soviet transformations (Hanson 2010).³⁹⁶ In doing so, the first part of the chapter will define the two dominant Russian ideologies of the post-Soviet era, namely ‘western liberalism’ and ‘statism.’ I will briefly review the intellectual roots of both philosophical traditions, their rise to prominence in post-Soviet era, and their perspectives on the role of Islam and Muslims in the country. I will argue that western liberalism and statism represent two different and consistent sets of ideas that guided state policies in the 1990s and early 2000s respectively. The second part of the chapter will focus on some of the structural factors that triggered the shift of ideologies. Relying on the premise that institutions are stable as long as nobody in power has incentives to change them, I will demonstrate how the emergence of a security threat and economic turmoil prompted the transition from liberalism to statism toward the end of the 1990s. The conclusion will summarize theoretical findings and reassess ideological debates in Russia in the context of the post-Soviet identity crisis.

Part I: Ideologies, Islam, and Russia’s Search for a National Identity

The question of national identity has become one of the central themes in the analysis of post-communist Russian politics and society. Soon after the Soviet collapse,

³⁹⁶ Hanson, Stephen E. *Post-imperial democracies: ideology and party formation in third republic France, Weimar Germany, and post-Soviet Russia*. Cambridge University Press, 2010.

many Russian intellectuals and politicians as well as Western observers and scholars pointed out that Russia was facing an identity crisis (Tsygankov 2006a, 2007; Suny 2007; Evans 2008:899).³⁹⁷ Commentators presented multiple competing frameworks for the analysis of Russia's domestic as well as its foreign policy choices (Tolz 1998, 2001; Hopf 2006, p. 700; Legvold 2007).³⁹⁸ Many intellectuals were relying on old concepts to describe the new polity. Whereas others attempted to develop new approaches (Tolz 1998:994; Sakwa 2008; Kucas 2009).³⁹⁹ As a result, a wide spectrum of competing ideas claimed that Russia was guided by a set of principles ranging from "secular liberal Westernism" to "Christian conservatism", "Orthodox Imperialism," and "Eurasianism" (Agardjanian 2000).⁴⁰⁰ Andrei Tsygankov, a scholar of Russian politics and history, for example, referred to the pre-revolutionary philosophical debates between the late 19th early 20th century Russian thinkers such as Nikolai Danilevsky, Vasilii Klyuchevsky, Nikolai Berdyaev, Georgii Fedotov, Ivan Ilin, and Vladimir Solovyev, to explain post-Soviet Russian decision-making (Tsygankov 2007).⁴⁰¹ For Tsygankov, Westernizers and Eurasianists represent 'polar opposites' on the question of Russian identity (Tsygankov

³⁹⁷ Tsygankov, A. (2006a) 'Projecting Confidence, Not Fear: Russia's Post-Imperial Assertiveness', *Orbis*, 50, 4, September.

Tsygankov, A. (2007) 'Finding a Civilisational Idea: "West", "Eurasia", and "Euro-East" in Russia's Foreign Policy', *Geopolitics*, 12, 3, July.

Evans Jr, Alfred B. "Putin's legacy and Russia's identity." *Europe-Asia Studies* 60.6 (2008): 899-912.

³⁹⁸ Tolz, V. (1998) 'Forging the Nation: National Identity and Nation Building in Post-Communist Russia', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 50, 6, September

Tolz, V. (2001) *Inventing the Nation: Russia* (Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press).

Hopf, T. (2006) 'Moscow's Foreign Policy, 1945–2000: Identities, Institutions, and Interests', in Suny, R. (ed.) (2006) *The Cambridge History of Russia, Volume III, The Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press).

Legvold, R. (ed.) (2007) *Russian Foreign Policy in the Twenty-First Century and the Shadow of the Past* (New York, Columbia University Press).

³⁹⁹ Sakwa, Richard. "'New Cold War' or twenty years' crisis? Russia and international politics." *International affairs* 84.2 (2008): 241-267; Lucas, Edward. *The new cold war: how the Kremlin menaces both Russia and the west*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2009.

⁴⁰⁰ For a brief review of proposed ideas in the 1990s, see Agadjanian 2000: 109.

⁴⁰¹ Tsygankov, A. (2007) 'Finding a Civilisational Idea: "West", "Eurasia", and "Euro-East" in Russia's Foreign Policy', *Geopolitics*, 12, 3, July.

2007: 381). On the other hand, Valerii Tishkov, director of the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology as well as former Minister of Nationalities, proposed a relatively new framework to define the nation based on Western scholarship on ethnicity and nationalism led by Ernest Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm, and Benedict Anderson. He suggested the concept of a civic nation, which for him was a community of all citizens of the Russian Federation regardless of their cultural, ethnic, or religious differences. Tishkov advocated for the use of the word *Rossiiane* rather than *Russkie* to emphasize the difference between civic and ethnic characteristics (Tishkov 1996, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c).⁴⁰²

How did indigenous Muslims and their religion fit into the range of proposed post-Soviet definitions for Russian national identity? The five major interpretations about the country and its people that were put forward in intellectual debates offer a clear perspective on the role of non-Russian minorities in the society (Tolz 1998). Thus, according to Vera Tolz, a *Union identity* implies portrayal of a nation as a multiethnic community with decades and sometimes centuries of shared history within the territorial borders of the Soviet Union. Based on the ideas of Danilevsky, Il'in, Fedotov, and Solovyev, this perspective suggests that indigenous Muslims are members of a new cosmopolitan Eurasian nation (*Evraziiskaia natsiia*), which emerged as a result of a long period of coexistence of the peoples of Slavonic, Tatar-Turkic, Finno-Ugric, and even

⁴⁰² Tishkov, V. (2009a) 'I russkii, i rossiiski', *Vestnik rossiiskoi natsii*, 2, 4, April, available at: <http://www.rosnation.ru/index.php?D1/438&goto1/432>, accessed 20 October 2009.

Tishkov, V. (2009b) 'O natsional'nom ideale i tsennostyakh', *Vestnik rossiiskoi natsii*, 3, 5, May, available at: <http://www.rosnation.ru/index.php?D1/438&goto1/435>, accessed 20 October 2009.

Tishkov, V. (2009c) 'What are Russia and the Russian People?', *Russian Politics and Law*, 47, 2.

Tishkov, V. A. (1996) *Kontseptual'naya evolutsiya natsional'noi politiki v Rossii* (Moscow, Rossiiskaya akademiya nauk, Institut etnologii i antropologii).

Mongolian origin.⁴⁰³

A second interpretation of Russia as a *nation of eastern Slavs*, united by common origin and culture, focuses on ethno-cultural similarities as the main markers of national identity. Based on the 19th-century Russian historiography, this perspective entails that Ukrainians and Belarusians are included into the Russian nation (Klyuchevsky, Solzhenitsyn).⁴⁰⁴ Ethnic Muslims, on the other hand, are excluded because of the lack of ethno-linguistic similarities and different historical origins. Moreover, Muslims, according to this view, are partly responsible for dispersion of the historical Slavic union

⁴⁰³ Nikolai Danilevsky (1822–1885), a Russian social theorist and pan-Slavist, introduced into Russian social thought of the early and mid-nineteenth century the utopian-socialist ideas of the French thinker, Charles François Marie Fourier. Danilevsky's major writing was his book *Russia and Europe: An Inquiry into the Cultural and Political Relations of the Slavs to the Germano-Latin World*, published in 1869. For details, see Albert Weeks, "Danilevsky, Nikolai Yakovlevich," in Millar, James R. (Ed.) *Encyclopedia of Russian history*. Thomson Gale, 2004.

Ivan Il'in (1883-1954), a Russian religious and political philosopher. Ilyin was a conservative Russian monarchist in the Slavophile tradition. His major works include *The Way of Spiritual Revival* (1935), *Foundations of Struggle for the National Russia* (1938), *The Basis of Christian Culture* (1938).

Georgii Fedotov (1886-1951), a Russian religious philosopher, historian. He is the author of *I est', i budet. Razmyshleniua o Rossii i revoliucii*. Paris 1932.

Vladimir Solovyev (1853–1900), a Russia philosopher, theologian, journalist, poet, literary critic. At the end of the nineteenth century, Vladimir Soloviev sought to counter the secular trend in Russian thought by articulating a world view grounded in Christianity. At the center of his philosophical outlook was the concept of the unity of all—the idea that the world was an Absolute in the process of becoming. On this basis, he developed a unique Christian metaphysics in his *Lectures on God-Manhood* (1877–1881). He is the author of *The Crisis of Western Philosophy: Against the Positivists* (1874). For details, see Greg Gaut, "Soloviev, Vladimir Sergeevich," in Millar, James R. (Ed.) *Encyclopedia of Russian history*. Thomson Gale, 2004.

⁴⁰⁴ Vasily Klyuchevsky (1841–1911) was a celebrated Russian historian. His main works are *Drevne-russkie zhitiya sviatykh kak istorichesky istochnik* [The Old Russian Hagiography as a Historical Source] (1872), *Boiarskaya Duma drevnei Rusi* [The Boyar Duma of Old Russia] (1882), and *Proiskhozhdenie krepostnogo prava v Rossii* [The Genesis of Serfdom in Russia] (1885). Klyuchevsky is known for his positivist approach toward interpretation of historical events. For a brief introduction to the life and works of Vasily Klyuchevsky, see Boris Mironov, "Klyuchevsky, Vasily Osipovich" in Millar, James R. (Ed.) *Encyclopedia of Russian history*. Thomson Gale, 2004.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn (1918-2008), a Nobel Laureate for Literature, one of the most prominent Soviet dissidents of the late 1960s and early 1970s. While most Soviet dissidents focused on the need for basic human rights, by the early 1970s Solzhenitsyn began to focus on the issue of morality. He believed that the Russian people could only be saved by a rejection of Bolshevik ideas and the resurrection of what he considered a unique set of moral values developed in Russia over centuries under the influence of Orthodox Christianity. He looked to pre-Revolutionary Russia for guidance, not to the West. For a brief introduction to the life and works of Alexander Solzhenitsyn, see Brian Kassof, "Solzhenitsyn, Alexander Isayevich" in Millar, James R. (Ed.) *Encyclopedia of Russian history*. Thomson Gale, 2004.

during the Tatar-Mongol yoke in the 13th, 14th, and 15th centuries.

Defining post-Soviet Russia as a *community of Russian-language speakers* points out the importance of a shared language. According to this view, the Russian language could unite different people, regardless of their ethnic origin, and make them an inseparable part of the Russian nation (Pushkin, Mendeleev). Therefore, not only some 25 million ethnic Russians who were left outside the Russian Federation after the Soviet break up, but also those who considered Russian their mother tongue were proclaimed by some intellectuals to be part of the Russian nation (Galenko). Ethnic Muslims, according to this view, could well “qualify” for membership in such community. However, relying on the Slavophile school of thought, some advocates of this perspective sometimes assert Orthodox Christianity as a marker of national identity (Rogozin 1996).⁴⁰⁵ Therefore, in this kind of outlook, indigenous Muslims who speak Russian are viewed as marginal.⁴⁰⁶

Some commentators have suggested a *racial definition of Russian nationhood*, according to which blood ties constitute the basis of common identity. Manifested in the theories of extreme right-wing anti-Semitic ideologists, this view defined the nation as a biological phenomenon (Gumilev, Borodai). According to this perspective, membership in the new polity was reserved solely for “biological” Russians, who suffered most throughout the Soviet era. Some were alarmed by the demographic trends and severe problems of alcoholism that undermined the majority status of Russians in the country. Others perceived non-Russians and particularly Muslims as a direct threat to the Russian population (Fetisov). Tolz suggests that the pictures by the dissident writer Aleksandr

⁴⁰⁵ Rogozin, D. *Russkii Otvét* (St. Petersburg 1996).

⁴⁰⁶ For discussion of the role of Orthodoxy in post-Soviet Russian national identity, see Agardjian 2001 and Wozniuk 1997.

Zinovyev, “depicting Moscow with minarets and Soviet leaders with distinct Central Asian appearance on Lenin’s Mausoleum during the parade to mark the October revolution, were the reflection of this fear” (Tolz 1998:1003). Several other public activists went as far as to call for banning of mixed marriages (Barkashov), introduction of proportional representation in elections and other restrictions against the Muslims, and even deportation of Muslims from Russia (Lysenko).⁴⁰⁷

Finally, under the influence of Western experience and theories of nationalism, a conception of a civic nation has also been proposed. Accordingly, members of the political community would be united primarily by loyalty to newly emerging political institutions and to the constitution.⁴⁰⁸ This notion, which implies that citizenship is granted regardless of people’s ethnic or cultural background, entered Soviet/Russian discourse on nations and nationalism only in the late 1980s (Tishkov 1989, Tolz 1998:1005).⁴⁰⁹ Thanks to the process of naturalization, according to this view, national identity could be a matter of personal choice. Valerii Tishkov, who was the main advocate of a civic definition of a nation, argued that a new Russian nation could be formed through the efforts of politicians and intellectuals. The word *Rossiyanin* would be applied equally to all citizens of the federation regardless of their cultural and religious

⁴⁰⁷ See Tolz 1998 for further details.

⁴⁰⁸ See the dissertation glossary for definitions of key terms – “civic nationalism” and “ethnic nationalism.” Ethnic nationalism is a type of nationalism based on a belief in the ethnic purity of the nation or in unity of language, religion, or culture. Civic nationalism is a type of nationalism based on a belief in common citizenship in a state embracing a specified territory and common allegiance to the institutions governing that territory. For further discussion of differences between civic and ethnic nationalisms, see Brubaker, Rogers. “The Manichean myth: Rethinking the distinction between ‘civic’ and ‘ethnic’ nationalism.” In Kriesi et al (eds.) *Nation and National Identity: The European Experience in Perspective*. Zurich: Ruegger, 1999. Pp. 55-71. Also see, Yack, Bernard. “The myth of the civic nation.” *Critical Review* 10.2 (1996): 193-211. For him, ethnic nationalism and civic nationalism are not dichotomous. Rather they are two extremes on a spectrum of nationalisms that mix ethnic values and opportunities for outsiders to become members in varying proportions.

⁴⁰⁹ Tishkov, V. “O novykh podkhodakh v teorii i praktike mazhnatsional’nykh otnoshenii,” *Sovetskaia Etnografiya*, 1989, 5.

differences.

With a varying degree of articulation and popularity, all of these views of Russian national identity (and several variations) became a subject of considerable debate throughout the first two post-Soviet decades. Advocates of these frameworks would repeatedly come up with arguments in favor of their own vision of the country's future during the heated discussions about migration, wars in the Caucasus, interethnic tensions, and religious extremism. Two decades after the Soviet collapse, many questions related to Russia's national identity still have not been resolved. However, predominant tendencies could be observed in how state officials approached questions related to ethnic and religious affairs in the 1990s and early 2000s. Thus, despite major disagreements between various opinion holders, the state maintained a largely *laissez faire* attitude toward ethnic and religious expression in the 1990s. In contrast, state policies became much more regulatory in the 2000s.

This chapter argues that a commitment of ruling elites to liberal principles largely explains some of the policy choices that Russian state authorities made in the early 1990s to manage its diverse population. Movement toward a statist doctrine in the late 1990s, on the other hand, accounts for introduction of regulatory measures to govern the country's heterogeneous society. The following section will explore liberalism and statism as two separate sets of consistent and to a certain degree emotionally charged ideas that provided a relatively coherent perspective on the future of the country and were articulated in the

official discourse at the federal level.⁴¹⁰

1. Western Liberalism

Many observers of Russian politics as well as Russian politicians themselves often deny the existence of consistent ideologies in the post-Soviet era (Hanson 2010).⁴¹¹ Nevertheless, it is difficult to ignore how relatively coherent and consistent sets of ideas expressed at the highest levels of government have had major effects on daily life activities of the Russian people. As Kathryn Sikkink has pointed out, this kind of denial resembles the paradox that scholars who spend their lives developing, disseminating, and defending their own theories insist that ideas have no systematic social impact (Sikkink 1991).⁴¹² Having rejected Marxism-Leninism, the new ruling elite in Russia suggested that there was no viable systematic alternative to Western liberalism, thus in one way confirming the argument that history had eventually reached its final destination (Fukuyama 1989).⁴¹³ Russia, for them, was on its way to “reintegrate into the mainstream of human development” and was following a logical path towards becoming a “normal country” (Kozyrev 1992a, 1992b, Shleifer and Treisman 2004, Shleifer 2005).⁴¹⁴

⁴¹⁰ According to Evans, the term ‘ideology’ pertains to a system or collection of ideas, which should include direct political content, motivate substantial numbers of people to action, and display some degree of coherence (Evans 2008:900). For my definition of the term, see chapter one and refer to the dissertation glossary.

⁴¹¹ Hanson, Stephen E. *Post-imperial democracies: ideology and party formation in third republic France, Weimar Germany, and post-Soviet Russia*. Cambridge University Press, 2010.

⁴¹² Sikkink, Kathryn. *Ideas and Institutions: Developmentalism in Argentina and Brazil*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991.

⁴¹³ Fukuyama, Francis, and Allan Bloom. *The end of history?*. Vol. 16. National Affairs, Incorporated, 1989.

For a discussion of how Russian intellectuals perceived Fukuyama’s thesis, see Tsygankov, Andrei P. "Rediscovering National Interests after the “End of History”": Fukuyama, Russian Intellectuals, and a Post-Cold War Order." *International Politics* 39.4 (2002): 423-446. According to Tsygankov, many intellectuals in Russia were in fact highly skeptical about the applicability of Fukuyama’s thesis to Russia.

⁴¹⁴ Kozyrev, Andrei V. "Russia and Human Rights." *Slavic Review* (1992a): 287-293.
Kozyrev, Andrei. "Russia: a chance for survival." *Foreign Affairs* (1992b): 1-16

At nearly all stages of Russia's modern history, the search to define the 'us' and the 'other' of the Russian state "has remained a priority for Russian political and intellectual elites" (Tolz 2004: 177).⁴¹⁵ This statement has been especially relevant to Russia's self-identification with respect to the West. Referring to Tsygankov, Evans argues that since Peter the Great Russia's rulers have faced a dilemma in relation to the more modernized societies of Western Europe: "whether to emulate the example of the West in order to advance their country's development or to preserve Russia's separate values and customs at the risk of denying it the capacity to compete with Europe" (Evans 2008:899).⁴¹⁶ Disagreements about how to respond to that dilemma flared up in one period after another. As Angela Stent has described it, the feelings of the Russian intelligentsia towards the West have been guided by impulses of both attraction and aversion (Stent 2007).⁴¹⁷

In the early post-Soviet years many Russian decision-makers seemed to have taken a clear and steady hold on the issue of Westernization and democratization. In his early commentaries as Russia's Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev identified the issue of human rights as a critical matter and emphasized that Russia made a "conscious and irrevocable choice," which in his opinion was inevitable (Kozyrev 1992a:287).⁴¹⁸ He described the policies of President Yeltsin and the Russian government as an effort to

Shleifer, Andrei. *A normal country: Russia after communism*. Harvard University Press, 2005.

Shleifer, Andrei, and Daniel Treisman. "A Normal Country." *Foreign Affairs* (2004): 20-38.

⁴¹⁵ Tolz, Vera (2004) "The Search for a National Identity in the Russia of Yeltsin and Putin," in Yitzhak Brudny, Stefani Hoffman and Jonathan Frankel (eds) *Restructuring Post-Communist Russia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

⁴¹⁶ For details, see Tsygankov, A. (2007) 'Finding a Civilisational Idea: "West", "Eurasia", and "Euro-East" in Russia's Foreign Policy', *Geopolitics*, 12, 3, July.

Evans Jr, Alfred B. "Putin's legacy and Russia's identity." *Europe-Asia Studies* 60.6 (2008): 899-912.

⁴¹⁷ Stent, A. (2007) 'Reluctant Europeans: Three Centuries of Russian Ambivalence toward the West', in Legvold, R. (ed.) (2007).

⁴¹⁸ Kozyrev, Andrei V. "Russia and Human Rights." *Slavic Review* (1992a): 287-293.

make the turn toward democracy irreversible and called to support a new generation of democratic rulers in the country (Kozyrev 1992b:6).⁴¹⁹ More broadly, liberals contended that, during the Cold War, the USSR acted against Russia's interests. The country now had to do everything to become an integral part of the West, because it proved to be the only viable and progressive civilization in the world. As Tsygankov has described it, the perception was that only by incorporating Western institutions and by joining the community of "Western civilized nations" would Russia be able to respond to threats and overcome its economic and political backwardness (Tsygankov 2002).⁴²⁰

1.1 – Intellectual roots of Russian liberalism

As it often happens in social sciences, it is difficult to decide on a starting point that will satisfy everyone. Depending on how one defines liberalism in the Russian context, its philosophical roots go back to the late 18th century.⁴²¹ Alexander Radishchev (1749-1802), a well-educated and widely traveled Russian nobleman, is often referred to as an early figure in the history of Russian liberalism (Phillips 2004).⁴²² His book *A Journey from Petersburg to Moscow* (1790) is regarded as the first work that revealed the dark side of Russian serfdom. For his writings Radishchev was deported to Siberia. However, the author's uneasy fate served as an inspiration to liberals for decades to come (Phillips 2004).

⁴¹⁹ Kozyrev, Andrei. "Russia: a chance for survival." *Foreign Affairs* (1992b): 1-16

⁴²⁰ Tsygankov, Andrei P. "Rediscovering National Interests after the "End of History": Fukuyama, Russian Intellectuals, and a Post-Cold War Order." *International Politics* 39.4 (2002): 423-446.

⁴²¹ Refer to the dissertation glossary for definition of liberalism. In the context of this study, liberalism refers to an ideology that focuses on the promotion of human rights, civil liberties, market economy, and democratic government broadly defined. While liberalism has indigenous intellectual history in Russia, it borrows heavily from the Western philosophical tradition and experience.

⁴²² Phillips, Hugh, "Liberalism" in James Millar, James *Encyclopedia of Russian history*. Thomson Gale, 2004.

Since the early 19th century, a group known as Westernizers contributed to the development of liberal ideas that later became the reference for post-Soviet reformers. Thus, in the mid-19th century Timofei Granovsky and Boris Chicherin were among the first Russian thinkers who systematically explored the theme of personal liberties and their protection by the law. During the reign of Alexander II (1855-1881), Ivan Petrunkevich brought up the topics of resisting a terror from above and guaranteeing basic civil rights. By the early 20th century such ideas had spread far enough that liberals established their own journal (*Liberation*), an organization (The Union of Liberation), and a political party (Constitutional Democrats) (Phillips 2004). Individual liberals like Pyotr Struve achieved national prominence in the years after 1905. Among other things, Struve called for widening of civil liberties and the establishment of a constitutional monarchy. Another public intellectual and historian, Pavel Milyukov, emphasized the need to abolish the autocracy and the right to basic civil liberties.

Calls for human freedom under the Soviet regime were thoroughly suppressed. Nevertheless, largely due to individual efforts of people like Andrei Sakharov the rhetoric about human rights and civil liberties reached the perestroika generation and was crucial in shaping the post-Soviet order.⁴²³

A great deal of overlap has historically existed between Russian liberals and Westernizers. In the best traditions of liberalism, Westernizers denounced serfdom and

⁴²³ For more on the history of liberalism in Russia, see Fischer, George. (1958). *Russian Liberalism: From Gentry to Intelligentsia*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; Hamburg, Gary. (1992). *Boris Chicherin and Early Russian Liberalism*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press; Roosevelt, Patricia. (1986). *Apostle of Russian Liberalism: Timofei Granovsky*. Newtonville, MA: Oriental Research Partners; Stockdale, Melissa K. (1996). *Paul Miliukov and the Quest for a Liberal Russia, 1880–1918*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press; Timberlake, Charles, ed. (1972). *Essays on Russian Liberalism*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press; Walicki, Andrzej. (1986). *Legal Philosophies of Russian Liberalism*. Oxford: Clarendon.

put forward plans for its abolition. They criticized censorship, the absence of legal rights, and persecutions on ethnic and religious grounds. Instead, Westernizers advocated civil rights, democracy, and representative government. In doing so, however, unlike liberal Slavophiles, Westernizers regarded the West as point of reference. In particular, they contrasted the Russian autocratic system with the constitutional orders of western European countries, especially those of England and France (Mironov 2004). In part, according to Mironov, they did so because philosophical views of Russian Westernizers were largely formed under the influence of Western enlightenment thinkers and philosophers such as Georg Hegel, Johann Herder, Immanuel Kant, Friedrich Schelling, Johann Fichte, and Auguste Comte. Classical Westernizers perceived the flow of history as a process of irreversible qualitative changes from worse to better and recognized the leading role of human intellect, which leads societies to the progress (Mironov 2004).⁴²⁴ Arguably, this is a strongest link that unites the late Soviet-era reformers and post-communist state-builders in Russia with their pre-revolutionary intellectual predecessors (Tolz 1998).⁴²⁵

According to careful observers of Russian politics, during the last years of the Soviet state, Mikhail Gorbachev looked on Western Europe as providing the model for a new system (Stent 2007). Not only he attempted to Westernize Soviet political and

⁴²⁴ Mironov, Boris, "Westernizers" in James Millar, James *Encyclopedia of Russian history*. Thomson Gale, 2004.

⁴²⁵ For more on the history of Westernism in Russia, see Edie, James M.; Scanlan, M. P.; and Zeldin, Mary-Barbara, eds. (1965). *Russian Philosophy, Vol 1: The Beginnings of Russian Philosophy: The Slavophiles; The Westernizers*. Chicago: Quadrangle Books; Treadgold, Donald. W. (1973). *The West in Russia and China: Religious and Secular Thought in Modern Times, Vol. 1: Russia, 1472–1917*. New York: Cambridge University Press; Walicki, Andrzej. (1975). *The Slavophile Controversy: History of a Conservative Utopia in Nineteenth-Century Russian Thought*, tr. Hilda Andrews-Rusiecka. Oxford: Clarendon; Walicki, Andrzej. (1979). *A History of Russian Thought: From the Enlightenment to Marxism*, tr. Hilda Andrews Rusiecka. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

economic institutions, Gorbachev also wanted the country to be accepted as part of the ‘common European home’, where all shared a commitment to democracy and individual rights. The liberal elite that came to power after the Soviet collapse attempted to surpass Gorbachev in adopting the image of Westernizers. According to Evans, although in practice Yeltsin’s policies were deeply inconsistent, in theory his program of change “was justified as bringing features of Western democracy and capitalism to Russia” (Evans 2008:901)

A highly favorable image of Western democratic patterns, including religious pluralism, inspired the late Soviet-era leadership to reform their policies toward religion.⁴²⁶ According to Agadjanian, it was actually the American model of religious freedom that encouraged Soviet reformers to adopt the 1990 law on freedom of conscience (Agadjanian 2001:480). At the same time, Soviet reformers wanted to make sure that the state preserved its secular nature. Because as a way of thinking, Russian Westernism was based on the recognition of the leading role of human intellect, some of the leading figures of this philosophy believed that religion could potentially hinder the humanity’s advancement toward higher levels of existence. As Agadjanian has described it, “Orthodoxy was at that time virtually ignored in the new ‘formula of identity’” (Agadjanian 2000:108). For him, this trend formed part of the legacy of the Constitutional Democratic Party dating from the beginning of the twentieth century. Secularizing influence of the 1960s intelligentsia, shaped by Soviet atheism and

⁴²⁶ For discussion of why foreign observers – journalists and human rights activists as well as political and religious leaders – watched the celebration of the millennium of the Christianization of Kievan Rus’ as a litmus test for the sincerity of Gorbachev’s perestroika reforms, see Smolkin-Rothrock, V. *A Sacred Space Is Never Empty: The Spiritual Life of Soviet Atheism* (forthcoming).

generated by the thaw of the Khrushchev era, contributed to this line of thinking. According to Smolkin-Rothrock, Gorbachev's motives might have indeed been political. She suggests that Gorbachev could have met with Patriarch Pimen on the eve of celebrations of the Millennium in 1988 in order to "harness the moral capital of Orthodoxy to recapture popular support for his failing reform program."⁴²⁷ The following section will discuss how these attitudes toward religion were reflected in state policies toward Islam and Muslims in post-Soviet Russia.

1.2 – Liberalism and Islam in Post-Soviet Russia

The decision to rely on the norms of both passive secularism and multiethnic ethnicity regime to manage the country's diverse population, which included a sizable portion of Muslims, reflects some of the key principles of Westernist liberal philosophy that permeated the thinking of the late Soviet era reformers and architects of post-communist Russia. Debates during the drafting of the 1990 law on religion, holding back from interfering into the process of decentralization of Muslim Spiritual Boards, and tolerating the emergence of Islamic political movements and parties best describes the attitude of state authorities toward Islamic affairs until the late 1990s.⁴²⁸ In order to address the emerging identity questions institutionally, state authorities resorted to the

⁴²⁷ Smolkin-Rothrock, V. *A Sacred Space Is Never Empty: The Spiritual Life of Soviet Atheism* (forthcoming). Also, see Agadjanian, Alexander, "Religious Pluralism and National Identity in Russia" *International Journal on Multicultural Societies (IJMS)* Vol. 2, No. 2, 2000. Pp.97-125 and Agadjanian, Alexander. "Revising Pandora's gifts: religious and national identity in the post-Soviet societal fabric." *Europe-Asia Studies* 53.3 (2001): 473-488. According to Agadjanian the mention of religion at the time was in order to affirm the "universal values of democracy."

⁴²⁸ For the detailed analysis of the process of disintegration of Muslim Spiritual Boards in post-Soviet Russia, see Silant'ev, R. *The contemporary history of Islam in Russia*. Moscow: Algoritm. 2007.

asymmetric model of federalism.⁴²⁹

Arguments and principles of Western liberalism were at the center of debates during the drafting of the 1990 law on religion and the 1993 constitution of the Russian Federation. Analysis of those debates reveals that secular state authorities deliberately precluded religion from taking part in the new “formula of identity” (Agardjian 2000:110). The negligence of state authorities to involve Islam in the construction of a new national identity in Russia can clearly be seen from the fact that neither of major Islamic leaders at the time was systematically involved in the process of drafting the 1990 law. In fact, it was a representative of the Orthodox Church who called for more inclusionary format of the meetings that discussed a new religious legislation.⁴³⁰

Secondly, despite the growing popular concern over mounting intra-faith disputes within Russia’s indigenous Muslim community, secular state authorities at the federal level did not involve in the Islamic affairs. Instead, they resorted to the self-regulating principle of the religious marketplace.⁴³¹ Thus, for example, when Makhmud Gekkiev, the Soviet-era Mufti of the Muslim Spiritual Board in the Northern Caucasus, appealed to the secular authorities to support him during the popular uprising against the Muftiyat, the state did not back him (Silantyr 2008:290). This was an early indication that the state would provide equal access for all Islamic communities to the Russian public sphere.

⁴²⁹ Some regional authorities have indeed skillfully used ethnic and religious identity arguments in constructing the post-Soviet relations between the federal center and the regions. For discussion of the asymmetric nature of Russian federalism, see Lapidus, Gail W. "Asymmetrical federalism and state breakdown in Russia." *Post-Soviet Affairs* 15.1 (1999): 74-82. Also see Ross, Cameron. "Federalism and democratization in Russia." *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 33.4 (2000): 403-420.

⁴³⁰ For details and the transcripts of the meeting at Kommunist, see *Kommunist*, N3 (1355) February 1990 and *Svobodnaya Mysl'*, N2 (1609) 2010, pp.125-145.

⁴³¹ For the detailed analysis of the process of disintegration of Muslim Spiritual Boards in post-Soviet Russia, see Silantsev, R. *The contemporary history of Islam in Russia*. Moscow: Algoritm. 2007.

Indeed, the 1990 law on religion did not require religious communities to have institutional affiliation with central Muslim Spiritual Boards in order to perform religious services, did not specify limitations related to the citizenship or the background of Islamic preachers, and allowed construction of mosques for all who could afford it. Later, when radical Islamic groups gained a foothold in some of the Russian regions, the established clergy demanded that the secular authorities legally ban some interpretations of Islam in the country (Silantyev 2008). At the federal level, these calls went unanswered. State authorities in Moscow remained committed to the legal pluralistic framework and the 'spiritual/religious marketplace' that was established by the 1990 law on religion.

Moreover, inspired by high standards of liberalism, architects of post-Soviet Russia created a system that tolerated religious movements and parties. Thus, over the first several years of political pluralism a few Islamic parties emerged on the Russian political scene. Some of the most prominent examples were the Russian Party of Islamic Revival, Union of Russia's Muslims, "Nur," "Refakh," and "Madzhlis."⁴³² Until 2001, the law did not prevent activists from establishing parties based on ethnicity or religious affiliation.⁴³³

In letting the religious marketplace thrive, the state authorities, nevertheless, possessed a mechanism that was intended to manage diversity. This mechanism was

⁴³² Among these movements only "Nur" took part in the 1995 parliamentary elections independently, barely winning 0.5% of the votes. Others with a variety degree of success entered into coalition with other secular parties of Russia. For details, see Silantyev 2008.

⁴³³ The intent, of course, was not to allow the emergence of anti-pluralist parties. Rather, such parties would ideally be committed to pluralism but embrace religious values as guiding principles. An example for such political entities in the West could be the Christian Democratic Union of Germany (CDU). While CDU openly emphasizes the Christian understanding of humans and their responsibility toward God, its membership consists of people adhering to a variety of religions as well as non-religious individuals.

asymmetric federalism. Authorities did so because the overwhelming perception at the time was that the resurgence of religious identity was part of a broader revival of *ethnic identity*.

Overall, according to Agardjanian, from the start of *perestroika*, and in particular following the official celebrations of the Christian Millennium in Russia (1988), religion “figured in liberal, anti-communist rhetoric as a symbolic alternative opening the way to a rediscovery of universal values” (Agardjanian 2000:105). Up to then quite irrespective of creed or affiliation, in this context, religion, including Islam, contributed to construction of a certain democratic myth, which, in the Westernist thinking, presupposed a secular social model and absolute religious pluralism.

2. Statism

In 1996, Russia’s President Boris Yeltsin declared the urgent need for creation of a new national idea. This was the formal acknowledgement that emulating the Western experience and the attempt to build a state according to liberal principles had ultimately failed. The committee that the President established for drafting a new Russian Idea did not succeed in producing an all-embracing notion of a nation. At its best, it could come up with a report entitled “Russia in Search of an Idea,” which elaborated on challenges of such a task. The debate carried on as policymakers, intellectuals, and the general public pondered upon the issue and discussed it in detail.⁴³⁴ The question whether Russia has finally arrived at a consensus about its unifying national idea may still be a subject of a

⁴³⁴ Particularly notable are the ideas put forward by Igor Chubais in his *Ot Russkoi idei k idee novoi Rossii* (From the Russian idea to the idea of a new Russia) and at the hearings of Duma’s Committee on Geopolitics. For a brief summary of the debates, see Hill, Fiona, and Clifford G. Gaddy. *Mr. Putin: operative in the Kremlin*. Brookings Institution Press, 2013.

debate. However, many commentators recognize that since the late 1990s the official rhetoric has significantly changed (Tsygankov 2002, Hill and Gaddy 2013). Instead of continuous references to the Western experience and principles of liberalism, themes such as patriotism, restoration of order, and primacy of the state have come to prominence.

According to Tsygankov, the change in Russia's discourse became visible around the time when chief of foreign intelligence service, Yevgeni Primakov, also known as the father of contemporary Russian statism, replaced Andrei Kozyrev at the office in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1996 (Tsygankov 2002:444). Since the second half of the 1990s notions such as "national idea," "great power," "Eurasia," and "geopolitics" have reemerged in the Russian public debates. These notions, according to Tsygankov, framed the debate about statism, which implies that Russia is not merely part of the West, but has its own unique interests to defend. Synthesizing both liberal and autocratic principles, contemporary statism maintains that Russia is an independent civilization and should be maintained as such. As Tsygankov has put it, for statist "establishing a market democracy was not a goal in itself, but something that should be subordinated to the building of a strong state" (Tsygankov 2002:435).⁴³⁵

In this respect Yeltsin's *poslaniye*, an annual presidential message to the Russian parliament, in 1997 is exemplary. The address emphasized the importance of restoring order in the country and outlined the means of strengthening state capacity. The President

⁴³⁵ For a more detailed analysis of statism, see Oleg Kovalev, "Russian 'Realism': Theory and Policy Preferences," Ph.D. dissertation (University of Delaware, 1997). Also, see various documents of *SVOP* (Council for Foreign and Defense Policy), an influential nongovernmental organization that was established with the purpose of challenging the liberal political philosophy associated with deputy prime-minister Yegor Gaidar and Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev.

identified the excessive weakness of state authority (*vlast'*) as the greatest danger facing Russia at the time. As Yeltsin put it, “Only a strong government authority which makes reasonable decisions and is capable of ensuring their effective implementation is in a condition for fulfilling its obligations.”⁴³⁶ According to Hill and Gaddy, the *poslaniye* was one of the key documents that highlighted the issue of state power and authority (Hill and Gaddy 2013:47). This theme would shape the official rhetoric in the 2000s. Analysis of President Putin’s several major public statements during his tenure in the Kremlin suggests that getting Russia’s peoples to unite around the idea of a strong state soon became one of the central goals of the country’s leadership.⁴³⁷

The role of religion in the state’s new official rhetoric has acquired a particularly eminent position. As Fiona Hill and Clifford Gaddy pointed out, religion along with Russian history and language became “the core elements in Russian conservative political thought” in the 2000s (Hill and Gaddy 2013:44). In January 1997, the first public appeal was made for the reestablishment of Orthodoxy as an official ideology and the essential core of the Russian idea.⁴³⁸ Church representatives increasingly spoke about Orthodoxy as the central element of the Russian Idea and of religion’s ability to fill the spiritual and ideological vacuum in Russian society. In contrast to the Western liberal approach, which was largely indifferent to religion, the new approach of the state implied treatment of religion as its junior partner subordinated to the secular authorities.

⁴³⁶ “Poslaniye Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii Federal’nomu Sobraniyu. Poryadok vo vlasti – poryadok v strane.” March 5, 1997. Cited in Hill, Fiona, and Clifford G. Gaddy. *Mr. Putin: operative in the Kremlin*. Brookings Institution Press, 2013.

⁴³⁷ See, for example, “Pis’mennoe interv’yu vyetnamskoi gazette ‘Nyan Zan’.” February 27, 2001.

⁴³⁸ Meeting of the Russian Orthodox Church representatives with the Ministry of Interior. For details, see Hill, Fiona, and Clifford G. Gaddy. *Mr. Putin: operative in the Kremlin*. Brookings Institution Press, 2013.

2.1 – Historical and intellectual roots of statism

The conception of Russian statism (*gosudarstvennichestvo*) is an historical notion deeply rooted in the idea of Russia as an independent sovereign state (*derzhava*). Some observers of Russian history and politics interpret the attempts to resurrect the country's national greatness in the 21st century as a return to Soviet-style imperialism (Lucas 2014).⁴³⁹ Some argue that “the search for useful history” in Russia goes back to the mid-19th century doctrine based on the trinity of “Orthodoxy, Autocracy, Nationality” (Hill and Gaddy 2013). Many more date the search to the Time of Troubles, the conquest of Kazan, or even Christianization of Kievan Rus in the 10th century (Petersson 2013, Romaniello 2007, Dubin 2014).⁴⁴⁰ However, most of those who are especially interested in the dynamics of state-religion relations in Russia, see the legacy of Peter the Great and Catherine II as a key element in the continuity of state-society relations from past to present.

Indeed, understanding the legacy of Peter I and Catherine II is the first step to grasp the role of religion in the ideology of statism that became the dominant school of thinking in the early 21st century Russia. Historically speaking, it was Peter the Great who subordinated religion to the power and authority of the state in Russia. In 1721 he abolished the patriarchate and, to replace it, appointed a collegial board of bishops, the Holy Synod, which was subject to civil authority and similar in both structure and status

⁴³⁹ Lucas, Edward. *The new Cold War: Putin's Russia and the threat to the West*. Macmillan, 2014.

⁴⁴⁰ Petersson, Bo. "The eternal great power meets the recurring times of troubles: twin political myths in contemporary Russian politics." *European Studies: A Journal of European Culture, History and Politics* 30.1 (2013): 301-326; Romaniello, Matthew P. "Mission Delayed: The Russian Orthodox Church after the Conquest of Kazan'." *Church History* (2007): 511-540; Dubin, Boris. "The ROC: The Church as a Symbol of Desired Wholeness." *Russian Politics & Law* 52.5 (2014): 73-86.

to other departments of the state (Knox 2004).⁴⁴¹ Catherine the Great (1762-1796) continued Peter's line of reforms by confiscating the church's properties and subjecting it administratively to the state.⁴⁴² Moreover, the Empress created a basis for loyalty to the Russian state among the Empire's Muslims by introducing an organizational structure for Islam under the name of Muslim Spiritual Assembly. Ever since, the state has been the main regulator of public religious life in Russia and an arbiter in communal conflicts.

Intellectually, proponents of restoring order and state capacity in post-Soviet Russia largely relied on the arguments raised by philosophical opponents of Westernism in the 19th century. However, rather than banking solely on classical Slavophile thought (I. Kiriyevesky, A. Khomyakov) in their reasoning, post-Soviet statisticians have been able to find a middle ground between nationalists (F. Dostoyevsky, K. Leontiev), adherents of the Eurasianist movement of the 1920s (P. Savitsky, N. Trubetskoy), and even accommodate views of some advocates of liberal-conservatism (B. Chicherin, N. Berdyayev, S. Frank).⁴⁴³ With nationalists statisticians shared some elements of the idea of Slav Orthodox unity, with direct references to the views of Tyutchev and Dostoyevsky (Agardjanian 2000:112).⁴⁴⁴ For example, Solzhenitsyn's thesis on the natural union of the "three fraternal peoples" (Russians, Ukrainians and Byelorussians) was partially accommodated in signing the "Treaty on the Union between Belarus and Russia" in April

⁴⁴¹ Knox, Zoe. "Episcopate" in James Millar, James *Encyclopedia of Russian history*. Thomson Gale, 2004.

⁴⁴² A (lay) over-procurator was empowered to supervise the church, appointing important officials and directing the activities of the Holy Synod. See Knox, Zoe. "Episcopate" in James Millar, James *Encyclopedia of Russian history*. Thomson Gale, 2004.

⁴⁴³ For a brief review of these schools of thought, see Agardjanian 2000:102.

⁴⁴⁴ In particular, Agardjanian points out the impact of this idea on public opinion after the war in Bosnia and Kosovo (Agardjanian 2000:112). According to this view, Orthodoxy is seen as a key expression of Russianness. Statisticians saw the role of the state in strengthening these reciprocal links.

1997.⁴⁴⁵

Along with Eurasianists, statisticians share the idea of a spiritual proximity between Orthodoxy and Islam and in this respect see Russia as a unique nation being able to connect Muslim and Western civilizations (V. Polosin). For example, Yegor Stroyev, the speaker of the Federation Council of Russia described Russia as “the core of Eurasian civilization, the point of anchorage of the unique synthesis of Eastern Christendom and Islam.”⁴⁴⁶ Panarin describes this as a synthesis of the “great monotheistic traditions” in a Eurasian State.⁴⁴⁷ In 1996, by signing the Treaty on Increased Integration in the Economic and Humanitarian Fields, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia and Kyrgyzstan made a significant step toward creation of a Eurasian Economic Union.

Liberal-conservatives appealed to statisticians by being able to stay in accord with Western democratic traditions but preserving Orthodoxy as a symbolic foundation insofar as it is the religion of the majority of Russia’s population (Agardjanian 2000:110).⁴⁴⁸ Liberal-conservatives and statisticians largely agree that the project to build in Russia a Western-type liberal civil society “has failed” and that the country should “develop organically” basing itself on Orthodoxy and other national traditions.⁴⁴⁹ As Morozov has written, this tendency can be defined as a “liberal-conservative synthesis” - an ideology

⁴⁴⁵ Zulus, Audrius “Towards A Union State Of Russia And Belarus,” Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review. N:15-16, 2005

⁴⁴⁶ *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 29 July 1998.

⁴⁴⁷ Agardjanian 2000, Panarin 1995a, Panarin 1995b, Panarin and Il'in 1994. Also see the description and analysis of the views of the neo-Eurasianists in Laruelle (1999).

⁴⁴⁸ Agardjanian cites *NG-Religii* 1997, No. 11

⁴⁴⁹ See *Nezavisimaya Gazeta-Religii* (1997, No. 12). According to Agardjanian, the concept of “organic development” in the tradition of Russian thought is closely associated with the old discourse of the Slavophiles and the later theorists of “Russian thought”, including religious thinkers such as Sergey Bulgakov and I. Il'in. See Il'in's article in “Russia is a living organism”, 1956, Vol. I, 223-229.

that is “pluralist and secular”, but “Orthodox in its content.”⁴⁵⁰ The debates on the meaning of the 1997 law on religion and its preamble point to the validity of this argument.

Finally, statist to a certain degree share the Slavophiles’ nostalgia for a traditional Orthodox way of life, in line with the philosophy of I. Kirievsky. Solzhenitsyn adds to it a desire for a local form of democracy based on the revival of the Russian zemstvos and a very specific national isolationism. In some ways, creation of seven federal districts in the early 2000s, stressing the importance of national sovereignty, and even restoration of the canonical link between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia speak in support of this claim.

Overall, what united all of these “formulas of identity” was acceptance of the state as the main regulator of public life in Russia. By synthesizing nationalist, Eurasianist, liberal-conservative, and finally Slavophile principles, the statist approach gradually turned into a dominant school of thinking in Russia. The following section will discuss how these principles guided state policies toward Islam and Muslims in Russia in the 2000s.

2.2 – Statism and Islam in Post-Soviet Russia

In 1998, a round table on religion and society in contemporary Russia declared that “Society needs a ‘vertical dimension of the sacred’, a ‘shared concept of civilization’” (NG-Religii 1998, No.1). This statement may well predate Vladimir Putin’s

⁴⁵⁰ Morozov in NG-Religii 2000 (3). According to Agardjanian, this is a reappearance of the tradition represented by Frank (1924), who writes on the post-religious “sacred foundations” of contemporary secularized societies (Agardjanian 2000:110).

launching of the *vertical of power* campaign aimed at centralizing the state apparatus in the 2000s.⁴⁵¹ However, it fairly reflects the movement away from religious pluralism of the 1990s towards a much more complex hierarchical organization of religions, instituted by the 1997 law on religion. What role is reserved for Islam in this hierarchy, how the statist ideology affected relations between Muslim religious organizations and state, and what kind of role secular authorities play in the relationship among religions under the new framework has been a focus of considerable attention over the 2000s.

2.2.1 – Islam in the post-pluralistic religious hierarchy

One of the most important outcomes of a change of religious legislation in 1997 was the establishment of a particular hierarchy among religions in Russia.⁴⁵² Privileged access to the Russian public sphere under the emerging state-religion regime was reserved for traditional religions, which included Islam along with Judaism, Buddhism, and various denominations of Christianity. Nevertheless, the debates occasionally took place as some Christian Orthodox groups interpreted the law as a basis for treating Orthodoxy as the first among equals, because it has historically been a dominant religion in Russia (Agadjanian 2000:118, Shterin 1998). In fact, the preamble of the law indeed acknowledges “the special role of Orthodox Christianity in the history of Russia, and in the establishment and development of its spirituality and culture.”⁴⁵³ This is especially noticeable, given that the first draft of the preamble used the language that explicitly considered Islam to be equivalent to Christian Orthodoxy and gave them both a special status (Rossijskaja Gazeta 1997, 16 September). In the final text, this formulation

⁴⁵¹ Vertical of power (*Vertikal' vlasti*) – A centralized chain of government command. The term is used to describe the effort of Russian state authorities in the early 2000s to strengthen the position of the federal government by improving the linkages between the federal, regional, and local levels of government.

⁴⁵² See chapter three for a detailed discussion of the 1997 law on religion.

⁴⁵³ Preamble of the 1997 federal law “On freedom of conscience and religious associations”

disappeared (Shterin 1998).

Two episodes that attracted public attention most were the debates about integration of religious education into secular curricula and religious practice in the Russian armed forces. In both cases the point of contention was the role that the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) played in the formation of Russian state policies. First, the introduction of an “Orthodox” element to education at all levels of public schooling, from kindergarten to the university has been a long-time wish of the Church (Papkova 2011:669).⁴⁵⁴ In March 2006, Council of Russia’s Muftis released a statement, in which it expressed concerns that the introduction of the Orthodox component in the federal public school curriculum would undermine the constitution and contradict the laws that guarantee equality of all religions before the law.⁴⁵⁵ According to the Islamic Council, if such a course were to be introduced, it would need to get the approval of all traditional religions. Ultimately, as a result of long debates, in the spring 2010, the experimental course was first held, which gave fourth- and fifth-grade pupils a choice between modules on Orthodox, Buddhist, Islamic, and Jewish culture, as well as a module on the fundamentals of world religions and a course on secular ethics (Papkova 2011:675). The “Fundamentals of Religious Culture and Secular Culture” course was structured to reflect the multi-confessional nature of the Russian Federation.⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵⁴ Papkova, Irina. "Russian Orthodox concordat? Church and state under Medvedev." *Nationalities Papers* 39.5 (2011): 667-683.

⁴⁵⁵ Zajavlenie Soveta muftiev Rossii po voprosu prepodavaniya «Osnov pravoslavnoj kul'tury» v gosudarstvennoj i municipal'noj shkole” 11 March, 2006. <http://muslim.ru/articles/109/1094/> (Last accessed February 23, 2015).

⁴⁵⁶ On average, 60% of students chose “secular ethics” or “history of religions”. Interesting to note that the first and the last lessons of each module are dedicated to the theme of patriotism (named, for instance, “Russia is our Homeland”), indicating the use of the course on religion as an ideological tool. See

Secondly, since the early 1990s the Russian Orthodox Church has been lobbying for the introduction of Orthodox chaplains into the armed forces (Papkova 2011:669). Similar to its position with respect to teaching fundamentals of world religions in public schools, the Council of Russia's Muftis opposed the initiative. In a written statement the Council expressed its concern that such a move could lead to confrontations between believers of different religious traditions and to discrimination against some military personnel on the basis of national or religious identity. Ultimately, the Council warned, this might harm the relationship among the troops and undermine the fighting capacity of the army.⁴⁵⁷ After extended debates, in July 2009, President Medvedev announced that the position of chaplain would be introduced into the Russian military. The military, as part of this effort, has established a directorate for work with believers serving in the Russian armed forces. Although the position of military chaplains does not belong exclusively to the ROC (chaplains can be appointed from any of the four religions "officially recognized" by the Russian government – Orthodoxy, Islam, Judaism, and Buddhism), some careful observers look at the initiative with skepticism (Gorenburg 2012).⁴⁵⁸ As Vyacheslav Kotkov put it in a military-industrial publication, the goal is to inculcate an "Orthodox spirit in the spiritual-patriotic education" of those serving in the

Kovalskaya, Kristina. "The Traditional and the Non-Traditional in the Religious Life of the Russian Federation." *Mundo Eslavo* 12 (2013a): 69-78. Also, see Kovalskaya, K.V. (2013b). *Sainte Connaissance? Le discours d'experts du fait religieux et leur impact sur les identités et les pratiques religieuses en Fédération de Russie depuis 1991*. Mémoire de Master 2. Paris: École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales.

⁴⁵⁷ "Pozicija Soveta muftiev Rossii po proektu Federal'nogo zakona «O voennyh svjashhennikah»" 11 March 2006. <http://muslim.ru/articles/109/1098/> (Last accessed February 23, 2015)

⁴⁵⁸ Gorenburg, D. "The Army and the Church," Ponars Eurasia 2012. <http://www.ponarseurasia.org/node/5714> (Last accessed February 23, 2015).

military and in this way to strengthen discipline in the Russian military (Kotkov 2012).⁴⁵⁹

2.2.2 – Collaboration between state institutions and the established Muslim clergy

Since “legalization” of Islam under the reign of Catherine the Great, the central claim of the established Muslim clergy in Russia has been that there was no necessary contradiction between being Muslim and politically moderate and loyal citizens of the country. Architects of Russia’s post-Soviet statist ideological framework have been careful to ensure that their model benefits from this historic asset and emphasizes the role of Muftiyats in disciplining the country’s Muslim population. President Putin acknowledged this during his meeting with leading Muftis of the country at the 225th anniversary of the Muslim Spiritual Assembly in Ufa by pointing out that recognition of Islam as a traditional religion in Russia has helped Muslims become true Russian patriots. He added that Russian Muslims “have always been united in their service to society and the state, and against external enemies and all forms of extremism” (Putin 2013).⁴⁶⁰ The President reiterated his support of the Islamic officialdom and expressed his confidence in that this unity would be maintained and strengthened.

Of particular importance were President Putin’s remarks about some of the issues that the country’s secular leadership and the Muslim clergy identified as common concerns. These issues included, but were not limited to, dealing with the forces that use Islam “to weaken Russia” and encourage dissent within the indigenous Muslim

⁴⁵⁹ Kotkov, V. “Pomoshh' batjushki neobhodima: Voennye i cerkov' v sovremennyh usloviyah,” *Voenna-Promyshlennyl Kuryer*, N 30, (447), August 1, 2012. <http://vpk-news.ru/articles/9098> (Last accessed February 23, 2015).

⁴⁶⁰ Vladimir Putin’s speech at a meeting with muftis from Russia’s Muslim spiritual administrations on October 22, 2013. <http://eng.kremlin.ru/transcripts/6157#sel=8:33,8:68> (Last access February 23, 2015).

community; socialization of Russia's Muslims and developing traditional Muslim lifestyles; adaptation of [Muslim] people who come to live and work in Russia; countering religious radicalism; education of the Islamic clergy; reconstruction of indigenous Islamic theological school and ensure the sovereignty of Russia's spiritual space; addressing the problems with translating theological and popular publications by foreign authors into Russian and ensuring the academic translation of key Muslim religious texts into Russian; preventing the spread of publications of destructive, extremist nature; educating Muslim youth; and developing a positive image of traditional Islam as an important spiritual component of Russia's identity.⁴⁶¹

Many of these issues had already been identified as concerns in the early 1990s. For example, the established Muslim clergy and secular authorities in the regions have repeatedly expressed their worries about the shortage of adequately trained religious cadres in the context of a growing popular demand for religious services. For liberal reformers in Moscow, however, this was a natural process during the formation of a religious marketplace and did not require any involvement. The statist, on the other hand, saw the guiding role of the state as key in promoting moral and spiritual values, inculcating a sense of patriotism and a belief in necessity of a strong state. In doing so, they not only operated in the purely secular domain but also engaged with religious organizations. According to provisions of the 1997 law on religion, unrestricted access to the public sphere was reserved only for those Muslim religious communities that were registered with the state and affiliated with centralized Muslim Spiritual Boards.

⁴⁶¹ Speech at a meeting with muftis from Russia's Muslim spiritual administrations. October 22, 2013. <http://eng.kremlin.ru/transcripts/6157#sel> (Last access February 23, 2015).

Also see the section on Islam and the State in the "Conception on Islam and the Tatar World" developed by the Spiritual Board of Muslims of Tatarstan. <http://dumrt.ru/ru/concept/> (Last access February 23, 2015).

Organizations that failed to pass the state registration process before the end of the registration period on December 31 of 2001 were to be deprived of their privileges as religious organizations or be liquidated altogether.⁴⁶²

In his speech at the meeting with muftis mentioned above, President Putin reminded that Russian Muslim religious organizations had “every opportunity to position themselves broadly through modern media” and invited to “take advantage of these opportunities” (Putin 2013).⁴⁶³ In combination with material support offered through the recently created Fund for the Support of Islamic Culture, Science and Education⁴⁶⁴ and multilevel cooperation between Islamic institutions and federal ministries and agencies (Ministries of Interior, Foreign Affairs, Justice, Defense, etc.)⁴⁶⁵ these policies indicate a clear departure from the state’s earlier attitude of indifference toward religious affairs.⁴⁶⁶

2.2.3 – *Secular Authorities and Interfaith Dialogue*

The shift from liberalism to statism has also been reflected in the role of the state in the relationship between religions. Since the late 1990s, the state has played an

⁴⁶² See chapter three for a detailed discussion of the 1997 law on religion and differences in statuses between religious organizations and religious groups.

⁴⁶³ Speech at a meeting with muftis from Russia’s Muslim spiritual administrations. October 22, 2013. <http://eng.kremlin.ru/transcripts/6157#sel=> (Last access February 23, 2015).

⁴⁶⁴ In 2010, it was announced that the Fund will spend about \$13m a year on educational, scholarship and publishing programs. For details on the activities of the Fund, see the official website of the Fund <http://www.islamfund.ru/index.php> (Last accessed March 22, 2015). Also, see Nemtsova, Anna “Russian government funds select Islamic schools to stem radicalism,” Telegraph.co.uk (originally produced and published by Rossiiskaia Gazeta) <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/sponsored/rbth/society/7975826/Russian-government-funds-select-Islamic-schools-to-stem-radicalism.html> (Last accessed on March 22, 2015)

⁴⁶⁵ For example, for details on cooperation between secular state institutions and the Moscow Muftiyat, see “Sotsial'noe sluzhenie i mirotvorchestvo” Announcement of the Muslim Spiritual Board of Muslims of the European Part of Russia (DUMER), 24 November 2005. <http://www.muslim.ru/articles/109/1090/> (Last access February 23, 2015). Also, see <http://www.muslim.ru/articles/109/1041/> (Last access February 23, 2015).

⁴⁶⁶ For the discussion on church-state relations under Dmitry Medvedev’s presidency, see Papkova, Irina. “Russian Orthodox concordat? Church and state under Medvedev.” *Nationalities Papers* 39.5 (2011): 667-683.

increasingly important role in Christian-Muslim relations in Russia. Given the expanding influence of the Church on Russian society and politics (Papkova 2011, Malashenko and Filatov 2012, Fagan 2012), Muslims have increasingly relied on the state to ensure observance of constitutional guarantees.⁴⁶⁷ These were reflected in the inter- and intra-faith debates and controversies about construction of mosques in non-Muslim territories, the Muslim dress code in public schools, and the prospects for establishment of religious parties.⁴⁶⁸

2.2.3a – *The construction of mosques in non-Muslim territories*

In the period since the late 1990s, the issue of mosque construction has repeatedly become a topic of public controversy and heated discussions. On the one hand, construction of mosques in traditionally Muslim-majority regions continued. As long as the places of worship were under the protectorate of the state-recognized “traditional” Islamic institutions and there was a demand for such venues, Muslim communities have been able to acquire permissions for construction of mosques. On the other hand, proposals to build Islamic places of worship in “traditionally Russian regions” have repeatedly been rejected or significantly delayed, despite a considerable demand for new

⁴⁶⁷ Fagan, Geraldine. *Believing in Russia: Religious Policy After Communism*. Routledge, 2012; Papkova, Irina. *The Orthodox church and Russian politics*. Washington, DC Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2011; Malashenko, Aleksei, and Filatov Sergei. *Pravoslavnaya tserkov' pri novom patriarkhe*. Moscow: Rosspen, 2012. Also see “Dialog v khristiansko-evreyskikh otnosheniyakh v sovremennoy Rossii i v mire.” Doklad zamestitelya predsedatelya OVTSS igumena Filippa (Ryabykh). <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/1285461.html> (cited in Curanović, Alicja. “Weaknesses of the Post-Soviet Religious Model: The Kremlin and “Traditional” Religions in face of Interethnic Tensions in Russia.” *Politics and Religion* (2014): 1-30).

⁴⁶⁸ Within the established Muslim clergy, the sharpest critic of the growing influence of the Orthodox Church is Ravil Gaynutdin, the head of the Council of Muftis of Russia. Mufti Gaynutdin demands equal treatment of the ROC and muftiates in the public sphere, a kind of spiritual condominium rather than agreeing on the role of a “younger brother”. See Curanovic 2014. For position of Mufti Gaynutdin, see his interview to Kommersant. “Islam — religija korennyh rossijan,” *Kommersant*. 18 February 2011. <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/1587146> (Last accessed on February 23, 2015).

premises (Fagan 2012). As the tension over the issue grew, particular cases such as those in St. Petersburg, Sochi, and Maloyaroslavets, attracted public attention. The fact that in St. Petersburg, with five million residents, there were only two mosques spoke for itself. Public ceremonies on Muslim religious holidays, for example, gather tens of thousands of people to attend the service, causing crowds to fill adjacent streets of the mosque.

In the Black Sea coastal town of Sochi, a local Muslim community has lobbied fruitlessly for a mosque for over 15 years. The community had hoped that Sochi's hosting of the 2014 Winter Olympics would boost their campaign for a place of worship. It was only in July 2009, upon the intervention of the Council of Russia's Muftis, the voice of the community was heeded. Mufti Ravil Gaynutdin appealed to then President Medvedev, arguing that some international athletes and guests would seek out a mosque in the region. Medvedev approved the idea and added that this should not be just a temporary structure for the duration of the Olympics.

Similar cases have been reported in Maloyaroslavets, Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, Moscow, Astrakhan, and other cities, where local Muslim communities either faced difficulties in securing a land for mosque construction (Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk), couldn't comply with safety standards (Astrakhan), or met with public resistance (Moscow).⁴⁶⁹ According to some observers of religious life in Russia, one reason for difficulties in opening new mosques in non-Muslim regions might have been position of the Church. According to Curanovic, for example, vision of interfaith dialogue implies that

⁴⁶⁹ See Bridge, Robert. "No need for new mosques in Russia," *Russia Today*. 16 October 2012. <http://rt.com/politics/russia-mosques-muslim-nationalists-moscow-538/> (Last accessed on March 22, 2015)

“traditional” religions don’t proselytize among ethnic groups which are considered traditional adherents of another religion. In other words, the ROC doesn’t proselytize among Tatars or Buryats and muftis don’t appeal to Slavic people (Curanovic 2014). In those cases where the involvement of Mufti Gainutdin into the process has led to the resolution of the dispute in favor of local Muslim communities, representatives of the established clergy appealed to state authorities and demanded observance of constitutional guarantees. This occurred, for example in Sochi and Kostroma.⁴⁷⁰

2.2.3b – The Muslim dress-code in public schools

In October 2012, a scandal broke out in Russia’s southern region of Stavropol over the fact that a young female student was barred from her middle school because she wore a traditional Muslim headscarf. Marina Savchenko, the school's principal, justified her decision by referring to the school’s secular dress code. "Here everything should be very simple: it is an institution, so it's a secular dress code, business-dress style. That's all. End of discussion," she said.⁴⁷¹ Shortly afterwards a Stavropol regional court outlawed Islamic veil at schools by imposing a single standard for the students' clothing. In July 2013, the Russian Supreme Court upheld the local decision. For many in Russia this was striking news given that in several Russia’s regions, such as Tatarstan and Chechnya, female students freely wear headscarves to school. In Muslim-majority Chechnya, which borders Stavropol, a headscarf that covers a student's hair is part of an accepted dress code. The issue still remains a stumbling block to religious dialogue as some members of

⁴⁷⁰ See, for example, Forum 18 News Service reports on the issue <http://www.forum18.org/> (Last accessed on March 24, 2015).

⁴⁷¹ Grove, Thomas. “Headscarf debate highlights Russian Muslims' grievances,” *Reuters*. October 21, 2012. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/10/21/us-russia-religion-headscarves-idUSBRE89K0C120121021> (Last accessed February 24, 2015).

the established Muslim clergy continue to appeal to secular authorities in Moscow to resolve the problem in the regions where Muslims represent a minority population.⁴⁷²

2.2.3c – Prospects for the establishment of religious parties in Russia

The statist ideological perspective incorporates religion in Russia's "formula of identity" but it does not tolerate political activism based on religious or ethnic rationale (Agadjanian 2010). Since 2001 the formation of political parties based on ethnicity and religion in the country has been officially banned.⁴⁷³ However, the revival of the Orthodox Church under Patriarch Kirill reanimated debate about whether it could be possible to establish an Orthodox Christian political party in Russia.⁴⁷⁴ A provocative web-posting by Archpriest Vsevolod Chaplin, a Russian Orthodox Church spokesman, regarding such a possibility triggered strong public reaction and once again exposed the fragile, yet very dynamic and intricate nature of the relationship between religious and secular authority in contemporary Russia (Akhmetkarimov and Parrott 2015).⁴⁷⁵

Reaction of the established Islamic clergy to a possible emergence of an Orthodox religious party in Russia has been cautious, if not suspicious. Farid Asadullim, deputy chairman of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of European Russia, evaluated Chaplin's initiative as provocative and expressed concern on behalf of Russia's many

⁴⁷² Muftii Gainutdin napravil Vladimiru Putinu pis'mo v zashhitu platka." 4 February 2015. <http://www.muslim.ru/articles/109/6403/> (Last accessed February 24, 2015).

⁴⁷³ Appeals to the Constitutional Court in 2004 on the grounds that the Law contradicted the constitutional rights of Russian citizens were rejected.

⁴⁷⁴ Chaplin, Vsevolod. "Nuzhna li, vozmozhna li 'pravoslanaia'/'khristianskaia' partiia?" *Pravoslavnaia politika*. January 11, 2012. <http://pravoslav-pol.livejournal.com/2030.html?thread=1518#t1518> (accessed April 14, 2014)

⁴⁷⁵ Parrott, Bruce and Bulat Akhmetkarimov. "The Future of the Religious Party in Russia," in Charles Doran et al., ed., *The Future of the Religious Party* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press) (forthcoming).

indigenous Muslims that allowing such parties could lead to partition of the country. Being aware of the dominant status of the Church, the majority of Russia's Muslim community, especially its part led by Mufti Gainutdin, upholds secular principles of the state.

2.2.4 – Foreign policy and Islam

Last, but not least, the transition from Western liberalism to statism has also been reflected in changing relations between Russia and the Muslim world. Andrei Kozyrev, Russia's first foreign minister under President Yeltsin, clearly saw relations with the Muslim countries as of little significance. According to Malashenko, limited public talk of developing relations with the Muslim East was simply for the sake of politeness (Malashenko 2008).⁴⁷⁶ According to Malashenko, several factors explain limited interest of Russia in the Muslim world. First, Russia's role in addressing the Arab-Israeli conflict had been devalued ever since the start of the Camp David process in 1977. Second, the Soviet Union left Russia no economic legacy of any worth in the Muslim world. According to Malashenko, the Soviets sponsored friendly countries but obtained no economic advantages in return. Therefore, he argues, Moscow excluded support for national movements from its foreign policy doctrine and abandoned independent initiatives in Middle East policy. Moreover, according to Tsygankov, the foreign policy concept of 1993 implied economic, political, and cultural separation of the new Russia

⁴⁷⁶ Malashenko, A. "Russia and the Muslim World," Carnegie Moscow Center Working Paper N3, 2008.

even from the former Soviet Muslim republics (Tsygankov 2012).⁴⁷⁷

Yeltsin's appointment of Primakov as Foreign Minister in 1996 signified a major shift in Russian foreign policy (Tsygankov 2012). In contrast to Westernists, Tsygankov argues, statisticians wanted to pursue "multi-vector" policies, which also implied building stronger ties with the Muslim world. Malashenko interprets the decision to obtain an observer status in the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) as both Moscow's attempt to rebuild its weakened standing in the Islamic world and a desire to offset its worsening relations with the West by building relations with other parts of the world.⁴⁷⁸ Starting in 2004, President Putin made several visits to Muslim countries and received their leaders in Russia. As a result, relations with Saudi Arabia were improved, ties with Syria and Egypt were revived, contacts with Iraqi Sunnis and Iran were restored (Malashenko 2008). At home these all contributed to strengthening of relations among the established Muslim clergy, ethnic Muslim leadership in Russian regions, and the federal authorities. At the joint meetings with OIC representatives Russian delegations included large groups of influential Russian Muslim politicians and the clergy.⁴⁷⁹ More

⁴⁷⁷ Tsygankov, Andrei P. "Change and Continuity in Russia's Foreign Policy." *Russian Analytical Digest* 8.109 (2012).

⁴⁷⁸ In 2004, the State Duma established the parliamentary group "Russia and the Islamic World: Strategic Dialogue." This group's stated aims, in the words of Duma deputy Shamil Sultanov, are to: "provide the legislative foundation for developing Russia's relations with the Muslim countries and international Islamic organizations, above all the OIC...; propose initiatives for participation in integration processes in the Islamic world; ...create the conditions for constructive dialogue between the political and economic elites in Russia and the Islamic world," etc. (Malashenko 2008).

On 28 June 2011 during the 38th Council of Foreign Ministers meeting (CFM) in Astana, Kazakhstan the organization changed its name from Organisation of the Islamic Conference to its current name, The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation.

⁴⁷⁹ An impressive Russian delegation headed by Vladimir Putin took part in the OIC summit in Kuala Lumpur in 2003. The delegation included a large group of influential Russian Muslim politicians – property minister Farit Gazizulin, deputy chief of staff of the Presidential Administration Djakhan Pollieva, the presidents of Bashkiria and Kabardino-Balkaria, and chairman of the Coordinating Center of the North Caucasus Muslims Ismail Berdiev. The President of Chechnya, Akhmad Kadyrov, was also in the delegation (Malashenko 2008).

and more often on various occasions, state officials referred to “dialogue between civilizations” and even lectured the West on the necessity of showing more understanding towards the Islamic world.⁴⁸⁰

2.3 – Statism: conclusion

At the 2014 National Unity Day Celebration, President Putin declared, “Russia’s sovereignty has the same fundamental value as freedom and democracy.”⁴⁸¹ The statement squarely fits into the statist doctrine which since the late 1990s has gradually come to dominate Russian politics (Evans 2008).⁴⁸² As Dannreuther has put it, “the principal concern of the doctrine was to promote Russia’s sovereignty rather than its democracy, emphasizing that the Russian state gains its legitimacy from the organic ‘general will’ of the Russian people, that outside powers have no right to criticize Russia’s distinctive political path” (Dannreuther 2010:123). After all, what statism privileges is the authority and primacy of the state.⁴⁸³

Meanwhile, during the early 2000s, religion has become essential to Russia’s political legitimacy and social cohesion. Some authors have gone so far as to claim that “traditional” religious organizations have become one of two pillars that the whole

⁴⁸⁰ When the Danish newspaper Jyllands Posten published cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed, reprinted in several European media outlets, which stirred up a storm of protest in the Muslim world, Vladimir Putin not only expressed understanding for the Muslims’ position, but even compared the cartoons to child pornography, saying that “if the state is not able to prevent something, it should at least apologize for not being able to act (Malashenko 2008:11)

⁴⁸¹ Vladimir Putin’s speech at the reception marking 2014 National Unity Day. November 4, 2014. <http://eng.kremlin.ru/transcripts/23177#sel=10:60,10:71> (Last access February 26, 2015).

⁴⁸² According to Evans, “Putin’s actions have been guided by core values and long-term goals whose general outlines were delineated even before he took office as the President of Russia (Evans 2008:901) Evans, A.B. “Putin’s Legacy and Russia’s Identity,” *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 60, No. 6, August 2008, 899 – 912.

⁴⁸³ Orlov, D. *Suverennaya demokratiya: Ot idei k doctrine*. Moscow: Evropa, 2007.

Russian system rests on (Curanovic 2014:789).⁴⁸⁴ Religion in Russia, according to Curanovic, is not just a private affair of an individual but also a matter of state security and stability. Therefore, she argues, state authorities “strived to form and control this area of social life”(Curanovic 2014:792). As cooperation between secular state and religious institutions in selected areas of the public sphere grew, the model came to be known as social partnership.⁴⁸⁵

The emphasis of the statist ideology on the homogenous society, the value of patriotism and strong statehood also entails promoting civic nationalism. For Putin, as March has put it, “the ‘Russian idea’ is *Rossiiskaya* rather than *Russkaya*.”⁴⁸⁶ Thus, a combination of the non-ethnic regime and the collaboration between religious organizations and the Russian state defines the statist approach toward diversity management in Russia in the early 2000s. Regulatory policies of the state toward Islam, therefore, reflect domination of the statist ideology in Russia during the second decade after the Soviet collapse.

3. Conclusion: Ideologies in Transition

Throughout the 1990s and into the early 21st century, Russian political elites as well as the general public were deeply divided on questions of what constitutes the Russian nation, what are the natural boundaries of the state where they live, and how to

⁴⁸⁴ According to Curanovic, another pillar is the Russian security service FSB (Curanovic 2014:789).

⁴⁸⁵ In this study I used the term ‘confessional collaboration’ to describe the relationship between secular state and religious institutions in the 2000s in Russia. However, it is also important to keep in mind that traditional religious organizations are not just tools of the state, but are themselves powerful social institutions. See conclusion for further discussion of this point.

⁴⁸⁶ March, Luke. "Nationalism for Export? The Domestic and Foreign-Policy Implications of the New ‘Russian Idea’." *Europe-Asia Studies* 64.3 (2012): 401-425.

define the national interest. These uncertainties, which were reflected both in domestic and foreign policy areas, had an important impact on state-Islam relations and Muslim religious practice in Russia. Competition between western liberal and statist ideologies, as this study suggests, has largely defined state policies toward Islam in the first two decades after the Soviet collapse. The dominance of the liberal ideology explains the *laissez-faire* approach of the state toward Islam in the 1990s. Accordingly, Russia's diverse population was managed in compliance with the norms of passive secularism and multiethnic ethnicity regime. Domination of the statist ideology, on the other hand, accounts for the regulation of Islamic affairs in the early 2000s. Consequently, state policies toward Islam and its Muslim population were shaped by a transition to a non-ethnic regime and development of the "traditional religions" paradigm.

This framework stresses the importance of ideologies in the formation of individuals' preferences. Western liberalism and statism, therefore, like other ideologies, can impact policies only if there are human actors who embrace these ideologies. These human actors form particular policy preferences based on particular ideologies and struggle to materialize these policy preferences. As Kuru has pointed out, the establishment of a new dominant ideology generally requires a long historical process. First, ideologies manifest themselves in the intellectual discourse, often through the works of some native thinkers. They find supporters among the elites through a variety of means, including publications, public discussions, and education. Over time these supporters organize to challenge the dominant paradigm (Kuru 2009: 238).

In the case of Russia, this offers a perspective to interpret the transition from Communism to Western liberalism during *perestroika* and from Western liberalism to

Statism in the late 1990s. In the 1980s, criticism of the socialist order convinced influential members of the communist party in the need of a comprehensive political reform. Under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev the *perestroika* initiative turned into an overarching conception that ultimately transformed the system. Similarly, during the 1990s, frustration with the attempted transition to Western liberal democracy revived the old debates about Russian national identity, which soon reached the country's senior leadership. Since the late 1990s Russia's intellectuals, policymakers, as well as the general public have been searching for a common narrative that could unite the country's diverse population. Statism, in part, emerged as a reaction to the failure of the early post-Soviet model, which came to be seen as out of touch with Russian traditions and specificities (Agadjanian 2000: 105). State policies toward Islam in Russia have largely shaped under the shadow of these larger debates about what Russia is and where it is headed.

It is important to point out that ideological dominance is never absolute and does not last forever (Kuru 2009:238). A liberal camp was able to develop and advance its reformist agenda under the communist regime. During the *perestroika*, supporters of religious freedom managed to convince the state leadership to stop sponsoring atheism and in the early 1990s this permissive attitude continued. Similarly, statist, who believed in subordination of religion to the state, relied on "traditional religions" rhetoric to criticize principles of western liberalism, which in the early 1990s seemed to be a dominant paradigm.⁴⁸⁷ Statists put a limit on religious freedoms by marginalizing newly

⁴⁸⁷ According to Kovalskaya, the spread of the concept of "traditional religions" is part of a larger process – designing "tradition" as a core value of modern Russian ideology. Kovalskaya suggests that the content of this "tradition," or these "traditions," is provided by the given ideal of patriotism, loyalty to the state and

emerging religious groups and depicting them as dangerous sects that posed a security threat to the state. These interactions define the dynamics of ideological struggles that ultimately result in policy changes toward religion.

Finally, neither of these transitions would have been possible without convenient structural conditions and committed agency that would allow the replacement of old dominant ideologies with new ones. For ideas to occupy the intellectual discourse, find support among the elites, and mobilize a critical mass of supporters, certain structural conditions have to be met. These can be wars, economic crises, critical elections, or pivotal events that evoke historical grievances and cause public resonance. The next section will discuss structural factors that played a key role in ideological transitions that led to changes in state policies toward Islam.

Part II: Structural Determinants of a transition from Western liberalism to Statism

Various social science approaches have different explanations for institutional stability and change. According to the rational choice theory, for example, institutions are stable as long as nobody has incentives to change them. Equilibrium, therefore, may become different when agents' preferences change (Eriksson 2011:206).⁴⁸⁸ Historical institutionalists, on the other hand, claim that the notion of *punctuated equilibrium* may account for the emergence of new historical paths. Punctuated equilibrium is used for understanding particular formative moments when much of the old system breaks down

demographically effective model of family. "Traditional" religions are engaged by the state as one of channels to broadcast pertinent information (Kovalskaya 2013:75).

Kovalskaya, Kristina. "The Traditional and the Non-Traditional in the Religious Life of the Russian Federation." *Mundo Eslavo* 12 (2013): 69-78.

⁴⁸⁸ Eriksson, Lina. *Rational choice theory: Potential and limits*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

and new paths can be chosen (Eriksson 2011:163). Both approaches acknowledge the importance of exogenous shocks that either affect institutional goals or create an incentive for people to take action to change the existing order. Therefore, identifying and assessing the key events in Russia's recent history is crucial for understanding ideological shifts in the country.

I argue that a set of structural challenges that the Soviet Union and Russia were facing in the 1980s and early 90s respectively prepared certain conditions and served as catalysts for ideological shifts. In particular, security and economic concerns played an important role in transitions from communism to post-communist Russian liberalism and from liberalism to statism. Various aspects of a transition from Communism to early post-communism and some reasons of the Soviet collapse have been relatively well researched (Gans-Morse 2004).⁴⁸⁹ This section will focus on some structural reasons of a shift from western liberalism to statism in Russia in the late 1990s. In particular, it will demonstrate how institutional strength relates to the stability of ethno-confessional regimes. In doing so, it will explain how security and economic dynamics in the early 1990s contributed to the disillusionment with the norms of multiethnic passive secularism and facilitated the rise of a non-ethnic confessional collaboration model.

1. Security

One prevalent narrative among some observers of Russian politics as well as Russian politicians and intellectuals is that the Russian state in the 1990s had fallen into

⁴⁸⁹ See Gans-Morse for a critical assessment of the literature on post-communist transitions. Gans-Morse, Jordan. "Searching for transitologists: Contemporary theories of post-communist transitions and the myth of a dominant paradigm." *Post-Soviet Affairs* 20.4 (2004): 320-349.

another *smutnoye vremya* (time of troubles).⁴⁹⁰ Within less than a decade the country fought two devastating wars on its soil, witnessed bloody consequences of a political standoff between the Russian legislative and executive branches, and experienced a surge of organized crime that cost the nation thousands of civilian casualties.

1.1 – Chechnya and Terrorism

After a series of unsuccessful attempts to resolve contested issues with the Northern Caucasus Republic of Chechnya, in December 1994, the Russian government launched a full-scale military assault on the republic. As Hill and Gaddy pointed out, the war became the largest military campaign on Russian soil since World War II (Hill and Gaddy 2013:26). Nevertheless, despite massive civilian and military casualties and almost complete destruction of the city of Grozny, federal forces did not achieve the expected results.⁴⁹¹ In 1996, the Yeltsin government was forced to conclude a truce with the Chechen government, an agreement that some military officers perceived as a humiliation. These officers believed that Moscow would eventually subjugate Chechnya again (Hill and Gaddy 2013:26, 304).

⁴⁹⁰ *Smutnoe vremya* was the historical period that marked the end of the 16th and beginning of the 17th century in Russia. It is a period of political crisis that followed the demise of the Rurik dynasty (1598) and ended with the establishment of the Romanov dynasty (1613). During this period foreign intervention, peasant uprisings, and the attempts of pretenders to seize the throne threatened to destroy the state itself and caused major social and economic disruptions, particularly in the southern and central portions of the country.

⁴⁹¹ It is estimated that casualties and losses during the first Chechen War between 1994 and 1996 exceeded 100,000 people, including more than 5,000 Russian troops, 17,000 armed Chechen separatists, and over 80,000 civilians. In the second Chechen war, which began in 1999, more than 50,000 people have gone missing. For the period from 1994 to 2003, estimates ranged from 50,000 to 250,000 civilians and 10,000 to 50,000 Russian servicemen killed. The figures are not confirmed by academic sources or researchers, and are difficult to verify. For some details, refer to http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/russian/news/newsid_2773000/2773997.stm (Last accessed on March 15, 2015); <http://www.gazeta.ru/2003/10/15/poteriv4e4ne.shtml> (Last accessed on March 15, 2015); <http://www.jamestown.org/nc/?articleid=2373419> (Last accessed on March 15, 2015); <http://www.watchdog.cz/index.php?show=000000-000005-000003-000001&lang=1> (Last accessed on March 15, 2015).

Indeed, the war in Chechnya did not end in 1996. Rather, an ethno-nationalist struggle transformed into a religiously motivated *jihad*, which was no longer defined territorially or directed by the rules of conventional wars. As Chechen separatists invaded Dagestan in August 1999 and series of bombs exploded in Moscow and elsewhere in Russia, Russian federal forces entered Chechnya in September 1999, launching the second round of war. As terrorist attacks continued well into the 2000s, commentators continued to blame the liberal reforms of the early 1990s that allegedly paved the way for infiltration of radical religious ideologies to Russia.⁴⁹²

1.2 – The constitutional crisis of 1993

The political deadlock between the Russian executive and legislative branches in 1993 also couldn't be resolved peacefully. Upon the outbreak of an open conflict between President Yeltsin and the Russian Parliament, in October 1993 supporters of the parliament marched on the Moscow television tower *Ostankino*. As a result of a clash between protesters and the police a few demonstrators were killed. The next day Yeltsin ordered the military to open fire on the Russian White House. According to the official figures, one hundred forty-five people were killed and eight hundred wounded in the attack and associated street fighting. Careful observers state that the events of October 1993 were “the most violent political confrontation in the Russian capital since the Revolution of 1917” (Hill and Gaddy 2013).⁴⁹³

⁴⁹² Some of the most infamous attacks were: taking of around 850 hostages in a Moscow theater in 2002; several bombings of passenger trains and the Moscow metro; downing of commercial Russian airplanes in 2003-04; and a seizure of more than a thousand children in a school in Beslan in North Ossetia in 2004.

⁴⁹³ For the official casualty figures, see *Izvestiya*, December 25, 1993

1.3 – Organized Crime

At the very beginning of Yeltsin’s economic reforms there was a boom of organized crime. According to Lokk, the number of murders and attempted murders rose from 16,000 in 1991 to 32,000 per year in the mid-1990s. At the same time, contract killings rose from 102 in 1992 to an average of 560 per year in the mid-1990s (Lokk, 2003).⁴⁹⁴ Meanwhile, the level of police pay remained relatively low and working conditions were poor. The lack of state funding and the neglect of the police’s basic needs caused many police officers to exploit professional relationships for personal benefit, thereby undermining professionalism and the public’s trust in the state’s security services (Dubova and Kosal’s 2013).⁴⁹⁵

By the late 1990s there was a pervasive sense that Russia faced a deep crisis. Many saw the reason in the absence of a strong state and the rule of law. In particular, terrorist attacks, according to Dannreuther, had a traumatizing effect on Russians, generating a sense of deep insecurity (Dannreuther 2010:115). It was around this time that Vladimir Putin moved to Moscow, first as a deputy chief in Kremlin property department and then as deputy prime minister. Later deterioration of the situation in the Northern Caucasus would prove instrumental in Putin’s rise to the presidency in 1999. As he noted himself when he came to power, ‘My mission, my historic mission—it sounds pompous, but it is true—is to resolve the situation in the North Caucasus’” (Gevorkian

⁴⁹⁴ Lokk, R. V., *Zakaznye ubiistva. Kriminologicheskii analiz (Contracted Assassinations. Criminological analysis)*. Moscow: Bylina, 2003. Cited in Kosals, Leonid and Anastasia Dubova "Commercialization of Police and Shadow Economy: The Russian Case." *Economic Sociology_the european electronic newsletter* Vol 13. N2. (2012): p. 23.

⁴⁹⁵ Dubova, Anastasia and Leonid Kosal’s “Russian Police Involvement in the Shadow Economy,” *Russian Politics and Law*, vol. 51, no. 4, July–August 2013, pp. 48–58.

2000).⁴⁹⁶ In such a way, Putin “sought to distance himself from Yeltsin’s legacy, which was increasingly associated with the dynamics of state disintegration, penetration and subversion by foreign forces, and the weakening of state structures as a result of criminality and terror” (Dannreuther 2010:115).

2. Economic Hardships

In January 1992, President Yeltsin launched an ambitious economic reform program, which soon came to be known as “shock therapy.” The program, which aimed to transform Soviet economic system into a market economy, imitated the recent experience of transition in Poland and some other former communist countries. Accordingly, this implied the privatization of government enterprises, abolition of central planning, rapid liberalization of prices, and severe cuts in budget. These measures did indeed have a shocking effect on the Russian population, which was used to fixed prices, strong welfare system, and employment guarantees (Hill and Gaddy 2013). Those who had accumulated household savings soon found them to be worthless as deregulated prices jumped to unprecedented levels. Enterprises were left without orders and the government provided no provisions for compensation. Unemployment rates skyrocketed as factories shut down having lost its main customer (Hill and Gaddy 2013:18).

The team of economic reformers led by Yegor Gaidar expected that the painful period would not last long and recovery would soon be under way. However, these expectations proved largely illusory. Deficits ballooned while the provision of

⁴⁹⁶ Quoted in Natalia Gevorkian, A. V. Kolesnikov and Natalia Timakova, *Ot pervogo litsa* (Moscow: Vagrius, 2000), p. 133.

Also, see Dannreuther, Roland. "Islamic radicalization in Russia: an assessment." *International Affairs* 86.1 (2010): 109-126.

government services almost collapsed. Prices continued to grow: in 1992 annual consumer inflation was 2,500 percent, in 1993 it was 840 percent, in 1994 and 1995 the inflation was recorded at the level of 215 and 131 percent respectively (Hill and Gaddy 2013:302). Unemployment rates grew every year from 1992 to 1999.⁴⁹⁷ In 1998, the Russian government and the national Central Bank devalued the ruble, defaulted on domestic debt, and declared a moratorium on payment to foreign creditors. In short, the economy was in full-blown crisis.

The economic collapse has had grave consequences for Russia's general public. Reportedly, by 1 August 1998 approximately \$12.6 billion in back wages was owed to Russian workers. Thousands of people across the country protested rising prices and demanded unpaid wages and pensions. In May 1998, coal miners went on strike over unpaid wages, blocking the Trans-Siberian Railway. From the demographic perspective, the country's population was steadily shrinking, mortality levels were nothing short of catastrophic, and the human resource base appeared to be on a trajectory of dangerous erosion (Eberstadt 2010).⁴⁹⁸ As Russians suffered from poor public health, high levels of alcohol and illegal drug consumption, in Eberstadt words, the country's demographic travails qualified "as nothing short of a humanitarian catastrophe in the modern world" (Eberstadt 2010:2).⁴⁹⁹

⁴⁹⁷ Unemployment rates in Russia between 1992 and 1999: 4.768 (1992); 5.285 (1993); 7.233 (1994); 8.534 (1995); 9.606 (1996); 10.819 (1997); 11.889 (1998); 13.001 (1999). Data retrieved from the International Monetary Fund.

⁴⁹⁸ Eberstadt, Nick. *Russia's peacetime demographic crisis: Dimensions, causes, implications*. Seattle, WA: National Bureau of Asian Research, 2010.

⁴⁹⁹ Estimated alcohol intake levels for Russia overall surged in the 1990s, hitting levels above the peak years from the Soviet era. For evidence and estimates, see Eberstadt, Nick. *Russia's peacetime demographic crisis: Dimensions, causes, implications*. Seattle, WA: National Bureau of Asian Research, 2010. Also see A.V. Nemtsov, "Alcohol-Related Human Losses in the 1980s and 1990s," *Addiction* 97, no.11 (November 2002): 1,413–25; Yurii Andrienko and Alexander Nemtsov, "Estimation of Individual

Moreover, according to Transparency International, Russia's global ranking on the Corruption Perceptions Index was average for a sub-Saharan state. In 1997, Russia was ranked 49th out of 52 countries that were surveyed.⁵⁰⁰ According to Mark Levin and Georgy Satarov, corruption became an integral part of economic activity in the country (Levin and Satarov 2000).⁵⁰¹ As one opinion poll revealed, more than 60% of Russians believed corruption had become a factor threatening Russia's national security (Levin and Satarov 2000). According to the estimates of the Audit Chamber of Russia, in 1997, the losses from improper uses of state budgetary funds amounted to tens of trillions of rubles, or billions of dollars. In addition, there was also massive grassroots corruption, which not only harmed economy but also had a devastating social impact. An image of a citizen lacking any kind of protection emerged in the public consciousness (Levin and Satarov 2000). As a result, trust in state authorities significantly declined as people became increasingly disillusioned with the attempted transition to democracy.

3. Conclusion: Structural underpinnings of the ideological change

Between 1991 and 1996, Russian domestic and foreign policy had experienced a long series of humiliating setbacks (Hill and Gaddy 2013). The economy was in collapse and the largest military conflict on Russian soil since WWII was under way in the North Caucasus. In addition, relations between Moscow and Russia's provinces became increasingly dependent on bilateral treaties, which not only threatened the legal

Demand for Alcohol," Centre for Economic and Financial Research, Economics Education and Research Consortium Working Paper Series, no. 05/10, 2005,

http://www.eerc.ru/details/download.aspx?file_id=7495.

⁵⁰⁰ See "Transparency International Corruption Perception Index 1997,"

http://www.transparency.org/files/content/tool/1997_CPI_EN.pdf (Last access March 1, 2015)

⁵⁰¹ Levin, Mark, and Georgy Satarov. "Corruption and institutions in Russia." *European Journal of Political Economy* 16.1 (2000): 113-132.

uniformity of the country but also raised fears that Russia might fall apart like the USSR. In foreign affairs, Russia's position was disregarded in the international handling of conflicts in the Balkans and the country was pushed out of the Baltic States.

The Western liberal ideology gradually became a scapegoat for the causes of the national turmoil that peaked at the end of the 1990s. Liberalism came to be perceived as “contradictory to the rule of law” and as “the antithesis of order” (Zhussipbek 2015:1).⁵⁰² According to Zhussipbek, for many in Russia, liberalism has become associated with unlawfulness, chaos, unfair privatization, economic hardships, loss of social benefits, deterioration of medical services, moral and social degradation, and even destruction of family values. In short, liberalism in the eyes of its critics was guilty not only of destroying the Soviet system but also of creating a society of “spoiled people” “without moral standards” (Zhussipbek 2015:3).⁵⁰³

Moreover, some opponents of Western liberalism in Russia argue that those Russians who claimed to be liberals were not merely westernized, but were outright compradors committed to destroying Russian power and greatness. A number of anti-liberal Russian public figures believe that the elite who seemed to be pro-liberal were agents of Western neo-colonial powers. For example, a group of Russian economists in their book *Krepost Rossiya* (Fortress Russia) suggest that Russia “has a great future

⁵⁰² Zhussipbek, G. “Disenchantment with liberalism in post-Soviet Societies,” *Rethink Paper* N20, January 2015, Rethink Institute, Washington, DC.

⁵⁰³ See also Daniel, Alexander, “Eshe raz o liberalnih tsennostyah i interpretatsiyah” (“Once again about liberal values and interpretations”), Moscow-based Russian human rights organization “SOVA Center,” January 25, 2005 [<http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/publications/secularism-limits/2005/01/d3390/>] (Last access March 2, 2015).

ahead if the authorities finally say goodbye to the liberalism that is hated by the people.”⁵⁰⁴

In such a context, the reactionary rise of alternative ideologies should not be surprising. The narrative of the statist ideology that came to replace Western liberalism sought to address the deficiencies outlined by secular and religious critics during the early 1990s. Statism promised to establish the rule of law and economic prosperity at home as well as return Russia’s great power status. Moreover, by integrating religion as an element of social cohesion, statism intended to leave no space for chaos or religious radicalism. (Malashenko and Trenin 2002). Ideas, which were initially articulated in the works of native thinkers such as Solzhenitsyn (nationalism), Dugin, Polosin (Eurasianism), representatives of the Orthodox Church and other intellectuals such as Igor Chubais, soon were absorbed by influential elites in the decision-making community. Policymakers, in their turn, supported by the population, translated these ideas into actual policies.⁵⁰⁵

Conclusion

This chapter tried to answer the question of what accounts for the continuity and change of ethno-confessional regimes in post-Soviet Russia, which, in their turn, define state policies toward Islam in the country. It argues that domination of principles of western liberalism during the *perestroika* era and in the early 1990s largely explains

⁵⁰⁴ Leontyev, Mihail, “Proschaniye s Liberalizmom (Farewell to Liberalism)” in Leontyev, Mihail et al. *Krepost Rossiya (Fortress Russia)*, Moscow: Yauza, Moscow: EKSMO, 2008,

⁵⁰⁵ Although there cannot be direct evidence that these works are progenitors of the Russian dominant political thought in the 2000s, the conceptual and substantive overlap is striking. History, language, and religion remain at the core of Russian conservative political thought to the present day.

laissez faire attitude of the Russian state toward Islam and the institutional support for expression of ethnicity. Adoption of the 1990 law on religion and assuming the multiethnic ethnicity regime led to the emergence of a multiethnic passive secularism that guided the state approach toward managing social diversity during the 1990s. Disillusionment with the process of transition from communism to post-communism called into question the legitimacy of the liberal ideology. The rise of the rhetoric about restoration of order and the need for a strong state in the works of native thinkers and then in the public utterances of politicians brought about a gradual transition to a statist ideology. With regards to the question of managing the diversity the transition was manifested in adoption of the 1997 law on religion and abolition of ethnicity line in the internal passports. These changes symbolized the transition to a non-ethnic confessional collaboration model, which assumed cooperation between the state and “traditional” religious organizations in selected areas of public life, in education, and social care.

Structural factors prepared conditions necessary for the post-communist ideological shift in Russia. Liberal ideology, which was dominant in the early 1990s, largely failed to deliver security, socio-economic stability, and basic order. Moreover, some people blamed it for being the source of moral and social degradation of the population. The statist approach that replaced western liberalism in the 2000s promised to reestablish order. Re-creation of an authoritative centralized state apparatus, which soon became known as *vertikal' vlasti*, implied resolving economic and security concerns along with embracing values such as patriotism, collectivism, solidarity, *derzhavnost'* – the belief that Russia is destined always to be a great power exerting its influence abroad (Hill and Gaddy 2013:36). More importantly, from the perspective of this study, statism

based part of its legitimacy on religion by collaborating with traditional religious organizations. In this relationship, however, the role reserved for religious organizations was that of a junior partner.

Conclusion

Ideologies, regimes, and policy: The dynamics of state policies toward Islam in post-Soviet Russia

The only solid and lasting peace between a man and his wife is, doubtless, a separation.

Philip Stanhope, 4th Earl of Chesterfield

As a wealthy and highly respected man in his community, Molla Nasreddin had several wives. One day when he felt that two of them are having issues with each other, Molla bought two beautiful necklaces with a single stone pendant, a piece of jewelry, hanging from a chain and secretly presented one to each of the two wives. As he was handing them over to the women, he warned each not to show the present to anyone. One day these two wives argued with each other again and came to Molla Nasreddin. “Tell, which one of us do you love best?” they demanded. “I love you both,” replied Molla, “but the one who has a necklace with a single stone pendant is a queen of my heart.” Both wives were thrilled to hear the answer but did not show it and happily returned to their daily work. We don’t know how the family ended up living, but what the story teaches us is that good management is often an art. Addressing critical situations before they break out and being able to find appropriate approach to delicate issues, taking into consideration a broader context and small nuances, requires a great deal of understanding, maturity, wisdom, and sometimes a sense of humor.

The story of Molla’s family is instructive for observers of state-Islam relations in Russia. In a sense, one could think of Russia as an example of a polygamous family, where the state represents a head of the household, or a husband, and major “traditional religions” symbolize his multiple wives. Complex relationships in the family unfold as

husband and his wives raise generations of children, or the people, all of whom share a father but have different mothers. Among the four religions, recognized as traditional faiths in Russia, the Russian Orthodox Church has the longest history of presence in the country. Many historians indeed start the history of Russia from Christianization of Rus, which happened shortly after Prince Vladimir's marriage with Anna, a sister of the Byzantine Emperor Basil II.⁵⁰⁶ Some scholars believe that Anna's hand was considered such a prize that Vladimir became Christian just to marry her.⁵⁰⁷ Interesting to note that, according to some accounts, Vladimir did not align with flourishing Baghdad, another superpower at the time, precisely because he did not like their religion. Prince Vladimir told Muslim emissaries that drinking alcohol, a sin according the Islamic faith, was the joy of the Rus' and the Russian people could not exist without it.⁵⁰⁸

From this perspective, the union that Anna and Vladimir created was a foundation of a new family, or a country, where religion assumed a central role in disciplining the population.⁵⁰⁹ Over time, the Orthodox Church developed into a supreme religious and

⁵⁰⁶ According to the early 12th-century Rus' chronicle [*Povest' vremennykh let*], foundations of the 'land of Rus' were laid when Prince Vladimir united region's diverse peoples under the Christian rule.

⁵⁰⁷ In fact, that there were also significant military and political motives, underlying the alliance between Kievan Rus' and Byzantium, that ultimately led to the baptism of the Rus'. See Leong, Albert, ed. *The Millennium: Christianity and Russia, AD 988-1988*. St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1990.

⁵⁰⁸ Scholarship on the history of religion in Russia suggests that Vladimir's choice of Christianity in 988 A.D. was not accidental. Vladimir made a deliberate choice of faith for himself and the people of Kievan Rus from among "religions of the book" – Judaism, Islam, and Orthodox Christianity. After a preliminary investigation, he felt apprehensive about Judaism because it was a religion of a stateless people and had qualms about Islam because it forbade alcohol. For a brief discussion of this see two volumes dedicated to the Millennium of Christianity in Russia: Leong, Albert, ed. *The Millennium: Christianity and Russia, AD 988-1988*. St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1990; House, Francis. *Millennium of Faith: Christianity in Russia, AD 988-1988*. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1988. This version of the story is also verified by the Muslim writers of the time. See, for example, Abu 'l-Faraj Yahya Ibn Said Ibn Yahya's *Tarikh* (ca. 1066) where he describes the "marriage alliance" between Byzantium and Rus' that led to Christianization of Rus.

⁵⁰⁹ Many historians agree that before adoption of Orthodox Christianity there was no unified or a centralized Russian state. At the most, there was an association of semi-independent principalities, which cooperated on some issues. Orthodoxy became a key element that united pagan Slavic tribes of the region. As Orthodox Christianity took its place at the core of the Russian state-building process, the country continued its development as a *religious state*. Christianity turned into a central pillar of Russian politics

premier public institution.⁵¹⁰ As a mother in most of the families, the Russian Orthodox Church established its own dogmas for domestic order and made the state a permanent guardian of its principles abroad.⁵¹¹

The conquest of Kazan, one of the Muslim successor states of the Golden Horde, by Ivan the Terrible in 1552 marks the beginning of a new era in the history of Russia and its relations with Islam.⁵¹² In our analogy it symbolizes the arrival of a second woman in the family, who may symbolically be called Suyumbikhe.⁵¹³ She was subordinated by force and treated as a maid rather than a legitimate mistress in her new house.⁵¹⁴ Suyumbikhe was young, stubborn, and mysterious, as some would expect an

and culture. A popular notion of Orthodoxy being a founding element of the Russian state largely depends on this narrative.

⁵¹⁰ Neither the shift of a spiritual, cultural, and economic activity from Byzantium to Rome, nor the rise of the Mongol Empire and the emergence of the powerful Lithuania diminished the role of the Church in Muscovy. On the contrary, the relative power of the Church increased, as it was the only institution in Rus' that was tolerated under the Mongol yoke.

⁵¹¹ Upon the Byzantine emperor's decision at the Council of Florence in 1438, the Russian Orthodox Church became independent of the Greek Church. After the fall of Constantinople religion took its place at the center of a newly emerging ideology, which entitled Moscow to a status of a Third Rome. Henceforth, the state became dependent on Orthodoxy for its political legitimacy and assumed the role of a defender of the Church's ecclesiastical autonomy. As the Church established its own Patriarchate in 1589, the Tsar continued to serve as the "guardian of the Church's dogmas" and subsidize Church's activities.

⁵¹² According to Khalid, the conquest of Kazan was a turning point, for it opened up the steppe to gradual Muscovite expansion (Khalid in Millar 2004). In fact, Muscovy acquired its first Muslim subjects as early as 1392, when the so-called Mishar Tatars, who inhabited what is now Nizhny Novgorod province, entered the service of Muscovite princes. The khans of Kasymov dynasty, who lost out in the succession struggles of the Golden Horde, came under Muscovite protection in the mid-fifteenth century and became a privileged service elite.

⁵¹³ Suyumbikhe was a female Tatar ruler, who had been forcibly moved to Moscow upon the fall of Kazan to the army of Ivan the Terrible in 1552. More broadly, according to some scholarly observations, Islam has played a critical role in the formation of Muscovite identity. Actually it had a dual impact. On the one hand, during the Mongol yoke, Islamic faith was perceived in Moscow as a foreign threat. This, experts argue, consolidated the Slavic people against the Mongol domination and contributed to the rise of Muscovy. On the other hand, many blame Mongol influence for being one of the main reasons for Russia's separation from European Christianity. One way or the other, Islam is considered to have made a significant contribution in strengthening of the Russian Orthodox identity at the early stages of state development.

⁵¹⁴ Incorporation of a sizable population practicing an alien religion did not change the status of the Orthodox Church in Russia. As rulers of a religious state, Russian Tsars approved enforced Christianization as a measure to discipline individual conduct and public order in conquered lands. Aimed at attaining uniformity in the emerging empire, in the following couple of centuries, Russia's further territorial expansion was accompanied by involuntary conversion to Christianity. Under conditions of unchecked

oriental woman to be. She was submissive but never gave up her faith or convert. It was not until the decision of the head of the household to modernize and revise the order at home that secular principles replaced religious dogmas as a new code of conduct in the family.⁵¹⁵ Comprehensive modernization and secularization efforts initiated by the executive order in the 18th century were aimed at creating a rational state, where Church would be subordinated to the state and function as a “department” in the bureaucratic government structure.⁵¹⁶ Soon Islam in Russia was also legalized and Suyumbikhe acquired the status of a second wife.⁵¹⁷ As the head of the household continued to rely on his wives to discipline the children, the relationship between the women determined the climate at home.

The 1917 Bolshevik Revolution symbolizes the beginning of yet another distinct period in Russian state-religion relations. In our analogy it exemplifies the divorce of the man from his life-long partners in marriage.⁵¹⁸ As the man tried to rely on his iron fist

power of the Church, religious minorities, including Muslims, were systematically purged. In Russia, under a religious state regime, the way to show your loyalty to the state was through accepting a Christian faith. As the state pursued its imperial goals, it continued to view the Church as its main partner.

⁵¹⁵ Peter the Great, who grew up in the wake of the Old Believer Schism in the Orthodox Church, realized that competing centers of authority could inflict on the land and its people. The Emperor believed that consolidation of the state depended on the subordination and subjugation of the Church. Peter utterly rejected the idea of Moscow being the Third Rome. Instead, inspired by western examples, he initiated a comprehensive modernization project of Russia, which envisioned a different role for the Church.

⁵¹⁶ In a sense, Peter laid foundation of a new state-religion regime, where religion was subordinated to the state. Service to the state, rather than Christianization, became the ultimate measure of loyalty and the source of privilege. This statist approach toward religion opened up new opportunities for Russia’s Muslims. Through the service to the state, those Muslim subjects, who survived the dispossession of the earlier periods, were allowed to keep their land and were even able to own Orthodox serfs.

⁵¹⁷ According to Werth, the government of Catherine the Great “came to recognize the utility of non-Orthodox religions as sources of order and stability” (Werth 2014: 49). By making religious tolerance an official policy, legalizing and institutionalizing Islam, she created a basis for loyalty to the Russian state in the Muslim lands. The Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly, at the time a unique in the Muslim world organizational structure imposed on Islam, became an essential mediator between the state and its Muslim subjects.

⁵¹⁸ The Bolshevik government did not want to rely on religious institutions to govern its highly diverse society. Guided by Marxian view of religion as an “opium of the people” and Lenin’s vision that religion was “merely a product and reflection of economic yoke within society,” Bolsheviks sought to construct a community based on non-spiritual values (Khalid in Millar 2004). Throughout the Soviet era, the

and the help of nannies to raise a new cohort of children, he was inculcating to his offspring a new source of deep affection that would replace the love and caring of their mothers.⁵¹⁹ After decades of painful struggle, the husband allowed women to return and reunite with their children. Nevertheless, the reality that all had to discover for themselves was shocking. The transformative impact of a lived experience in a single-parented family was huge.⁵²⁰ The following two decades were spent in family members' adapting to each other and negotiating the new rules of family life.

The long history of the relationship between the partners in a family that I call Russia has experienced substantial periods of tension and uncertainty as well as accord and cooperation. It hasn't been static since the end of the Soviet Union either. The initial period of reconciliation was accompanied by concrete efforts aimed at accommodating moral and spiritual needs of the children, who suffered most during their parents' separation. The following decade was marked by the parents' reassertion of their traditional roles as primary caregivers. The analogy could be extended further to describe the details of the complicated relationship between the husband, his wives, and the children. What is important here, as in the case with Molla Nasreddin, is to note that the

communist government vigorously discouraged the practice of all religions, including Islam. In other words, under the Soviet regime, it was no longer enough to show your loyalty to the regime through the service to the state. To become a Soviet man one had to abandon his/her faith in the supernatural.

⁵¹⁹ The establishment of a socialist order also meant the introduction of atheism as an absolute dogma (Riasanovsky 1990:15).

⁵²⁰ The overall impact of the Soviet era on religion and on Islam in particular was brutal. During seven decades of ruthless anti-religious policies and atheist propaganda, thousands of mosques were destroyed or given over to "more socially productive" uses, such as youth clubs, museums of atheism, or warehouses; religious endowments were confiscated; religious schools closed; religious authorities arrested and deported to labor camps or executed (Khalid in Millar 2004). Moreover, connections between indigenous Muslims and the Islamic world were cut, religious knowledge was vastly circumscribed and the site of its reproduction pushed into private or covert realms; continuity with the past made difficult by changes in script. Although destructive anti-religious campaign could not eradicate the religion completely, it largely managed to render "Islam" synonymous with "tradition". For the most part, this key element of the Soviet legacy has determined the dynamics of Islamic revival in Russia in the first decades after the collapse of the communist regime.

attitude of the head of the household toward his wives plays an essential role in maintaining peace and harmony at home.

Islam, ideologies, and ethno-confessional regimes: The dynamics of interaction in post-Soviet Russia.

Post-Soviet Russian state policies toward religion have had a huge impact on religious life of indigenous Muslims. This study has demonstrated that various Islamic groups have had different experiences in the 1990s and the 2000s, most notably manifested in terms of their access to the Russian public sphere. This dissertation has asked what explains the change in state attitudes toward religion. In particular, it has explored why state policies toward Islam changed during the first two decades after the Soviet collapse. The analysis suggests that religious policies are often a product of ideational struggles. Ideas about particular models of societies first emerge in the works of some native thinkers, or they are imported from other intellectually influential countries. Then they find followers among the elite and policymakers through publications and public discussions. Next, these followers organize and mobilize to challenge the dominant ideology. Finally, these activists replace the dominant ideology with the new one. The last step usually requires suitable structural conditions.

This study suggests that neutral policies toward Islam in Russia in the early 1990s were a result of an ideological domination of Western liberalism, which displaced the communist mentality. Western model of development, which has historically had its supporters in Russia, envisioned a secular, liberal, and democratic path to nation building. In the 1980s, dissenting intellectuals such as Andrei Sakharov revived Western liberal ideas in the country. Soon the rhetoric about human rights and freedoms was supported

by the elites in the policymaking community and developed into a full-fledged reform movement under the Gorbachev regime. Economic stagnation and other structural factors contributed to the formation of the conditions that led to the collapse of the communist regime and abandonment of the atheistic approach toward religion. Under Western liberal ideology religion was treated as an element of culture. This allowed adoption of passive secular state-religion and multiethnic ethnicity regimes to govern Russia's diverse population in the late *perestroika* and early post-Soviet years. A central feature of the passive secular state-religion regime was accommodationist policies toward Islam. Both granting religious groups unrestricted access to the Russian public sphere and supporting the institutionalization of ethnic diversity facilitated the Islamic revival in the country.

In the late 1990s, the ideology of Western liberalism was renounced in favor of the norms and principles of Statism, which envisaged the state playing a guiding and regulating role in the society.⁵²¹ Religion, including Islam, according to this perspective, was an important element in building Russia's new "formula of identity." In particular, "traditional" religious organizations were expected to positively contribute to building and maintaining the patriotic consensus. However, religion and its institutions had to be subordinated to the state. The idea that Russia should follow its own path of development is deeply rooted in Russian philosophical tradition of the Slavophiles. In the 1990s, Russian thinkers and theoreticians such as Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Igor Chubais, and Aleksandr Dugin revived the debate in the country about different elements of this idea. Soon the rhetoric about Russia's unique posture as a bridge between East and West found

⁵²¹ Putin, V. *Millennium Message* (Rossiya na rubezhe tysyacheletii), December 29, 1999, available in Russian on the *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* website at http://www.ng.ru/politics/1999-12-30/4_millennium.html (Last accessed on February 14, 2015).

supporters among the elites and in the policymaking community. A wide public disillusionment with the Western model of development speeded up the beginning of a state-sponsored search for a new national identity. The ideological shift from Western liberalism to Statism resulted in a change of state-religion regime, which then gradually took the shape of a confessional collaboration between state institutions and “traditional” religious organizations. This transition, combined with a movement toward a non-ethnic ‘ethnicity regime’, explains the prevalence of regulatory policies of the state toward Islam in Russia since the late 1990s. Both granting a privileged access to the public sphere for state-approved religious organizations and reducing support for institutionalization of ethnic diversity indicates a novel approach toward “managing the diversity” in Russia.

A set of structural challenges that Russia was facing in the 1990s prepared the necessary conditions and served as a catalyst for the ideological shift. In particular, security and economic concerns accelerated the formation and mobilization of a critical mass against the defenders of liberal reforms. Thus, the outbreak of violence in the Russian North Caucasus, the spread of terrorist attacks across the country, and the economic collapse diminished the trust in advocates of liberalism, rapidly disillusioned the people about the process of transition to liberal democracy, and contributed to the rise of an alternative ideology.

In this respect, my argument differs from analyses that focus primarily or even solely on security concerns in explaining the post-Soviet dynamics in state-Islam relations in Russia. This study reveals that secular state authorities were already aware of security challenges posed by Islamic radicalism in the 1980s. Soviet policymakers,

nevertheless, were committed to liberalization of religious policy despite ongoing conflicts in Afghanistan, Central Asia, and Iran. On the other hand, starting in the late 1990s restrictive measures were also applied to “non-traditional” religious groups that are widely regarded as non-violent (e.g. Jehovah’s Witnesses and Muslim readers of Said Nursi). This study suggests that focusing on the criteria for access of religious groups to the public sphere offers a better perspective for the analysis of post-Soviet state-Islam relations.

In contrast to many other studies on the subject, this dissertation does not rely on the essentialist approach, which suggests that inherent distinctions between certain religions and religious communities have a direct impact on politics. In particular, it avoids the argument that Russian state policies toward Islam are guided by the fact that Russia is a Christian-majority state, which, according to many, has historically struggled to suppress Muslims. Essentialist arguments may be attractive for their simplicity, but they have little to say about state-religion relations and neglect issues related to interfaith dialogue and religious freedom. This study demonstrates that Russian state policies toward Islam are better understood in the context of changing state-religion regimes, which also include Church-state relations. Moreover, essentialism often ignores the fact that Islam is internally diverse. People and communities of one particular religious tradition may take different views and positions. There is no religious hierarchy in Islam and no single individual is qualified to say the last word on questions of belief or practice. The history of Russia’s indigenous Muslims demonstrates that relations between the state and various Islamic communities have varied not only over time but also across different cultures, geographies, religious traditions, and schools of thought.

This study has taken the discussion about Islam in Russia beyond securitization and essentialist contexts toward a comparative framework of ethno-confessional regimes. It suggests that the analysis of Russian state policies toward Islam in the context of state-religion and ethnicity regimes can help to better assess the historical dynamics of the relationship and compare it to those of other states. Besides, by taking structural factors seriously, this study also has aimed to control for a variation in country-specific ideological struggles. Despite the unique ideological contexts that historically developed in many countries, many believers and non-believers share things in common as human beings and equal members of their societies. The discussion below will demonstrate the importance of the notions such as meritocracy, transparency, fairness, justice, and ultimately religious freedom to various religious groups and their relations with the state.

The challenges and limits of the “Confessional collaboration” model.

At the beginning of Vladimir Putin’s third term as the President of Russia in 2012, an observer of Russian politics might have thought that the country’s population was in the midst of a wave of patriotism and social cohesion unprecedented in its post-Soviet history. Has the fundamental ambiguity about Russia’s national identity ultimately been resolved? Has the post-Soviet ideological vacuum finally been filled? Has the Russian government found a right approach to govern its religiously diverse population? Looking at the attempts to build a patriotic consensus based on traditional values and beliefs, one may suggest that the “confessional collaboration” model between secular state institutions and “traditional” religious organizations is working and receiving a significant amount of social support. Established clergy of all traditional religions,

including Islam, have made use of a privileged access to the Russian public sphere and indeed have worked hard to revive their old connections with the society. Nevertheless, as in the past under the “multi-confessional establishment” framework, issues related to religious freedom, interfaith dialogue, and a range of structural problems facing Russia still remain largely unaddressed.

A) Religious freedom and Islamic religious pluralism

First and foremost, relying on traditional religious organizations to build a patriotic consensus raises fundamental questions about religious freedom for most of the period. Since Peter the Great the bureaucratic Russian state has been regulating various aspects of religious life in the country. Over time, subordination of religion to the Russian state has been so deeply internalized by both religious and secular authorities, that today even some careful observers of religious life in Russia describe the establishment of the post-1997 order in the country as the process of normalization of state-religion relations after the turbulence of the early post-Soviet era (Krawchuk and Bremer 2014).⁵²² Indeed, given Russia’s historical record of state-religion relations, the early post-Soviet years demonstrated an unprecedented tendency towards the expansion of religious freedoms. Despite the fact that “freedom of conscience” and secularism remain declared principles of the Russian state, since adoption of the 1997 law on religion, the country has gradually

⁵²² Krawchuk, Andrii, and Thomas Bremer, eds. *Eastern Orthodox Encounters of Identity and Otherness: Values, Self-reflection, Dialogue*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

moved away from these stated goals.⁵²³ The instrumental approach toward religion that the state has adopted raises concerns about prospects of religious freedom in Russia.

As shown in the previous chapters, the state-religion regime since the late 1990s, is, at its core, a system of state control over religious institutions, and with their help, control over society.⁵²⁴ Arguably, even more serious weakness of the confessional collaboration model is that the secular bureaucracy works through religious institutions, which are loyal to the state and serve its interests rather than represents the society. Curanovic notes that the “elitist” club of “traditional” religions “is not fully representative of the increasingly complex Russian society” (Curanovic 2014:793). This is particularly evident in the case of Islamic muftiyates, which are internally conflicted, fragmented, and are losing authority among young Russian Muslims. “The promotion of a moderate Russian Islam,” according to Dannreuther, “has struggled to counter the appeal of radical Islam, particularly among young Russian Muslims, since an avowedly ‘traditional’ Islam appears to lack theological rigor, deviating from the purist standards of the Salafist movement, as well as being continually compromised by the official state support that it receives” (Dannreuther 2010:126).⁵²⁵ A conscious disregard of the pluralistic reality and the constraints of traditional religious organizations in addressing religious diversity bear the danger of forcing many religious communities to go

⁵²³ The Russian 1993 constitution grants extensive religious rights, including the right to “disseminate religious or other convictions,” and declares that no religion can be instituted as state-sponsored or mandatory.

⁵²⁴ Curanović, Alicja. "Weaknesses of the Post-Soviet Religious Model: The Kremlin and “Traditional” Religions in face of Interethnic Tensions in Russia." *Politics and Religion* (2014): 1-30.

⁵²⁵ Various studies pointed out a limited ability of Muftiyats to represent the diverse community of Russia’s Muslims. However, so far, no major work has been conducted on peaceful “non-traditional” Islamic groups in Russia and their ability to positively contribute to the society (e.g. the Gulen Movement).

underground.⁵²⁶ This, in turn, risks not only curbing religious innovation but also stigmatizing traditional religious organizations themselves.⁵²⁷ In this context, the key question is how the Kremlin will continue to manage its diverse Muslim population and whether it can maintain the allegiances of such a heterogeneous group. Will the Russian government's approach toward religion, which apparently has had some success, continue to assuage the demands and needs of the religious communities in Russia and, if not, how will future disaffection of religious communities be expressed (Dannreuther 2010:126)?⁵²⁸ Much of the answer depends on intra-faith dialogue and the ability of Muslims to listen to each other.

It is also important to keep in mind that "traditional" religious organizations are not formal tools of the state, but are themselves powerful social institutions, which, at least in theory, can develop their own agenda. According to Smolkin-Rothrock, historically the interests of Russia's traditional religious institutions have not always and necessarily overlapped with those of the Russian state.⁵²⁹ If the unity of interests between the Russian state and religious institutions were put into question, and if religious organizations withheld or even withdrew their support for Russian state policy, the state

⁵²⁶ For a discussion of the ban on Islamic texts and persecution of the followers of Said Nursi in Russia, see Chapter 4. Also refer to Sova-Center Reports on inappropriate enforcement of anti-extremist legislation in Russia in 2008, 2009, and 2011 by Alexander Verkhovsky: <http://www.sova-center.ru/en/misuse/reports-analyses/2009/04/d15800/> (Last access March 3, 2015). <http://www.sova-center.ru/en/misuse/reports-analyses/2010/04/d18482/> (Last access March 3, 2015). <http://www.sova-center.ru/en/misuse/reports-analyses/2012/04/d24302/> (Last access March 3, 2015).

⁵²⁷ In its extreme form, the attempt to "confine Islam to the official mosque" is not too different from the Soviet era practice of isolating indigenous Muslims from the Muslim world. When people were allowed to express their opinion, Soviet era Muftiyates, as this study has shown, became the first target of public condemnation.

⁵²⁸ Dannreuther, Roland. "Islamic radicalization in Russia: an assessment." *International Affairs* 86.1 (2010): 109-126.

⁵²⁹ Victoria Smolkin-Rothrock. *A Sacred Space Is Never Empty: The Spiritual Life of Soviet Atheism* (forthcoming).

would find itself without an essential social base, and its moral claims would lose much of their power, thereby undermining the existing patriotic consensus.

B) Interfaith dialogue

Moreover, a patriotic consensus built on traditional religions paradigm will remain fragile as long as there are unresolved issues regarding interfaith relations. In today's Russia, the role of the Orthodox Church within traditional religions framework raise concerns among the established Muslim clergy and careful observers of secularism in Russia. As has been shown above for regions where Muslims represent a minority group in an Orthodox majority culture, influential figures within the official Orthodox and Muslim clergy sometimes disagree with each other (e.g. construction of mosques and Islamic dress code for school girls). Some members of the Orthodox Church interpret the public visibility of Islam in Russian-majority regions as Islamic proselytism and even expansion (Curanovic 2014).⁵³⁰ Muslim clergy, on the other hand, criticize the attempts to introduce elements of Orthodox religious education in public schools across the nation and to establish military chaplaincy. Especially the Council of Russia's Muftis has opposed these initiatives, referring to them as unconstitutional and dangerous (Verkhovsky 2007).⁵³¹ According to Verkhovsky, since converting people of other faiths cannot be banned by the Patriarchate and no one has the authority to ban the *Islamic dawah* (Islamic proselytism), missionary work on both sides continues. Periodic

⁵³⁰ Here we have to admit that neither the Russian Orthodox Church nor the Muslim clergy are monolith-like structures and various views expressed by some members of the established clergy do not necessarily represent the opinion of the whole community (Fagan 2012).

⁵³¹ Verkhovsky, A. *Public Interactions between Orthodox Christian and Moslem Organizations at the Federal Level*. May 2007. <http://www.sova-center.ru/en/religion/publications/2007/05/d10814/> (Last access March 2, 2015). Also see chapters three and four.

occurrence of such instances, in turn, mars relations between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Islamic establishment.

Observers of religious freedom in Russia note that since the late 1990s, the official rhetoric of the Russian Orthodox Church has increasingly emphasized the idea of "the Church of majority" based on the premise that "Russia is a predominantly Orthodox country with some national and religious minorities" (Verkhovsky 2007). Accordingly, Russia is perceived by leading Church leaders as "ethnic Russian and Orthodox civilization."⁵³² This rhetoric is not uniformly received by members of the established Muslim clergy, who often argue that they represent up to 15 percent of the Russian population which is spread all over the country. Ravil Gainutdin of the Council of Russia's Muftis is the most ardent defender of the constitutional rights of Russian Muslims. In his opinion, Islam deserves an equal status with Russian Orthodoxy and should not be treated as a regional phenomenon. Ultimately, Mufti Gainutdin envisions institutionalizing Russia's bi-religious nature in the future by introducing a government position of vice president to be held by a Muslim.⁵³³ On the other hand, the Central Spiritual Board of Muslims led by Mufti Tadzhuddin almost always sides with the Russian Orthodox Church. Many Muslim supporters of Mufti Tadzhuddin see themselves

⁵³² For example, see Kovalskaya, Kristina. "The Traditional and the Non-Traditional in the Religious Life of the Russian Federation." *Mundo Eslavo* 12 (2013): 69-78. According to Kovalskaya, "since the dominant position of the Russian Orthodox Church is not in question, the representatives of the Orthodox Church do not focus on the inclusion of Orthodoxy among the traditional religions of Russia, because there is no particular need for this. The word "traditional" is more often used by the representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church in relation to other areas, particularly in reference to the concept of "traditional values." Denominations that do not have such a large congregation, in contrast, insist on the fact that they are "traditional religions" or at least use references to something "traditional" (p.72).

⁵³³ In defending his position, Ravil Gainutdin often refers to secular foundations of the state. As this was denoted in the Council's official position on the issue about symbols on the Russian national coat of arms, in a secular state, everyone, including Muslims, must respect symbols adopted through a democratic process. See Gainutdin, R. "K voprosu o gosudarstvennoj simvolike." 6 December 2005. <http://www.muslim.ru/articles/109/1092/> (Last access March 2, 2015)

as a specific Islamic component of Russia's rebirth as a traditionally Orthodox country. In contrast, Muslim spiritual leaders of Russia's North Caucasus region rarely get involved in arguments on all-Russian issues. They are more focused on advocacy for regional interests and do not claim a contribution to the overall "Russian identity" (Verkhovsky 2007).

Despite these complicated relations between the Islamic clergy and the Russian Orthodox Church, they all, nevertheless, seem to be united in their criticism of Western liberalism. Arch-priest Vsevolod Chaplin, for example, argued that he was more concerned about Western secularists' attacks against both Christianity and Islam than about tensions in Orthodox-Islam relations. According to Verkhovsky, Chaplin's statement is "consistent with ROC's numerous appeals to all religiously-defined 'civilizations' to oppose the ideological expansion of the liberal and secular western civilization" (Verkhovsky 2007). Muslim leaders make similar statements with regard to Western 'freedom of expression' rhetoric, what has been demonstrated in their fairly aggressive anti-secularist reaction to the "Danish cartoons."⁵³⁴

C) Nationalisms, immigration, and integration

The third element that calls into question a patriotic consensus built on traditional religions is the issue of interethnic dialogue or maybe lack of it. Alas, over the 2000s, expressions of intolerance toward groups that are perceived in the Russian public

⁵³⁴ According to Verkhovsky, Russia's Muslim leaders have different attitudes toward secularism at home and abroad. At the international level, "secular enemies" are very strong, so the differences in foreign policy assessments for them are not so important. In contrast, Russian domestic secularism is on the decline, while political differences are greater. See Verkhovsky, *A. Public Interactions between Orthodox Christian and Moslem Organizations at the Federal Level*. 9 May 2007. <http://www.sova-center.ru/en/religion/publications/2007/05/d10814/> (Last access March 2, 2015)

consciousness as strangers have reportedly been on the rise (Verkhovsky 2007, Pain 2007, Schnirelman 2011).⁵³⁵ Levada Center survey of 2013, for example, indicates that 66% of participants in a nationwide survey fully or to some extent agreed with the slogan “Russia for Russians” (*Rossiia dlya russkikh*). 62% of the respondents believed that violent clashes on ethnic grounds were possible in contemporary Russia. This is a notable increase from the figures that were recorded in 2002. Back then 55% of survey respondents expressed support for the slogan “Russia for Russians”, and 49% thought that bloody conflict on ethnic grounds could happen in the country.⁵³⁶

According to Curanovic, in today’s Russia strangers there are of two kinds: immigrants and ethnic minorities, a great majority of whom are Muslims (Curanovic 2014:793). If ethnic minorities force the majority to face the question of national identity, immigrants bring along the challenges of integration and assimilation. As a result, a combination of caucasophobia and migrantophobia emerged as major destabilizing forces in the country.⁵³⁷ This tendency to “ethnisation of [interpersonal] relations” in the context of growing Russian nationalism presents a challenge to the ideology of statism, which, as this study has shown, aims to build a non-ethnic regime based on a confessional

⁵³⁵ Verkhovsky, Alexander, ed. 2007. *Verkhi i nizy russkogo natsionalizma*. Moscow: Informatsionno-analiticheskiy tsentr «Sova»; Pain, Emil. 2007. “Xenophobia and Ethnopolitical Extremism in Post-soviet Russia Dynamics and Growth Factors.” *Nationalities Papers* 35: 895–911; Schnirelman, Viktor. *Porog tolerantnosti: ideologiya i praktika novogo rasizma*. Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2011.

⁵³⁶ “Rossijane o migratsii i mezhnatsional’noj naprjazhennosti,” *Levada Center*. 5 November 2013. <http://www.levada.ru/05-11-2013/rossiyane-o-migratsii-i-mezhnatsionalnoi-napryazhennosti> (Last access March 3, 2015)

⁵³⁷ A. Malashenko, *What the North Caucasus means to Russia*. *Russie.Nei.Visions*, ifri, No. 61; A. Verkhovskiy. *Religioznaya ksenofobiya: mezhkonfessional’ny i vnutrikonfessional’ny aspekty*. <http://www.сова-center.ru/religion/publications/2003/04/d351/>(Last accessed on March 15, 2015); V. Mukomel, *Problemy migratsii v sovremennoy Rossii*. Doklad Moskovskogo bjuro po pravam cheloveka Prepared for the project on «Obshhestvennaja kampanija protivodejstvija rasizmu, ksenofobii, antisemitizmu i jetnicheskoj diskriminatsii v mnogonatsional’noj RF»

collaboration between secular state institutions and “traditional” religious organizations. (Curanovic 2014: 795, Schnirelman 2011:234-288).⁵³⁸

D) Dealing with chronic diseases: Facing structural problems and building a just society.

Last, but not least, the prospects of the “Confessional collaboration” model also depend on the regime’s ability to deliver comfortable living conditions, offer material benefits, and provide incentives for all parties involved to sustain the given model. This study suggests that ideological shifts happen when opponents of the dominant ideology take advantage of available structural conditions to replace the old system. On the one hand, violent conflicts, economic crises, and social upheavals often present an opportunity for mobilization of critical masses against the ruling regime. On the other hand, factors such as economic growth, comprehensive, transparent and reliable upward mobility system, and good governance contribute to the stability of political systems.

Indigenous Russian Muslims have a long history of living side-by-side with Orthodox Christians and representatives of other faiths and cultures. Despite particular differences in cultures, languages, and religious traditions, the country’s diverse peoples share a lot in common. The argument that Russia’s indigenous Muslims can be good citizens and would like to be present in every field of Russia’s social and political life has been repeated for decades and even centuries by native religious leaders and demonstrated in practice by generations of successful Muslim academics, scientists,

⁵³⁸ Curanović, Alicja. "Weaknesses of the Post-Soviet Religious Model: The Kremlin and “Traditional” Religions in face of Interethnic Tensions in Russia." *Politics and Religion* (2014): 1-30; Schnirelman, Viktor. 2011. *Porog tolerantnosti: ideologiya i praktika novogo rasizma*. Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye.

musicians, businessmen, and politicians.⁵³⁹ A state that provides equal opportunities to all, respects minority rights, and does not discriminate between followers of different religious traditions should only strengthen the links between Russia's various peoples. Moreover, aiming at fairness, accountability, transparency, rule of law, and social justice will make the biggest contribution to the demystification of the radical Islamist ideology, which as a manifestation of a protest rests more on earthly promises than on the hereafter.⁵⁴⁰ Support for justice, objectivity, honesty and resistance to corruption, fraud, and misconduct are some of the principles that most Russia's Muslim believers share regardless of their attitudes toward the established Muslim clergy and "traditional religions" paradigm.

The vertical of power built over the 2000s has been able to offset some of the perceived shortcomings of the "alien" Western liberal ideology at the expense of transparency and accountability. Increasing public awareness of corruption, the opaque system of cover-ups, and ambiguous reasons for successful upward mobility weakens the ideological appeal of statism and strengthens the position of alternative philosophies. Many young Muslims, for example, find some of the answers in Islamism, which, for them, is centered on the notion of justice and a utopian future.⁵⁴¹ This suggests that addressing structural problems facing the society is a precondition for uprooting religious radicalism and might be much more effective than applying rigid anti-extremism measures.

⁵³⁹ Fahretdinov R. *Dini vje izhtimagyj masalalar*. – Orenburg, 1914.

⁵⁴⁰ According to Naumkin and Makarov, since the early 1990s Islamists have created a romantic aura of fighters against corrupted state bureaucracy (Naumkin and Makarov 2007). Naumkin V.V., Makarov D.V. *Islamskiy faktor v mirovoy politike i interesy Rossii // Strategiya Rossii*. 2007. No. 7.

⁵⁴¹ According to Dannreuther, "Islamic radicalization probably represents a lesser threat than it did in the late 1990s and early 2000s, though its ideological appeal, and the underlying conditions which foster support for it, remain strong" (Dannreuther 2010:126).

The religious revival in Russia is not yet complete. Coming to terms with the Soviet legacy, rediscovering of the pre-Soviet era practices and traditions, and adapting to the new challenges of the twenty-first century are ongoing processes. On the one hand, attempting to establish a monopoly over traditional values in the name of a new political ideology poses a threat of polarizing the society and delegitimizing both secular and “traditional” religious institutions. On the other hand, if Russia addresses some of the above concerns, it is well endowed to become a model for the rest of the world as a lived example of a cultural and interfaith mosaic. As a country, where representatives of various faiths and nationalities have lived together for centuries, Russia could develop into a natural practical field for the nurturing of a new utopia, which potentially could refute the idea of the inevitability of the clash of civilizations.

What is clear is that the story does not end here. Russia’s intellectual life is alive, just like its internal ideational struggles. Various ideological poles maintain their own view of an ideal Russia. Some would like to see it democratic, capitalist and secular, some as conservative and morally grounded on traditional values. Some envision it as a genuine federation, some as a strong unitary state. Some see it as complete within its present borders, while some others still think that borders are yet to be determined. Ultimately, some perceive the country’s internal diversity as an asset, others think of it as a potential source of a threat and strive for homogeneity. All of these intellectual struggles support the claim that ideas matter and they will continue to determine the dynamics of state policies toward various issues in Russia, including religion.

Avenues for further research

The study identifies several avenues for further research. First and foremost, the question of interfaith relations and dialogue, as this study suggests, plays an important role in the formation and maintenance of state-religion regimes, especially in multi-confessional societies. Whether the established clergy of Russia's traditional religions can exist in mutual respect and tolerance despite different ideologies or interests is key for the success of the "confessional collaboration" model. More broadly, the ability and willingness of the country's indigenous communities to coexist with each other is crucial for maintaining peace and stability in Russia. As of today, to my knowledge, no major academic work has been conducted on Christian-Muslim relations and on the topic of interfaith dialogue in post-Soviet Russia more broadly.

Secondly, comparing Russia's experience in dealing with its Muslim population and other minorities with practices in other countries could help us better understand both state-religion and ethnicity regimes in Russia and further develop the concept of ethno-confessional regimes. What accounts for differences in various combinations of ethnic and religious policies that different states chose to pursue? Does type of political regime (e.g. democracy vs. authoritarianism) affect how states approach the question of "diversity management"? This study makes a step toward development of a more nuanced approach toward the study of different forms of religious nationalism and the challenges it presents.

Finally, researchers can further examine the relationship between ideological struggles and state policies toward other aspects of social and political life. Looking into other domains of identity politics such as race or gender, for example, could further explain whether, how and why ideologies shape state policies. The story of Molla

Nasretdin has taught us that managing diversity often requires art. It is my hope that politicians reflect on this wisdom when making difficult decisions on seemingly uncompromising and incompatible issues.

Glossary of Key Terms

Ideology – In a narrow sense, it is a set of proposals made by individuals to define clear and consistent criteria for membership in a proposed polity.⁵⁴² More broadly, and in the context of this study, ideology is a collection of ideas that refer to an ideal socio-political system.⁵⁴³ Ideologies need to be formal, explicit, and relatively consistent.

Western liberalism – In the context of post-Soviet Russia, it is an ideology that focuses on the promotion of human rights, civil liberties, market economy, and democratic government broadly defined. While liberalism has indigenous intellectual history in Russia, it borrows heavily from the Western philosophical tradition and experience.

Statism – An ideology, according to which the state should have substantial centralized control over social and economic affairs.

Regime – A coherent set of principles, norms, and rules that systematically regulates state policies.

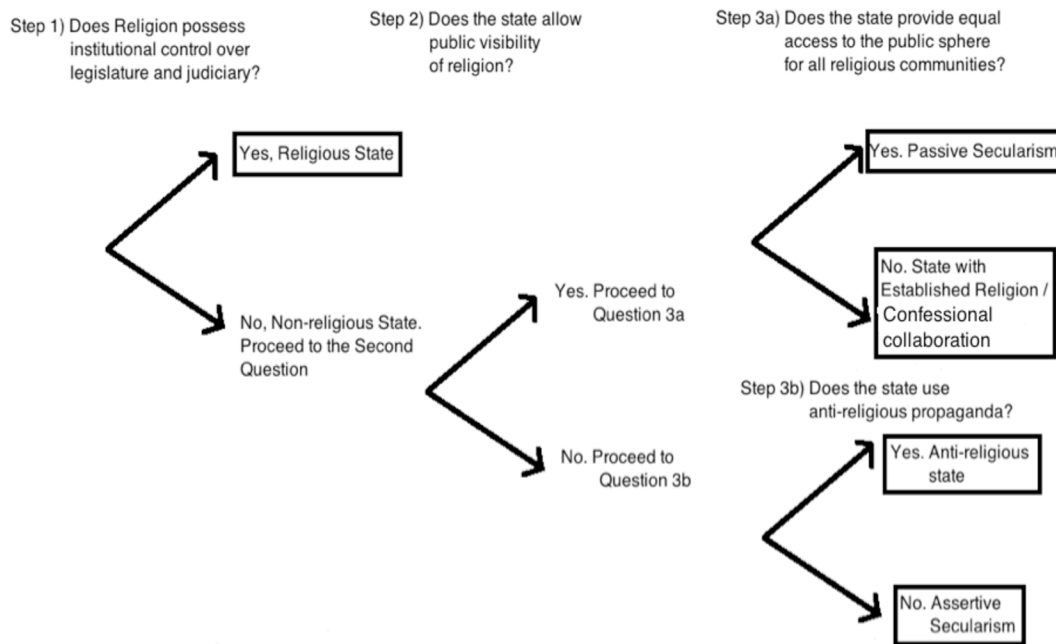
State-religion regime – A coherent set of principles, norms, and rules that systematically regulates state policies toward religion. According to the role that religion plays in any given polity, state-religion regimes can take multiple forms. Five models of state-religion regimes described in the scholarly literature are ‘Religious state’, ‘State with an established religion’, ‘Passive secularism’, ‘Assertive secularism’, and ‘Anti-religious state’.⁵⁴⁴ Refer to the figure below to assess similarities and differences between different types of state-religion regimes.

⁵⁴² Hanson, Stephen E. *Post-imperial democracies: ideology and party formation in third republic France, Weimar Germany, and post-Soviet Russia*. Cambridge University Press, 2010.

⁵⁴³ Kuru, Ahmet T. *Secularism and state policies toward religion: the United States, France, and Turkey*. Cambridge University Press, 2009.

⁵⁴⁴ Kuru, Ahmet T. *Secularism and state policies toward religion: the United States, France, and Turkey*. Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Figure 7: *Deductive Test of State-Religion Regimes and Secularism.*



Ethnicity regime – A coherent set of principles, norms, and rules that systematically regulates state policies toward ethnicity. Depending on whether multiple ethnic categories are allowed membership in the political community and whether those multiple ethnic categories are legally and institutionally recognized, three types of ethnicity regimes can be identified: mono-ethnic, multi-ethnic, and non-ethnic.⁵⁴⁵

Mono-ethnic regime – an ethnicity regime that restricts the acquisition of citizenship to one ethnic group.

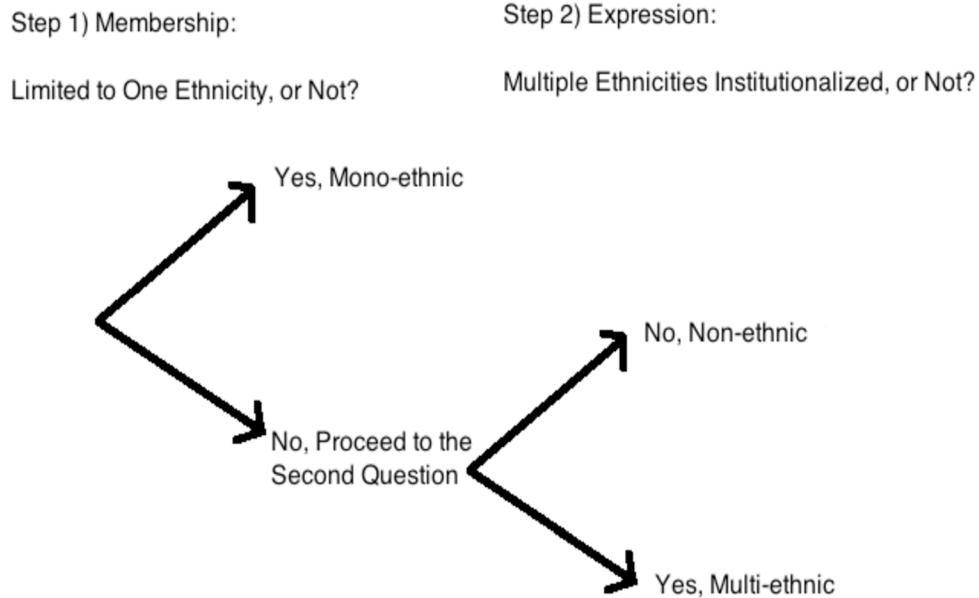
Multi-ethnic regime – an ethnicity regime that legally and institutionally recognizes multiple ethnic categories.

Non-ethnic regime – an ethnicity regime that does not recognize multiple ethnic categories legally and institutionally.

Refer to the figure below to assess similarities and differences between different types of ethnicity regimes.

⁵⁴⁵ Aktürk, Şener. *Regimes of ethnicity and nationhood in Germany, Russia, and Turkey*. Cambridge University Press, 2012. Note that my use of terminology slightly differs from Aktürk's typology. Aktürk uses the term 'anti-ethnic ethnicity regime' to describe the regime where ethnic categories are not legally and institutionally recognized.

Figure 8: *Deductive Test of Membership and Expression.*⁵⁴⁶



Ethno-confessional regime – A coherent set of principles, norms, and rules that systematically regulates state policies toward both religion and ethnicity.

Multiethnic passive secularism – An ethno-confessional regime that allows equal access to the public sphere for all religious groups and legally as well as institutionally recognizes multiple ethnic categories.

Non-ethnic confessional collaboration – An ethno-confessional regime that reserves privileged access to the public sphere for certain religious communities and does not support multiple ethnic categories legally and institutionally.

Refer to the table below to assess similarities and differences between different types of ethno-confessional regimes.

⁵⁴⁶ I borrow this figure from Şener Aktürk. For a detailed discussion of this test, see Aktürk, Şener. *Regimes of ethnicity and nationhood in Germany, Russia, and Turkey*. Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Table 11: *Matrix of Ethno-confessional Regimes.*

		Ethnicity Regimes		
		<i>Mono-ethnic</i>	<i>Multi-ethnic</i>	<i>Non-ethnic</i>
State-religion regimes	<i>Religious State</i>			
	<i>Established Religion/ Confessional Collaboration</i>			Non-ethnic confessional collaboration
	<i>Passive Secularism</i>		Multiethnic passive secularism	
	<i>Assertive Secularism</i>			
	<i>Anti-religious</i>			

Nationalism – A belief, creed or political ideology that involves an individual identifying with, or becoming attached to, one's nation.

Ethnic nationalism – a type of nationalism based on a belief in the ethnic purity of the nation or in unity of language, religion, or culture.

Civic nationalism – a type of nationalism based on a belief in common citizenship in a state embracing a specified territory and common allegiance to the institutions governing that territory.⁵⁴⁷

Traditional religions – In this study the term refers to four religions – Russian Orthodoxy, Islam, Judaism, and Buddhism. In the Russian legal context, the concept is not formally defined. However, it is widely accepted that the notion was inspired by the preamble of the Russian Federation 1997 “Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations,” which acknowledges “the special role of Orthodox Christianity in the history of Russia, and in the establishment and development of its spirituality and culture, ...respecting Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism and other religions, that comprise the inalienable part of the heritage of the Russian people.”⁵⁴⁸

⁵⁴⁷ For further discussion of differences between civic and ethnic nationalisms, see Brubaker, Rogers. "The Manichean myth: Rethinking the distinction between 'civic' and 'ethnic' nationalism." In Kriesi et al (eds.) *Nation and National Identity: The European Experience in Perspective*. Zurich: Ruedger, 1999. Pp. 55-71. Also see, Yack, Bernard. "The myth of the civic nation." *Critical Review* 10.2 (1996): 193-211. For him, ethnic nationalism and civic nationalism are not dichotomous. Rather they are two extremes on a spectrum of nationalisms that mix ethnic values and opportunities for outsiders to become members in varying proportions.

⁵⁴⁸ Kovalskaya, Kristina. "The Traditional and the Non-Traditional in the Religious Life of the Russian Federation." *Mundo Eslavo* 12 (2013): 69-78.

Traditional religious organizations – In this study, the term refers to state-registered religious organizations representing traditional religions in Russia. More broadly, these are religious organizations that have demonstrated that they had significantly influenced the formation and development of Russian statehood, played an important historical role in the development of national consciousness and that a significant proportion of Russian citizens belonged to or expressed a preference for it.⁵⁴⁹

Traditional religions paradigm – a pattern of thought based on the assumption that traditional religions deserve special privileges because of their size, geographical range, as well as the history of presence in Russia.⁵⁵⁰ The idea has been inspired by the preamble of the Russian Federation 1997 “Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations.”

Confessional collaboration – The relationship between the state and traditional religious organizations (most notably between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Kremlin) which manifests itself in cooperation taking place in selected areas of the public sphere, in education and social care.

Multi-confessional establishment – a religious order that framed the exercise of faith and defined the scope of religious freedom in Russia from the reign of Catherine II (1762-96) through that of Nicholas I (1825-55) until the end of the Tsarist era. It implies recognition of religious institutions and production of legal statutes for the regulation of spiritual affairs in the country. In other words, it describes a framework wherein the state partly relies on state-approved religious organizations to socialize the population and provide moral discipline.⁵⁵¹

Official Muslim (Islamic) establishment – In the context of this study, the term refers to the body of people ordained by Islamic training and recognized by the state as ritual and spiritual leaders of Russia’s Muslim community, the clergy.

Mufti – A Muslim religious leader who should be able to interpret Islamic law.

Muftiate – A council of muftis.

(Islamic) religious market – a physical and virtual space where (Islamic) religious ideas and goods are exchanged.⁵⁵²

Religious revival – In this study the term refers to a social phenomenon, which reflects a significant growth in public interest towards religion in Russia after the renouncement of an atheistic ideology.

⁵⁴⁹ Fagan, Geraldine. *Believing in Russia: Religious Policy After Communism*. Routledge, 2012.

⁵⁵⁰ Fagan, Geraldine. *Believing in Russia: Religious Policy After Communism*. Routledge, 2012.

⁵⁵¹ Werth, Paul W. *The Tsar's Foreign Faiths: Toleration and the Fate of Religious Freedom in Imperial Russia*. Oxford University Press, 2014.

⁵⁵² Sengers, Erik. "The religious market and its regulation: A sociological perspective." *Ecclesiastical Law Journal* 9.03 (2007): 294-301.

Public sphere – In this study the term refers to a space to which all citizens have access and in which common issues of concern to citizens and all available opinions can be articulated and deliberated.⁵⁵³ According to Taylor, it is “a common space in which the members of society are deemed to meet through a variety of media: print, electronic, and also face-to-face encounters to discuss matters of common interest and thus to be able to form a common mind about these.”⁵⁵⁴

Private sphere – In the context of this study the term refers to the domain of a home, where social relations are based on family and kin.⁵⁵⁵ More broadly, private domain is an area of individual choice and autonomy.

Parade of sovereignties – a political movement by the underrepresented peoples of the Soviet Union in the 1990s.

Shock therapy – In economic policy, the term is used to describe powerful austerity measures designed to break spirals of rapid inflation. More recently, it has been used as a blanket term for policies designed to reform the post-socialist economies of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

Vertical of power (*Vertikal' vlasti*) – A centralized chain of government command. The term is used to describe the effort of Russian state authorities in the early 2000s to strengthen the position of the federal government by improving the linkages between the federal, regional, and local levels of government.

Hajj – The Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca that takes place in the last month of the year (according to the Islamic calendar), and that all Muslims are expected to make at least once during their lifetime.

Imam – An Islamic leadership position. Typically used to describe a person who leads prayers in a mosque.

Madrasa – A type of Islamic educational institution.

Minaret – A tall slender tower, typically part of a mosque, with a balcony from which Muslims are called to prayer.

Ummah – The community of Muslims bound together by ties of religion.

⁵⁵³ Shearing, Clifford, and Jennifer Wood. "Nodal governance, democracy, and the new 'denizens'." *Journal of law and society* 30.3 (2003): 400-419. Haas, Tanni, and Linda Steiner. "Public journalism a reply to critics." *Journalism* 7.2 (2006): 238-254. There is an ambiguity about a definition of public sphere/space in the Russian law in the sense of J. Habermas's *Offentlichkeit*. See, Habermas, J., *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989). For further discussion, see Krasin, Jurii Andreevich. "Publichnaia sfera i publichnaia politika v rossiiskom izmerenii." *Politija* 3 (2004): 5-23.

⁵⁵⁴ Charles Taylor. *Modern social imaginaries*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004.

⁵⁵⁵ Graham, Hilary. "The concept of caring in feminist research: the case of domestic service." *Sociology* 25.1 (1991): 61-78

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<http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/1587146> (Last accessed on February 23, 2015).
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