
Muslim Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism: The Characteristics of Islamic Entrepreneurship Development in the Russian Empire between the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the ethnic and religious values of the Muslims in the Volga-Urals region of the Russian Empire between the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The author employs Max Weber's 'Protestant Ethic' as the primary source to perform a comprehensive analysis of religious rationalism and to examine its important elements including the displacement of mystical features and growing role of mind, the literacy level, the knowledge of sacred texts and rational understanding of the Protestant doctrine.

The article reveals the development of Islam in Russia towards its rationalization under the influence of the Russian Muslim religious reformers' activities, which were aimed at spreading the rationalization ideas. However, the analysis shows that the rational-confessional foundations of economic management were not inherent for every representative of the Muslim confession but only for the upper class while the common population and small entrepreneurs preserved traditionalist values and institutional system.

INTRODUCTION

By the end of the twentieth century after more than seventy years of socialist development Russia returned to market economy, which generated a significant interest to its capitalist past. Since Russia has always been and remains a multinational and multi-religious state the study of ethnic and confessional aspects of Russian entrepreneurship, including the Muslim one, is rather pertinent.

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If we consider the European part of Russia, according to the results of the First general census of 1897, the largest Muslim population was found in Ufa (1,098,982 people), Kazan (625,847 people), Orenburg (362,799 people) and Astrakhan (307,008 people) provinces (Arapov 2001: 324–325). The Tatars were among the most active representatives of this group. By the end of the nineteenth century the most numerous Tatar communities were in Kazan (28,348 people) (The First... 1904b: v), Astrakhan (15,355 people) (The First... 1904a: 3), Orenburg (11,306 people) (The First... 1904c: 3) and Ufa (4,523 people) (The First... 1904d: 3). Thus, the territorial framework of the present study will be limited to the Volga-Urals region of the Russian Empire.

In the late nineteenth century, Russia entered the capitalist developmental stage. By this time, the Tatars in the Russian Empire, as well as members of other confessions, had developed intensive entrepreneurial activities, which gained a positive survey in numerous works of the Russian authors (Amirkhanov 2000a; Shatsillo 2010; Salikhov 2010; Sverdlova 2012; Bekkin 2015; Gabdrafiikova *et al.* 2015).

This article defines the paradigm of economic reasoning of various layers of the Tatar business community in order to find out to what extent the Tatar Muslim ummah were ready to integrate into capitalist system, within which framework, from Max Weber's point of view, an 'economic selection' of economic actors – businessmen and workmen – is carried out. Weber points at the link between the people's capacity to adapt to the capitalist way of production and their religious sentiments. As to the West, the Protestants' economic success was stipulated by the connection between their business ethos and the rational ethics of Protestantism (Weber 2005: xxxix). Using this statement as a departure point we consider the subject of conditioning of the Tatars' economic reasoning by the Muslim faith they professed, and in particular, to determine the presence of religious rationalism in Islam.

Max Weber was the first in European historiography to raise this question. However, he spoke of Islam as an irrational religion, noting that the most crucial elements of its economic ethics bear marks of purely feudal character. That means that “capitalism” that was present in Islam was of the type, “which existed in the Antiquity and in the Middle Ages in the West”, but “there was no development toward modern capitalism, nor even any stirrings in that direction”. Moreover, there developed no “capitalist spirit”, in the sense that is distinctive of ascetic Protestantism’ (Weber N.d.: K. 4).

In modern Western historiography there is an evident trend to a reconsideration of such an assessment of Islam (Woodward 2002; Kayed and Hassan 2011). Among the Russian authors we can name Rustam Shukurov who criticizes Weber's interpretation of Islam and believes that Weber re-

lies on the German Islamic studies which in the nineteenth and twentiethcenturies lacked knowledge about the subject and focused on the study on the 'core' texts – the Qur'an and the Sunnah. However, within the Muslim consciousness it is not only the Qur'an and the Sunnah that played a comprehensive role but also the subsequent moralizing exegesis which often made some different emphasis than in the literal sense of the sacred text (Shukurov N.d.).

With respect to the Russian Muslims, in particular, to the Tatar businessmen, the same trend is applicable. Thus, the Dutch researcher Michael Kemper in his monograph *'Sufis und Gelehrte in Tatarien und Baschkirien. Der islamische Diskursunter russischer Herrschaft'* records a notable presence of businessmen among members of the Sufi order 'Naqshbandiyyah Mujaddidiyya'. The author argues that the teachings of this order could have served as a foundation for Weber's 'spirit of capitalism' among the Russian Muslims already in the eighteenth century (Kemper 1998).

The Russian historian Aydar Yuzeev in his works on the origin and development of the Tatar religious-philosophical thought in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries contests Weber's conclusion about the foreignness of rationalism for Islam. He argues that the same processes associated with the Western religious reformation would unfold several centuries later in the East (particularly in the Volga-Urals region), adding that they had their share of idiosyncratic features and peculiarities (Yuzeev 2012).

Another author, Islam Zaripov, following his analysis of socio-economic views of the Tatar clergy at the end of the nineteenth and early 20th century, similarly came to a conclusion that in the Russian Empire the religious reformers in their aspiration for the integration of economic principles of Islam with market economy promoted establishment of what could be called an Islamic 'spirit of capitalism' (Zaripov 2013: 35–37).

The development of economic thought in the Tatar society is well presented in Khadiullina's monograph which points at serious theoretic work by a number of Muslim intellectuals aimed at rationalization of religion (Khadiullina 2003). Another researcher, Farid Nigamedzinov showed the high level of the Tatar merchants' religiosity and its impact on the Muslim enlighteners' ideology (Nigamedzinov 2004).

Thus, there are two opposite viewpoints in world historiography on the economic ethos of Islam. The present article analyzes the Russian Muslims' value-institutional system in close correlation to the elements of rationalism in the Protestant value system singled out by Weber which were conducive to the formation of rational thinking of the contemporary Europeans.

Here we use the value-institutional approach (Kerov 2011), according to which the value system of a particular confessional community determines its business and economic culture. The work aims at determining the value system of the Tatar Muslims of the Volga-Urals region. Consequently, a matrix of elements of rationalism identified by Weber will be applied to it, which will make possible to establish their presence or absence in the value system of Tatar businessmen of the Volga-Urals region.

This article is organized as follows. The first section describes the Tatar business in quantitative and statistical terms and scale; it also demonstrates to what extent these indicators allow defining the Tatars as leaders of the business community in their region, just as it happened with the Protestants in the West. The second section reviews a system of norms, developed by the Muslim theologians-reformers, and establishes to what degree it matched the Protestant value system. The third and fourth sections correlate the value system of large, medium-sized and small Tatar businesses with the norms developed by the Tatar reformers and Protestant value system.

I. RATIONAL ECONOMIC ETHOS AND SOME STATISTICAL INDICATORS ON THE TATAR SOCIETY

When speaking of the efficiency of Protestantism and its economic ethics, Max Weber pointed to several external manifestations of its success. First of all, it is the primary role of technology in organizing the capitalist industrial manufacturing. 'Now the peculiar modern Western form of capitalism has been, at first sight, strongly influenced by the development of technical possibilities' (Weber 2005: xxxvii).

It is necessary to point here that as a matter of fact, in Kazan, which was an advanced center of the Tatar culture and entrepreneurship, the Muslim merchants played far from a leading role in the organization of industrial manufacturing and were outpaced by their Orthodox Christian peers. The author of the article published in 1899 in the Muslim newspaper 'Terjemahan' shared his concerns after attending the Russian Exhibition of Industry and Arts in Nizhniy Novgorod. In his opinion, the Russian Muslims had a poor scientific and industrial base for manufacturing. In particular, he mentioned the fact that at the exhibition among the companies manufacturing industrial goods there were only five representatives of the Kazan Muslims. Among them there were two firms owned by the Aktchurin family, who demonstrated an improved process of broadcloth manufacturing; two firms belonged to Murtaza Azimov and Utyamishev demonstrated coarse calico and some manufactured Chinese-style silk. A firm that belonged to Ahmedjan Galeev showed some goods made of morocco and also shoes (Islamskiy vestnik 1993: 19).

According to the attendee, the other presented items were mainly handmade: carpets, silk, broadcloth, wool, cotton, down, thick felt, silverware, saddles, whips, bridles, Asian knives, daggers, and astrakhan karakul. He continues: 'There are no Muslims in the steel, brass, copper, vehicular or industrial sections', concluding that 'Apparently, our Muslims are still living in the "Wooden Age", *i.e.* they are five centuries behind the modern world of steel and machinery' (*Ibid.*).

Secondly, Weber pointed that when examining the statistics on occupational structure of any country with mixed religious composition one can always note the predominance of Protestants among the capital owners and entrepreneurs, with the share of Protestants in this social stratum being much larger than their share in total population (Weber 2005: 3).

As for the Tatars, they never represented a notable majority among the Russian entrepreneurs. According to 1897 census, the Tatar merchants in the province of Kazan were represented by just 199 males constituting only 12.5 per cent of the total number of entrepreneurs amounting 1,598 people (The First National Census 1904a: 258–259).

The number of the Muslim First-Guild merchants was not larger either amounting to 8 of 33 (25 %) in 1902. The Tatar Second Guild merchants made up 55 out of 265 (18 %), which was also a modest percentage (Amirkhanov 2005: 104).

Thirdly, Weber draws attention to the fact that the Catholic graduates received trade-oriented degrees and degrees in science and economics considerably less frequently than the Protestants did – the Catholics preferred arts and traditional public school training.

In Russia, the Tatar children that finished their studies at maktab usually entered madrasah, where they were taught religion, which often hampered their secular studies. So being aware of this lack of knowledge gained in madrasah, people would study some subjects on their own. According to Abdul-Kadyr Gubaidullin, who graduated from madrasah, 'Since we were dissatisfied with the scholastic disciplines that were taught in madrasah, we turned to self-study'. He then admits that 'in order to gain access to general education, one must have a minimal scope of knowledge that can be obtained through a public school course'. This conclusion made him start his studies in 1905 in order to prepare for the exam to public school. The whole process took him five years, forcing his father, who was a cloth factory owner, to leave his business in the son's hands (Nasretdinova 1998).

So we can see the Tatar educational institutions hardly provided basic education that could promote successful commercial activity under the future capitalist regime. The Tatars had almost no access to non-national educational facilities. In 1908 among 53,000 students of commercial colleges there were only 153 Muslims (Nigamedzinov 2004: 24).

They were no Muslims among the students of industrial schools in Russia which was mentioned in the Russian Muslim press. In particular, the *Iktisad Journal* reported that Russia had a lot of industrial schools, and in 1909 the Ministry of Industry and Trade alone, for instance, funded a large number of such schools, including 31 art schools. These schools were established to train highly skilled craftsmen who could get jobs in workshops and were involved in various activities that required specific training. Such schools (also called courses) provided fundamental knowledge of trade. There were 28 of them in 1909, with 222 teachers passing their knowledge to 2,797 students, 512 of which graduated from school, and there were no Muslims among them.

There were also four schools of mines where students were taught mining and ore processing; according to statistic reports, 51 teachers worked there and taught 350 students of whom 88 graduated the school. The rural training workshops that prepared specialists capable to produce and repair agricultural tools amounted to 35, with 1,441 students and 319 graduates in 1909 year. No Muslims again (Craft schools 1910: 14–15). Thus, according to the local journalist, the Tatars ‘preferred to stay in cities without any profession, serving as unqualified workers instead of obtaining professional skills and getting involved into qualified labor’ (*Ibid.*: 15).

Thus, the objective factors characterizing the Tatar entrepreneurship reveal the lack of rational economic ethos similar to that observed among the European Protestants. At the same time, most authors (including the above-mentioned ones) studying the Tatar entrepreneurship, speak about its success and development in accordance with Weber's ‘spirit of capitalism’. In order to deal with this contradiction, we are going to consider the value and institutional system of the Volga-Urals Tatars in the following section.

II. RELIGIOUS REFORMISM AND NEW VALUE-INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM OF THE TATARS

In the Volga-Urals region Islam gained the status of the official Bulgar religion in the early tenth century. At the same time, it had close ties with the pre-Islam pagan faith – Tengrism, that is worshipping the god named Tengri. On the other hand, between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries Sufism started gaining popularity in the Volga region. It preached self-development, asceticism and focus of the whole willpower and thoughts on the desire to comprehend God and merge in spirituality (Amirkhanov 2000b: 29). The Sufi mysticism of Islam, according to Weber, formed the irrational pattern of economic thinking.

Meanwhile, starting from the eighteenth century, there developed a reformist religious movement within the Islamic Ummah. It engaged such prominent religious leaders as Abdelnasar Kursavi, Shagabutdin Marjani, Gataulla Bayazitov, Galimdzhhan Barudi, Ziya Kamaly, Musa

Bigiev, Rizaetdin Fahrerdinov and many others. Their activity was aimed at rationalizing Islam and abandoning mysticism. The Tatar theologians reinterpreted dogmas and canons of Islam thinking that the truth contained in Quran had been distorted, so the return to its roots could give an impulse to economic development of Muslims in Russia.

Let us proceed to the value and institutional system of the Russian 'pre-reform' Muslims and the values that were developed by the Tatar theologians in correlation with the rational ethic of Protestantism.

In Weber's approach the central point is the conception of 'vocation' which is considered as the fulfillment of duty in worldly affairs and the highest form assumed by the individual's moral activity. This was associated with the idea of religious meaning of secular daily labor. Thus, the only means that pleased God was not a disdain towards secular morality from the heights of monastic asceticism, but solely the fulfillment of worldly duties in a way appropriate for each person's life station. Hence, such duties become person's 'vocation' (Weber 2005: 40).

As opposed to Protestantism, the Tatar Sufism declared it a sin to actively participate in secular life. It was preferable to completely abstain from everyday problems and focus on the mystical self-contemplation aimed at developing spirituality. Thus, the everyday labour was considered to be vain and not desired by Allah.

The Russian Muslim theologian reformists called for taking an active position towards secular life, proving that Allah does not despise creativity and labour which, on the contrary, are considered pleasing to God. In particular, the Tatar enlightener Ziya Kamaly wrote that a call for being impartial towards the mundane is a 'sin against the faith per se'. In his own words:

Although some of our religious activists reduce our aspirations, saying that 'this world is a paradise for a non-believer and a prison for a true Muslim' and 'This world is a corpse and those who embrace it are carrion-eating dogs' this contradicts all the scriptures and prophecy of the Holy Quran and 'Sunah' (Kamaly 2010: 152).

R. Fahretdinov supports this idea saying that 'There couldn't be anything more delicious than the bread one earns through hard labor' (Rizaetdin 1999: 249).

The next characteristic of Protestant ethics is its systemic and rational aspiration for profit legally obtained through trade. Weber wrote that the attainment of wealth as a fruit of labor in a vocation was a sign of God's blessing of the person's economic activity (Weber 2005: 116).

In Islam Sufism had a strong limiting influence on the Muslims who wanted to become rich. The cult of poverty is a peculiar feature of classical Sufism. The poor ascetics who were called *fakirs* in Arabic and *der-*

vishes in Persian were entitled to alms according to the principle of ‘tavakkuhl’ (hope) which meant that they could abstain from the mundane and rely on God. Thus, poverty had both external and internal forms: the absence of desire to be rich and freedom from any worldly ties (Aminev and Yamaeva 2009: 115).

The religious reformists revised the attitude towards being rich or poor. Thus, Ziya Kamaly debunks the Islamic myth that poverty pleases the God. The argumentation of this idea consisted in the interpretation of one of the pillars of Islam – zakah, which represents one fortieth of the assets, and which Muslims pay annually, helping the unfortunate. This money is usually given to mosque and then is reallocated according to the needs of the poor. This money cannot be paid if a Muslim is a debtor himself. Thus, poverty becomes an obstacle for complying with one of the pillars of Islam. Kamaly proved that the Holy Quran urges to multiply the welfare and exercise some craft. Those who earn their living in a permitted way and also help some people, can be truly considered beloved by the Almighty Allah (Kamaly 2010: 151). Summarizing the contents of the Quran, Kamaly says that ‘The world is the land of happiness; multiply its riches by all means, possess these riches, become the giving hand, which is better than the taking hand, help the poor and the needy, thus saving your faith and people’ (*Ibid.*: 151–152).

In his ‘Commentary on the sayings of the Prophet Mohammed’ (published in Orenburg in 1917) Fahretdinov said that according to the traditional beliefs, ‘for some people poverty does not mean harm, perhaps it can be beneficial for the afterlife’ (Rizaetdin 1999: 186). At the same time he warns people against waiting for handouts from strangers without exercising any crafts while being able to do so, as this constitutes a sin (*Ibid.*: 249). He also rehabilitates the ‘love of wealth’, indicating that ‘it would not be punished in the afterlife’ (*Ibid.*: 399).

In Weber’s book there is established a clear link between love of your neighbor and attainment of wealth. The former should be manifested in the aspiration to transform the whole social space instead of helping an individual.

And the joy and pride of having given employment to numerous people, of having had a part in the economic progress of his home town in the sense referring to figures of population and volume of trade which capitalism associated with the word, all these things obviously are part of the specific and undoubtedly idealistic satisfactions in life to modern men of business (Weber 2005: 37).

The Tatar enlighteners of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century also emphasized the importance of serving the Muslim community. Musa Bigiev said in his essay ‘Some issues for the attention of the nation’

(1912) (see in Khayrutdinov 1999) that the main features of a true Islam believer are rationality, righteousness, high morality and the ability to be helpful to the community. Citing the Quran, Bigiev emphasized that faith has an unlimited number of dimensions. The major of them is the faith in Allah and His unity and the minor is a removal of a stone that hampers the normal circulation of transport. He added that while even the minor manifestation of faith already includes the idea of being helpful to society, it means that the major components bear certain aspects of 'public interest' (Khayrutdinov 1999: 58).

In his article 'Islam and Progress' Bayazitov provides an accurate quotation from Quran: 'There are only two types of my followers who are worthy of envy: a man who possesses the knowledge and shares it with humanity for its benefit, and a rich man who spends his fortune to help his brothers' (Bayazitov 1898: 19).

Weber also connects the postulate of wealth with the Protestant mundane asceticism, which denounced the direct enjoyment with material wealth and tried to reduce it, especially when it became surfeit. This postulate deals with the fight against an irrational use of property, that is a fight against demonstrating luxury and attachment to it because only a rational and utilitarian use of wealth can help every individual and society in general to please God. Max Weber confirms this

Man is only a trustee of the goods which have come to him through God's grace. He must, like the servant in the parable, give an account of every penny entrusted to him, and at the very least it is hazardous to spend any of it for a purpose which does not serve the glory of God but only one's own enjoyment (Weber 2005: 114).

God is willing 'the rational and utilitarian uses of wealth ... for the needs of the individual and the community' (*Ibid.*: 115).

The Tatar religious reformists also described those possessing wealth as the mediators between Allah and the Muslim community and called for responsibility for any sum of money that He gives us. Fahretdinov urged the wealthy not to 'waste money irrationally', to get rid of 'useless habits' and not to think about 'vain decorations', warning that the 'Resources that are spent on bad affairs are considered evil and calamitous, they lead to sorrow and repentance' (Rizaetdin 1999: 24).

Thus, we have clarified that the ideas generated by the Muslim religious reformists correlated to the elements of religious rationalism identified by Weber and were supposed to bring to life the 'spirit of capitalism' in Tatar entrepreneurs, which in turn would make them become modern capitalist industrialists and merchants.

III. PERCEPTION OF REFORMIST IDEAS BY THE UPPER TATAR BOURGEOISIE

Let us proceed to the analysis of progressive ideas and their influence on the Tatar Muslims starting with their perception by the representatives of upper class.

It is necessary to point out the link that existed between religious reformists and representatives of the upper bourgeoisie. For instance, the merchant Kazakov was Baroudi's friend, while Ibraghim Akchurin's sympathy towards modernization of Islam can be evidenced by the presence in his library of the books by progressive theologians A. Bayazitov and R. Fahretdinov (Tairov and Ivashkina 2005: 94). The Kazan industrialist Musa Utyamishiev wrote several books concerning religion in keeping with religious reformists (Yusupov 2003: 50).

The Tatar bourgeoisie supported the progressive call against superstitions and attained the highest priority to rationalism so they decided to fund the construction of several so-called 'new-method schools'. Unlike the old-method schools (maktabs) these schools taught secular subjects, translation and interpretation of Quran instead of its rote learning without understanding the sacred text.

The reformist theologians' rational ideas were published in national journals owned by the Russian Muslim bourgeoisie representatives. For example, Mahmud Khussainov's son named Khussain Khussainov became the head of the Tatar publishing company named 'Karimov, Khussainov and Co', which published the economics journal *Iktisad* ('Economics'). Mahmud Khussainov's nephew Vali published 'Din ve Magishat' ('Religion and Life'). The Kazan entrepreneur brothers Muhametzyan, Sharifzyan, and Hassan Karimov founded a commercial, social, political and literary newspaper 'Koyash' ('Sun'). The Ramiev brothers, gold miners from Orenburg, sponsored the newspaper called 'Vakyt' ('Time') and the journal named 'Shura' ('Council').

A first-guild merchant Ahmed Hussainov is a good example of a new religious ethic perception in terms of rational attitude to money. Despite being very wealthy, Ahmed-bai had a reputation of a very thrifty man; he tried to save money unless there was an urgent need. He used to take some food from home when he went travelling, did not use the first-class carriages, bargained with the cabmen, always looked for an opportunity to send letters with some of his people instead of postal service. His clothes were modest: a woolen fur coat and a five-ruble hat (Rizaetdin 1997: 16, 18).

At the same time, when it came to helping the nation, he was always open to spending money on charity. While living in Kazan, he built nearly 20 Mosques and madrasah, which cost him more than 3,000 rubles each, paid salaries to 40 school teachers, and provided books for 200 schools

(Rizaetdin 1997: 25). His opinion concerning salvation through wealth is very illustrative

Wealth can help you to escape from Hell and enter Paradise; one should respect and preserve wealth instead of thoughtless waste of money. All wealth belongs to God, I hold it temporarily, so I am not going to give even the smallest sum of money if it doesn't please Him (*Ibid.*: 17).

As for his restless professional activity, Ahmed-bai was said to work ceaselessly, 'not making any distinction between day and night'. The following words are ascribed to Ahmed-bai himself: 'God always helps a diligent person' (*Ibid.*: 13).

According to Weber, 'the aspiration to dock in a safe haven' is not natural for an ideal capitalist entrepreneur. It is not acceptable for him to be willing to keep 'the traditional manner of life, the traditional rate of profit, the traditional amount of work, the traditional manner of regulating the relationships with labor, and the essentially traditional circle of customers and the manner of attracting new ones' (Weber 2005: 30). It is more typical of him to be ready for a ceaseless modernization, innovation and manufacturing intensification.

Having analyzed the development of soap production in Kazan, we can make a conclusion about its orientation at ceaseless development. One such example is the 'I. Arslanov's Soap Producing, Glycerin and Candle Factory Association'. Its origin can be traced back to the early nineteenth century when Gubaidulla Arslanov started optimizing hand-made candle production engaging as few workers as possible. His grandson Ishak Arslanov (1845–1901) became a capitalist innovator who managed to transfer his core activity to industrial soap manufacturing instead of following the beaten track of manual labor. Besides, he was ready to experiment, creating some new types of soap and launching their production (Salikhov and Khayrutdinov 2010: 188). Arslanov sold his soap-producing enterprise shortly before his death, so his son-in-law Habibulla Gezatullin and a Kazan merchant of the First Guild, raw material trader Suleiman Aitov became its new owners. They kept the old name of the factory but were not content to stop developing the business and decided to increase its output by restructuring the factory old buildings situated at Bolshaya Meschanskaya and Ekaterinenskaya Streets, and they also bought the cutting-edge equipment and almost eliminated manual labor. These measures would bring the annual output growing from 10,000 poods (pood: ~36 pounds) to 50,000 poods, which put Gezatullin and Aitov's factories in the second place among the city's factories (Salikhov and Khayrutdinov 2010: 188).

Thus, it becomes evident that the Tatar upper class proved to be very receptive to the ideas of Muslim theologians aiming at rationalizing their religion.

IV. RELIGIOUS NORMS AND BUSINESS BEHAVIOR OF SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZE BUSINESS OWNERS

Now let us examine the Tatar small and medium-size business owners. According to Weber, it was 'not the upper class but the middle-class citizen of both the upper and lower levels' who mainly developed the new economic ethos. Weber considered petty bourgeoisie to be capable of creating the most favorable environment for ethically rational life which would be rather immune from the effects of natural forces. On the contrary, 'economic foundation of the citizen's life has a far more rational character, namely, calculability and end-rational operation of the processes'. He also pointed that

the crafts-person and in certain circumstances even the merchant lead economic existences which influence them to entertain the view that honesty is the best policy, that faithful work and the performance of duty will find their 'reward' and are 'deserving' of their just compensation. For these reasons, small traders and crafts-persons are disposed to accept a rational world view incorporating an ethic of compensation (Weber N.d.: E.4.f).

Weber opposed burghers to peasants; he considered the latter to be a part of population the least perceptive to any changes. In his essay 'Economic ethics of world religions' he wrote

Magic appealed to the peasants, who were tied to nature and dependent on the power of the elements, as was their whole economic livelihood. Magic was used against the controlling spirits within and above the forces of nature, or simply to purchase divine goodwill. Magic stood so close to the peasant that only enormous transformations in the orientation of life could drag them free from this primitive and pervasive form of religiosity. This was accomplished by other strata or by mighty prophets who legitimated themselves as magicians and through the power of miracles (Weber 2004: 72).

As for the Tatars, they were mainly rural people not urban dwellers, unlike their Western counterparts. Nigamedzinov mentioned that many merchants originated from peasants, whereas in the Western Europe they mainly originated from city craftsmen and traders (Nigamedzinov 2004: 15).

The share of peasants among the city population was considerable. For instance, in Kazan they made up 77 per cent of the Tatar population (21,975 peasants among 28,520 Tatars), while the number of petty bourgeoisie was 5,000, and noble citizens and prominent merchants totaled 500 (The First... 1904: 260–261).

Therefore, we can draw a conclusion that the Tatars living in cities were mostly the representatives of rural culture than of the urban one. So we need to analyze and evaluate to what extent the moral teaching developed by the Tatar reformists influenced the peasants.

Let us address the ‘Police department reports on the distribution of progressive task-solving and methodology teachings’, submitted by the governors in 1901. According to these reports, peasants of the Volga-Urals region were not strongly influenced by these ideas. Even in the Kazan region which was the center of Islamic modernization in Russia, the new methods were hardly widespread despite the public’s general awareness about them. For instance, the progressive mullahs introduced a new methodology in schools of Kichkinyash but when seven years later they needed to expand school and find a new place for it the local population would agree to this only on the condition of getting back to the old method. In another village, Urazlina, people forced the mullah to return the old methods after a year (SARF. Fund 102. Register 226. File 11. Part 3(2). Page 88).

Since the reformist ideas were fairly unpopular among peasants, the latter would keep to their irrational way of thinking for another decade. The data from national print media of those times demonstrates that mysticism remained a wide-spread phenomenon among the Tatars even in the first decade of the nineteenth century. This can be proved by the article ‘False Convictions’ published in *‘Iktisad’* (‘Economics’) that listed different mystical rituals aimed at reaching particular goals or preventing some trouble. The author emphasizes that such actions go both against Islam and the reason, so those who commit them are guided by some ‘false convictions’. Here are some of the numerous rituals cited by the author

The last year witnessed a lot of droughts and famine, so inhabitants of a village in Samara region would dig up a corpse and throw it to the dogs. When asked at the court about the reasons they would say that a person who died being intoxicated prevents the rain, so they unearthed it (False... 1910: 4).

In another Muslim village people burned a corpse and scattered the ashes since people believed that if substance called ‘urek’ appeared near the grave then it could spread plague among the inhabitants, so they wanted to prevent harm (False... 1910: 5). The author was shocked by the popular assumption that a person would not be able to become rich until

he falls from somewhere, so 'under that false assumption the lower classes of the society did not attempt anything to improve their own position' (False... 1910: 5).

Thus, it becomes obvious that the irrational type of thinking remained typical among the village inhabitants even in the twentieth century. Meanwhile, peasants were the main source for the medium-sized entrepreneurship among the Tatars that was established in various cities of Russia. The traditionalist type of thinking would bring traditionalist business culture. The interrelation between these two factors could be illustrated by the data provided by the Astrakhan Chamber of Verification. According to a revision of measures and weights conducted in 1908 in Astrakhan, it was established that there were countless cases of using unsanctioned weights and scales – some of them had no official government stamps or were expired. The scales often indicated wrong results, in particular, ten Muslim merchants who carried on trade at Tatar bazaar had 33 per cent of unwarranted scales and 40 per cent of unwarranted weights.

In this context, let us examine Khussain Almyashev's case. Upon the inspection of his inventory it was discovered that his scales and weights had no official stamps, there were large disparities in the sizes, and the weights were with some holes and were lighter than it was legally permitted. For instance, a ten-pound weight was about 26 grams lighter than necessary; a five-pound weight was almost 20 grams lighter, *etc.*, which exceeded the officially admitted margin of error by four or five times (SAAR. Fund 694. Register 2. File 36. Page 9).

The process of weighing goods can be illustrated by the following letter addressed to a bailiff in Astrakhan on 24 August 1912, written by an official from the Chamber of Scales and Weights after the inspection of butcher's shops at the very popular and crowded Bol'shie Isady market with a strong Tatar presence

While buying meat at the market, I noticed the following: one of the scales is usually so low that it touches the counter while the other usually hangs very high. They usually put the weight on the former scale and meat on the latter so there is always an illusion of balance between the scales (SAAR. Fund 694. Register 2. File 17. Page 238).

'So, this traders' tiny trick creates favorable conditions for deceiving unsuspecting customers who want to buy, for instance, ten pounds of meat but will take home nine because they will be unable to identify the fraud even if they follow the tongue of the scales'. Then he calls for an immediate action to restore the order: 'The possibility of such action is evident and its importance is so high that we are forced to call for an immediate interference, forcing the traders to take all the necessary actions to eliminate any

fraudulent manipulations in the best interest of the public' (SAAR. Fund 694. Register 2. File 50. Page 195).

Let us examine how this phenomenon correlates with Islam religious postulates. According to Max Weber's theory, the Protestant religious laws formed the basis for everyday activities as well. Let us address Quran: the necessity to observe the exact weight and measure is mentioned at least in five ayahs (Quran 6:152, 7:85, 11:84–85, 17:35, 83:1–3) 'And give full measure when you measure, and weigh with an even balance. That is the best way and best in result' (17:35). Moreover, the Sharia laws define an attempt of deceiving while weighing as 'haram zulmi' – an action which is prohibited by the morals of Islam. This sin can only be forgiven if the person who suffered from the evil deed forgives the deceiver (The Bases...). In reality, the deception of customers by Muslim entrepreneurs reveals a big contradiction between the religious norms of behavior and their observance by the Tatar small and medium-size entrepreneurs. This serves a proof of the traditionalist value and institutional system.

CONCLUSION

Hence, by the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries due to the efforts of Muslim intellectual elite the Islamic system of values in Volga-Urals region was seriously reconsidered. As a result, the previously missing elements in Islam were developed, thus paving the way for the thriving of the Russian Muslims under capitalist conditions. Declaration of principles of focusing of a man on productive activities in this life for the general good of his own denomination, increase in his own religious literacy, and establishment of a direct link between Koranic law and life should have transformed Islam from mystical and irrational religion into ascetical and rational one. That in turn should have enabled the Russian Muslims to fit into the straightjacket of new realities, resulting from the ascendancy of capitalism in the country.

The presented data shows that ideas developed by the reformers were successfully adopted by the members of the Tatar upper class. Thus, one can speak about the emergence of a new system of values among this group of businessmen. Meanwhile, unlike the Protestant businessmen of Western Europe the reviewed ethnic community generally failed to take the leading positions in Russian economy. The main reason for that was a failure to meet the conditions contributing to the spread of religious rationalism which could produce a new type of rational economic thinking. The first reason was that the middle-class businessmen came not from traders and urban craftsmen, but from peasantry, which was a bearer of traditional culture. The second reason was that the Tatars made up an insignificant fraction of urban population, mostly living outside city bounds so the progressive ideas of religious reformation would hardly penetrate there and get enough appreciation. Weber wrote: 'The most

important opponent with which the spirit of capitalism, in the sense of a definite standard of life claiming ethical sanction, has had to struggle, was that type of attitude and reaction to new situations which we may designate as traditionalism' (Weber 2005: 23). As our research demonstrates, these obstacles had not been completely overcome and the Tatar Muslims had not fully modernized their way of thinking before the tragic events of 1917.

NOTES

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