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Islamic diffusion in the countries of the Arctic region: the processes of Muslim migration to Scandinavian countries in the context of the transforming Islamic world

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Islamic diffusion in the countries of the Arctic region: the processes of Muslim migration to Scandinavian countries in the context of the transforming Islamic world

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Abstract. The paper is dedicated to the problems related to the change in the social and sociocultural structure of the countries in the Arctic region as a result of Muslim migration to the states of the Arctic region such as Scandinavian countries. Based on the review of Russian and European literature and open information sources, in this paper the authors systematize the perceptions of the migration flow from the Muslim world to Northern Europe. The formation, causes, specifics and transformation of this migration flow are considered within its entire course in chronological order and its division into periods is proposed. Each stage is judged upon and arguments are given for the chosen categorization. In addition, the events occurring in the Islamic world within the mentioned periods are reviewed. These events are systematized, synthesized and synchronized. As a result, the authors are able to reconstruct a reliable chronology of the process of Muslim migration to the Scandinavian countries and divide it into stages. In the course of the research study, the authors conclude that almost all stages of the Muslim migration wave to Northern Europe (excluding the "Initial" and most recent ones) have a systemic period of 20 years. However, some prerequisites are being formed for the present stage to be much shorter in time in comparison to the previous ones. As of 2018, two bastions of North Africa - the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria and the Arab Republic of Egypt - are in a crisis situation by their economic, social and political indicators. This crisis cannot be interpreted as anything but a prewar situation. If the crisis in these countries is similar to the one in 2011-2014 and they are unable to withstand or transform it, the situation with Muslim migration, flows of refugees and the situation in Europe itself can turn out to be unpredictable. In today's 2019 and in the nearest future five more countries - three Islamic Republics are in the zone of risk: Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, while the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Republic of Turkey and in the zone of turbulence. A catastrophe in any of these countries will itself cause an explosive leap in migration, which will spread as waves of people throughout all Eurasian regions. If a chain reaction occurs and a domino effect lasts, it will probably end up in a socio-humanitarian catastrophe of a global scale first in the regions and then on the way where people masses will flow.

1. Introduction

The Islamic factor as a subject of internal European policy at the age of neoliberalism with the ideas of multiculturalism dominating at the turn of 21 century (1990s-2010-s) generated a situation that cannot be concluded from in a simple and unambiguous way at the present moment and in future. The factor of Muslim communities in the region of Western and Northern Europe (Scandinavian countries) has



grown from a problem to a real actor of the living and existence of the general European society. As of 2017, Great (Jama) Mosques for special Friday religious servicing are there in almost every European capital. If a capital is a metropolis, like, for example, London or Berlin, there are several of such mosques or, more precisely, several mosques of that kind. Construction projects of Great Mosques in Northern Europe and Baltic region are being widely discussed in Tallinn, Riga, Helsinki, Reykjavik - countries, where Muslim population accounts for few percent, tenths of a percent, or even hundreds of a percent. In the countries of Western and Northern Europe Muslims amount to 5 to 25% of the entire population of the capital cities of these regions. This is a common problem for almost all countries in the region. However, there is something unique and specific about it in every individual country and situation. This is the main and largest problem. There is no example in the countries of Western and Northern Europe, which could be used as a template for solving the problem, because every case is unique for every particular country and what is good for Stockholm may not suit Gothenburg. Today Islam is the fastest growing religion in all Scandinavian countries without exception, with the Muslim community developing most rapidly. How it became possible, what is going on now and what is likely to happen in future is the subject of this paper [1].

Dramatic social change in 20 century in combination with a new round of technology progress [2] transformed the world after World War II beyond recognition. It was pointed out by Torsten Hägerstrand, Swedish geographer known for his work on migration, cultural diffusion and time geography of time [3]. Things that could only be dreamed about in the early 20 century turned into reality as early as by its middle. The world has become global and the limitations it used to have become more and more formal with time until they were eliminated or faded away as a rudiment of the disappearing era. Colonial policy, authoritarian and totalitarian regimes in the former metropolises of Europe gave place to a new system of values, political and sociocultural coordinates, preconditioned, in the first place, by individual freedom and the role of an individual in society, independently on his natural characteristics and specifics, race and religious affiliation. The humanity found its ecumene [4].

2. The first stage of the Muslim migration wave to Scandinavian countries (period before 1975)

The first or the initial stage of the Muslim migration wave to postwar Northern Europe falls within the period before 1975 and was not registered specifically as a stage of Muslim migration. This time reference is preconditioned by the fact that since the early 1960s labor migrants started to arrive in mass in the countries of Western and Northern Europe (Scandinavian countries). Only some of them were from traditionally Muslim territories - modern countries of former Yugoslavia (SFRY), Turkey and Pakistan. At the same time, by the mid-1970s, all countries of Western and Northern Europe (Scandinavian countries) took restrictive measures at the parliamentary level to regulate this process [5] [6] [7] [8] [9].

Why did the exodus take place from these particular Muslim countries in this period? The SFRY in the early 1960s - late 1970s cannot, of course, be called a Muslim country. This state can be characterized primarily as a frankly artificial European project of the time after World War I. At the same time, the socialist experiment of dictator Josip Broz Tito after WWII relied solely upon his personal authority and segregation policy in a form of light apartheid, aimed primarily at the Muslim population or, to be more precise, the "Muslim nation" of the federated republic, which status, at that moment, he granted to Bosnian Muslims in Yugoslavian constitution in 1974. Since the beginning of the actual collapse of Yugoslavia in the late 1980s, the Bosnian war (March 1, 1992 - December 14, 1995) was the longest episode in the process of semi-break-up of the SFRY and the most tragic one in terms of its consequences. According to Margaret Thatcher, Prime-Minister of the UK, by and large more than two million people (while prewar population being 4.3 million people) were driven from their settlements. According to estimates, 900 000 people took refuge in the neighboring countries and Western Europe [10]. The episode with the occupation of the Autonomous Province of Western Bosnia (September 27, 1993 — July, 25 1995) as a result of Operation Tiger-94 (June 2 – August 21, 1994), and the consequent liquidation of the Republic of Western Bosnia (July 26 — August 7, 1995)

during Operation Storm (August 4—9,1995) raised the question about the internal unity of the Bosnian ethnicity. But it will concern the next, second stage of Islamic migration.

The Turkish Republic, as one of the main countries supplying migrants to Europe, and, first of all, labor migrants to the Federal Republic of Germany, entered a zone of strong political turbulence in the above-mentioned period. In the period from the early 1960s to the late 1970s Turkey was shaken by social, religious and ethnic conflicts, as well as coups-d'etat (or attempts of coup d'etat), organized by the military junta and the forces opposing it. In the same period, to prevent the escalation of a possible conflict and the subsequent genocide of the Muslim population in Cyprus, inspired and organized by the Greek military junta known as the Regime of the Colonels, under direct support of the Turkish armed forces ("Cyprus peace operation"/ Operation "Atilla") the population of Cyprus is divided by force into Christians and Muslims, and subsequently the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) is created (de facto since July 20, 1974, de jure since November 15, 1983).

Pakistan in the early 1960s - late 1970 fights two Indo-Pakistani wars with a deplorable result: during the Second Indo-Pakistani war (August - September 23, 1965) the prospect of peaceful resolution of the “Kashmir Question” disappears, and during the Third Indo-Pakistani war (December 3 - 17 1971), Islamabad loses its control over East Pakistan, which the former has to recognize as the independent People’s Republic of Bangladesh on December 16, 1971.

3. The second stage of the Muslim migration wave to the Scandinavian countries (1975-1995)

The third stage of migration to the Scandinavian countries started in 1995 and continued until 2015 when the European Migration Crisis occurred. The composition and the nature of Muslim migration to the Nordic region did not change significantly. During this period, the rules of receiving migrants became different, which was determined both by the EU standards and the national legislation. This period in the Muslim world is characterized by strengthening military dictatorships (and the effects of this process), transformation of terrorism and terrorist organizations, and formation of a new technological paradigm of war. Since early 2011, after a series of events called the “Arab Spring” and their consequences in the form of the European Migration Crisis in 2015, the EU countries have faced virtually uncontrollable waves of Islamic migration (which also occurred in previous years) from the territories of North and East Africa, as well as from the countries of Southwest Asia.

At the time when this paper is being written, there is no information about the exact number of refugees who fled to the Scandinavian countries after the socio-political upheavals called the Arab Spring and the events related: The civil war in Libya (February 15 - October 23, 2011) and its consequences, broken down into several stages (armed clashes in Libya after the overthrow of the regime of Muammar Gaddafi (October 20, 2011 - May 16, 2014) and the armed conflict in Northern Libya (from May 16, 2014 - to the present day)), the Civil War in Syria (from March 15, 2011 - to the present day), the Second Civil War in Lebanon (from June 17, 2011 - to the present day), the Civil War in Iraq (since December 15, 2011 - to the present day), the Civil War in Mali (from January 17, 2012 - to the present day), and the Civil War in Yemen (from January 27, 2011 - to the present day).

It should be noted separately that there are systematic conflicts on the territory of Palestine, primarily in the Gaza Strip, associated with its economic blockade maintained by Israel (from September 19, 2007 to the present day). The situation has worsened after Hamas came to power (Operation "Rainbow" (May 18 - May 23, 2004), Operation "Summer Rains" (June-November 2006), Operation "Hot Winter" (February 28 - March 3, 2008), Operation "Cast Lead" (27 December 2008 - January 18, 2009), Operation "Pillar of Cloud" (November 14 - 21, 2012), Operation "Strong Cliff"(July 7 - August 26, 2014)). All of it causes tension in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, as well as in Egypt - on the Sinai Peninsula and in Sudan.

There is a problem, practically and existentially related to the previously discussed subject, which is commonly considered as a completely new phenomenon that can develop in an unpredictable way in Muslim communities in all countries all over the world without exception. It is the Sunni-Shiite confrontation [11], which has seriously aggravated due to the recent events in the Middle East. It is believed that it appeared and crystallized during the many years of direct confrontation between the

Shiite majority and the Sunni minority in Iraq in the so-called Iraqi Sunni Triangle (Baghdad - Baqubah - Ramadi) after the overthrow of the regime of Saddam Hussein in post-Saddam Iraq, when the Iraq war (March 20, 2003 - December 15, 2011) turned into a new full-scale civil war.

The new phase of this religious confrontation, which we are witnessing in the present, is of an unprecedented scale. Today the front line of this war stretches from West Africa to the Southern Philippines, and from the Arctic to Equatorial Africa, Australia and North America. In direct armed clashes on the territory of Syria and Iraq alone, hundreds of thousands of people have already died, and millions have become refugees. There are clashes between three forces in the region of the western, northern and northeastern provinces of Iraq - Shiites, Sunnis and Kurds. With a relative parity of forces, none of the parties can win a clear victory over their opponents, which aggravates the situation for the civilian population and make it leave the region. The situation is almost the same in Syria.

Today, with the intervention of third forces, the confrontation, which used to be balanced, goes beyond the limits of the Middle East - its traditional conflict area. It has been vividly illustrated by the civil war in Syria and its internationalization. Under active support of the Sunni population, on October 15, 2006 the Sunni independent al-Qaida enclave was created in the “land of the Two Great Rivers (the Tigris and Euphrates)” in the western part of the former Iraq. After the civil war started in Syria, the Sunni enclave of Iraq, having unconditional support of the broad masses of the local population during armed clashes in Anbar province (December 30, 2013 - June 25, 2014), got out of control and jurisdiction of Al-Qaeda and transformed into the so-called independent Islamic state of Iraq and Sham (Levant) (ISIS (L)). This is the reason why the undecided Muslims of the Middle East and the whole world have divided into the supporters of various religious movement. At the same time, a struggle ensued in the radical part of the Sunni Ummah over two fundamentally different projects and forms of the Islamic state in the territories of Syria and Iraq, which aggravated and forced their further shaping into the opposing camps.

4. The fourth stage of the Muslim migration wave to the Scandinavian countries (2015-2016)

The fourth or spontaneous crisis stage of migration flows, mainly from Muslim countries to the Scandinavian and Baltic states, falls on the period from 2015 to 2016. It is primarily associated with the beginning of the European migration crisis and the consequences it has had for the internal European realities.

Since the appearance of the IS in the Middle East region and after its first conquests, Iran, with the Bashar Assad regime in Syria being actually helpless, the same as the government of Nuri al-Maliki in Iraq, made the sole decision to reformat the entire military process in the region and placed its bet on the Sunni-Shiite confrontation, transferring the battle actions into a religious-sectarian war. In order to do so, Iran, relying on the experience of the Abuzar Brigade, began to create the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), mainly composed from refugees from Afghanistan and those who fought for the Iranian side in the Iran-Iraq war in the period 1980-1988, paramilitary troops of Shiites, Alawites, Ismailis, etc. from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, Bahrain, Lebanon, and of course, Iran and Iraq itself, thus meeting the need for building the "Shiite axis." According to this principle, hybrid proxies of the Syrian-Irochian theatre of war were created - “Liwa Fatemiyoun”, “Liwa Zainebiyoun”, the Popular Mobilization Forces, better known as “al-Hashd al-Shaabi”. The fighters who have nothing to do with Iraq, and even less so with Syria, have proved themselves in the region as punitive battalions performing police functions and being poorly motivated in terms of morality and character. Their appearance after the "liberation" of the territory by the units of the regular army have been almost always accompanied by abundant violence, colossal civilian casualties and outright looting. Thus began the religious and confessional redistribution and reformatting of the socio-cultural and political space of the Middle East.

Using a completely different tactic, but having at the same goal the IS created a homogeneous mass of the Sunni population in the territory it controlled. All of this could not but result in a mass exodus of the population to a neutral territory. Refugee camps in Syria in the territories controlled by the

government due to the general depletion of infrastructure and lack of additional resources could not take in any more people. In Lebanon, the same as in Jordan, the refugee crisis could have resulted in a real catastrophe, similar to the one that took place during the creation of the State of Israel and in the course of the Arab-Israeli war (May 15, 1948 - March 10, 1949), when the number of Palestinian Arab refugees was equal to the number of citizens of these countries. Many Arab countries at that moment closed their borders for refugees from Syria and Iraq. As a result, people had to move to Europe through Turkey. At the same time, disaster came from the place different of what it was predicted and expected. On March 12, 2015, Abu Muhammad al-Adnani, the official representative of the IS, announced that the most significant and radical Islamist organization in Africa, the Nigerian "Boko Haram", was renamed and identified itself as the "Islamic State's West Africa Province", which spurred further the religious conflict, which has been growing in this most populous country of the African continent since early 1950s. Even before this, in September 2014, the emissaries of the IS arrived in Libya, and on November 13, 2014, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi Khalif and Amir al-Muminin announced that three wilayahs were created in Libya: Wilayat al-Fizan, Wilayat al-Barqah, and Wilayat al-Tarabulus. The IS with the cooperation and support of the native Gaddafi's tribe joined the fight for the so-called "Libyan Legacy." All of this, if not caused, then, at least, enlarged the exodus of people from this territory, mainly towards Europe.

Three basic, two additional, one individual and one absolutely exotic migration routes were transferred to the territory of Europe in 2015: Western Mediterranean, Central Mediterranean and Eastern Mediterranean; Balkan and Eastern European; West African; and Arctic [12]. The latter route was used by the migrants who targeted to get to Scandinavian countries and the territory of the Russian Federation was used quite frequently for that. According to the official data only, in 2015 in the countries of the EU 322 825 resident permits were issued, and in 2016 this number was 1 260 910. According to unofficial data, only in 2015 from 2 to 2.5 million migrants arrived in Europe. The countries of the Baltic region and Scandinavia, despite their geographical remoteness, could not help sharing the burden of the effects of civil wars in Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Somali, Yemen and many other places in the world. They also became the target for migrants aimed at receiving the necessary status and potential possibility to settle there for permanent residence. Although the most worrying situation is observed in the Scandinavian countries, the Baltic countries of the southern coastline of the Baltic openly denounce the requirements of the EU for migrants, relying primarily on the cultural traditions of the nature of their society [13].

5. The fifth stage of the Muslim migration wave to Scandinavian countries (2017 - to the present day)

The fifth stage of migration predominantly from Muslim countries to Scandinavian ones takes up the period from 2017 to the present day. It is, in the first place, identified with the time when some countries started to withdraw from general European principles because of the European migration crisis and its sequences in the internal European realities. In particular, it is about bringing back border control between individual Scandinavian countries, refusal of some Baltic countries from receiving migrants and the beginning process of the UK leaving the European Union [14].

The general mosaic of insoluble problems in the Middle East region described by the authors above was supplemented by new ones in 2017. The situation in the late 2018 and early 2019 only confirms the fact that Muslim, however, preliminary Kurd migration and growing Kurd Diasporas will continue in the Scandinavian countries. In the course of the almost settled issue on the military defeat of Iraqi Kurdistan, the fight for its territorial legacy was joined by the Kurds under support of the Coalition countries and the USA at first hand. The range of prospective problems is replenished by the issue of new administrative-territorial division of both Syria and Iraq, which was projected on the notable maps of "New Middle East" published by Ralph Peters in his article "Blood Borders" in Armed Forces Journal [15]. In the course of the "Arab Spring" a full-fledged national liberation movement took place in the territory of a non-Arab state only in one place, when a civil war in Mali started with the Tuareg Uprising (January 17, 2012 - June 18, 2013) with the proclamation and

creation of the independent state of Azawad on April 6, 2012, which ended in the complete defeat of the Malian army in the battle of Gao and Timbuktu (June 26–27, 2012) and the creation of the Tuareg state by a combination of factors (such as the small number of the Tuareg people (no more than 3 million people), their commitment to the traditional way of life, the absence of any significant ethnic representations in the countries of the EU and Northern Europe) was virtually unnoticed. However, in 2017 the problem of Kurdistan (or rather the territories of some countries in the Middle East in which the Kurds are the dominant majority) became really serious.

Kurdistan consists of the following parts: Iraqi (southern) part, including 5 300 000 people (mohafadhas/ governorates Dohuk, Hawler, Slemani and Halabja, and the disputed territories in mohafadhas/ governorates Ninewa, Kirkuk, Salah al-Din, Diyala and Wasit), Iranian (eastern) part, including 6 million people (province of Western Azerbaijan, Kurdistan, Kermanshah and Ilam, significant Kurdish population in the provinces of North Khorasan and Khorasan-Rezavi), Syrian (western) part, including 2 million people (before 2014 in the mohafadhas / governorates of Aleppo, Raqqah and Haseke, after 2017 they were joined by the disputed territories in the mohafadhas/ governorates of Deir ez-Zor) and the Turkish (northern) part of 20 million people. The Kurds account for an absolute majority or a significant part in the eastern provinces in the regions of Southeastern Anatolia, Eastern Anatolia and in the subregion of Northeastern Anatolia (provinces of Bingöl, Bitlis, Van, Malatya, Mush, Tunceli, Hakkari, Elazig, Agra, Kars, Iğdir, Erzincan, Erzurum, Ardahan, Bayburt and Diyarbakır). Half of all Kurds in Turkey live in the western provinces of Istanbul, Izmir, Ankara, Bursa, and many others (from 10 to 15 million people). According to different estimates from 35 to 40 million Kurds live all over the world. This is the biggest nation in Western Asia, which is divided and does not have its own state.

6. Conclusion

Thus, almost all stages of Muslim migration wave to Northern Europe (excluding the "Initial" and most recent ones) have a systemic period of 20 years. It cannot be scientifically justified yet and the authors in this particular research study prefer to consider it to be just a coincidence. As early as today it can be said that the present stage will be much shorter than the previous ones and the effects of this stage will make us look at all previous ones at a different angle, revise and rethink them.

The outcomes of 2018 contribute to this. Two bastions of Northern Africa - the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria and the Arab Republic of Egypt - are in a crisis situation by their economic [16], social and political indicators. This crisis cannot be interpreted as anything but a prewar situation. In both countries, supreme power is represented by junta and in some regions there is no authority in principle (war continues on the Sinai Peninsula (it started on February 5, 2011) and in the Maghreb ((started on April 11, 2002)). If the crisis in these countries is similar to the one in 2011-2014 and they are unable to withstand it or transform, the situation with Muslim migration, flows of refugees and the situation in Europe itself can turn out to be just unpredictable. The consequence of the fall of the regimes of Muammar Gaddafi and Hosni Mubarak in North Africa, Saddam Hussein, Saleh Ali Abdullah and Bashar Assad in the Middle East with the wars in these countries already caused the European Migration Crisis in 2015. It is not possible to imagine what would happen if the key regimes remaining in the Islamic world collapsed in the Middle East and North Africa.

7. Findings

In today's 2019 and in the nearest future five more countries - three Islamic Republics are in the zone of risk: Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, and in the zone of turbulence: the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Republic of Turkey. A catastrophe in any of these will itself cause an explosive leap in migration, which will spread as waves of people throughout all Eurasian regions. If a chain reaction occurs and a domino effect lasts, it will probably end up in a socio-humanitarian catastrophe of a global scale first in regions and then on the way where people masses will flow. In today's circumstances, Sunni and Shi'ite confrontation, which has all the signs of existential antagonism, is taking a completely different level and scale (already outside the boundaries of the Islamic world) and

the consequences are very hard to forecast. At the same time we should expect to see stricter migration policy in the countries of Northern Europe up to that sharp point which is in the debates between Brussels and Eastern European countries in the issues of receiving migrants in their territories as well as between the UK and EU, with the process of the UK leaving the EU and the migration issue being one of the key ones. There is a strong chance for Finland and to a lesser degree for Sweden to repeat this scenario [17]. The latter, by the way, closed its border with Denmark as early as on January 4, 2016, with border control regime being introduced at the entrance to the tunnel bridge over Öresund, a strait connecting Sweden and Denmark. These and subsequent negative events, possibly together, will be the starting point for a new stage of Muslim migration to the countries of Northern Europe.

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