

ИДЕНТИЧНОСТЬ В ТЕОРИИ И ПРИКЛАДНЫХ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЯХ

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PRESERVING OF MOTHER TONGUE, RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL IDENTITY OF TATAR MIGRANTS (THE CASE OF THE TATAR COMMUNITY IN FINLAND)

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The Tatars arrived over a hundred years ago and were the first Muslim immigrants to Finland. This Muslim minority presently has about 700 members. The Tatars have preserved very well their own religion and culture; the fifth generation is still using the Tatar language. At the same time, the Tatar minority has adjusted well to the larger society with no problems due to their ethnicity. They have a double-identity: they follow their own traditions at home and the Finnish way of life outside. To preserve their language, the Tatar congregation accepts only members who belong to this old minority and who speak the Tatar language. Only the midday and the Friday prayers in the mosque are open to any Muslims. The Tatar families' financial situation has been fairly good ever since the migration. The wealthy congregation has been able to arrange and offer range of common activities for their members. The families typically meet in conjunction with various religious and cultural events, which preserve old traditions and transfer them to the younger generations. Additionally, the congregation has afforded to maintain instruction of the religion and mother tongue, the kindergartens, language trainings, public lectures, summer courses, and private literary activities to their members. Despite the current vitality, the future of the Tatar culture in Finland may be endangered; the community grows smaller, the members grow older, and as a result of mixed marriages. However, the community is very well organized: it has a strong administration and good incomes to keep activities going on also in the future.

Keywords: Finland, Tatar, Finnish Turks, Mishär, Muslim, double-identity, preserving the language

The Tatar community in Finland

The Tatar community in Finland emerged already at the end of the nineteenth century, when a number of Tatar merchants arrived from Russia, mainly from the rural villages of Sergachsky District in the Oblast of Nizhny Novgorod. At the time, the Grand Duchy of Finland was part of the Russian Empire, which meant that there were no barriers to Tatars extending their trade from Russia to Finland. They were peddlars to begin with, gradually turning their trade into a permanent year-round business. These merchants of textiles, clothing and furs with their families first settled down in the largest commercial centres, that is, in Helsinki, Turku, Tampere, Vaasa, and Kemi. Almost all Tatars were merchants as late as the 1940s, but the range of occupations is now as wide as among the other Finns. Although the Mishār Tatars were the first permanent Muslim immigrants in Finland, already in the early nineteenth century many Muslim soldiers in the Russian army had been living in the country. These Muslims, however, moved back to Russia. There was also an imam in Helsinki who operated as a spiritual guide for Muslim soldiers, many of them were Tatars. Due to their long presence in Finland, Tatars are considered today not as immigrants but rather as a traditional minority. The Tatars have very well adjusted in the larger society without any problems due to their ethnicity. At the same time, they have preserved their own religion and culture so well that the fifth generation is still using Tatar language within their community.

Congregation

The Tatar community is extremely well organized with respect to both religion and culture. After independence in 1917, once the Finnish Parliament had legislated for freedom of religion in 1922, the Tatars founded the Mohammedan Congregation of Finland in 1925, with 528 members at the time. The order of the Congregation is explicated in the list of the basic tenets of the Islamic doctrine and practises. These consist of ten principles, the first five of which are generally associated with the Islamic faith, whereas the latter five express the concerns of Finnish Muslims at the time. They emphasize the good will towards others and respect for all religions and people and portray Tatars as law-abiding citizens who want to put themselves to the service of the general welfare of society. The first translation of the Quran into the Finnish language was compiled already in 1942 and its aim was to give a balanced picture of Islam to the Finns. These ten principles are as follows:

1. Believing in One God and His Prophet Mohammad.
2. Praying five times a day and officiating at a public religious service in the mosque every Friday.
3. Fasting once a year for one month.
4. Donating the fortieth part of one's property to the poor.
5. Making a pilgrimage to Mecca once in a lifetime, if one was a wealthy Mohammedan.

6. Respecting all religions.
7. Observing physical and spiritual purity.
8. Observing truth in everything.
9. Respecting fellow people and endeavouring to benefit society.
10. Wishing good to all people.

During the following decades, the institutional development of the Congregation was extended by the establishment of a primary school, as well as efforts to construct an independent House of Islam. A five story building in the centre of Helsinki was completed in 1961. Two of its upper floors now house a prayer room, a festival hall, a kitchen, kindergarten and school rooms, library and offices. The lower floors of the building are rented for use as offices. The permission to marry its own members was granted to the Congregation in 1932. The Tatars have had a cemetery in Helsinki since 1870. It was enlarged in the 1950s and is used only by the Congregation. In 1956, the Pro-Finlandia Memorial was constructed in honour of the Finnish Tatar soldiers who were killed in the Second World War. The congregation changed its name in 1963 to the Finnish Islamic Congregation (Finlandiya Islam Cemaati) and now it includes around 600 members. A branch of the congregation was established in Tampere in 1943, with about a hundred members at present. As such, the congregation has proved to be a source for a strong sense of unity among the members of the Tatar community. The congregation is also financially very secure because of the wealth accumulated over the years, and it has never had a need of financial support from the Finnish state.

The identity of the Finnish Tatars

The identity of the first generation of the Tatars in Finland was primarily based on Islam and the mother tongue. Although the congregations are grounded in religion they constitute a linguistic rather than a religious minority, as the members are required to know the Tatar language. The ethnic composition of this minority has not always been entirely homogeneous: in its early stages, the community had an influx of some Muslims from Central Asia who, nevertheless, adopted the Tatar language. Some Tatars called themselves “Finnish Turks”, with reference to their Turkic linguistic identity. The second generation were romantically drawn as a “Northern Turks” to the new independent and progressive Turkey. The congregation employed as late as in the 1960s teachers/imams who were raised and educated in Turkey. They were Tatars by birth, but their linguistic identity was more or less Turkish. After the Russian Revolution of 1917, several Tatar intellectuals and nationalist activists moved temporarily to Finland. Some of them had acted for years as teachers and educators of the Tatars in Helsinki. At the same time, Turkey was actively propagating the pan-Turkish cause, and the opposing tensions gave rise to two camps among the Tatar minority in Finland, with pan-Turks at the one end and nationalist Tatars at the other. The collective term of Finnish Turks gradually gave way to the

name of Finnish Tatars in the 1990s. Much of this change was due to increased emigration from Turkey to Germany and from the ensuing problems. Moreover, at that time, the Tatars of the former Soviet Union made their way to the general western consciousness. However, the old juxtaposition is still evident in the name of the cultural association of Finlandiya Türkleri Birliği, founded in 1935. This association of “Finnish Turks” popularly goes by name of FTB, because the T can stand for either Türkleri or Tatarları. Also the present “Tatar camp” has some insignificant identity issues. Some Tatars identify themselves also as Mishärs while some prefer to be only Tatars. Some internal juxtapositions may remain, but the congregation’s Islamic way of life fits into the framework of the majority culture, and there are no conflicts between the Tatars and other Finns. It is justified to say that the Finnish Tatars have a double identity. They are Finns outside their homes, while at home they speak their own language and observe their own traditions. Since the late 1950s it became possible for Tatars to renew their contacts with their survived relatives in the Soviet Union. Since the 1960s, there has been an active cultural exchange between the Russian and Finnish Tatars, and some Finnish Tatars have turned in the direction of Kazan in search of their roots.

Spoken language of the Finnish Tatars

The Mishär Tatar language used by the Tatar minority of Finland is closely related to the Kazan Tatar of Tatarstan, so much so that the languages are mutually intelligible. The more isolated Finnish variant of the language is more archaic, while Kazan Tatar has been much influenced by Russian. The spoken language of Finnish Tatars presents a number of variations in pronunciation. The older generation commonly speaks with an “authentic” Tatar accent – in “original speech sounds”, with hard and distinct vowels. For their part, the younger generations have more or less clearly adopted the accent, stress, speech sounds and loan words from the Finnish. Some loan words have been taken from the Turkish language, which has influenced the vowel sounds of common words. The impact of the cultural life of Tatarstan and its dominant language, Kazan Tatar, has gradually started to grow among the Finnish Tatars, who listen to Tatar music and watch Kazan television, picking up local words and idioms and imitating the pronunciation. Modern Tatar literature and press, however, tend to be sidelined, because Finnish Tatars are not familiar with the Cyrillic alphabet. Tatars often use Finnish loan words as a kind of slang. In most cases, this is down to sloppiness or because the speakers simply do not know the Tatar word. Comparisons of adjectives and the genitive constructions of nouns – and the use of cases in general – imitate the Finnish language. The word order has become free as in Finnish, and subordinate clauses – even if less frequently used as such – are entirely constructed according to the Finnish model. English loan words are equally common in both Mishär and Finnish languages, primarily originating from the use of computers, tablets and phones.

The literary activities of the Finnish Tatars

At the turn of the 19th and 20th century, it was the Volga Tatars among the Turkic peoples in Russia who published the most books, with thousands of titles. [2, p. 136]. In Finland we have a large Turcica collection, unique by Western standards, in the National Library of Finland thanks to the right and obligation of the University of Helsinki to obtain a copy of every publication printed in Russia for its collections. This collection contains a wealth of books published in Russia in several Turkic languages in 1828–1919. The data has been detailed in Handbook of Oriental collections in Finland. Manuscripts, xylographs, inscriptions, and Russian minority literature by Harry Halén [2, p. 136–267]. These works carry on the old traditions as a distinct branch of the Tatar literature. This background makes it easy to appreciate the Tatar literature published by the Volga Tatars in Finland, as well. To begin with, the Finnish Tatars made use of the 19th-century books published in Kazan, including the Quran, Quranic commentaries, Hadith books, textbooks of religion, books of poetry and school books. They made facsimile prints in Finland for new readers, and the books were later used as templates for new literature to suit Finnish Tatars' needs. In view of their relatively small population, the Finnish Tatars have a surprisingly rich literary heritage, which is manifested in a large number of publications in various fields, including religious instruction, musical and cultural education, as well as language teaching. The publications comprise both individual books and booklets and periodicals used in community meetings, public lectures, summer courses, language training and private literary activities. The most intensive publishing period was between the 1930s and 1950s, but the activities have been continued to the present day. The most productive Tatar writers include Hasan Hamidulla (1900–1988) [4, p. 7] and Sadri Hamid (1905–1987), who became writers because they wanted to do all they could to preserve the Tatar language and culture in Finland. Hamidulla and Hamid have gained a prominent place as historians, poets, journal editors, and public educators within the Finnish Tatar community. Besides them, the Finnish Tatar community has also fostered other productive writers. By the year 1979 there were 157 publications written, published or printed by Finnish Tatars [3, p. 3–26]. Currently, the Tatar literature in Finland lists more than 200 titles and are presented in the book compiled and edited by Kadriye Bedretdin in the year 2011 *Tugan tel – Mother tongue – Kirjoituksia Suomen Tataareista* [Writings of Finnish Tatars]. This collection includes articles by both scholars and the Tatars themselves on the history, life and culture of the Finnish Tatars. [1].

Ortographical traditions among the Tatar minority in Finland

The Tatar minority began to publish books, leaflets, and magazines already in the 1920s. All the materials published in the 1920s and early 1930s were printed in Arabic letters. From the 1930s, under the impact of the Turkish lan-

guage reform and the simultaneous Latinisation movement (Yañalif) in the Turkic areas of the Soviet Union, Roman letters were increasingly used among the Finnish Tatars as well. The adoption of the Latin alphabet by Turkey in 1929 also split opinions among the Tatars in Finland. The younger generation was no longer able to read Arabic scripts while the older generation did not approve the new alphabet. This was due to the Turkish teachers who started to teach mother tongue using the Turkish alphabet. This was one reason to shut the Turkish school. Often, a single publication included the text in both Arabic and Roman letters, so that different generations were equally able to understand it. Therefore, for example, Hasan Hamidulla started to publish his books with concurrent texts in Arabic and Latin letters. The Finnish Tatar community still uses facsimiles of the *Qazan basması* religious publications originally printed in Kazan. The official adoption of the Latin alphabet in teaching of the mother tongue to children was not quite complete until the 1960s. However, Arabic letters are still taught and used. In the computer world, Finnish programmes prevail, while Turkish letters are more common in official texts. In other words, orthographic norms are still lacking. There are great individual differences according to age, education, place of residence, and attitude to one's mother tongue. There has been a certain tendency to comply with the standard language of modern Kazan Tatar. It has always been possible to obtain Tatar literature from Kazan, but most Finnish Tatars are not familiar with the Cyrillic alphabet. Over the years, many children's books in particular have been "translated" from the Cyrillic alphabet to the Latin letters to help the study of the mother tongue.

Other activities based on the Tatar language

In addition to literary activity, the Tatars in Finland have had their own choirs and drama clubs. As part of musical activities, a group of young Tatars founded the band Başkarma in the late 1970s and released three albums: "Bezneñ belän", "Sagınam duslarım", and "Kızıläü". The cultural association FTB is still active and has published two extensive collections of folk songs, song books and 4–5 records, the first of which, "Ak İdel buyları", came out in 1986. Also a book of traditional Tatar food, "Milli aşlarımız", was published in 1991 and came out in Finnish in 2014. Finlandiya Türkleri Birliği is celebrating its 80th anniversary this year and it published a song book *Balalarımız yaratkan cırlar / Our Childrens' Beloved Songs* in Tatar in honour of this date. The Tatar sport club Yolduz has been active since 1945, bringing together young Tatars in particular. A sense of community is being fostered by the Tatar language, as all the brochures of the cultural and sports associations are published in Tatar.

Cultural exchange

A part of the cultural exchange is the almost annual visits by groups of artists. Tatarstan has sent singers and dancers, musicians, music teachers to Finland. Besides, Finnish Tatar amateur actors performed in Kazan in 1992 and 1993 and

in New York in 1995. Moreover, such researchers from the University of Kazan as archaeologist Alfred Halikov, folklore scholar İlbaris Nadirov, professors of Tatar, Diljara Tumaşeva and Flora Safiullina, as well as Associate professor of Tatar literature Hatip Miñnegulov and historian Mirkasim Osmanov have visited Finland. Cultural relations has also been flourishing with Turkey. The congregation has hosted a number of acclaimed cultural Tatar representatives ever since the 1950s, including professors Reşid Rahmeti Arat, Alimcan İdris, Abdullah Battal Taymas, and Nadir Devlet.

Preserving cultural heritage

Finnish Mishār Tatars have maintained their own language for five generations already. This is a rare and impressive feature for a community which consists of fewer than thousand people. Already the first generation laid the institutional foundations for religious activities by founding the first Islamic association in 1915, which was registered as Suomen musulmaanien hyvän-
tekeväisyysyhdistys ry (The Charitable Muslim Society of Finland). It was founded in order to create some kind of institutional base for promotion of cultural and religious traditions in the new environment. From the beginning religion and native language have existed side by side and strongly supported the community's identity. Religious education both for adults and children was held in Tatar, since the previous imams, although they came from Turkey, were Tatars by origin. The survival of the language in particular has been supported by the conservative nature of the Tatar population, their clannishness and family-oriented approach, cultural and associational life, and mutual social control. Members of the congregation must know Tatar, which is the language of all social and religious interaction and activities. This means that despite the fact that there are tens of thousands of Muslims from many different countries in Finland at present, they are not eligible to join the congregations. Only the Friday prayers and other midday prayers in the mosque are open to other Muslims, too. The Friday Hotba is held in the Tatar language. The Tatar families' financial situation has been fairly good ever since their migration. The wealthy congregations are able to arrange and offer a range of common activities for their members. The families typically meet in connection with various religious and cultural events thus preserving and keeping the traditions alive. These occasions are also naturally transferring them to the younger generations. The congregation has given special attention to the language. It established a Turkic primary school (Türk Halk Mektebi) which functioned in Helsinki in 1948–1969, following the national curriculum set by the Finnish Ministry of Education. Even if the school carried a Turkish name, it was the first and only Tatar-language primary school in Western countries. The decrease in number of pupils led to the closing of the school. The Finnish Islamic Congregation has since arranged 2–4 weeks long summer courses in various educational centres until 1991 when the congregation bought its own educational centre in Kirkkonummi, near Helsinki.

Currently, these summer courses are taught to Tatar children from Finland, the United States, Sweden, Turkey, and Estonia. In summer 2014, four children from Russia, from the Sergachsky region, attended the courses. The children's Sunday club, which was opened in 1949, and the Saturday school for 3–6-year-old children since the 1960s, are still active, focusing on language and religious teaching through song and arts and crafts. The Tatar-language Sunday club and the Tatar-language courses do not admit children who do not speak the language at home. While many children from mixed marriages used to be deprived of Tatar classes, the survival of the language was helped by a negative stance on mixed marriages. Today, however, and based on previous experience, the congregation provides Tatar language classes to children from mixed marriages. Since 1966, the Tatar language has also been taught in the University of Helsinki. The Tatars themselves perceive their identity as depending mainly on Islam and their Tatar language. Less attention has been given to people's clothing, homes and their interiors which follow the Finnish and international trends and environment. Still, some old and new ethnic items can be traced in the Tatar homes. However, the traditional food and dishes are still made and valued.

Future prospects of the Finnish Tatar community

Despite its present vitality, the future of Tatar culture in Finland may be endangered: the community grows is decreasing, its members are growing older, and some are being integrated into the majority culture, as a result of mixed marriages. The Tatars are so well adopted in the Finnish society that assimilation might be a threat. It takes an effort to maintain one's own culture as each new generation identifies more strongly with Finnishness. Finland has two official languages: Finnish and Swedish. The Tatar language is a minority language among many others and its survival depends on those who use it. Literary activity, which used to be so lively in the past, has decreased with time, although has not vanished. Even the spoken Tatar is at risk of being forgotten and falling into decay. Previously, one was not allowed to speak anything but Tatar at home, now some have even started speaking Finnish among family members. The Finnish vocabulary, structures and pronunciation has had a powerful influence and many new concepts come directly from the Finnish language. Some Tatars do not feel the need nor are they able to express themselves in writing in their mother tongue any longer. Due to the Finnish school education, they are more familiar with writing in the Finnish language than their own mother tongue. Many feel a sense of inadequacy when it comes to the correct linguistic form. However, even if the vocabulary does not permit the most abstract and nuanced interaction, the mother tongue still matters as an emotional language among the youngsters. It touches the Tatar at a deeper level than Finnish, which is seen as a more rational language. [5, p. 253–254]. The opening borders have enabled visits to ancestral villages in Russia, and many members have availed themselves of this opportunity. There is also a minor renaissance among some people drawn to their Tatar background.

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The younger generations in particular have found the joy of a shared language among those raised in totally different circumstances in Tatarstan. Some people have also found Tatar spouses from Russia. A well organized congregation and common property guarantee that the Tatar community still have a long future in Finland as a linguistic and religious community. The use of language may loose its position while the religion will stay as it is. The Tatars' Islamic way of life is well integrated into the Finnish majority culture and the Tatars like to emphasise their dual identity. Tatar ethnicity is important to all community members who feel home in the Finnish environment and identify Finland as their permanent home country at the same time.

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**СОХРАНЕНИЕ РОДНОГО ЯЗЫКА, РЕЛИГИОЗНОЙ
И КУЛЬТУРНОЙ ИДЕНТИЧНОСТИ ТАТАР-МИГРАНТОВ
(НА ПРИМЕРЕ ТАТАРСКОГО СООБЩЕСТВА В ФИНЛЯНДИИ)**

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Татары поселились в Финляндии более ста лет назад и были первыми мусульманскими иммигрантами на этой территории. В настоящее время это мусульманское меньшинство насчитывает около 700 членов. Татары хорошо сохранили

свою религию и культуру; пятое поколение все еще использует татарский язык. В то же время татарское меньшинство благополучно адаптировалось к более крупному обществу в связи с их этнической принадлежностью. Татары в Финляндии имеют двойную идентичность: они следуют своим традициям в семье и финскому образу жизни за пределами дома. Чтобы сохранить свой язык, татарское сообщество принимает только членов, принадлежащих к этому старому меньшинству и говорящих на татарском языке. Только полуденные и пятничные молитвы в мечети открыты для любых других мусульман. Финансовое положение татарских семей с момента миграции складывалось довольно благополучно. Сообщества с хорошей финансовой поддержкой имели возможность организовать ряд общих мероприятий для своих членов. Семьи обычно встречаются на различных религиозных и культурных событиях, направленных на сохранение старых традиций и передачу их молодым поколениям. Кроме того, сообщество имеет возможность поддерживать своих членов, организуя религиозное обучение и занятия на родном языке, детские сады, языковые курсы, публичные лекции, летние курсы и частную литературную деятельность. Несмотря на жизнеспособность в настоящее время, будущее татарской культуры в Финляндии может оказаться под угрозой; сообщество становится все меньше, а его члены становятся старше; появление смешанных браков влияет на интеграцию татар в финскую среду. Структура сообщества очень хорошо организована: оно имеет сильную администрацию и обладает финансовой поддержкой, обеспечивающей продолжение его деятельности.

Ключевые слова: Финляндия, татары, финны, мишаре, мусульмане, двойная идентичность, сохранение языка

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