

MIGRANTS AND CONFLICTS WITHIN THE LOCAL UMMAH OF THE PERM KRAI: A PLAYING CARD OR A SOCIAL ACTOR?

This presentation aims at demonstrating the role played by the newly arriving Muslims in the life of the local Islamic community in the Perm Krai of Russia (the Kama River region). This region is characterized by the following important features. First, there is a permanent Islamic community¹. It consists of two parts: local ethnic groups (Tatars, Bashkirs, Slavic converts, etc.) and people born and raised in the North Caucasus, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan and Tajikistan. The exact number of indigenous Muslims in this region is not available, but in some districts – Bardynsky, Ordynsky, Kuedinsky, Oktyabrsky - Muslim population is historically dominant. This situation has its historical and geographical roots. The Perm Krai is a part of the Western Ural region. The Muslim population lived there before the colonization of the Russian state in the XVI century. A number of Tatars resettled in the Urals after the Khanate of Kazan had been annexed to Russia. Bashkirs traditionally lived in the Southern Ural and these two ethnic groups became the basis for the local Muslim population. Some districts of the Perm Krai have a mixed population with Orthodox and Muslim elements and the other include mono-ethnic Tatar and Bashkir settlements.

There are 115 local Muslim believers' organizations registered in the Perm Krai. One part of them (above 100) is included into the compound of the Central Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Russia with a center in Ufa city (Bashkortostan) and the other one (near 15) is ruled by the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the European part of Russia the center of which is situated in Moscow. All local Muslim organizations belong to the Hanafi Madhhab of Sunni Islam.

The faith for local Muslims is actually only a part of their traditional lifestyle and culture. Many of them (80%) have a marriage-partner with a different nationality² and faith and this circumstance determines their religious tolerance. Inter-ethnic marriage smooths the difference in the outlook and religious behavior for family members. At the same time local believers

¹ Кобищанов Ю. М. Мусульмане России, коренные российские мусульмане и русские-мусульмане // Мусульмане изменяющейся России. М., 2002г., С. 61-105 / Kobischanov Yu. M. The Muslims of Russia, native Russian Muslims and Muslims-Russians in The Muslims of Changing Russia. Moscow, 2002.

² Interview with the imam of Chaykovskiy (09.06.2011)

perceive Islam as an important part of the Perm Krai cultural and historical heritage. Some imams connect Islamic tradition with Zolotaya Orda (the Golden Horde) and Khan Uzbek to use this fact as the basis for the legitimization of Islam in the Ural region and its attractiveness for non-Muslim population³. Perm imams were spreading a myth that other autochthonous population (the Udmurts and the Mordovians) were Christians before forced Christianization. The rulers of the local communities are confident that the Hanafi Madhhab is the best for the Ural Muslim population and that any spiritual searching in the Ural region leads to the local madhhab and local mosque.

It is very interesting that the educational level of the local imams is very low. Usually they are self-taught persons in religion who have graduated only from short courses in Perm Muftiate. Very often they have no sufficient information about different variants of Islam in other regions and countries. The local imams organize their religious activity on the basis of private relations and the principle of the spiritual prestige. Personal skills of an imam have great significance for the religious life of each local community⁴, which includes any new community members and innovations.

But local perm Ummah is not homogeneous. A very important part of the Perm local community consists of young people who have received their religious education abroad (generally, in Egypt⁵). These young men are ready to reject traditional religious practices (for example, the Cult of the Holy sources) and theological interpretations given by Perm imams. Imam-Khatib of Perm Cathedral Mosque has said that these Muslims don't respect local religious authorities because they have no sufficient spiritual education and use a lot of superstitions⁶. The Muslims of the older generation criticize such an approach of young believers as a rule and accuse educated youth of "the inobservance of Sunna"⁷ and of following other madhhab (Shafi'iyah). Elder Muslim believers insist that a man can receive true religious knowledge only in his Motherland⁸. As a result Muslim educated youth create their own groups, practice new habits and behavioral models and hold their meetings separately. This part of believers has neither support of their relatives and fellow countrymen nor any intensive contacts with migrants in spite of their foreign education.

The Perm Krai also has an Islamic diaspora consisting of various newcomers. In spite of that 2011 was a peak of inner and external migration, the Perm Krai is still attractive for people from other Russian regions and neighboring countries. There are three kinds of migrants here:

³ Interview with the imam of Chaikovskiy (09. 06. 2011).

⁴ Interview with the imam of the Nizhniy Syp settlement (10.06.2011).

⁵ Interview with the imam of the Elpachikha settlement (18. 06. 2011)

⁶ Interview with the imam of the Cathedral mosque (06. 09. 2017).

⁷ Interview with the imam of the Barda settlement (18. 06. 2011).

⁸ Interview with the imam of the Elpachikha settlement (18. 06. 2011)

labor migrants, students, and those who intend to apply for citizenship. One part of this stream is the so-called inner migrants from North Caucasus and the other – newcomers from the post-Soviet republics of Central Asia and Turkey. Due to the fact that inner migrants are the citizens of the Russian Federation there are no special data about their flows and groups. It is possible to analyze only number of external new-comers and the main reasons of their coming.

Table 1. The number of the newcomers in 2011 according to the reasons of their arrival

	All	Private	Business	Tourism	Study	Work	Charity	Hotel
Azerbaijan	5537	2832	39	27	36	2447	0	156
Kazakhstan	3751	3196	63	60	83	156	0	193
Kyrgyzstan	8000	3673	54	13	109	4077	0	74
Tajikistan	17888	5811	74	10	114	11599	0	280
Turkmenistan	106	43	6	32	12	8	0	5
Turkey	1223	93	88	91	4	836	0	111
Uzbekistan	22877	6210	96	23	71	16275	13	189

We can see that migrants from the so-called Muslim states were in the majority in 2011 and this feature takes place at present.

Table 2. The number of Temporary Residence Permits for migrants from the post-Soviet countries in the Perm Krai

период	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
гражданство					
Всего	3113	2850	2491	1572	1311
Azerbaijan	260	209	295	163	140
Kazakhstan	182	170	215	153	189
Tajikistan	415	291	432	285	254
Uzbekistan	242	216	245	139	114
Other	338	262	254	163	150

After all in the Perm Krai there are illegal new-comers who act as a part of the Diaspora or Ummah. Most of migrants tend to settle in Perm and some regional centers (Krasnokamsk, Kungur, Berezniki, Dobryanka, Usolye) to find a job with a good salary. Usually they are involved in trade, building areas and road making throughout the whole territory of the region. However, there are some places with mono-ethnic migrant settlements – for example, Chechen villages in Karagay and Bolshaya Sosnova districts. Their dwellers graduated from Perm State Agricultural Academy and remained in the Kama River region. Some of their landmen arrived to work at timber industry enterprises. Now these are compact communities with their own cultural and religious space. The situation is the same for the settlements of Azerbaijani newcomers who live in Nerdva and Rozhdestvenskoe villages on the border of Karagay and Kudymkar districts and also work at timber industry enterprises.

Muslims from other states are usually included into their own diaspora, so there are some certain national communities with Islamic elements in the Perm Krai. They belong to different madhhabs (Shafi'iyah, Khanafi'iyah, Khanbali'iyah) and sometimes to a different branch of Islam – Shiite Islam⁹. Very often some of them have enough money to support the local Ummah and to change some aspects of religious life. As a rule Muslim newcomers have a higher level of religious education than Perm Islamic believers because of cultural features of their areas. It is interesting to note that the level of Muslim education of migrants is the sticking point for the local religious workers. Most of them are confident that newcomers' religious knowledge is not better than that of the local Muslims. But I suppose that in this case we have to deal with a kind of jealousy in relation to the migrants. Alien believers are more active in religious life, they take part in a number of sacral holidays and make donations for mosques and different educational projects. At present the construction of a new big mosque takes place in Perm and only internal and external migrants help Imam Khatib of the Cathedral mosque to do it.

It appears that the imam of Kuyeda settlement and the now deceased mufti of the Cathedral mosque are more honest to recognize that newcomers from Uzbekistan and Tajikistan read Koran during their religious service very good¹⁰. They explain this fact by the relationship of Arabic and Tajik languages (it is not so) and mark the religious activity of most of migrants. It becomes especially clear when a newcomer starts to play a role of the organizer of routine religious life. We can tell even about the self-organization of the migrant Muslim communities. All work places where migrants are involved have special houses or rooms for praying. In Perm such special rooms are customized in the Central market, in the wholesale market in Zaostrovka sub-district, in the so-called "Chine market", in the wholesale warehouse "Krasny Oktyabr" (The Red October). Formally these praying places are opened for all believers but actually the most of visitors are Tajiks and Uzbeks who choose religious workers (imams) from their neighborhood. The leaders of these communities are literate Tajiks who have received home Muslim education.

It is very interesting that imams are elected not only from permanent dwellers of the Perm Krai (who have obtained citizenship) but from those who have come for a short period. This is a cause of frequent changing of the religious leaders who are identified by family circumstances, individual plans and the laws of the Russian Federation. There are no special documents stating that these "houses of praying" are subservient to any Spiritual Department. Only a representative of Zaostrovka community told that namaz in their place begins in five minutes after it starts in

⁹ Кобищанов Ю. М. Мусульмане России, коренные российские мусульмане и русские-мусульмане // Мусульмане изменяющейся России. М., 2002г., С. 61-105. Kobischanov Yu. M. The Muslims of Russia, native Russian Muslims and Muslims-Russians in The Muslims of Changing Russia. Moscow, 2002

¹⁰ Interview with the imam of the Kueda settlement (09.06.2011) and the Interview with the mufti of the Cathedral Mosque (07. 07. 2011).

the Cathedral mosque¹¹. It is remarkable that the mufti of the Cathedral mosque refused to recognize this connection speaking about free choice of migrant community in this question. Obviously that religious affiliation to newcomers is very contextual and can be changed depending on the situation. They choose most comfortable conditions for religious life and near-religious communication more often. Imams and other religious leaders organize religious education for children in Uzbek and Tajik Diasporas and teach the youth the ropes of Islam and to read Koran. During Ramadan the members of Zaostrovka community invite religious authorities from Dushanbe (Tajikistan) to lead common praying.

Rural migrant communities (like Chechen villages in Bolshaya Sosnova) don't use special organizing structures with legal registration but always have a religious leader for Sabbatical namaz and family rites. They meet for these purposes in one of the farmhouses and rent big houses for great holidays. The situation is the same in urban enterprises and building areas: one of the collective members takes on the role of the spiritual leader and rules week-days praying.

Sometimes most influential leaders are not official migrant imams but Sufi teachers who act in the mosques on a par with religious leaders. This is the influence of the North Caucasus Islam connected with a huge net of Sufi orders which are more powerful in this region. Sufi teachers play a role of the power behind the throne in the local Muslim community, they determinate money flows and Muslims' participance in social events. The activity of migrant religious leaders and Sufi teachers influence different Muslim organizations and Perm Ummah in general.

We insist that migrant Muslim communities have a high potential of religious life which can be independent or connected with the environment. Labor migrants and potential citizens visibly demonstrate their religiosity and attract a lot of attention from local Muslims, authorities, journalists, and non-Islamic dwellers.

Second, there is a permanent conflict between two Muslim communities on this territory. This contradiction is related to a situation in Ummah of the Russian Federation. There are some central organizations that pretend to lead Muslims in Russia – The Central Spiritual Administration of Muslims which exists from the Soviet period (TZDUM); The Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the European part of Russia (DUMER) and The Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the Asian part of Russia (DUMACHR) created after the decline of the Soviet Union; The Coordinating Center of Muslims of the North Caucasus and Russian Association of Muslim Agreement (RAIS) – a contextual organization created as an alternative

¹¹ Interview with the mufti of the Cathedral mosque (07. 07. 2011).

to other religious structures¹². The existence of all these organizations at the same time doesn't contradict to Muslim tradition to have no hierarchy in religious space. Membership in the Ummah assumes an equality of all believers in theological and routine questions and only spiritual authority can be more powerful. However Russian Islam was seriously changed by the influence of the Orthodox tradition with its religious structure. All Islamic organizations wanted to identify mainstream tendencies in Russian Ummah.

This feature is applied to local religious space and leads to the split of communities. It is true to the full extent for Perm Muslims. Local Perm Ummah acted in the post-Soviet period as a weak and ill-structured community with a number of ignorant religious workers and without well-educated laity. For Perm muftis and imams TZDUM was only a formal leader who didn't help them solve any problems. So subgroups within Muslim believers began to act to intensify local religious life and consolidate the believers.

In 1992 a new community was created in the Cathedral mosque and this new organization wasn't subordinate to traditional Perm Muftiate. Ravshan Akhmedov became its head in 1995. He was very effective in organizing the mosque reconstruction as well as regular religious services. Another person Mukhametgaly Khuzin was appointed the leader of Perm Muftiate by the head of TZDUM Talgat Tajuddin in 1997. This date became a starting point for the opposition between two communities. The sticking point of discussion was the principles of Ummah management and the main directions of community development.

The raise of number of migrants was used by both organizations as a basis for activity but in different meanings. The community of the Cathedral mosque was ready to include all the newcomers, especially from the Caucasus and Central Asia. New members helped to solve some financial problems (to build house for Arabic classes, to repair, to help poor believers, etc). At the same time (1999) M. Khuzin inspired extreme Mejlis (Council) of Perm region¹³ to forbid newcomers to lead any Muslim communities.

The second sticking point was the construction of the Cathedral mosque because Perm Muftiate had no place to pray. M. Khuzin tried to use a heavy-handed method (encroachment on the building, the wrecking of Sabbatical namaz) but without any results. After a long chain of different conflicts the mufti lost access to the mosque that was then transferred by T. Tajuddin to TZDUM directly.

In the early 2000s the community of the Cathedral mosque withdrew from TZDUM and opened a regional office of DUMER. After this the battle for many local communities began. M.

¹² Централизованные мусульманские организации в современной России и анализ позиций их лидеров // Вестник Волгоградского государственного университета, Волгоград, 2008 г. Сер. 7, N 2, с. 219-223 / Centralized Muslim Organizations in modern Russia and the analysis of their leaders' positions. Journal of Volgograd State university. 2008. Edition 8. № 2

¹³ The Perm region became the Perm Krai in 2005 when Komy-Permyak Autonomous Okrug was united.

Khuzin requested to reregister all Muslim organizations under the ruling of Perm Muftiate¹⁴. As a result most of small groups of believers were formally connected with Perm mufti. However, the question with a place for praying was not solved because the Cathedral mosque was officially handed over to DUMER community in 2001. M. Khuzin began to collect money for the construction of a new mosque and it was his undoing. In spite of all the collected finances, construction work wasn't begun and nobody explained any causes of this situation. At the same time some heads of the rural communities wrote many letters to T. Tajuddin about wrong principles of mufti Khuzin: the interdiction to lead namaz for local spiritual authorities; abuses¹⁵; disregard of believers and financial problems; permanent self-presentation¹⁶. This led to the secession of ummahs of Chernushka, Dobryanka, Barda, Osa and Zakamsk from Perm Muftiate to the direct subordination to TZDUM¹⁷. As a result M. Khuzin was replaced by Maulyudin Mustozyap¹⁸.

In 2006 both Muslim Spiritual Administrations received new leaders. In November Ch. M. Galautdinov was appointed by Ravil' Gainutdin, the head of DUMER, as a mufti for the community of the Cathedral mosque¹⁹. At the end of this year B. M. Tazitdinov became a plenipotentiary representative of TZDUM²⁰. Perm Muftiate was transformed to a very strange organization without any connection with central Spiritual Administrations but with a number of subordinated local commune of believers. M. Khuzin tried to keep his position in local religious space and insisted to call Regional conference to approve all changes in Perm Ummah²¹. Ex-mufti lost the support of high authorities and concentrated on media spots to push the idea that any new religious structure destroys the unity of local Muslims²². He accused other religious leaders and the members of the Cathedral mosque community of spreading the ideas of Wahhabism²³ and false Islam. By that attitude M. Khuzin opposed himself to all leading Muslim organizations of the Russian Federation. Using his ruling experience he organized a new all-

¹⁴ The telegram of mufti to the community of the Bardabashka settlement 17. 02. 2000 г.

¹⁵ The letter of imam-khatib of Osa A. N. Mustakimov to sheikh-ul'-islam.

¹⁶ The open letter of the council of makhllya of Chernushka to T. Tajuddin 21. 03. 2006.

¹⁷ Discussion note №3 of mahallya of Dobryanka 17. 12. 2006

¹⁸ Interview with the mufti of the Cathedral mosque (07. 07. 2011) ; Decree of TZDUM №04-06 (21. 01. 2006)

¹⁹ Decree of DUMER №033-ДУ (22. 11. 2006).

²⁰ Decree №291 in License of TZDUM (31. 12. 2006).

²¹ The letter №115-Ц to imamam-khatibam and imamam-mukhtasibam 09. 03. 2006.

²² The announcement of Interfax 20. 12. 2006.

²³ About the principles of using the term "Wahhabism": Witch Hunt I Argayack district. URL: <http://www.portal-credo.ru/site/index.php?act=news&type=archive&day=13&month=1&year=2011&id=81839> (Дата обращения 20. 06. 2011);

Кобищанов Ю. М. Мусульмане России, коренные российские мусульмане и русские-мусульмане // Мусульмане изменяющейся России. М., 2002. С. 101// Kobischanov Yu. M. The Muslims of Russia, native Russian Muslims and Muslims-Russians in The Muslims of Changing Russia. Moscow, 2002. P. 101

Сафаруллин Р. Политизация ислама в России: состояние и перспективы. URL: http://fairway.h1.ru/2/57_1.html (Дата обращения 20. 06. 2011) / Sarafullin R. The politicization of Islam in Russia: the situation and perspectives. URL: http://fairway.h1.ru/2/57_1.html (20. 06. 2011)

Russian organization - Russian Association of Muslim Agreement (RAIS) forgetting about his own words about destructive nature of any new Muslim communities for the Kama River region²⁴.

Thus Perm Muslims faced three independent religious leaders who realized religious and near-religious activities. This problem was partially solved in 2013. Some imam-muhtasibs appealed to the governor of the Perm Krai Victor Basargin, the head of the Justice Ministry of the Perm Krai Rustem Yusupov and the attorney of the Perm Krai Alexander Belykh with a complaint against ex-mufti. The heads of religious communities accused M. Khuzin of damaging Muslim image, creating conflict situations and of autocratic behavior. Imams offered to convene the Regional Conference of Muslims to improve the situation.

M. Khuzin started some repressive actions and fired imam-muhtasibs from Uinskoye and Kungur accusing all his opponents of extremism, Wahhabism, etc. again. Despite this the Special Majlice of Muslims of the Perm Krai with the participation of T. Tajuddin accepted a new statute for the Spiritual Administration according to that Perm Muftiate came back to TZDUM after seven years of independent existence. M. Khuzin was removed from the post of Perm Muftiate head and replaced by Rustam Galimov who became the imam-akhoond of the Spiritual Administration. New general committee of Muftiate and the delegates from 67 settlements declared the renovation of canonical and administrative unity with Ufa department.

After Khuzin's replacement the communities subordinated to TZDUM and DUMER had good relations for some time. The heads of two Spiritual Administrations took part in public events together and exchanged congratulations on holidays. But it should be immediately noted that these good interactions were only for an external observer. After a short period of ceasefire the leaders of two Spiritual Administrations are ready to begin a new stage of the battle. The head of TZDUM community struggles for the believers and permanently visits the communes of small towns and rural settlements. He has a low level of education and tries to improve his position through a close communication with laity. Today this imam-khatib – Anvar Ablayev – has only one material project of a new mosque construction. In spite of many public hearings and resolved area he has no mosque in the central part of Perm and only two small buildings in the

²⁴ Президент Исламского культурного центра АБДУЛ-ВАХЕД НИЯЗОВ об «исламофобском закулисье Кремля» и необходимости объединения вокруг муфтия Равиля Гайнутдина. URL: <http://www.portal-credo.ru/site/index.php?act=news&type=archive&day=8&month=1&year=2011&id=81750> (Дата обращения 20. 06. 2011) / The president of Islam cultural center Abdul-Vakhed Niyazov about "Islamophobic lobby of the Kremlin" and about the necessity of consolidation around mufti Ravil' Gaynutdin URL: <http://www.portal-credo.ru/site/index.php?act=news&type=archive&day=8&month=1&year=2011&id=81750> (Дата обращения 20. 06. 2011)

Международный мир в России под угрозой. URL: <http://www.portal-credo.ru/site/index.php?act=news&type=archive&day=20&month=1&year=2011&id=81947> (Дата обращения 20. 06. 2011) / International world in Russia at risk. URL: <http://www.portal-credo.ru/site/index.php?act=news&type=archive&day=20&month=1&year=2011&id=81947> (Дата обращения 20. 06. 2011)

suburbs. Anvar Ablayev tries to rest upon native Muslims – Tatars and Bashkirs but sometimes he is compelled to communicate with migrants. This communication became actually important after the opening of Muslim college which is not very popular with autochthon Muslims. The administration of this education institute was also forced to receive migrants as students. This Muslim leader has non-official support of secular authorities.

The other head – imam of DUMER community Il'kham Bibarsov – has very close relative connections with Muslim elite of Volga Federal District and a good religious education. He is oriented towards active partnership with newcomers and visits different Muslim countries very often. I. Bibarsov has a way with consolidation of native and migrant part of Muslim community to receive money for the construction of a new mosque, an educational project (the second Islamic college in the Kama River region) and the support of the community life. Religious leaders from Egypt and Sudan (for ex. sheik-exorcists) are frequent guests in the Cathedral mosque. But its head has no approval of local authorities and few officially subordinated communes in the towns and settlements of the Perm Krai. Perhaps this situation inspires him to make the statements against Anvar Ablayev during the public events with the accusation of split of local Ummah.

This small war was complemented in 2016 by the creation of the Union of the Kama River region Muslims the goal of which was declared as educating and editor activities. Adlan Musaev became the head of this new organization and the first official religious leader from the migrant environment. The Union of Muslims of the Perm Krai was involved into communication with authorities; this would increase their control over the community. There is at the moment only one similar organization uniting the leaders of ethnic diasporas who lost their leading positions. This organization proved to be ineffective due to neither having a serious political program, nor being supported by the majority of believers. But the emergent Union of Muslims has intensified the situation of competition in the split ummah of the region. This situation is convenient for the local authorities in charge of religious affairs: they will have a choice to support a more loyal leader or a group. One of the civil servants said that the Union included all migrant ex-leaders who pretended to play any role in social and political space of the Kama River region. It must be admitted that this structure is not effective and has no influence in religious space but makes an effect of serious social actor on the face of it.

There is an obvious opposition between those who pretend to unite only local Muslims and those who support an intensive integration of migrants. In this situation migrants are accused of attempts to seize power in the local Islamic community. It is necessary to analyze the actual potentiality of migrant groups to change anything in local religious space.

Can there be any causes and foundations for local religious conflicts? Can the migrants take over local Islamic communities and change religious habits of the locals and the status of the Muslims community in the region? These are the questions the author intends to address in this presentation. The research is based on two series of semi-structured interviews with Islamic leaders (2011 and 2017), on a participant's observation of official events (meeting of the City Duma Council on Interfaith Relations, the Annual Regional Forum «Muslim world»), and experts' interviews with local authorities.

There are two factors which can determinate the success of any innovations in social and religious space. The first and very important is the specificity of the local Ural Islam. This variant of Muslim religious system is very specific. Faith is regarded as a part of national tradition, which influences religious practices and social behavior, engendering, at the same time, a specific mythology. Religiousness of vernacular believers is often invisible and even contextual (only during holidays).

Some features of the local Muslim communities are the basis for conservative position of the Perm Krai Ummah. First of all, this is the aloofness of Perm Islamic believers and their spiritual leaders. Most of Perm Muslims have no opinion on the situation with the opposition between two Spiritual Administrations and on the relevant circumstances with internal and external migrants. They have a habit to place confidence in a head of a religious community, especially in a representative of Perm Muftiate. Believers from rural and small town communes have never heard about the struggle for religious and social power between the followers of TZDUM and DUMER. Even after the replacement of M. Khuzin imams at the local level said: "We have only one mufti – Khuzin"²⁵ or "We are subordinated to mufti"²⁶. There was only one matter when the Ummah of the Sulmash settlement had a conflict with the head of Perm Muftiate and wanted to change its affiliation²⁷ but this situation was solved by preserving the membership. As a rule only highly educated and caring believers refused to visit the mosque in the presence of mufti Khuzin²⁸.

This aloofness is closely connected with a routine life of the most of local communities. Each imam has to solve a lot of problems: economic matters (to warm the mosque, to repair the roof), the construction of new religious buildings, the collection of donations, etc. The laity leads a normal life without everyday questions about faith, religious services and spiritual authorities. Each local commune is usually self-contained and has very weak inter-communal relations. Perm believers respect the Muslims from other cities and settlements but make a journey to other

²⁵ Interview with the imam of Chaikovskiy (09.06.2011).

²⁶ Interview with the imam of the Kueda settlement (09.06.2011).

²⁷ Interview with the imam of the Kueda settlement (09.06.2011).

²⁸ Interview with the imam of the Kueda settlement (09.06.2011).

districts very seldom²⁹. Occasionally local Muslims are ready to visit the holy places of the Perm Krai (for ex. the town Bulgur) or other cities to find sponsorship (for ex. some believers from Chaikovskiy helped their adherents from some villages of Uinskiy district). Obviously the system of interactions for Perm Muslims is based on the so-called “short relations” with a great role of sympathy and confidence. This system supposes a preservation of long-standing traditions and closeness for any newcomer.

This availability of routine problems gives a rise to inobservance of the situation in the region and in the country in general. Even imams as local religious elite lack some knowledge on the central Muslim organizations and all contradictions between them. As a rule religious leaders have a trouble to answer the questions about the subordination of their communities during the interviews. Only one imam told something about a new all-Russian Muftiate (RAIS) and added that he had no desire “to tamper with life of the communities’ heads”³⁰. Even after the explanation about existing structures the heads of local ummahs insisted that they didn’t want to take part in religious business on all-Russian level³¹. According to the words of Perm spiritual leaders the most popular attitude of true Muslim believer is to be patient³². It is true for Perm Muslims even in the circumstances when high authorities limit religious and social practices of the local communities. To some extent, this opinion is inspired by the repressive policy of the Soviet power against all religious organizations and spiritual leaders especially.

The aloofness and unwillingness to have additional problems influence the attitude toward outsiders. The locals suppose that newcomers have no right to live in the Kama River region. So migrants receive pejorative names (for ex. “azer”, “churka”). Perm dwellers are sure that outsiders have no spiritual authority in principle. This is the case of inner newcomers, too. One entrant wanted to build a new mosque in Chaikovskiy and this initiative was interpreted as an attempt to make an alternative Muslim community. Local Muslims attained the prohibition of this construction in spite of lack of praying places. The imam of Chaikovskiy long-standing community told that this community was oriented towards strict control of any newcomers and the acceptance of special sanctions. Local Muslims feel a closer connection with the followers of other religions who are indigenous people than with Muslims-outsiders and thus reject to be spiritual leaders. The most popular explanation of such attitude is the statement that a newcomer-imam can inspire displeasure among the believers of native nationalities³³. The heads of local

²⁹ Interview with the imam of the Nizhniy Syp settlement (10.06.2011).

³⁰ Interview with the imam of the Kueda settlement (09.06.2011).

³¹ Interview with the imam of Chaikovskiy (09.06.2011).

³² Interview with imam of town Chaikovskiy (09.06.2011).

³³ Interview with the imam of the Kueda settlement (09.06.2011).

communities are ready to invite outsiders to read Koran only in the case of force majeure (the illness of the imam or his set-off)³⁴.

Thus the local Islam appears to be an aloof long-standing system, oriented towards the natives and against outsiders who concedes any innovations only under pressure of external factors.

Vigorous religious practices of the migrants (foreign and domestic) sharply contrast with non-practicing local Muslims. It looks like newcomers are ready to change the local Islam practices or to add some innovations. However we can see many factors that influence this process.

Some changes in religious life which are connected with migrants actually take place. Muslim migrants visit Sabbatical namaz cheerfully. They prevail during religious services in all the mosques of the Kama River region, while the local Islamic tradition permits making the namaz (Islamic daily prayers) at home. The lack of believers at religious services in some settlements is connected with the absence of newcomers who changed their residence³⁵. Migrants attend mosques not only on Fridays and sometimes make generous financial contributions. Traditionally Sabbatical service includes a sermon in Tatar or Bashkir language because there are a few natives who know Arabic very well. However namaz in a mosque is visited by newcomers for whom only Russian is their mother tongue and by transit drivers of different nationalities. Russian as a language of international communication becomes the most effective for sermons in mosques.

Muslim newcomers bring new elements to near-religious life. The most popular innovations are a new Islamic fashion and the change of religious calendar. These external revisions are immaterial for local Islam and its religious workers. The Imams of the Perm Krai insisted that all variations of a believer's visage or of the mosque's interior have only pragmatic causes and are not connected with any reforms of the model of religious behavior. For example, one change was the substitution of namazlyck (special mat for praying) for big modern carpets. Now-deceased mufti of the Cathedral mosque told that carpets were more comfortable and useful and its religious meaning was like candy wrappers³⁶. The efforts to keep and to increase local Ummah are more important than preserving the old-fashioned rules.

Sometimes newcomers try to use religious practices of other madhhabs during namaz. Local believers pronounce "Amen" calmly, but migrants want to do it very loud and thus destroy the customary atmosphere of the service. In such cases religious workers make a caveat or hold a

³⁴ Interview with the imam of the Barda settlement (18.06.2011).

³⁵ Interview with the imam of the Kueda settlement (09.06.2011).

³⁶ Interview with the mufti of the Cathedral mosque (07. 07. 2011).

discussion that all believers must follow long-standing traditions of the Ural³⁷. The same situation took place in the Cathedral mosque. Muslim migrants insisted to organize a separate entrance to the building for women and the same room for women praying. Local religious activists rejected this offer because the Cathedral mosque was a cultural heritage object to rebuild it and traditionally women were praying behind the curtain.

Some local Islamic leaders suggest that financing of the mosque is a method to gain leadership. But financial basis must be added by any organization chart of newcomers. It is critical to underscore that migrant community is not united. Each Diaspora has its own features and ambitions. Chechens and Dagestani prefer mono-ethnic communication and make profitable business. They are ready to intervene in the management of a Muslim community only with commercial interests. Chechens were very active in Perm muftiate during Khuzin's rule because they had one common business. After Anvar Ablaev's order they accused him of "irtidad" (apostasy) and called him "murtad" (a renegade) because Ablaev had no truck with them. The local authorities preferred not to be involved into this conflict.

But usually Diasporas exist separately especially those that confess not Khanifi'ya madhhab. So their influence on social space of the Perm Krai is not intensive.

The second way to gain influence is to participate in Islamic social events and projects, like holidays, or charity. The administration of the Perm Krai organized only two big projects for Muslims – the celebration of Eid al-Adha (Kurban-bairam) and the annual inter-regional forum "The Muslim World" (since 2009). The second event includes different directions – table-top sale, scientific round tables and worship to Muslim relics. Though the migrants, as well as the locals, prefer to declare the importance of Islamic values being in fact mostly interested in the commercial part of the event (fairs, popular non-religious holidays, etc.), this aspect of Muslim life became, in many ways, declarative for both groups.

I suggest that partnership with the local Spiritual Administrations of Muslims is the most effective way for the migrants to influence the local religious communities. In these departments migrants sometimes occupy the positions of imams; they often study at the two available Muslim colleges, and help to build new mosques in terms of both money and labour.

Today the migrants play no critical role in the inner life of the regional Ummah. Local Muslims outnumber them and sometimes dislike, the local authorities prefer to cooperate with Spiritual Administrations. Migrant believers are, at the moment, only a source of money for ummah, an argument in favor of constructing new mosques and a potential support during habitual conflicts between Spiritual Administrations. They are a playing card used by the heads of Spiritual Administrations and local authorities.

³⁷ Interview with the imam of the Kueda settlement (09.06.2011).