

Changes in religious tradition of migrants from Tajikistan in the Russian Federation

A main goal of the project is an analysis of transformation of religious practice of migrants from Tajikistan in the Russian Federation and their adaptation to the new social conditions. The main research question applies to influence of migration on a sphere of the religious life and traditional practices of migrants.

In the last twenty years The Russian Federation became a place of migration for many people from the former Soviet republics including Central Asia. Tajikistan is as measured by share of GDP, the most remittance-dependent country in the world. In 2012, remittances made up 47.5 percent of country's GDP its economy. A present wave of migration from Central Asia resulted in growing cultural diversity in Russia. Simultaneously, a religious revival which has been visible since a period of Perestroika has contributed to increasing the ideological, cultural and religious differences between some Muslims and non-Muslims. In the case of Tajikistan, since a period of the civil war (1992-97), Tajiks have migrated to Russia including religious leaders. Gradually, migrants began to create places to perform the religious services (mosques, *namaz-khonas*), to open *halal* shops and other facilities. Moreover, apart from representatives of a mainstream Islam, some healers, female religious leaders (*bibi otun*) as well as clairvoyants migrated to Russia; they also contribute to transforming spirituality there. The Tajik language, a lifestyle, as well as cultural practices, both typically "Islamic" as well as others started penetrating into the social and cultural system of the Russian Federation. Islam brought by migrants differs to some extent with beliefs of indigenous Muslims. Consequently some newcomers being influence by new ideas reject the Tajik religious practices changing their approach to own tradition. Some of them became members of various radical groups including militants faithing in the Islamic state.

Undoubtedly migration processes transformed Russia, similarly as the Western European countries. It is often expressed in the social feelings which could be visible during demonstrations organized by nationalists invoking the slogans such as: "We do not want Moskwobad" or "Russian for Russians". It stands to reason that many citizens of the Russian Federation have more balanced opinions on the issue of migration, nevertheless a social transformation is noticeable.

The planned project will focus on labour migrants from Tajikistan in the context of religion, and changes of religious tradition. It will examine a spiritual life of migrants, its various manifestations as well as transformation in a host country. Another research question is to consider whether "Islam of migrants" influences transformation of spiritual life of Muslims in Russia, Tatars and Bashkirs, but also the Caucasian communities. It applies to both rituals and practices as well as religious and social institutions created by a diaspora. Following issue reflects on interaction of the Tajik migrants with the Russian culture through transferring various forms of spirituality into a local ground.

The proposed research can enhance understanding of adaptation of migrants from a point of view of Islam on the example of migration from Tajikistan to the Russian Federation, a country bordering on the EU. The project will serve to expand existing knowledge on Islam and migration processes in the Russian Federation, also in a context of various forms of spirituality that go beyond a main stream of Islam. It will provide an opportunity to see "Islam of migrants" from a different perspective.