Muslim Orders in Russia: Trade Networks and *Hijama* Healing

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Abstract

This article sheds light on the informal institutional settings that guide the social and economic lives of Muslim migrants in Moscow. Mosques and *medresses* (Muslim theological schools) serve as central locations from which these institutions emanate, evolve, and transform. Case studies of trade networks and *Hijama* (wet cupping) healing practices demonstrate the inner workings of such institutions. The article draws on the theoretical traditions of informal institutions and new institutionalists focusing on anthropological works on agency and institutions. These analytical frameworks and concepts help explain the mechanisms and processes involved in the institutionalization of Muslim lives in Moscow. I argue that individual agency and charismatic leadership of individual members of the community play formative roles in institutionalizing daily practices and constituting normative orders of Muslims in Moscow. The article is based on fieldwork conducted in Moscow and Perm during 2016, 2017, and 2019.

Keywords: Muslim entrepreneurs; Russia; migration; Islam; new institutionalism

Introduction

Millions of migrants from non-Slavic and Muslim countries, such as Central Asia and Azerbaijan, have a visible presence in many Russian cities today. Migration en masse from visa-free countries in the former Soviet Union has brought cheap labor to Russia but has been met with growing xenophobia and Islamophobia. Russian society has proved itself unprepared for such a large number of migrants, and government policies are either nonexistent or outright abusive.[1] In the context of a weak migration infrastructure and harsh legal provisions for migrants, other forms of regulations and orders have evolved to help migrants solve problems and meet basic needs.

Islam has become an important domain in which migrants find comfort and protection free from racism and police abuse. These "Muslim orders," following the definition of what I earlier refer to as "micro-orders" (Turaeva 2013, 278) provide space and opportunities to network, find employment and housing, and address other needs, such as education, health care, and social support, that extend beyond the spiritual and moral comfort of religious community. In the context of absent or dysfunctional states (at home and in the host country), religious authorities and Muslim leaders have filled in the gaps (Turaeva 2013). Their initiatives offer space for individual Muslim actors to create institutions that can accommodate Muslim migrants. Muslim migrants appreciate these efforts by Islamic authorities and leaders, but they are also critical of the motivations and principles the same leaders follow. Migrants have a more critical opinion about the officially recognized religious

authorities (mainly Imams in official mosques) who make use of the political, economic, and social advantages that come along with having power over Muslim spaces (e.g., controlling informal economies, generating informal income from services and halal economies, accessing various business opportunities in the Arab world, and accepting nontransparent cash flows). Complaints from migrants have led to the fragmentation of Islamic authority and religious communities along the lines of ethnicity as well as divisions between migrant and nonmigrant Muslim populations. Individual members of the community play a crucial role in the formation and fragmentation of Muslim spaces and Muslim communities in Moscow (Turaeva 2018a).

Muslim entrepreneurs are crucial to the formation of Muslim communities and the character of the institutions structuring Muslim orders, which can be defined as a regularized system of norms and practices that guide economic, social, political, and spiritual engagement. Elsewhere, I show how Muslim orders create an imagined community of Muslims in Moscow through norms and practices institutionalized in daily lives (Turaeva 2018a). These orders encompass spaces where institutions, organizations, and political actors operate according to an alternative system that governs the Muslims and non-Muslims who inhabit them. Places where Muslims meet, learn, pursue economic projects, and socialize include mosques, *medresses* (Muslim theological schools), cafés, offices, buildings, halal businesses (cafés, food production, cattle farming, shops, and religious healers), NGOs, clubs, and virtual spaces.

The empirical basis of this article is ethnographic fieldwork, primarily among female migrants in Moscow, and the material contains analysis of networks, actors, discourses, and practices that constitute Muslim spaces, such as healing rooms, prayer rooms, home-school groups, and trade networks. The central case studies presented are trading networks and the healing practices of *Hijama* (wet cupping). While these examples do not present a complete picture of Muslims in Moscow, they do show forms of organization of daily social, economic, and political lives. The institutions highlighted (norms and patterns around trade networks and healing services) also show the role of Muslim entrepreneurs who maintain these spaces and networks and who take an active part in their formation and transformation.

The article draws both on the theoretical traditions of institutionalists (DiMaggio and Powell 1991) and on action theorists such as Garfinkel and Goffman (Garfinkel 1964; Hammersley 2018) to highlight the changing character of institutions and the diversity of actors involved in the creation and maintenance of them. The theoretical argument advanced here is that it is important to take a process-based approach to the analysis of institutions and actors. This can be accomplished by paying attention to the interaction of individuals as they navigate through daily life within Muslim spaces in Moscow. A starting point for such an analysis, following such authors as Garfinkel and Goffman, is to study procedures created by the actions, interactions, and experiences of actors within these spaces.

Following the new institutional economists' suggestion to pay closer attention to the embedded character of institutions and actors within their local contexts (Olivier de Sardan 2013), this article analyzes the institutional setting of religious belonging of migrants in Moscow. Drawing on multiple sociological and anthropological traditions of social practice theories, performative action, and production of social orders, it is a fruitful exercise to analyze institutions and actors without falling into static or causal explanations of the rules of the game. The dynamic character of institutional change involving a diversity of actors hinges on interactions among them in shaping empirical realities such as the Muslim orders.

The article is structured to unpuzzle the dynamic of institutional change through analyses of two case studies. First, it outlines the relevant literature on migration and Islam in Russia to locate the current research and indicate gaps and directions for further research. Second, an overview of relevant theoretical paradigms further provides an analytical framework for the empirical material presented. Third, the concluding remarks outline the arguments. The study finds that the failure of Russia's migration policies and the mass migration of Muslims to Russia created a context where Muslim orders accommodated alternative spaces of belonging for Muslim migrants.

Muslim Migrant Communities in Non-Muslim Countries: An Academic Debate

The means by which migrants in hostile receiving societies organize their lives as ethnic communities through informal institutions has been researched for decades (Gordon 1964; Portes and Böröcz 1989; Dietz 2004; Moldenhawer 2005; Kil and Silver 2006; Riccio 2008). Within this literature, a growing scholarly interest on migrants in Russia is evident (Laruelle 2007; Agadjanian and Zotova 2012; Schenk 2013; Ryazantsev 2014; Ryazantsev et al. 2014; Urinboev 2016). This interest first focused on immigration and assimilation and later shifted to issues of multicultural diversity related to labor migration, migration politics, and other topics. The late 1990s saw a transnational turn in the research on migrant communities and networks when scholars began looking beyond national borders and the formation of diasporas abroad to analyses of mutual influence of migrant sending and receiving countries (Taylor 1999; Faist 2000; Meyer 2001; Vertovec 2006; Wimmer and Schiller 2003; Levitt and Schiller 2004). Studies examining the role of religion in transnational migrant networks and diasporic engagement focused initially on Christian migrants in the West (Hagan and Ebaugh 2003; Levitt 2003; Levitt and Schiller 2004), but the literature has grown to include analyses of Muslim migrant communities in Western and Eastern Europe (Ahmed 1992; Vertovec and Peach 1997; Abu Lughod 2002; Salih 2013; Elbasani and Tošić 2017).

Scholars studying religious migrant communities have analyzed the role of religion in the social, economic, and political lives of migrants and the means by which these interactions have created systems of belonging as alternatives to national or civic identity. Religious communities formed their own systems of practices, support networks, institutions, hierarchies, norms, and beliefs. These studies focus on the transnational connections of community members in both receiving and sending countries using network analysis or space theories to frame their research (Vertovec and Peach 1997; Levitt 2001; Schiller and Caglar 2010).

The scholarly engagement with contemporary Islam in Russia is increasing, focusing on the regions in Russia where Muslims constitute most of the indigenous populations, for example, in Tatarstan and the North Caucasus (Laruelle 2007; Sabirova 2011; Knysh 2012; Bustanov and Kemper 2013; Garipova 2013; Malashenko 2014; Bustanov 2017; Rubin 2018). There is well-established literature on the history of Islam and Sufism in Russia (Frank 1998; Knysh 2002, 2010; Bukharaev 2004; Kefeli 2015)

Crews (2003, 2006) produced a particularly interesting study of the interface between Islam and Christianity, including the relationship between the Russian government and Muslim religious leaders. Other works focus on security issues such as Islamic extremism and political Islam in Russia (Jonson and Esenov 1999; Shlapentokh 2008; Dannreuther and March 2010; Laruelle 2010; Markedonov 2013; Hunter 2016) and on the regulation of Islam and Islamic movements in Russia (Bukharaev 1996; Yemelianova 2002, 2003, 2009; Pilkington and Yemelianova 2003; Aitamurto 2016). Yemelianova (2003, 2009, 2013) and Knysh (2010, 2012) provide a detailed and insightful study of Islam in Central Asia and Russia. Yet the interaction between migration and an Islamic religious "revival" in Russia has not been discussed.

Ethnographic research on Islam in Russia is a growing new field (Crews 2014; Oparin 2017; Tolz 2017; Benussi 2018; Turaeva 2018a, b; Di Puppo and Schmoller 2019). It has recently produced several insightful publications that highlight local discourses about national definitions and concepts of traditional and nontraditional Islam in Russia (Benussi 2018; Di Puppo and Schmoller 2019). Ethnographic studies of Islam in Russia focus on the political and national discourses among indigenous Muslims such as Tatars and Chechens and are predominantly oriented toward Sufi traditions of Islam.

Little research has been conducted on the role of Islam among Muslim migrants in Russia. This article not only contributes to the nascent body of ethnographic research on Muslim migrants in Russia but also engages with the theoretical debate on agency and institutions (mainly informal institutions) to show the role of individual Muslim actors, particularly entrepreneurs, in the process of formation and maintenance of these norms. Furthermore, it contributes to the body of literature on Muslim migrants in non-Muslim countries by offering an analysis of the microdynamics of institutionalization that constitute Muslim orders in Moscow. A dynamic approach to these processes involves following the routes and networks that emanate outward from mosques and other locations

in Moscow where Muslim migrants navigate through both Muslim and non-Muslim opportunity networks. I focus on individual agency and Muslim entrepreneurs in Moscow to detail the dynamic process of formation and transformation of Muslim orders in Moscow.

Institutions and Muslim Entrepreneurs

The concept of institutions has gone through decades of wide-ranging debates in classical economics, political science, sociology, and only later in anthropology. The old institutional economics created a static picture of how institutions constrain human agency, whereas new institutional economics take individual actors and their agency into account to explain institutional change (Kanbur and Ostrom 2006). Critical discussion of new institutional economics pointed out the limitations of the original models and theories due to a lack of systematic analysis of informal rules and formalistic interpretation of culture, which created an insufficient empirical basis for the causal models and economic calculations (Weyland 2002; Helmke and Levitsky 2004; Olivier de Sardan 2013). The new institutional economics characterizes actors as rational beings who act on the basis of maximizing output and minimising input logic. Some recent scholars further recognize the agency of individuals and their impact in institutional work.

The term "institution" is often used to refer to organizations, legal entities, or other groups such as families, political parties, or corporations. The definition offered by Ostrom (1999, 23) instead refers "to the shared concepts used by humans in repetitive situations organized by rules, norms, and strategies," where rules are "shared prescriptions (must, must not, or may) that are mutually understood and predictably enforced in particular situations by agents responsible for monitoring conduct and for imposing sanctions." Norms are "shared prescriptions that tend to be enforced by the participants themselves through internally and externally imposed costs and inducements," and strategies are "regularized plans that individuals make within the structure of incentives produced by rules, norms, and expectations of the likely behavior of others in a situation affected by relevant physical and material conditions."

However, Olivier de Sardan (2013, 288) notes that even the new institutional economics leave certain important questions unanswered because it is not clear "on the basis of what type of data the rules of the game, particularly the informal ones, will be decided, on what 'values' they might be founded, to what extent they could be shared, or through what mechanisms they might operate." Drawing on Goffman and Garfinkel, Olivier de Sardan (2013, 290) offers a methodological way forward by suggesting that "informal norms are . . . the product of daily interactions resulting in a set of routines, cognitive scripts, practical reasoning, practices, classifications, frames of reference, procedures and categorization, of varied temporal scope, and depth." This article takes these very practices as its empirical material to analyze the foundations on which the Muslim orders migrants in Moscow operate.

The meaning of the term "institution" as is used here is not strictly defined but rather puzzled in an attempt to understand it better. The enquiry into the meaning or forms of institutions considered here provides important clues for better understanding the term in the context of Muslim orders. During this enquiry into the processes of constitution and transformation of institutions, the combination of the phenomenological approach promoted by Garfinkel and Goffman and the work of action theorists is applied. A more dynamic definition of institution embraced by those new institutionalists who moved away from formalistic views on rules, norms, and culture allows for diversity and change and welcomes process-based approaches (DiMaggio 1988; DiMaggio and Powell 1991; Olivier de Sardan 2013; Garfinkel, Rawls, and Lemert 2016). Institutions are not seen as static but rather as dynamic, reflective orders resulting from continuous strategic and symbolic interaction by actors. Garfinkel, Rawls, and Lemert (2016,107) define actors as "animal symbolicum," who are not a priori vested with given values but rather who are active interpreters of their encounters with others, creating a dynamic basis for the institutions created by repeated interactions. Battilana and D'Aunno (2009, 39) draw attention to the environment of incomplete institutionalisation (Tolbert and Zucker 1996) where actors are particularly active in institutional

work and in creating new institutions. Rules and norms play an important part in the way institutions work. How are the rules formed and norms established and maintained?

Rules and Norms

Throughout their work, Garfinkel, Rawls, and Lemert (2016) argue that rules are not simply tools to be borrowed and applied. Further, rules are not necessarily used with a priori reflections about future action in mind. This thinking implies that the starting point of analysis should not be on the psychology of actors. Rather, inquiry should begin with the interactions in which actors are engaged, followed by a consideration of the types of continuous participation that create practices. With this focus, an analyst can consider what results from a particular exchange, how these interactions repeat to create practices, and how actors reflect on and discuss their experiences. These frames of knowledge- and information-sharing practices interact with existing rules that are fluid rather than static and that are in a constant process of making and remaking. Garfinkel, Rawls, and Lemert (2016, 105) are critical of scholars who are bound by uncovering systematic patterns of rules and norms that predict actors' decision-making, stating, "The scientist is always interested in interpreting the subject's action with reference to some analytical scheme, within the purpose of predicting the regularities of the subject's flow of experience. The scientist is faced constantly with the problem of testing his model against a batting average of successful predictions. This means he must take the subject as he finds him."

Rather than imposing an artificial construct on Muslim migrants and the orders and institutions that mark their everyday lives in Moscow, I follow Garfinkel and Goffman in their thinking about rules as repeated symbols and meaning that are negotiated on a daily basis. I argue that Islam is not static with fixed rules; rather, it is a symbolic, flexible reference point for people as they negotiate with one another in the processes of daily living, discussing, practicing or not practicing, learning, and simply attending religious activities. Trust and religion play a crucial role in the verbal agreements that replace formal contracts, especially for entrepreneurs who operate within Muslim orders in Moscow. Trust is established as a result of numerous exchanges, interactions, and experiences. Informal agreements are negotiated daily and are enforced by drawing on obligations that derive from and are negotiated through kinship relations and friendships based on trust or mutual dependencies of various kinds (Turaeva 2013).

Moral codes are shared and negotiated whereas those codes and rules structure Muslim orders in Moscow. Imams in particular participate in the process of meaning-making in their role as religious authorities, reinforcing that Muslim orders begin at the mosque and emanate outward into other spheres of life. Imams work to create an authoritative moral framework by defining and interpreting core concepts such as justice and peace. Yet these frameworks and codes not only are modified during interactions within the community but also are renegotiated in light of changing statuses of religious leadership and followers.

The institutional framework offered by mosque communities becomes crucial for any entrepreneurial activity because an Imam can provide authoritative mediation in case of conflicts. Religious networks create opportunity structures for financial services and transnational capital mobility. These networks are considered safe because of shared beliefs and morals and are often used as trusted routes for transferring remittances and for other investments (Weber 1930; Laqueur 1976; Vogel and Hayes 1998; Inglis 2007).

Muslim entrepreneurs appeal to various sources of authority[2] to regulate their informal economic lives and maintain their trust networks (Tilly 2004, 2005; Turaeva 2014). These include Islamic and non-Islamic beliefs and rules, culturally-laden moral codes, and other kinship and social rules. For example, fear of dying with debt is often used as leverage in various agreements. The discourses on debt between Muslim migrants and Muslim entrepreneurs demonstrate how religious and nonreligious reasoning is used to address financial problems. Attitudes toward debt are often embedded in the belief that God stops looking after people who are in debt.[3] Appealing to God

is a common way of moralizing one's behavior and disciplining the activities of others. Citing real life experiences to justify different procedures of mutual exchange, whether economic or social, also seems to be an important element in communication, further indicating the fluidity of rules and norms in the process of institutionalization and regularization of social and economic exchange among Muslim migrants in Moscow. These and other strategies are complex and need more systematic research. There are numerous variables at play in the processes of negotiation, institutionalization of new rules and relations, status maintenance, and formation of trust networks. Historical state and institutional developments in the region, current economic and political factors, and other issues directly impact the everyday life of Muslim entrepreneurs. These forces, coupled with the currents of globalization shared via modern communication technologies and traditional means of sharing information and knowledge, establish frames of ordering or reordering the micro-orders (Turaeva 2014) in which Muslim entrepreneurs operate and live.

The literature on governance of informal institutions or governance outside state legal systems is well established and covers many of the aspects present in the Muslim orders discussed here, such as migrants' transnational economic networks, informal economies, and informal institutions. Meagher (2009, 400) analyzes "new forms of economic order in the context of state decline" and gives several examples, such as the Somalian stateless economy, Islamic *hawala* (informal value transfer systems) networks in Dubai, and "the Islamic trading networks of the Mouride brotherhoods." Meagher (2009, 402) notes: "Studies of Islamic as well as Christian religious networks highlight their role in introducing strict moral norms, a range of efficient commercial institutions, and a tendency to operate across communal and class boundaries, contributing to processes of accumulation and social cohesion in a context of intense hardship and social disruption."

Djelic and Sahlin-Andersson (2006) discuss regulation and reordering of transnational space and suggest moving beyond a state-centric understanding of rulemaking where governments are the primary creators of rules. I suggest further that looking at rules from the perspective of those who either follow or do not follow state laws helps elucidate other potential perspectives on rule making. By analyzing a context where the state does not consider itself responsible for migrants and fails to integrate these noncitizens into the labor market and social security and health systems, we can begin to see how migrants create alternatives.

Muslim Orders

Muslim orders are not regulated by any one single actor but rather are continuously reinforced as a result of daily interaction, as Garfunkel (1964) and others argue and are similar to Bourdieu's concept of "habitus." During fieldwork in Moscow, I realized that there are primary topics of interest among Muslim migrants that are esteemed and relevant for daily survival. Issues that are especially salient in discussions among migrants are economic survival (earning money to live and send home), education (for children in particular), safety from police, legal documentation, health and well-being, provisions for death and returning bodies home, and socializing. An encounter with a young Kazakh woman in a mosque illustrates the faith that many of these problems can be solved within Muslim spaces: She asked me if I was a Kyrgyz and if I spoke Russian. I replied that I am Uzbek from Uzbekistan and was new to the mosque. She said, "I just came from the train station directly to the mosque as I have no money, no documents, no contacts, and no family here. I bought a train ticket to Moscow and came straight here. I think Muslims, our sisters and brothers, will not leave me on the streets and will help me to find a job, a bed [*koyku*], and some money.[4] While our further contact via WhatsApp eventually quieted my initial shock and worry for this woman, when I asked why she went to the mosque, she said, "Where else [would I go]?"

Mosques and *medresses* are where initial contacts are made in Moscow. These centers of Muslim life connect outward to other locations that offer space for healing, doing business, and socializing with other migrants. Sometimes, the activities in these other locations have nothing to do with Islam, yet they act as an umbrella under which Muslims of various ethnicities can meet.

Both online and offline, in cafés and prayer halls, in offices and homes, and even on the streets, one experiences networks and economic niches in Moscow that are inhabited and maintained by Muslims. There are Internet chat boards, discussion forums, trading sites for Islamic products and services, space for singles to meet, announcement boards, etc. In mosques, communities are formed through regular meetings, discussion circles, and trade networks. Several Muslim centers in Moscow are interconnected, providing clubs and schools where members know one another and participate in diverse projects. When I visited these centers, both at peak and at break times, a lively atmosphere filled rooms of women and corridors active with children and men. For migrant children, an increasing number of whom live in Moscow, religious schools offer them not only a chance to learn but also an opportunity to widen their social networks and improve their quality of life as they interact with other children during school breaks in summer camps organized by the Muslim centers. I was told by a teacher from an informal school for Muslims in Moscow that their students perform better in high school and continue onto higher education more often than those who do not participate in religious education. Moreover, these schools offer children spaces safe from discrimination and other perceived ills that migrants imagine exist in the outside world dominated by non-Muslim ethics.

Sharing halal food in cafés, socializing, and maintaining networks make up the daily interactions that constitute the dynamic atmosphere of Muslim orders and institutions. Most migrants work long hours, six days a week, to send home as much money as possible, leaving limited time for socializing. To save money on the high living costs in Moscow, anywhere between 3 and 15 people may share a small apartment room, making locations for socializing all the more valuable. Networks, businesses, and offices run and administered by migrants offer similar meeting places to halal cafés, mosques, and schools but in a more limited manner.

Health and medical services are as important as education and economic opportunities for most migrants in Moscow. Many have no access to medical services, leaving them on their own to stay healthy amid unsanitary working and living environments, harsh weather conditions, long working hours, and with poor nutrition. Religious healing and informal medical services provide an alternative for migrants to meet basic health needs. Islamic healing has become a popular method among both practicing and nonpracticing Muslim migrants in Moscow as evidenced by a proliferation of *Hijama* practitioners in Russia.

Healing, employment or income generation, education, housing, and spiritual refuge or mental support are some of the most important needs that are accommodated through institutionalized interactions in Islamic networks, communities, mosques, cafés, and spaces in Moscow. Various forms and norms structure these Muslim spaces in Russia, forming Muslim orders of different kinds. Below I show how these networks emanate from mosques and give examples of two contrasting spaces—trade networks and *Hijama* practices—that demonstrate how norms are created and reinforced by their participants.

The Mosque as a Center for Networking

The mosque is seen by many attendees as the ideal space for spiritual and moral encouragement. It is also used to produce a divine endorsement of economic and social activities. Mosques offer Muslims opportunities and space where security, comfort, networks, contacts, and social relationships can be found. Attendees are diverse and range from devout Muslims to those who come to the mosque out of economic interest or to find help securing employment, housing, and documents (for example, registration forms and work permits). These types of assistance are not available to migrants through the formal state welfare system in Russia, and nonstate sources, such as civil society organizations or Islamic foundations, are limited.

On Fridays, mosques are filled beyond capacity and during the rest of the weekend only slightly less so. On workdays, fewer women attend, though weekday services offer women who are working on weekends an opportunity to participate in services and social engagement. The women's prayer

hall in Moscow's Sobornaya mosque is an ideal place for creating community because it is at once huge and yet cozier than others I have visited. In the Sobornaya mosque, some women attend in traditional clothing, such as a hijab, while others wear modern clothing with scarves. Still others arrive in tight trousers and change into a borrowed hijab and long gown at the entrance.

While some women leave the mosque as soon as prayers are finished, many others remain, eating the dates and sweets that were distributed before prayers as a form of *sadaqa* (almsgiving). The liveliest time I observed was after the Friday prayers, when many women formed circles to talk, chat, exchange, and share. Joining these groups led me to two offices in Moscow that demonstrate continuity in terms of maintaining some connection to Islam and to religion in general but center on different projects that may have nothing to do with religion. In one of these settings, migrant women in professional attire discussed business and referred to the mosque as a good place to network and seek prosperity with God's blessing. In the private house of a devout Muslim healer, a completely different setting played out, where all aspects of family life were based on the rules of Islam, and Islamic healing was seen as the superior choice for all Muslim and non-Muslim patients. Below I discuss these places and share my reflections about my experiences.

From Mosque to Trade Networks

A group of women I met in the mosque were part of a network that sold food supplements using a pyramid scheme business model. Known in Russia as a *setevoy biznes* (a so-called network business), it became popular after the breakup of the Soviet Union. The business model features an internal advancement and incentive system to motivate people not only to sell products but also to recruit salespeople whose other networks will bring additional income, the logic being the more one sells and the more traders one recruits, the more profits are generated and passed up the pyramid.

The network of food supplement salespeople has an office located on the sixth floor of a large business center in the suburbs of Moscow. On arrival, someone from the office comes down and escorts you upstairs, past security. It is apparent from the entrance procedures with strict security protocols and from observing how visitors to the office are quite cautious that the company's operations are not entirely open.

The Kazakh woman I met in the mosque that introduced me to the business has been in Russia for 15 years. In the office, I sat at a table with Kyrgyz and Kazakh women, and as we chatted, it became clear that their main aim was to involve me in their sales structures so that I could widen their network with clients from Germany. The woman I met in the mosque explained that she goes to the mosque every week to recruit clients because "the type of people who come to the mosque won't trick you. You can trust them because they have a *chistaia dusha* (clean soul/heart)." She added that it is important to be able to trust those with whom you do business. She also reiterated several times that attending mosque every Friday is good for business because it is obvious to her that those who seek God are blessed with profits.

The atmosphere of the business office is professional, and its operations have nothing to do with religion or Islam. It is dominated by women, with only one or two men. The women who recruit their clients from the mosque are a minority; most women recruit their clients from their own networks.

Those who were recruited from the mosque had developed their own logic, routine, and norms that operated within the business model. Islamic values and beliefs were successfully accommodated and integrated into the values and norms of the office, such as the directive to sell and recruit more and more. I was puzzled by what seemed to be contradictory understandings of honesty and giving, in particular the sense that the products are definitively advertised as something more than they are. One of the presentations, for example, charged customers to not eat chemically grown vegetables and fruits that would poison their bodies but to take the pills made by the company to stay healthy. During my time at the office, I translated a phone call from an Uzbek migrant

seemingly in despair because his wife had severe tuberculosis, but they could not afford treatment in Moscow. The man asked for pills that would help his wife, and the Kazakh salesperson said that indeed they had remedies for tuberculosis. This telephone conversation raised a moral dilemma for me because I was the translator and thus was closely involved. Each time I left the office I had similar dilemmas that are outside the scope of this article.

From Mosque to Hijama Treatment Rooms

I met a Chechen woman who practiced *Hijama* in her home through another young woman I encountered at a small mosque in the center of Moscow. The word *Hijama* is from the Arabic حجامة and means "sucking," or "wet cupping," where blood is drawn by vacuum from a small incision. This alternative healing and curative procedure is referred to in the Sunna and Hadith, where it is said that the Prophet used and recommended cupping for therapeutic purposes. The woman stressed the power of blood in her healing philosophy, though both the amount of blood and the potential pathogenic consequences of the procedure brought other concerns to my scientific mind. Though we had very different understanding of health, medicine, religion, and well-being, we could still find common ground on different topics related to physical and spiritual well-being.

My encounter with the healer took place spontaneously, as I had not set out to study healers or healing practices. During observations at the mosque, I mentioned I had a headache and was advised to go for a *Hijama* treatment. *Hijama* is popular within the Muslim community for a variety of ailments. A poster hanging in the café of a mosque I visited often offered an explanation of the procedure and provided information about available services. The poster showed an anatomical view of a body, with colored labels pointing to the head, back, extremities, and joints where common pains occur. There was a brief description of the *Hijama* treatment, a list of ailments it can heal, and telephone numbers of separate *Hijama* practitioners for women and men who could treat patients at home. The prices were not indicated on the poster, though I was informed that the costs are common knowledge within the Muslim community and are based on the level of complication of the health problem. The healer I visited indicated that because healing is done in the name of Allah, she does not ask for money. She claimed it is a sin to ask for money for things given by Allah and that a healer is generally dedicated to heal other Muslims to do good things for them. Payment for services is instead framed as a small donation to cover expenses.

I followed the advice of the woman in the mosque, and we went together to the healer's three-room flat where she lived with her 12 children; the flat had a tiny kitchen full of large cooking pots and sacks of rice, flour, and other products. The healer's husband was not at home, and the children made for a lively atmosphere. While we occupied the kitchen, most of the children played in the living room, which doubled as their sleeping space. The *Hijama* practitioner had little formal education because she was married at age 16 and had her first child at age 17. She had learned *Hijama* from her husband several years prior and now offers her services to female clients. She also uses the treatment on her children if they get sick so she can avoid going to a doctor. When she showed me her five-year-old son's back where the traces of scars from cuts from *Hijama* were visible, I became concerned about what my scars would look like if I were to agree to become her patient. I also voiced my concern about the pain involved in the procedure, and she again brought in her five-year-old son to tell me that *Hijama* is not painful.

The woman explained that healing is based on the Sunna and therefore has a faith-based component in addition to the physiological effect of ridding the capillaries of bad blood. The bad blood, she explained, is the source of many diseases. Renewal of the blood, according to her, allows for the renewal of the body into a healthier and cleaner state. She tried to convince me that science-based medicine claims to treat one symptom but in so doing damages other functions, leaving people sicker than they were before seeing the doctor.

As an Islamic healing practitioner, this woman found her economic niche in a context where migrants have limited access to health care. For a strict follower of Islam who sees her healing

practices not only as an economic opportunity but also as part of her devotion to Islam, the niche is both economic and spiritual. Whereas the Muslim business women in the first case study do not integrate Islamic rules into their economic endeavors—they use mosques and other gathering places of Muslims as a venue for recruiting clients—the *Hijama* practitioner integrates her relationship with Islam into her healing practices.

Islamic medical networks go beyond *Hijama* healers to include migrant doctors who practice their profession in Moscow or work in other areas (for example, as taxi drivers, laborers, etc.) and who also privately offer their services to sick migrants. Though medical insurance policies are required for migrants to obtain work permits, in practice the policies do not cover basic medical services. This leaves migrants vulnerable to health problems that are often made worse by tight living quarters (for example, having to share an old bathroom with numerous other migrants, not having access to a washing machine). In this context, private medical practitioners from Central Asia and *Hijama* healers have found their economic niches within the informal economy of medical services among Muslim patients. This informal economy functions on the basis of networks created as a result of increasingly popular Muslim spaces such as large new mosques, *medresses*, NGOs, Muslim clubs and cafés, and a range of official, semiofficial, and informal places in Moscow. These spaces provide a context for systematic and continuous interaction of Muslim migrants, where rules of conduct and norms are negotiated and socioeconomic lives are institutionalized.

Muslim entrepreneurs have found markets for their economic activities in mosques, where they can find large concentrations of potential clients. These Muslim entrepreneurs actively take part in the institutional work that creates opportunities for migrants such as affordable products and services (food, healing, child care, jobs, contacts, documents, housing). These economic services and activities are often unofficial in terms of licenses, tax registration, and legal documents; they also may not be visible to an average gaze. But they provide an effective alternative for migrants who would otherwise be relegated to the periphery of society. Muslim entrepreneurs play a crucial role in institutional change and the formation of rules, networks, and work conduct. Agreements and social and economic exchanges are based on trust rather than on contracts or other formal legally binding tools. In the absence of legal mechanisms for sanctioning violators, regulating and administrating the economic activities of Muslim entrepreneurs rely on shared obligations and expectations. These moral codes provide an alternative system of sanctioning those that violate the trust, loyalty, religious beliefs, collective identification, kinship obligations, and other duties and responsibilities within Muslim orders.[5]

Conclusions

In this article, Muslim spaces and institutions have been presented through analyses of the two case studies of trade networks and *Hijama* to provide examples of how the daily lives of Muslims are institutionalized in the non-Muslim urban setting of Moscow. Besides its empirical contribution, the article engaged with the theoretical discussion of institution formation and the ways they operate, more closely following the critical approaches of new institutional economics. Following the critique of new institutional economists, I demonstrated the embedded character of institutions and actors within their local contexts (Olivier de Sardan 2013) by focusing on Muslim orders in Moscow. The theoretical argument advanced here engages with the dynamic character of institutional change, with its diversity of actors that retains the importance of individuals in shaping processes that reflect the current empirical realities described.

I have shown that amid mass migration of Muslims from Central Asia and the North and South Caucasus, alternative systems of belonging driven by nonstate actors are becoming increasingly relevant. Russia's migration policies focus on controlling migrants, and the government uses the "migration card" for negotiating politics with sending countries and for image making at home. In light of this, a social security system for migrants in Russia does not exist. Rights, labor protection, and services like medical care and education are generally not available to migrants through official

channels because most are not able to obtain valid registration documents. This has led to a precarious existence where migrants have to live in overcrowded flats with unsanitary conditions and face violence and discrimination by security officials, employers, and the general Slavic population. Migrants are left on their own to survive exploitation, abuse, violence, and discrimination as they work to sustain themselves and the families they left behind.

Islam has become a crucial space to provide comfort and protection from the racism and police abuse migrants experience on a daily basis. In addition to spiritual and moral comfort, Muslim orders not only regularize and organize the daily lives and survival of Muslim migrants in Moscow but also create opportunities for them to network and find employment as well as provide basic services and needs, such as education, health care, and social support.

Although Russia's police state uses any and all means to keep an iron hold over Islam, Muslim spaces are diverse and accommodate informal or unauthorized forms of Islamic services, religious structures of authority, educational systems, healing practices, economic networks, social welfare structures, and other institutions. Mosques are central to these spaces, where formal structures intermingle with informal networks and institutions, blurring boundaries between official and unofficial as Muslim orders are produced and reproduced for both migrants and other Muslims. Muslim entrepreneurs and migrants find opportunities and economic niches that allow them to make a living, stay healthy, and socialize with others who share the same values and concerns.

Rules and norms within Muslim orders follow principles and moral codes drawn from Islam and other sources. A closer look into the various paths taken from mosques to cafés, business offices, and healing rooms, such as those used for *Hijama*, shed light on invisible institutions that have been established. Economic niches in trade, health services, and gastronomy highlight the importance of networks, mosques, cafés and other gathering places for Muslims to solve the daily problems of survival in Moscow, such as accessing health care, food, housing, and employment. The empirical material presented indicates there is a diversity of actors, places, motivations, and discourses about and beyond Islam actively constituting and transforming Muslim orders in Moscow. Individual actors and their interpretations of Islam contribute to fluid and flexible rhythms that are institutionalized through daily interactions. The implications of these findings are wide-reaching and set the context for further systematic research on the definition and interpretation of Islam by Muslim migrants in the context of post-Soviet Islam and post-Soviet life of Muslims in Russia.

Notes

1 On June 13, 2012, President Vladimir Putin approved a national concept for migration policies that highlighted major problems and laid out plans to improve language skills and legalize migration (it estimated that 3–5 million migrants were working illegally in Russia). The report (available in Russian, at http://government.ru/info/20224/) is titled *On the Concept of State Migration Policy of the Russian Federation for the Period until 2025.*

2 There is a lacuna of literature on authority and power, religious authority, and the role of authority in Islam (Lambek 1990; Long 2017; Bano and Benadi 2018). However, the focus of this article is not to analyze the formation, negotiation, contestation, and fragmentation of religious authority but rather to look into the mechanisms of work performed by individual Muslims that contribute to the institutionalization of Muslim orders or spaces structured by Muslim networks.

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3 References to God and debt vary, but they have broad similarities during negotiations and sharing knowledge about mutual exchange.
4 Fieldnote, April 2017, Moscow.
5 There are in-depth studies of alternative systems of regulation outside state legal systems (Nazpary 2002; Turaeva 2013) and an established scholarship based on legal anthropology (von Benda-Beckmann 1981; von Benda-Beckmann and Pirie 2007; von Benda-Beckmann, von Benda-Beckmann, and Eckert 2009).

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