

VORTRAGSREIHE DES INSTITUTS FÜR ETHNOLOGIE

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Trajectories of Muslim Orders in Russia (Habil-Vortrag)

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Abstract

Central Asian migration to Russia, by predominantly Muslim migrants, is a multifaceted journey to a both familiar and unfamiliar destination where migration networks are built up through decades of migration since the Soviet period. Migrants' trajectories are shaped by diverse motivations, life projects and aspirations about life style, faith, and belonging. In Russian cities, where the political and social context is often hostile to migrants, the doors of mosques—open to all—lead migrants down varied life paths, intertwining work, spirituality, and support networks. These spaces within "Muslim Orders" offer both safety and a sense of familiarity, but they guide individuals to vastly different social roles and spiritual journeys. This creates an intricate web of resilience, trust, and survival, highlighting the diversity of experiences and the growing importance of faith in navigating life in a migrant-unfriendly environment.

Within these "Muslim Orders," informal networks provide vital connections between migrants, helping them navigate the challenges of life in a predominantly non-Muslim society. These orders accommodate and reshape not only religious practice and individual trajectories of all Muslim migrants but also offer spaces for security and trust. Yet, the divergent trajectories within Muslim orders reflect the migrants' diverse experiences: some find upward mobility and stability, while others remain trapped in precarious, uncertain living and survival modus. This web of experiences reflects the complex realities of Muslim life in Russia, where faith, work, and survival are deeply intertwined.

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