

Official Discourse on Islam and Islamic Discourse in Contemporary Russia

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Abstract

This paper considers intertextuality between official discourse on Islam and Islamic discourse in contemporary Russia. This divide between discourses transmitted by government agencies and Russian Muslim leaders allows for an analysis of the differences and similarities between them. A major goal of this paper is to identify the origins of these modern discourses on Islam. To this end, it examines analytical parliamentary papers and transcripts of parliamentary meetings, but also expert materials from the Russian media and results of public opinion polls, in order to demonstrate how the idea of ‘fighting Islam’ flows across discourses to become a dominant discourse in the Russian political sphere. Analysis of Russian Muslim leaders’ rhetoric demonstrates close semantic connections with government discourse (not just on Islam), insofar as their rhetoric is full of conceptual metaphors indicating loyalty to the ruling elite.

Key words: Islam in Russia, image of Islam, Islam, sociology of Islam

There are two opposing trends associated with perceptions of Islam in the modern Russian public sphere. The first relates to the positive image of ‘traditional Islam’, one of the four ‘traditional’ religions of Russia – alongside Russian Orthodox Christianity, Buddhism and Judaism. The second is the widespread belief in Islam’s militant nature and its inseparability from the activities of extremist organizations around the world. The latter view has contributed to the development

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of negative stereotypes about Islam, leading to increased social tension in Russia's multi-ethnic and multi-religious society. This element of Islamophobia dominates a range of discursive genres in modern Russia: the journalistic, the governmental and even the scientific.

This paper looks at how the official discourse on Islam is currently being constructed. Official here means as transmitted by government institutions and statesmen. Analysis of discursive dynamics and changes allows the major categories and opinions promoted by the authorities or structures close to them to be identified. They tend to be repeated by the expert community and media, finally becoming firmly entrenched in public opinion. An example is the 'friend-enemy' dichotomy, frequently deployed in analyses of matters related to Islam.

Because of their many shared features, no examination of contemporary Russian governmental discourse would be complete without an analysis of contemporary official Islamic discourse in Russia. By official Islamic discourse we mean statements by Russian muftiates, the largest religious organizations representing the Muslim communities in the country. The rhetoric of the leaders of Russia's muftiates is characterized by a high level of intertextuality that indicates close semantic connections with governmental discourse (not just about Islam). Their rhetoric abounds in conceptual metaphors indicating loyalty to the ruling elite. Official Islamic discourse also offers us a better understanding of the use of the 'good' vs. 'bad' Islam dichotomy in Russia.

A major goal of this paper is to identify the origins of contemporary discourse on Islam in Russia. It includes analysis of analytical papers from Parliament and transcripts of parliamentary meetings. It also examines expert materials in the Russian media and the results of several public opinion polls to demonstrate the flow of the idea of 'fighting Islam' across discursive fields and its success in dominating the Russian political sphere.

This paper argues that official Islamic discourse in Russia is a distorted reflection of the official government discourse on Islam. A rhetorical and semantic analysis of mufti Ravil Gaynutdin's¹ speeches illustrates this close relationship between official Islamic and government discourses.

The methodology applied in this paper is derived from the critical discourse analysis (CDA) theory of N. Fairclough. It is a text-oriented form of discourse analysis based on socio-linguistic methods and a deep interpretational approach. The central concept of Fairclough's theory is approaching language as a social phenomenon: discourse is a linguistic reflection of social practice. Fairclough notes that while all linguistic phenomena are social, not all social phenomena are

1 As a mufti of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the Russian Federation (DUM RF) and the Council of Muftis of Russia (SMR), Gaynutdin pretends to have leadership of the overall Russian Muslim community.

linguistic. He distinguishes three types of critique relevant to CDA: ideological, rhetorical and strategic critique. “Whereas ideological critique focuses on the effects of semiosis on social relations of power, and rhetorical critique on persuasion (including ‘manipulation’) in individual texts or talk, what we might call ‘strategic critique’ focuses on how semiosis figures within the strategies pursued by groups of social agents to change societies in particular directions.”² Different variants of critique allow us to analyse different levels of discourse. Thus, regulatory documents make it possible to reveal the structure of power relations through rhetorical figures in the speeches of politicians and public figures – the major political orientations in public space. An analysis of a broader context, including, for example, the activities of official religious organizations, allows us to establish how words are transformed into real actions.

Official Discourse on Islam: Major Trends

Western society was deeply influenced by the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001 in New York, which became a key event in the development of a negative image of Islam. The situation is different in Russia. Of course, the impact of the Anti-Extremism law passed in 2002 should not be underestimated. It made it easier to prosecute the adherents of ‘bad’ and ‘non-traditional’ religious organizations and movements, including Islamic ones. Yet a negative image of Islam was already widespread in Russia before 9/11 and the Anti-Extremism law was introduced. The Second Chechen War and, indirectly, the collapse of the Soviet Union played a crucial role in the development of this negative image of Islam in Russia. In the early 2000s, discussion about the leading role of the ‘external factor’ in the Caucasus conflict intensified.

The dominant image of the enemy has changed several times since then. The first ‘threat’ was connected with what was called the ‘export of Wahhabism.’ For example, a parliamentary analytical paper states that “after December 1994, Russia was for the first time openly confronted by terrorist actions of influential forces connected with the Islamic world.”³ The same report contains ideas about Muslim countries become active in financing various organizations of Russian Muslims. Saudi Arabia was declared enemy number one because it supported the largest number of foreign organizations and institutions: the Department of diplomatic missions in Islam, the World Islamic League and the Ministry of Islamic Affairs,

2 Fairclough N., *Critical discourse Analysis. The Critical Study of Language* (New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 509.

3 *Analiticheskiy vestnik* “Terrorizm v sovremennom mire: nekotorye fakty, organizatsii, prichiny” (chast’ II). Vyp. 38 [Analytical bulletin “Terrorism in Modern World: Some Facts, Organizations, Causes” (Part II). Vol. 38] (2001), <http://iam.duma.gov.ru/node/8/4606/16223>, accessed 25 September 2019.

numerous charity foundations, its allies in Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, and Pakistan, the General Intelligence Service, and the World Assembly of Islamic Youth, recruiting young people all over the world. The second most important external threat was the Muslim Brotherhood. Unlike the Saudis, its main target was not the Northern Caucasus but the republics of Central Asia. To emphasize the threat posed by such organizations, authors use military terminology, such as “the association’s weapons”, “agents”, and “they recruited students”. Finally, the authors draw conclusions about the “implementation of a grand plan against Russia”.

It is worth noting that members of Russia’s Muslim community were accused of having links with external forces. “From the beginning of the 1990s, North Caucasian nationalists, Sufis and local fundamentalists began to receive financial support from Muslim countries, as well as from international Islamist organizations and the Vainakh diaspora.” The approach of dividing Islam into ‘traditional Islam’ and ‘Wahhabism’ seemed dysfunctional to government experts, however. “One can only defeat fundamentalist Islam by relying on the forces of humanistic Islam. At the same time, the peacekeeping potential of religion is limited. (...) Islam as a political means for achieving inter-ethnic harmony has shown its limitations.”⁴

The idea of a ‘Wahhabi threat’ retains its potential to the present. As a concept, however, it contains serious contradictions. In the early 2000s, the use of the term ‘Wahhabism’ could somehow be justified on the grounds of social and political realities, as an ‘export version’ of the ideology was being distributed across the Northern Caucasus. Later the term was used in any case involving radicals associated with Islam and for all militants. Wahhabism was a religious and political doctrine in 18th-century Islam associated with Muhammad Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab at-Tamimi. Without going into the doctrine’s ideological features, one must be aware of one crucial feature: from the moment the Saudi state was created, Wahhabism has been its state ideology and as such this term is not applicable to the situation in the Northern Caucasus. How one should describe the activities of Islamic radical groups in the area requires thorough consideration. The notion of a ‘Wahhabi threat’ has taken root in modern Russian discourse on Islam, however, despite the inherent ambiguity of the term.

This confidence over the external nature of the Islamic threat presupposes three main ideas. First, that an inherent feature of certain Muslim organizations is their dependence on external sources of financial support, which automatically makes them ‘enemies of Russia’. Second, that Islam is associated with terrorism. Third, that this problem can be solved only by violent means. Since the early

4 *Analiticheskiy vestnik Problemy zakonodatel'nogo obespecheniia regional'noi bezopasnosti na Severnom Kavkaze. Vyp. 28 [Analytical bulletin. Problems of legislative provision of regional security in the North Caucasus. Vol. 28]* (2000), <http://iam.duma.gov.ru/node/8/4612/16255>, accessed 25 September 2019.

2000s, when the main enemy was the 'Ichkerian separatist', and since 2007, when this enemy was transformed into the Islamist from the 'Caucasus Emirate', these ideas have been very popular. They did not suffer even after 2009, when the counterterrorism operation was officially completed. Given continued reports from the Northern Caucasus about attacks on the authorities, the image of a threat remains strong, as does the idea that it is inspired by external factors.

Contemporary politics reflects these tendencies. For example, the *Counter-terrorism Plan*,⁵ a document setting out the basic principles of state policy in the field of counter-terrorism, contains a list of external factors "contributing to the emergence and spread of terrorism" that is almost twice as long as the internal ones. The document includes theses related to the financing of international terrorist organizations, the desire of "a number of foreign states to weaken the Russian Federation and its position in the world", the presence of sources of instability along the borders, and fighter camps in other states. The Plan clarifies that the process of countering terrorism includes three components: prevention, struggle and the elimination of consequences. In the section on counter-terrorism measures, special attention is paid to what is commonly called 'social and humanitarian counteraction to terrorism', while political, socio-informational, cultural and educational countermeasures are described. The plan was adopted in 2009. Amendments to the Federal Law on counter-terrorism,⁶ which addresses the prevention of terrorist activities, have not been passed. The Law is largely devoted to the role of the Armed Forces in counter-terrorist operations. Analysis of official discourse on Islam requires examples from the legal framework on counter-terrorism, insofar as they are 'symptomatic' of the current situation.

In the early 2000s, another form of external threat was defined, the 'liberal West': "Liberal western policy, mostly in France, Germany, Britain and the United States, has allowed extremists from the Middle East to create favorable conditions in Europe for their activities, and for expanding their influence."⁷ The liberal approach is also criticized in statements such as "The liberal educational policy adopted in the Arab states allowed young people from among the poor to receive education in colleges and universities that were influenced by the most conservative ideologues. As a result, they were easily drawn into the orbit of extremist movements."⁸

5 *Kontsepsiya protivodeistviya terrorizmu v Rossiiskoi Federatsii. Utverzhdena Prezidentom Rossiiskoi Federatsii D. Medvedevym 5 oktiabria 2009 goda* [Concept of countering terrorism in Russian Federation. Approved by President of Russian Federation D. Medvedev on October 5, 2009], Rossiyskaya gazeta. 20 October 2009.

6 *Federal'niy zakon ot 6 marta 2006 g. N 35-FZ "O protivodeistvii terrorizmu"* [Federal Law of March 6, 2006 N 35-FZ "On Countering Terrorism"].

7 *Analiticheskiy vestnik Terrorizm v sovremennom mire: nekotorye fakty, organizatsii, prichiny (chast' I). Vyp. 38* [Analytical bulletin. Terrorism in Modern World: Some Facts, Organizations, Causes (Part I). Vol. 38] (2001), <http://iam.duma.gov.ru/node/8/4607/16229>, accessed 25 September 2019.

8 *Analiticheskiy vestnik Terrorizm v sovremennom mire: nekotorye fakty, organizatsii, prichiny (chast' I). Vyp. 38*.

This problem is somewhat differently presented in the Duma speeches of V.V. Zhirinovskiy.⁹ Due to his orientalist education, he quite often refers to examples from the Islamic world. He advocates for the idea that the Muslim world has become a victim of Western aggression:¹⁰ “That’s what America is doing in front of our eyes – it mocks the Islamic world in general, and Iraq in particular, with which we had a friendship agreement, our workers worked there, and there was peace and quiet in this country.”¹¹ Zhirinovskiy considers Muslim countries to be strategic partners now adversely affected by Western countries. This idea further reinforces perception of the West as enemy.

Other variations of external threat relate to the activities of a number of specific international radical non-governmental organizations in Russia. One such is the *Hizb at-Tahrir al-Islami* organization. Founded in 1953 in Jerusalem, it positions itself as a pan-Islamist political organization and describes its ideology as Islamic and its aim as the re-establishment of the Islamic Caliphate to resume the Islamic way of life. By decision of Russia’s Supreme Court, it was declared a ‘terrorist movement’ in 2003. Descriptions of the organization’s activities tend to include, among other things, allusions to the external factor: “militant Islamist propaganda combined with intolerance towards other religions; active recruitment of supporters, purposeful work to split society (primarily through propaganda with strong financial support).”¹² This decision provoked a number of critical comments. Firstly, while *Hizb at-Tahrir* is a radical organization, experts nonetheless emphasize that it does not use violent methods to achieve its goals.¹³ Secondly, the active struggle that started after it was designated a terrorist organization is being waged against not just its members but Muslims with no link to radical activities. The loudest voices against the ‘legitimation of repression’ and ‘fabrication of criminal cases and torture’ were human rights organizations like the “Memorial” Human Rights Center, the Committee for “Civic Assistance”, the Institute of Human Rights and the “SOVA” Research Center.¹⁴

9 Vladimir Zhirinovskiy is a Russian politician, leader of nationalist *Liberal Democratic party of Russia*.

10 *Stenogramma zasedaniya 11 oktyabrya 2001 g.* [Transcript of meeting 11 October, 2001], Gosudarstvennaya Duma, <http://transcript.duma.gov.ru/node/1865/>, accessed 25 September 2019.

11 *Stenogramma zasedaniya 20 marta 2009 g., N 81 (1054)* [Transcript of meeting 20 March, 2009, No. 81 (1054)], Gosudarstvennaya Duma, <http://transcript.duma.gov.ru/node/372/>, accessed 25 September 2019.

12 “Reshenie VS RF o priznanii terroristicheskimi ryada inostrannykh organizatsii” [“Decision of Supreme Court about recognizing a number of foreign organizations as terrorist”], *Religare.ru*, 24 June, 2003, http://www.religare.ru/2_5347.html, accessed 25 September 2019.

13 “Malashenko: Moskve nuzhno osteregat’sia provokatsii v Krymu” [“Malashenko: Moscow needs to beware of provocations in Crimea”], *IslamNews*, 10 September, 2014, <http://www.islamnews.ru/news-432444.html>, accessed 25 September 2019.

14 “Vitaliy Ponomarev. “Spetssluzhby protiv islamskoi partii ‘Khizbut-Takhrir’” [“Vitaly Ponomarev. Intelligence agencies against the Islamic party “Hizbut-Tahrir”], *Informatsionno-analiticheskii tsentr “Sova”*, 8 February, 2005, <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/publications/2005/02/d3504/>, accessed 25 September 2019.

SOVA specialists have analysed the legal basis of Russian state action against social and religious organizations, including *Hizb al-Tahrir*. The head of SOVA, A. Verkhovskiy, says he is neither a “scholar of Islam” nor a “connoisseur of history”, just an analyst of law enforcement practice in Russia. SOVA’s main critique of these practices is that members of the organization are being prosecuted simply for being affiliated with it, so that “... the courts do not consider whether the nature of Hizb’s activities is extremist or terrorist; they refer only to the decision of the Supreme Court,” which indicates a lack of motivation. Verkhovskiy also stresses that “it is unlikely that the Russian Hizb groups are preparing for violent activities (if anyone has been preparing for them, they have been extremely unsuccessful).”¹⁵

In Russian public discourse, human rights organizations and their sympathizers are considered adherents of the same ‘hostile liberal West’ or a ‘fifth column,’ and, in light of recent legislative initiatives, as ‘foreign agents.’ The image of *Hizb at-Tahrir* as a ‘terrorist threat’ is spreading much more efficiently than any idea of it as a victim of the Russian political regime, as a result. Semen Bagdasarov is a popular expert and media figure who often focuses on the ‘threat’ represented by *Hizb at-Tahrir* to national security. After serving in Tajikistan during the 1994–1996 civil war, he began his political career, working at the Ministry of Commonwealth of Independent States Affairs. In 2007, he was elected to the State Duma (during the fifth convocation) as a member of the Spravedlivaya Rossiya party. In his speeches, he repeatedly addressed the topic of Islamic fundamentalism. More recently, he has positioned himself as an expert on the Middle East. Bagdasarov is convinced that the visa-free regime for “dubious allies within the Collective Security Treaty Organization” and immigrants from Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan poses the main current threat to Russia. They are the main reason for the emergence of groups such as *Hizb at-Tahrir* and the Islamic Party of Turkestan in Russia.¹⁶ Moreover, such organizations are associated with global jihad,¹⁷ a result of “serious reform” in the world of radical Islam. Bagdasarov also emphasizes the effectiveness of *Hizb at-Tahrir*’s ideological activities, which is why he stresses the need to “unleash ideological struggle.”¹⁸

15 Verkhovskiy A., “Yavlyaetsa li Khizbut-Takhrir ekstremistskoi organizatsiei?” [“Is Hizbut-Tahrir an extremist organization?”], *Informatsionno-analiticheskii tsentr “Sova”*, October, 2005, <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/publications/2005/10/d6036>, accessed 25 September 2019.

16 *Stenogramma zasedaniya 03 dekabrya 2008 g., N 58 (1031)* [Transcript of meeting 03 December, 2008, No. 58 (1031)], Gosudarstvennaya Duma, <http://transcript.duma.gov.ru/node/441/>, accessed 25 September 2019.

17 In the very broad sense now used in the public sphere, *jihad* is the struggle of Muslims against unbelievers.

18 *Stenogramma zasedaniya 06 noyabrya 2009 g., N 121 (1094)* [Transcript of meeting 06 November, 2009, No. 121 (1094)], Gosudarstvennaya Duma, <http://transcript.duma.gov.ru/node/252/>, accessed 25 September 2019.

An Islamic organization that receives less attention is *at-Takfir wa-l-Higra* (“Excommunication and Exodus”). Its emergence, like that of Wahhabi ideologists, was originally a purely local phenomenon. It appeared in the early 1970s on a wave of discussion within the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood about the possibility of using violence against the ruling regime. Those who supported the idea withdrew from the Muslim Brotherhood and created their own organization, *at-Takfir wa-l-Higra*. This group legitimized the use of violence by declaring other Muslim communities ‘non-believers.’ There are no data on its institutionalized international networks of the sort that exist for *Hizb at-Tahrir* or *Al-Qaida* for example. It may be assumed therefore that its activities are not systematic. The organization was banned in Russia by decision of the Supreme Court on September 15th, 2010. As with *Hizb at-Tahrir*, this led to a new wave of arrests and critique from human rights defenders against the law enforcement agencies’ unfounded accusations.¹⁹

Such defamation of Muslim political organizations gives the impression that any party that uses Islamic rhetoric will be deemed unacceptable, regardless of how radical it truly is. Even if some deputies do take a more sympathetic stance, the general view supports strict prohibition of such parties. During discussion on the Law on political parties, member of parliament Alexander Chuev (the “Rodina” faction, 4th convocation) said that the existence of “Islamic-democratic ideologies” in Russia is legal but creating parties with such an ideology would nonetheless be unconstitutional. As a result, some Russian citizen would be forced to vote not for a party that reflects their views. His idea failed to get support in the Duma.²⁰ The prevailing point of view is the opposite, namely that “... even the slightest accommodation of extremist groups gives them political identity and strengthens their influence among the masses. Rejection of their practices will reduce their effectiveness. As history shows, assistance from the government and recognition of extremists as subject to the law affects the growth of their popularity in society. However, some time later they begin to work against the official structures that directly or indirectly contributed to their formation and activity.”²¹ In other words, according to the government, the most dangerous scenario is for a new popular actor to emerge, causing a change in the alignment of political forces. Even though this report is from 2001, it is relevant to this day.

19 “Dzhemal’: prinadlezhnost’ zaderzhannyh v Moskve urozhentsev Severnogo Kavkaza k “At-Takfir w-al-Khidhra” somnitel’na” [Dzhemal: the affiliation of natives of the North Caucasus to *at-Takfir wa-l-Higra* detained in Moscow is dubious], *Kavkazskii Uzel*, 29 November, 2013, <http://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/234286/>, accessed 25 September 2019.

20 More: *Stenogramma zasedaniya 08 noyabrya 2006 g., N 191 (905)* [Transcript of meeting 08 November, 2006, No. 191 (905)], Gosudarstvennaya Duma, <http://transcript.duma.gov.ru/node/816/>, accessed 25 September 2019.

21 *Analiticheskiy vestnik “Terrorizm v sovremennom mire: nekotorye fakty, organizatsii, prichiny” (chast’ I). Vyp. 38* [Analytical bulletin “Terrorism in Modern World: Some Facts, Organizations, Causes” (Part I). Vol. 38] (2001), <http://iam.duma.gov.ru/node/8/4607/16229>, accessed 25 September 2019.

Radical Islamic organizations' activities are still viewed as destabilizing in several Russian regions. That they receive external financial support plays a significant role in the development of this image. For this reason, at the meeting of the State Duma mentioned above, the leader of the Liberal democratic Party Vladimir Zhirinovskiy argued against Alexander Chuev and his plea for the creation of Islamic parties, stating that "They will not only be able to carry out an election campaign better, but also pay voters who vote for them. Orthodox voters will vote for them, because Saudi Arabia has an enormous amount of money."²² It is worth noting that the theme of the political participation of Muslims is not only marginal to public debate, but has even, to some extent, become taboo.

The concept of so-called 'political Salafism'²³ has been gaining popularity, as in the West. Allowing radical elements to become involved in politics is seen as an option for reducing social tensions and the danger of extremist activity. The Russian government, however, considers that it cannot afford to 'make concessions' to groups it has declared enemies. At the same time, the sustained scale of this threat contradicts constant official reports on the effectiveness of the special services in combating the so-called "terrorist underground mafia."²⁴ The decriminalization of radical Islamic organizations is not considered a feasible alternative to forceful counter-action.

As public opinion polls show, the use of force is perceived to be the most effective approach to many problems in Russia. According to a recent large-scale study on perceptions of war and terror conducted by the Levada Center,²⁵ citizens perceive military operations as 'necessary and valuable.' This military mobilization strategy is used by the authorities to shore up support for the regime. As regards Islam, the results of a public opinion poll conducted by the same research centre to assess the impact of the Charlie Hebdo case are particularly informative. Nearly 75% of those surveyed were in favour of tightening policies towards migrants, ramping up the struggle against al-Qaida, and increasing control over the Muslim community in France, while only 12% were in favour of assimilating

22 *Stenogramma zasedaniya 08 noyabria 2006 g., N 191 (905)* [Transcript of meeting 08 November, 2006, No. 191 (905)], Gosudarstvennaya Duma, <http://transcript.duma.gov.ru/node/816/>, accessed 25 September 2019.

23 See e.g. al-Anani K., Malik M., "Pious way to politics: the rise of political Salafism in post-Mubarak Egypt", *Digest of Middle East Studies*, 22:1 (2013), p. 57–73.

24 See e.g. "Pochti 100 boevikov likvidirovani v Dagestane v 2015 godu" [Almost 100 militants were liquidated in Dagestan in 2015], *RIA Novosti*, 30 January, 2016, <http://ria.ru/incidents/20160130/1367469302.html>; "FSB: v 2014 godu likvidirovani 130 boevikov i predotvrashcheny shest' teraktov" [130 militants were liquidated and six terrorist attacks were prevented], *Gazeta.ru*, 10 June, 2014, http://www.gazeta.ru/social/news/2014/06/10/n_6219949.shtm; "Za 2013 god v Rossii likvidirovano bolee 250 boevikov" [In 2013 more than 250 militants were eliminated in Russia], *TASS*, 28 April, 2014, <http://tass.ru/politika/1153362>, accessed 25 September 2019.

25 "Khotiat li russkie voyny. Voyna i terror v vospriyatii rossiyan" ["Do Russians want war? War and terror in the perception of Russians"], *Levada-tsentr*, 23 March, 2016, <http://www.levada.ru/2016/03/23/hotyat-li-russkie-voyny-voyna-i-terror-v-vospriyatii-rossiyan/>, accessed 25 September 2019.

Muslims and expanding their rights.²⁶ The tough stance may be related to the formulation of the questionnaire, however, as it did not allow for alternatives.

The dichotomy of ‘radical’ and ‘traditional’ Islam

The idea that Islam is completely hostile to the Russian political regime is gradually changing with the introduction of a new discursive model: the division of Islam into ‘good’ and ‘bad’, ‘traditional Islam’ and ‘radical Islam’. If the category of ‘radical Islam’ is generally understood to describe various illegal organizations of political Islam, the notion of traditional Islam is more difficult to understand and define. These two categories first appeared in the Russian media in 2003–2004 and were firmly entrenched by 2009–2010 in both scientific and public discourses and stereotypes.

The concept of ‘radical Islam’ is amply described in a parliamentary analytical paper titled ‘Islamic extremism’.²⁷ According to this document, all ‘Islamic extremists’ are united around common goals, namely: establishing an Islamic theocratic state, introducing Shariah law into public practice, and restoring the Caliphate. The appearance of the Kharijites²⁸ is also offered as an example of the emergence of extremism in Islam: “Khawarij doctrine was taken up in following years by many extremist and anarchist groups in Muslim countries and is being actively used nowadays.”²⁹ Another key feature of radical Islam from this perspective is its being perceived as a problem that can be solved only by force.

The concept of ‘traditional Islam’ is, in turn, used to describe both religious and political conditions in a number of Russian regions. In all cases, ‘traditional Islam’ is juxtaposed, explicitly or implicitly, with ‘radical Islam’. The term ‘traditional’ is often applied to all forms of Islam in Russia. Crucial features of this ‘traditional’ and supposedly ‘peaceful’ Islam are that its traditions have been successfully incorporated (or must be incorporated) into Russian socio-cultural reality, and, secondly, that it is seen as a regional political actor capable of resolving potential conflicts. The dichotomy between ‘radical Islam’ and ‘traditional Islam’

26 “Terakt v Parizhe: karikatury, islam, zaprety”, *Levada-tsentr*, 29 January, 2015, <http://www.levada.ru/2015/01/29/terakt-v-parizhe-karikatury-islam-zaprety/>, accessed on 25.11.2018.

27 *Analiticheskiy vestnik* “*Terrorizm v sovremennom mire: nekotorye fakty, organizatsii, prichiny (chast’ I)*”. Vyp. 38 [*Analytical bulletin. Terrorism in Modern World: Some Facts, Organizations, Causes (Part I)*]. Vol. 38] (2001), <http://iam.duma.gov.ru/node/8/4607/16229>, accessed 25 September 2019.

28 Kharijites (Khawarij) – members of a school of thought that appeared in the first century of Islam during the First *Fitna*.

29 *Analiticheskiy vestnik* “*Terrorizm v sovremennom mire: nekotorye fakty, organizatsii, prichiny (chast’ I)*”. Vyp. 38 [*Analytical bulletin. Terrorism in Modern World: Some Facts, Organizations, Causes (Part I)*]. Vol. 38] (2001), <http://iam.duma.gov.ru/node/8/4607/16229>, accessed 25 September 2019.

does not always stop at academic discussion (though the effectiveness of so simplified a conceptual model is questionable).³⁰ It is sometimes used as an aggressive discursive strategy that allows a clear line to be drawn between a hostile ‘radical Islam’ and an endangered ‘traditional Islam’.

The use of this dichotomy is typical of the expert community close to the Russian political establishment. Reports by employees at the *Russian Institute for Strategic Studies* (RISI) offer perhaps the clearest examples. Established on February 29th, 1992, RISI functions as a state-sponsored think tank. In many of her papers and interviews, the Head of the Caucasus Studies section Yana Amelina addresses the problem of ‘radical Islam’. In her opinion, radical Islamism is one of the most serious threats to public order and state.³¹ Amelina characterizes the current state of Islam in Russia as follows: the gradual formation of a ‘united Islamist front’, bringing together the Islamists of the Northern Caucasus and Volga regions; the formation of an eclectic Islamist ideology in Russia; a growing orientation towards a foreign, especially Arab, Islamic community, external forces that supposedly lead to archaic regression (‘Arabization’, ‘hijabization’) of the more radical part of the Russian Ummah; and the activities of a federal Islamist lobby, which popularizes and promotes the ideas of Islamists in the all-Russian media and government structures. This rhetoric again displays the images of an external enemy and of a ‘fifth column’, represented by the Islamist lobby. This rhetoric is alarmist and some of the arguments unsubstantiated. For example, according to the statistics it provides, “3.3% of Ingush men and 2.3% of women named Arabs among the desirable nationalities for marriage.” From this the author draws the conclusion that there is an observable “gradual fundamentalization of Ingush youth.”³²

RISI experts also quite often point to the problem of responding to *at-Takfir wa-l-Higra* and *Hizb at-Tahrir*, reinforcing their image as an enemy by emphasizing the use of force against radical Islamism.³³

Rais Suleymanov, a former research fellow at RISI, expresses even more radical views on counter-extremism measures. In most of his papers and speeches, he calls for extremely stringent measures to counter Islamic radicalism in Russian regions, labelling the phenomenon ‘Wahhabism’. He also greatly exaggerates the

30 See e.g. Akaev V.Kh., *Sufizm i vabbabizm na Severnom Kavkaze* [*Sufism and Wahhabism in the North Caucasus*], Seriya “Issledovaniia po prikladnoi i neotlozhnoi etnologii” Instituta antropologii RAN. Dokument No. 127 (1999); Kisriev E.F. *Islam v Dagestane* [*Islam in Dagestan*], (Moscow: Logos, 2007); Makarov D.V. *Ofitsial’nyi i neofitsial’nyi islam v Dagestane* [*Official and non-official Islam in Dagestan*], (Moscow, 2000).

31 “Yana Amelina: Namereniya islamistov v Rossii ser’ezny kak nikogda” [“Yana Amelina: The intentions of Islamists in Russia are more serious than ever”], *Rossiiskiy institut strategicheskikh issledovaniy*, 30 September, 2013, <http://riss.ru/smi/3919/>, accessed 25 September 2019.

32 “Yana Amelina: Namereniya islamistov v Rossii ser’ezny kak nikogda”.

33 “Takfir wa-l’-Khidzra v Rossii: ideologiya, rasprostranenie, mery protivodeistviya” [“*At-Takfir wa-l-Higra* in Russia: ideology, distribution, countermeasures”], *Rossiiskiy institut strategicheskikh issledovaniy*, 30 October, 2013, <http://riss.ru/actions/4039/>, accessed 25 September 2019.

scale of the threat, talking about Islamist training camps and the emergence of new ‘Mujahideen groups’. In 2013, Suleymanov was summoned by the Tatarstan Prosecutor’s Office, as “his [publications] functioned on the basis of false information, his assumptions about the development of Wahhabism in the country lacked factual substantiation, and he imparted exaggerated significance to certain facts about extremism, while knowingly keeping silent about the actions of law enforcement agencies to prevent them.”³⁴

To understand how widespread such ideas about radical Islam are, it suffices to look at some of the results of sociological studies by Russian sociological centres. For example, the number of people expressing no opinion on the possible construction of a mosque in their city or district is about 36%. Around 30% reacted more or less positively to the idea, but 27% took a negative view.³⁵ A study conducted by the *Foundation for Public Opinion* (FOM) in 2012 included questions asked to gain a more thorough understanding of the situation. Three questions were asked about the role, positive or negative, of Islam in the history of Russia, in contemporary Russia, and in the world. About half of the respondents expressed difficulty answering these questions, while 32%, 39% and 40%, respectively, stressed Islam’s negative role.³⁶ To a certain extent, these fears have been caused by the fact that approximately a third of the Russian population gets its knowledge about Islam through the media, and one fourth knows nothing about Islamic religion and culture. 19% learns about Islam from Muslim relatives, 13% gains relevant knowledge at school, 11% reads the literature independently, 10% turn to the Internet, and 6% have learned about Islam by traveling to Muslim countries.³⁷

Traditional Islam: Patriotism, Humanism and Loyalty to the Russian State

There has been an overwhelming number of public discussions devoted to ‘radical Islam’. What about ‘traditional Islam’? Many events under the slogan of humanitarian

34 “Who is Mr Rais Suleymanov?” [“Who is Mr Rais Suleymanov?”], *Biznes Online*, 7 September, 2013, <http://www.business-gazeta.ru/article/87208>, accessed 25 September 2019.

35 “Terakt v Parizhe: karikatury, islam, zaprety” [“Terrorist attack in Paris: cartoons, Islam and prohibitions”], *Levada-tsentr*, 29 January, 2015, <http://www.levada.ru/2015/01/29/terakt-v-parizhe-karikatury-islam-zaprety/>, accessed on 25 September 2019.

36 “Rossiiane ob islame” [“Russians about Islam”], *FOM*, 8 October, 2012, <http://fom.ru/TSennosti/10652>, accessed on 25 September 2019.

37 “Terakt v Parizhe: karikatury, islam, zaprety” [“Terrorist attack in Paris: cartoons, Islam and prohibitions”], *Levada-tsentr*, 29 January, 2015, <http://www.levada.ru/2015/01/29/terakt-v-parizhe-karikatury-islam-zaprety/>, accessed on 25 September 2019.

counter-terrorism³⁸ aim to create a positive image of certain forms of Islam.³⁹ They generally remain marginal, however, and do not enjoy wide support. Most initiatives of the Muslim community itself are either theoretical or merely declarative. A vivid example is the statement on “The Social Doctrine of Russian Muslims” published by the Council of Muftis of Russia in 2001.⁴⁰ According to its authors, “the structuring processes in the Muslim community itself and changes in the public life of the country demanded a balanced approach on the part of the leaders of Islamic community”.⁴¹ Active discussion only took place in 2014–2015, however, because of a number of factors. First, the document had to be adapted to fit changing realities in Russia. The concept of a “brand of good traditional Islam” needed support from the Muslim community itself. Second, elaboration of the concept paper allowed Muslim leaders to give an impression of unity based on the principles set forth in it. On June 14, 2015, it was officially adopted. Despite many years of conflict, the document was signed by the leader of the Central Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Russia, Talgat Tadzhuiddin; the leader of the Coordination Centre of Muslims of the North Caucasus, Ismail Berdiyev; and the leaders of the Spiritual Administrations of Muslims of Russia (DUM RF) and Tatarstan (DUM RT), Ravil Gaynutdin and Kamil Samigullin respectively.⁴²

The idea of tolerance of ideological diversity and other religious tendencies runs through the document, which emphasizes the humanistic nature of Islam.⁴³ A positive image of Islam is created by evoking the contributions of Muslim scholars from the turn of the 20th century (such as Shihabuddin Marjani, Galimdzhan Barudi, Rizaeddin Fakhretdin, Musa Bigiev (Bigeev), and Ismail Gasprinskiy) to the development of science, education and culture in Russia.

The body of the document is dedicated to Muslim patriotism and civil duties. It is interesting to observe how political categories are legitimized in this religious

38 See e.g. “‘Protivostoia’ ekstremizmu cherez rasprostranenie idei ‘zolotoy serediny’” [“Counteract Extremism through the Spread of Idea of ‘Golden Mean’”], *Musulmane Rossii*, 19 July, 2016, <http://www.dumrf.ru/common/event/11036>; “Komitet po bezopasnosti SMR provel krugliy stol” [“Committee of the Council of Muftis held a round table”], *Musulmane Rossii*, 18 July, 2016, <http://www.dumrf.ru/common/event/11035>, accessed on 25 September 2019.

39 For example, a great number of charity projects of the Moscow Spiritual Muslim Department are devoted to veterans, orphanages, donor campaigns. See <http://mosdum.ru/>.

40 “‘Sotsial’naya doktrina rossiyskikh musul’man’ prizyvaet veruyushchih prinosit’ pol’zu obshchestvu” [“Social Doctrine of Russian Muslims” calls on believers to benefit society”], *TASS*, 27 May, 2015, <http://tass.ru/obschestvo/1999282>, accessed 25 September 2019.

41 Abbyasov R.R., “‘Informirovannost’ musul’man o kontseptual’nom dokumente ‘Osnovnye polozeniya sotsial’noi programmy rossiyskikh musul’man’” [“Awareness of Muslims about the conceptual document ‘The main provisions of the social program of Russian Muslims’”], *Teoriya i praktika obschestvennogo razvitiya* 23, (2015), p. 21–24.

42 “Prinyata ‘Sotsial’naya doktrina rossiyskikh musul’man’” [“Social Doctrine of Russian Muslims” is adopted], *Kommersant*, 14 June, 2015, <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/2746763>, accessed 25 September 2019.

43 “Sotsial’naya doktrina rossiyskikh musul’man” [“Social Doctrine of Russian Muslims”], *Sovet muftiev Rossii*, <http://www.muslim.ru/actual/13636/>, accessed 25 September 2019.

discourse. The mechanism is similar for most categories: first, a definition is provided of a political concept, and then an analogy selected from a religious or historical context. This demonstrates both the susceptibility of Islam to political discourses and the closeness of the Islamic and Russian traditions of political philosophy. For example, the text states that the “term ‘patriotism’ is used when priority is given to the idea of connecting and uniting all citizens”. Further, the existence of patriotism within the Muslim community is explained by reference to the Medina Constitution, which presupposes “along with community in religion, community in citizenship and the importance of living in one common homeland”. The category of civil rights is explained with references to “the words of Allah.”

Certain parts of this “Social Doctrine” represent a response to the difficulties faced by the Muslim community in Russia. The fifth section, which discusses the “Attitude of Islam towards Extremes and Radicalism”, includes a consistent argument that directly addresses the main categories used by their opponents. For example, an answer to common misinterpretations of the concept of *jihad* is considered in detail: “The greatest task facing our *alims* [Islamic scholars], imams, and preachers is offering the younger generation of Muslims a clear and complete picture of jihad.” The meaning of *takfir*⁴⁴ is explained and the exceptional nature of such action emphasised. The last paragraph in the chapter aims to interpret the thesis of the division of the world into a ‘territory of war’ and a ‘territory of peace’. Rather than to war, priority should be given to the peaceful spread of Islam through various media. The authors warn against a “biased approach to covering religious issues” and point out the need for strict adherence to professional journalistic ethics, as well as for a rejection of value judgments that exacerbate false notions about Islam. Although only a short paragraph in the text is devoted to this problem, it is significant that it is included in the statement’s agenda.

Finally, it is worth noting that the authors of the “Social Doctrine” also partially accept the dichotomy of ‘radical’ vs. ‘traditional’ Islam. The term ‘radical’ appears only sporadically (twice) in the document, while references to ‘traditional’ Islam are frequent (29). More importantly, the authors identify themselves as representatives of ‘traditional Islam’ and they do so in a rather emotional manner: “Traditional Islam in Russia is true Islam related to the conditions and traditions of our country. This new identity and integration, which has prompted a natural all-Russian patriotism in Muslims, allows the Muslim community in Russia to overcome many of the threats that occur in other non-Muslim countries, due to differences in their understanding of traditions and cultures.” “Traditions’ play an extremely positive role in the history and present of the Muslim community of Russia: “Russian Muslims are directing their efforts towards strengthening traditional family values”, “for

44 The procedure when one Muslim declares another a non-believer.

Russian Muslims, cultural traditions are the source of their national-religious identity”, and “representatives of the peoples of Muslim tradition stood side by side with Russians and shed their blood for Russia.”

The document thus represents a peculiar testimony to the loyalty of ‘good Islam’ to Russian state. In fact, this is an essential characteristic of traditional Islam. It declares humanism and patriotism to be the most important values. The main problem, however, as mentioned above, is the extremely low awareness in Russian society of the project of the “Social Doctrine”. According to a survey conducted by representatives of the Council of Muftis of Russia, 84.1% of respondents said they had not heard anything about the first version of the “Social Doctrine of Russian Muslims” and more than half of respondents consequently found it difficult to answer questions on the need to modernize the document.⁴⁵

One also finds patriotic rhetoric in the speeches of Ravil Gaynutdin. Obvious manifestations of loyalty to the Russian authorities are expressed in the many references to the words of the Russian President. There are several other interesting tropes in Gaynutdin’s rhetoric, however. His speeches contain three important interconnected narratives: those of unity, Eurasianism, and spirituality. In any of its manifestations, unity, whether the unity of the Muslim community (alluding to conflict of the DUMs) or unity between Muslim and Russian civilization on the basis of a Eurasian community, turns out to be a fundamental existential principle for Russian Muslims: “It is symbolic that it is a native citizen of St. Petersburg, our President, who will cut the ribbon at the entrance to the Moscow Cathedral Mosque. We will thereby identify our common roots as a unified multinational and multi-religious Eurasian civilization.”⁴⁶ Spirituality is emphasized as an attribute in the political sphere, as well. For example, Gaynutdin argues that the main mosque will “bring enormous benefits in strengthening the spiritual qualities and sovereignty of our state.”⁴⁷ The idea of a “spiritual gene pool” is on a par with notions of peace, stability and harmony, and is opposed to extremism and radicalism.⁴⁸ He also uses such phrases as “spiritual roots” and “spiritual abyss.”

45 Abbyasov R.R., “Informirovannost’ musul’man o kontseptual’nom dokumente ‘Osnovnye polozeniya sotsial’noi programmy rossiyskikh musul’man’” [“Awareness of Muslims about the conceptual document ‘The main provisions of the social program of Russian Muslims’], *Teoriya i praktika obschestvennogo razvitiya* 23, (2015), p. 22.

46 “Muftii Gaynutdin: rossiyskoe musul’mansvo smozhet stat’ liderom vsei ummah” [“Mufti Gaynutdin: Russian Islam can become the leader of the whole Ummah”], *Musul’mane Rossii*, 11 June, 2015, <http://www.dumrf.ru/common/speech/9411>, accessed 25 September 2019.

47 “Muftiy Gaynutdin: otkrytie Moskovskoi Sobornoj mecheti – sobytie gosudarstvennogo mashtaba dlya RF” [“Mufti Gaynutdin: opening of Moscow Cathedral Mosque is an event of a state scale for the Russian Federation”], *Musul’mane Rossii*, 23 September, 2015, <http://www.dumrf.ru/common/speech/9735>, accessed 25 September 2019.

48 “Muftiy Gaynutdin: ya dumayu, ne odna mechet’ budet postroena v Moskve” [“Mufti Gaynutdin: I think more than one mosque will be built in Moscow”], *Musul’mane Rossii*, 18 September, 2015, <http://www.dumrf.ru/common/speech/9718>, accessed 25 September 2019.

Loyalty to the authorities is also demonstrated in less obvious ways. Gaynutdin uses Orthodox terminology to describe Muslim realities. For example, a large part of his ‘Christmas message’ (the title given on the official website of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the Russian Federation) is a comparison of *Mawlid an-Nabi* (celebration of the Birth of the Prophet) with Christmas: “I try – to make the language and the message of Islam available to our contemporaries I therefore use words and images that are familiar in Russian culture. The Old Slavonic ‘Christmas’ was in the Middle Ages the most common way to denote the physical appearance of man into the world. Therefore, the phrase ‘Christmas of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)’ is perfectly valid in Russian culture and retains its Islamic essence”.⁴⁹ Quoting various surahs (chapters of the Qur’an), Gaynutdin unfolds a theological argument about the shared Christian and Islamic traditions associated with the birth of Jesus and Muhammad, and draws an analogy between the ascension and the *Mi’raj*.⁵⁰

In a different speech, Gaynutdin compares Christian and Islamic eschatology to revise Russia’s special role in the international arena. “Christian and Islamic eschatology are close and claim that before the Messiah (*Mahdi*) arrives, the Antichrist (*Dajjal*) will appear, and the role of the *Katechon* (the Retainer) will be especially important. Obviously, our policy and our experience of interreligious harmony and cooperation will become the core of world politics.”⁵¹

In these texts, mosques are occasionally compared with Orthodox churches. For example, in an interview about the Cathedral Mosque under construction, Gaynutdin said that “our mosque is gold-domed (*‘zlatoglavaya’*) and fits into the ensemble of Moscow churches.”⁵²

Gaynutdin also draws parallels between mosques and the symbols of Russian statehood. “The new look of the mosque, which at the same time resembles both the Spassky tower of the Moscow Kremlin and the elegant Syuyumbike Tower in the Kazan white-stone Kremlin, demonstrates the irreversible connection of our Islam to its spiritual roots, to the Eurasian foundations of Russian civilization and statehood.”⁵³

49 “Rozhdestvenskoe poslanie muftiya Rossii Gaynutdina” [“Christmas message by mufti Gaynutdin”], *Musul’mane Rossii*, 27 January, 2015, <http://www.dumrf.ru/common/speech/8925>, accessed 25 September 2019.

50 Isra’ and Mi’raj – two parts of Muhammed’s Night Journey to Jerusalem described in the *Sura al-Isra* (17).

51 “Muftii Gaynutdin: rossiyskoe musul’mansvo smozhet stat’ liderom vsei ummy” [“Mufti Gaynutdin: Russian Islam can become the leader of the whole Ummah”], *Musul’mane Rossii*, 11 June, 2015, <http://www.dumrf.ru/common/speech/9411>, accessed 25 September 2019.

52 “Muftiy Gaynutdin: ya dumayu, ne odna mechet’ budet postroena v Moskve” [“Mufti Gaynutdin: I think more than one mosque will be built in Moscow”], *Musul’mane Rossii*, 18 September, 2015, <http://www.dumrf.ru/common/speech/9718>, accessed 25 September 2019.

53 “Muftiy Gaynutdin: otkrytie Moskovskoi Sobornoj mecheti – sobytie gosudarstvennogo mashtaba dlya RF” [“Mufti Gaynutdin: opening of Moscow Cathedral Mosque is an event of a state scale for the Russian Federation”], *Musul’mane Rossii*, 23 September, 2015, <http://www.dumrf.ru/common/speech/9735>, accessed 25 September 2019.

Following official state discourse, Gaynutdin evokes the same threats identified above. In his texts, the main enemies of Russian Muslims are Western philosophy and liberal ideology. According to Gaynutdin, the idea that ‘man is the measure of all things’ is unacceptable since it leads to egocentrism and causes the many disasters of modern civilization.⁵⁴ He calls this concept ‘I as a thing-in-itself’.⁵⁵ Such unlimited freedom brings liberalism to its extreme: “Chasing imaginary freedom, the ultra-liberals have directed their society along the path of a new form of slavery – slavery to the instincts, illusory comfort, the slavery of illusions of consciousness. Does God not speak of such slaves of instincts in the Holy Scripture...”⁵⁶

Islamic official discourse thus becomes indistinguishable from the official governmental discourse on Islam. There is a high level of intertextuality between these two discourses, in which representatives of the Muslim community use the same categories as government officials, appealing to values of unity, spirituality and Eurasianism, as well as to the image of a liberal Western enemy. Gaynutdin’s parallels with Christian religious traditions follow the same logic.

Conclusion

This paper analyses a selection of sources reflecting both Russian Islamic official discourse and official Russian governmental discourse on Islam. It does not claim to paint a comprehensive picture, seeking rather to identify major trends and so contribute to a general understanding of the situation. The official discourse on Islam is filled with alarmist rhetoric. It claims that, under the influence of external factors, Islam in Russia is radicalizing and turning into a threat to the country’s national security. This point of view first developed during the ‘second Chechen war’ and has remained strong since. For the government and experts close to it, force remains the only real and effective way of dealing with what is considered radical Islam. At the same time, social and humanitarian initiatives, including those of the Muslim community itself, remain on the margins of public consciousness. The much-promoted ‘brand of traditional Islam’ has been actively used to oppose ‘radical Islam’, but that does not go beyond the scope of the

54 “Rozhdestvenskoe poslanie muftiya Rossii Gaynutdina” [“Christmas message by mufti Gaynutdin”], *Musul'mane Rossii*, 27 January, 2015, <http://www.dumrf.ru/common/speech/8925>, accessed 25 September 2019.

55 “Fundamental'nyi vyzov chelovechestvu imeet tsennostnuyu prirodu” [“Fundamental challenge to humanity has a value nature”], *Musul'mane Rossii*, 10 December, 2014, <http://www.dumrf.ru/common/speech/8810>, accessed 25 September 2019.

56 “Fundamental'nyi vyzov chelovechestvu imeet tsennostnuyu prirodu”.

dichotomy or offer a new solution to the problem. Representatives of the official Muslim community limit themselves to mimicking official governmental rhetoric in the theological sphere, which allows them to demonstrate their loyalty to the authorities.

Zvanični diskurs o islamu i islamski diskurs u savremenoj Rusiji: stereotipi i intertekstualnost

Sažetak

U ovom radu se razmatra intertekstualnost zvaničnog diskursa o islamu i islamskog diskursa u savremenoj Rusiji. Takva podjela između diskursa, kakvu prave vladine agencije i ruski muslimanski lideri, omogućuje analizu razlika i sličnosti među njima. Glavni cilj ovog članka jeste identificirati izvore modernog diskursa o islamu. U tu svrhu, analizirani su parlamentarni dokumenti i transkripti parlamentarnih sjednica, ali i stručni materijali iz ruskih medija i rezultati ispitivanja javnog mišljenja, a da bi se pokazalo kako se ideja “borbe protiv islama” prelijeva iz jednog u drugi diskurs i postaje dominantna u ruskoj političkoj sferi. Analiza retorike ruskih muslimanskih lidera pokazuje bliske semantičke veze s diskursom vlasti (ne samo o islamu), po tome što je njihova retorika puna konceptualnih metafora koje ukazuju na lojalnost vladajućoj eliti.

Ključne riječi: Islam u Rusiji, slika o islamu, islam, sociologija islama