



**ZEMLYACHESTVA AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES
IN THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY OF MIGRATION
FROM DAGESTAN TO WESTERN SIBERIA**

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Abstract: The article examines the peculiarities of interaction between Dagestani *zemlyachestva* (immigrant associations) and the regional authorities of both the host and originating communities, using as an example the associations for immigrants identifying with Dagestan in the towns of the Khanty-Mansi and Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrugs. The article aims to describe the character of these interactions and to determine the current communicative strategies used by *zemlyachestva* in the context of the specific challenges that the regional authorities of KhMAO-Yugra, YaNAO and Dagestan present them with. The author examines the specifics of the contacts between the *zemlyachestva* and the originating community as represented by the Ministry of National Policy and Religious Affairs of the Republic of Dagestan and the Spiritual Directorate of the Muslims of Dagestan, and also with the authorities of the host community, primarily the municipal and regional administrations. In the latter case two behavioural strategies are identified, one directed towards co-operation with the authorities of the host community, and the other towards a closed kind of interaction within the framework of the *zemlyachestvo*. The article was written using material from the author's fieldwork (interviews and observation) carried out in towns in both the regions and in Makhachkala in 2015, 2018 and 2019, and also using other sources (publications in the mass media and data on the official portals of the regions concerned).

Key words: migration, Dagestan, *zemlyachestva*, institutions of authority, originating and host communities.

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Zemlyachestva and Regional Authorities in the Context of the Study of Migration from Dagestan to Western Siberia

The article examines the peculiarities of interaction between Dagestani *zemlyachestva* (immigrant associations) and the regional authorities of both the host and originating communities, using as an example the associations for immigrants identifying with Dagestan in the towns of the Khanty-Mansi and Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrugs. The article aims to describe the character of these interactions and to determine the current communicative strategies used by *zemlyachestva* in the context of the specific challenges that the regional authorities of KhMAO-Yugra, YaNAO and Dagestan present them with. The author examines the specifics of the contacts between the *zemlyachestva* and the originating community as represented by the Ministry of National Policy and Religious Affairs of the Republic of Dagestan and the Spiritual Directorate of the Muslims of Dagestan, and also with the authorities of the host community, primarily the municipal and regional administrations. In the latter case two behavioural strategies are identified, one directed towards co-operation with the authorities of the host community, and the other towards a closed kind of interaction within the framework of the *zemlyachestvo*. The article was written using material from the author's fieldwork (interviews and observation) carried out in towns in both the regions and in Makhachkala in 2015, 2018 and 2019, and also using other sources (publications in the mass media and data on the official portals of the regions concerned).

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Within the framework of my interest, over many years, in studying the process of migration from the Republic of Dagestan to other regions of Russia, I made several field trips to the Khanty-Mansi and Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrugs (hereinafter KhMAO-Yugra and YaNAO) to collect anthropological material on various aspects of the life of those Dagestanis who had migrated to towns in the arctic and subarctic zones of Western Siberia in the post-Soviet period. While collecting this material, it was impossible to ignore the structures of the local *zemlyachestva* (see below) bringing together people who had migrated from Dagestan: I carried out interviews with their leaders and activists, and sometimes they helped to find informants or organised trips to various settlements in the region. Officials from the regions with whom I spoke also took the leaders of the *zemlyachestva* to be my main, if not only informants and experts on topics relating in one way or another to the presence of people from Dagestan in the North.¹ It goes without saying

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¹ 'The North' is a general concept used both by researchers into the arctic zone and their informants; here it means virtually any direction of migration from Dagestan within the said regions.

that the migrant community (or rather communities) cannot be studied solely on the basis of *zemlyachestva* (in certain cases one might in principle speak of an absence of any relevant connections between the diaspora and the migrant community). Nevertheless, the *zemlyachestva* structures themselves, as a specific social institution, undoubtedly deserve the attention of anthropologists studying migrant communities.

The institutionalisation of migration and the role of migrant institutions in the originating and host communities is a popular question in the anthropology of migrations (see, for instance: [Margolis 1995; Kandel, Massey 2002]). Such institutions include various sorts of social unions of migrants and migrant associations designated by various terms, of which the most frequent are *diasporas* and *zemlyachestva*.¹ Researchers have more than once studied the functioning of *zemlyachestva* of various kinds, and also using material relating to migration into Russia. In particular they have examined such questions as the overall range of interactions of diaspora organisations with the state and with migrants in one region or another [Dyatlov 2005; Dmitriev et al. 2013; Nam 2015], the processes of integration with input from *zemlyachestva* structures [Nazarova 2018], the non-complementary nature of official diasporas and informal groups of fellow countrymen [Brednikova, Pachenkov 2001], the *zemlyachestva* structure as a construct, above all of the political homeland [Rumyantsev, Baramidze 2008; 2009], and also the characteristics of this social institution on the basis of its legal status in the country and the application of the law with regard to it [Osipov 2004; Dmitriev, Rogovaia 2015].

When speaking of the *zemlyachestva* that identify with Dagestan, it is essential to take into account their status and the specifics of their activity as representatives in the first place of citizens of Russia. The internal character of Dagestani migration (as a population shift within the Russian Federation) obviates a whole set of questions connected with the migrant's status as a foreigner, and this is reflected in the work of the Dagestani *zemlyachestva*.

The activity of the organisations of the Dagestani diaspora in various regions of Russia has, as a rule, been repeatedly mentioned alongside other similar structures in Russian sociology (see, for example: [Voronov, Dmitriev 2016; Cherepanova, Gorbunova 2019]). However, in most of the publications known to me the Dagestani *zemlyachestva* structures were not the focus of the authors' interests, and to boot, were mainly studied using quantitative methods or in the macrocontext, and so the specifics of particular organisations

¹ Russian *zemlyachestva*, sg *zemlyachestvo*, from *zemlyak* 'fellow countryman', means societies of people from one place living in another [Trans.].

were not visible to any significant extent. (The works of researchers studying the interactions between Dagestan and the regions of southern Russia, for example, Rostov Oblast, through the prism of the activity of *zemlyachestva* structures in the region [Khalilova 2012] are a separate matter.) In this respect the present article fills a gap in the anthropological study of Dagestani *zemlyachestva* in Siberia.

In this article, I address the topic of the interaction between Dagestani *zemlyachestva*¹ and the administrative organs both of the host region (in this case KhMAO-Yugra and YaNAO) and the region of origin (Dagestan), and also with certain other official actors connected with the regional administration (the religious structures of Dagestan). I am particularly interested in the question of the degree to which the regional authorities take note of the said structures and how they try to make use of their resources; I also examine the *zemlyachestva*' positions regarding those government institutions with which they have to interact in the course of their work. The article is based on field material which I collected in 2015 and 2018–2019 in the towns of KhMAO and YaNAO (the main work on this topic was done in Surgut and Novy Urengoy), and also in Makhachkala in the course of studying labour migration from Dagestan to the towns of Western Siberia. The material obtained consists mostly of semistructured biographical interviews with members of the *zemlyachestva* and with migrants who are not formally members of them, with members of the municipal administrations, officials of the Ministry of National Policy² and Religious Affairs of the Republic of Dagestan (Minnats RD), and also of the author's own observations. In addition, use was made of open-source material (publications in the mass media and data from the official portals of the administrative structures of the said regions).

The overall nature of migration from Dagestan to the towns of KhMAO-Yugra and YaNAO should be briefly characterised. It is mostly directed towards centres of industry for the extraction of natural resources and is, without doubt, a significant economic and social phenomenon. The scale of the migration, its character and persistence allow this region to be called one of the most attractive for migration from the republic over recent decades. (On the reasons for this migration and its basic characteristics see: [Kapustina 2014a; 2014b; Sokolov 2016; Kapustina 2019].) The migration of Dagestanis

¹ Here by *zemlyachestva* I mean an institutionalised community or association of fellow countrymen who represent the various ethnic groups of Dagestan present in the territory of the KhMAO and YaNAO. The exception are the Nogais, who prefer to form their own *zemlyachestva* on the ethnic principle, uniting the Nogais of Chechnya, Dagestan, Karachay-Cherkessia and the Stavropol Krai.

² Throughout the article, the title of the ministry has been translated 'National Policy', although *natsionalnost* in Russian has a meaning closer to 'ethnicity', in the sense of, a minority ethnic group within the borders of a nation-state [Eds.].

to the towns of Western Siberia began in the 1980s and reached its peak at the beginning of the twenty-first century, and led to a significant increase in their numbers in that region. In Surgut alone, according to expert evaluations, there are twenty thousand residents from Dagestan, and in some small towns the percentage of Dagestanis is even greater: for example, in Pokachi, out of a population of 17,000 there are about 1,500 long-term inhabitants from Dagestan. According to the calculations of the permanent representative in KhMAO, there are about 100,000 Dagestanis living in the region as a whole.

The large presence of Dagestanis in the region, and also the series of problems that migrants encounter in the host community [Kapustina 2014a; 2014b], led to the appearance, in many towns, of organisations resembling *zemlyachestva*. *Zemlyachestva* may be registered under a variety of forms: besides the usual social organisation, there is a possibility of organising a national cultural autonomy (NCA). According to the 'Law on National Cultural Autonomy' this is understood to be a form of national-cultural self-determination consisting of a social union of citizens of the Russian Federation who consider themselves as belonging to a particular ethnicity, on the basis of their voluntary organisation of themselves with a view to independent solution of questions relating to the preservation of their individuality, the development of language, education and national culture [FZ 2002]. (For more detail on the development of the institution of the NCA in Russia see: [Osipov 2004; Nam 2015].) It is evident that such structures, formed on different principles in different towns, may differ in character, in the intensity of their activity, and in other respects. As Dyatlov rightly remarks, '[F]or all their external similarity and common standard set of declared aims in their constitutions, they are to a large extent very different organisations. Different in the number of their members, in their activity, and, most importantly, in the actual direction of their activities' [Dyatlov 2005]. For this reason, the study of the activity of separate *zemlyachestva* may serve to illustrate the spectrum of diversity among such migrant social institutions.

In my previous works on the subject of migration from Dagestan to the North, I have proposed to consider this social phenomenon as translocal migration, meaning by 'translocal' a particular variant of transnationalism, a social process whereby migrants create a social field that transcends geographical, cultural and political boundaries [Glick Schiller et al. 1992: IX] (for more detail on transnationalism as applied to migration from Dagestan see: [Kapustina 2019]). Transnational migrants may be involved in national projects both in the place to which they have migrated and in their homeland; they and their specific way of life may be exploited by political leaders of both the host and originating regions. In particular, in

conditions of transnational migration various forces within the originating community (political parties, administrative structures and individual leaders) look at ‘their’ diasporas within the host communities as ‘a global resource and constituency’ [Glick Schiller et al. 1995: 52]. At the same time diasporas, both at home and in the host community, may not only function as the objects of politics, but also be considered as important non-state subjects possessing definite influence and power [Laguerre 2006; Sørensen 2007; Baser, Halperin 2019] (on Russian material, [Rumyantsev, Baramidze 2008] et al.). Constance Sutton and Susan Makiesky-Barrow have called such a situation a transnational sociocultural and political system in which ‘political events at home <...> had an impact on the migrant communities abroad while migrant experiences were relayed in the opposite direction’ [Sutton, Makiesky-Barrow 1975: 114, cited from Lozano-Ascencio et al. 1999: 83].

To address these problems, the article examines two *zemlyachestva*, the National Cultural Autonomy of Representatives of the Republic of Dagestan in the City of Surgut, and the Vatan Dagestani Diaspora, a social organisation of YaNAO.

The Vatan Dagestani Diaspora was registered as a social organisation of the Yamalo-Nenets Okrug in 2007. Its present leader describes the circumstances of its foundation and its basic aims as follows:

Since that time [the late 1990s. — E.K.] I had got to know a lot of people in the course of six months, got to know a lot of Dagestanis, and understood how they were living and what they were doing. And since that time I began to participate. Not just me, all the lads, there were lots of us. <...> We were friends, and we got together from time to time. We had the same aims as are written in the constitution — consolidation, preservation of our culture and Dagestani cultural values. And the education of young people — that comes first (AFM, E. B., Novy Urengoy, 2019).

The organisation includes a group of activists made up of representatives from various villages, who are responsible for communication with people who are from the same village or who come from the same region of Dagestan. As a result, as the organisation’s activists say, most of the people who have come to this small town from Dagestan know about it and are in frequent contact with each other within the framework of its activities.

At the beginning of the second decade of this century the Novy Urengoy organisation initiated the building of a common space, which came to be called the ‘*zemlyachestvo* house’. To this end the activists bought land, and many Dagestanis took part in the building, either by working on the site or financing it. As the leader of the association says, it was decided to build a house for holding meetings

and discussing vital questions, because when their fellow countrymen had tried to meet in a public place, often the police arrived, having been called by 'vigilant' citizens. The activists had found it too burdensome to ask the local authorities for a place for their fellow countrymen to meet every time, and that was how the idea of a *zemlyachestvo* house came about. As well as assemblies of the association, it was planned to celebrate *mawlid*¹ there, and to accommodate newly arrived fellow countrymen who had nowhere to stay, etc. It is obvious that the actual construction work played a certain part in consolidating the community.

Yes, we took some empty land, some waste ground among the dachas. We registered it officially, got a plan from the land registry, all that. And we began to build the house there. And while that house was being built thousands of people from Dagestan and from other places got to know each other. And after that a very large number of Dagestanis found out that we have a diaspora, as it turns out. There are a lot of people who arrive and don't know anybody. They get a job somewhere, and go back and forth between home and work. And then somehow something happens, there's some sort of problem, and they begin to look about them. And somebody tells them: 'What, don't you know? We've got a diaspora. Why are you casting about hither and yon?' That's what. And a very large number of people got to know each other there (AFM, E. B., Novy Urengoy, 2019).

The National Cultural Autonomy of Representatives of the Republic of Dagestan in the City of Surgut has existed since the end of the 1990s, and of the nine *zemlyachestva* in the region, it is the largest. When, in 2011, I first came into contact with representatives of the NCA, its then leader, who had been living in the region for almost thirty years, declared that his prime interest was in questions of the preservation of national culture and presenting it in the region, and he was dissatisfied that he kept having to be the mediator in conflict situations involving his fellow countrymen (for more detail see: [Kapustina 2014b]). In 2014 he was succeeded by the new head of the NCA, a young sportsman and entrepreneur, who, evidently, changed the course of the association in the direction of active interaction with the authorities and especially with the law-enforcement agencies of the region (which will be discussed below).

The leader of the Surgut NCA has deputies who are representatives of the main ethnic groups in the town, and it is through these deputies that the NCA is in contact with ordinary members, especially when large-scale gatherings of Dagestanis have to be held. There is also a youth council and a council of elders. The former is

¹ The celebration of the birth of the prophet Muhammad; also, gatherings of Muslims to mark important life events.

very active and, in the words of the association leader, is intended to do explanatory work with newly arrived students.

We have a group of activists that looks after them constantly, particular deputies are attached to the universities where the students go, and we have meetings with them at the beginning of the year, in the middle of the year, and at the end of the year. At the beginning of the year, so that the newly arrived students <...> in the university itself. We arrange with the university and they give us a room, and we have the meeting, a dialogue about how they've come here, and here there are very many cultures and values, yes, and there are the rules of the university itself, which they have to observe there, not wearing caps or slogans or football shirts there, they have to dress properly, and outside the university there are the rules of the town, the rules of the town's common life, how people in Surgut behave, yes, and we shouldn't behave provocatively (AFM, V. A., Surgut, 2015).

The NCA has organised a dance ensemble, Vatan, the *zemlyachestvo* is represented on the municipal administration's local consultative council, and activists take part in various cultural events such as the Sotsvetie ethnic festival.

The Surgut NCA, as far as one can see, is able to organise large meetings in various places made available by the municipal administration and by businesses: meetings of first-year students may take place at universities and colleges, shows and rehearsals by the ensemble at the Neftyani House of Culture, and so on.

The attitude to the actual term 'diaspora' is noteworthy. Not only do the leader of *zemlyachestvo* in Surgut and his deputy avoid using it in the name of their organisation, but they also stress that it would be incorrect to use it in such a case, pointing out that Dagestanis are Russian citizens, whereas a diaspora brings together foreigners. At Novy Urengoy the term 'diaspora' even occurs in the *zemlyachestvo*'s official name. It is noteworthy that in ordinary conversation people may call their organisation a diaspora in both Surgut and Novy Urengoy.

Having briefly characterised the *zemlyachestvo* under discussion, I propose to examine the specifics of their contacts with the regional authorities of both the originating and host communities.

The originating community

Since migration from Dagestan is a notable economic and socio-cultural phenomenon, the subject of their fellow countrymen's life outside the republic and their contacts with Dagestan is constantly being raised in the press and in official announcements by functionaries. The basic vectors along which the discourse evolves are

the loss of valuable population, the image (particularly the moral image) of their fellow countrymen far away from their homeland, and their resources that can be used for the good of the republic (though this is mainly about super-rich or influential Dagestanis, Suleyman Kerimov, Magomedsalam Magomedov, and others).

The subject of emigrant fellow countrymen can also be discussed at the level of the government of the republic. In particular, there have been several attempts to forge links between the regions, confirmed by official agreements between Dagestan and other constituent parts of the Russian Federation. The republic has many contacts with other regions of the Southern Federal Region including those arising from the presence of a significant migration from Dagestan within the region and from the existence of common borders. Thus an 'Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Dagestan and the Government of the Stavropol Krai on Co-Operation on Trade and Economics, Science and Technology and Social and Cultural Matters' was concluded in 2017 for a period of four years, and there are similar agreements with other regions.

There is an institution of permanent delegations of Dagestan in other constituent parts of the Russian Federation. Originally such delegations were financed from the state budget, but since 2013 only three delegations in Russia (apart from the permanent delegation in Moscow) are financed from the budget as organs of state authority — those in the Stavropol and Krasnodar Krai and that in St Petersburg. At that time they began the practice of appointing individual plenipotentiary representatives of Dagestan in different constituent parts of the country, but they work on social principles, i.e. without finance from the budget. There are two of them in the regions under discussion: the permanent representative of Dagestan in KhMAO lives in Surgut, and the one in YaNAO in Purpe.

Questions of the republic's interaction with its fellow countrymen fall within the remit of the Ministry of National Policy and Religious Affairs of the Republic of Dagestan. It maintains contact with the permanent delegations and the individual representatives. The Ministry calculates the number of Dagestanis in KhMAO and YaNAO at forty thousand in each, based on data sent in by the permanent delegations, and also relying on the latest census of 2010. According to information given to me by the Ministry in 2018, there are no intergovernmental agreements on co-operation between the republic and the said regions.

It cannot be said the Dagestani officials have failed to understand the importance of KhMAO and YaNAO for the republic: there has been more than one attempt to draw up official bilateral agreements. In 2008 Eduard Urazaev, then the Dagestani minister for national policy, information and external communications, stressed at

a bilateral meeting with officials from KhMAO in Makhachkala that there were Dagestanis living and working in KhMAO and that there were representative bodies of the republic there. Galina Vydrina, the governor of KhMAO's advisor on ethnic affairs and social associations note that 'Dagestanis are working in all spheres of the life of society and making a worthy contribution to the development of the economy of the Khanty-Mansi Region. The Dagestanis are good, responsible workers and make a great contribution to the education of young people' [Isaev 2008].

One of the most recent official contacts between representatives of the Republic of Dagestan and the regions of Western Siberia under discussion took place at the end of February 2019, a couple of weeks before the dismissal of the Minister of National Policy and Religious Affairs, Tatyana Gamaley. As the official press release states, the main topic of the meeting between Mrs Gamaley and her deputies and Magomed Gitinomagomedov, the plenipotentiary of the government of Dagestan in YaNAO, was the discussion of a project for an agreement between the Republic of Dagestan and the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug on co-operation on trade and economics, science and technology and social and cultural matters, which, in the words of the plenipotentiary, would 'allow the interests of the Dagestanis living in the region to be represented more effectively, and develop links between the regions' ['V Minnatse RD...' 2019]. It was also mentioned that the project for the agreement and the plan for its realisation had previously been agreed with Minnatse RD and presented for consideration by the government of the republic as early as January 2017 (but what became of it afterwards has not been reported).

In addition, the question of strengthening ties between the regions was discussed in a telephone conversation between Tatyana Gamaley and the Deputy Governor of YaNAO, Alexander Mazharov, who expressed an interest in business and humanitarian contacts with the Republic of Dagestan.

During the meeting there was also discussion of projects concerning the strengthening of peace and accord between ethnicities, of questions of youth work, of the activity of religious organisations in the region, etc. ['V Minnatse RD...' 2019].

Nevertheless, an expert from the Ministry noted in an interview that he did not see economic ties with Western Siberia as relevant, since there was no one qualified to deal with them in the republic, and little enthusiasm in the region for such agreements. Whether yet another project for an agreement would become a reality would evidently become apparent in the near future.

In 2017 an Interdepartmental Council for Interaction with Dagestani *Zemlyachestva* in the Regions of the Russian Federation was set up

at Minnats, consisting 'of young people and businessmen connected with the Mufti's Office; they [act] on recommendations from the mufti's office, and the Mufti's Office in accordance with the leadership <...> of the republic. These young people would travel to the regions and hold meetings and conversations with our diasporas. This was a joint project, to which there were three parties, the government, the Mufti's Office and this social union' (AFM, Tatyana Gamaley, Makhachkala, 2018). The first session of a renewed Interdepartmental Council took place in 2019 under the leadership of the new minister, Enrik Muslimov. According to the official press release, 'the Interdepartmental Council was set up at Minnats with a view to forming a single integrated system of work with ethnic Dagestanis living in the constituent parts of the Russian Federation and abroad, ensuring coordinated action of the governmental organs of the Republic of Dagestan and the institutions of civil society towards strengthening interethnic and interfaith peace and harmony between the peoples of the Russian Federation' ['V Minnatse RD...' 2018]. However, informants and representatives from the *zemlyachestva* in Surgut and Novy Urengoy made no mention of the activities of this council.

In an interview when still acting as nationalities minister, Tatyana Gamaley noted that Minnats was not responsible for the activity of *zemlyachestva*, but only maintained contact with the permanent representatives. The remit of the institution of the permanent delegations was outlined as follows: the preservation of the ethno-cultural individuality of Dagestanis, the resolution of disagreements and conflicts, assistance in various difficult life situations and also work to counteract extremism and terrorism. In principle, the same tasks are also declared by the other immigrant social associations connected with the republic. In the absence of any funding, the first of these tasks can only be fulfilled by a single individual, the permanent representative, if (s)he has other resources for such activity. This is confirmed by an expert from the Ministry who gave examples of successful activities by the permanent representatives in several regions in those cases when they had social and economic influence and connections with the local administrative elites. As far as I know, in situations of conflict with wider consequences or incidents involving Dagestanis in the KhMAO and YaNAO, representatives of Minnats have not been invited to act as mediators or interested parties.¹ The Ministry's initiatives to counteract extremism in KhMAO and YaNAO through its permanent representatives have been advisory in nature.

¹ According to information from this expert, Minnats did once become involved in such a conflict in Kalmykia through its permanent representative, when emigrants from Dagestan had defiled a statue of the Buddha.

Now [we] have sent them another circular, though in any case they know this work and are getting on with it, go without delay to the universities, identify all the first-year students, call them together, bring representatives of the clergy and talk to them, so that they aren't radicalised (AFM, Tatyana Gamaley, Makhachkala, 2018).

It may be that the evident weakness of interaction between Minnats and the Dagestani *zemlyachestva* is the result of the undefined status of the latter. In the opinion of Irina Nam, an NCA is in an undefined position, because of the lack of any completed legislative process regarding this specific institution, which was at first granted considerable autonomy and weight [Nam 2015: 41]. As a result an NCA remains a social organisation, 'a component of the public discourse on ethnicity, that is, of the symbolic reproduction of multiethnicity' [Osipov 2006: 53], 'an element of the decor that adorns the image of a multicultural and tolerant society and / or a means of satisfying the aesthetic requirements or power ambitions of a narrow social stratum, and this makes it hard for the NCA to be perceived as an important element of civil society with the function of a mediator between migrants and the host society' [Varnavskiy 2011: 212, cited from Nam 2015: 41].

As a result, judging by the data from interviews with employees of the Ministry and with the permanent representatives, the contacts that the latter have with the Ministry are often superficial and of a bureaucratic kind. The permanent representative sends a report of a few pages to the Ministry, and the Ministry sends him / her and the leader of the local *zemlyachestvo* a certificate of tasks successfully completed.

The criteria for appointing permanent representatives in the regions are interesting. There were several applications for this position in KhMAO, and in the end they appointed an applicant who had formerly served in law enforcement, justifying their choice by the fact that this would enable him to solve the problems of Dagestanis in the region with greater success.

It is obvious that the real status of the permanent representative depends on his / her personality and his / her position in the community before his / her appointment as a representative of the republic. For example, the permanent representative in KhMAO was previously, and still is, the deputy head of the NCA. Over several years he has been an active participant in many events connected with interaction with his fellow countrymen. The status of permanent representative did formally give him extra weight, but it can hardly have made any radical difference to his work in society.

The permanent representative in YaNAO is practically unknown at the Novy Urengoy Vatan Diaspora, and they have no dealings

with him. '[T]wo or three years ago this lad living in Gubkinsky appeared, and presented a document that he was the President of Dagestan's representative in YaNAO. I don't know what he's up to, what aims he's pursuing' (AFM, E. B., Novy Urengoy, 2019).

The head of Vatan at Novy Urengoy does not regard official links with Dagestan as necessary. To put it simply, the *zemlyachestva* do not expect anything from Dagestani officialdom, nor do they get anything except certificates of successful completions of assigned tasks. The legal basis for this attitude towards the authorities in the republic is also telling: 'We have nothing to do with Dagestan from a legal point of view. We are a regional organisation in Yamal, we are registered in Salekhard' (AFM, E. B., Novy Urengoy, 2019).

Unlike the Ministry of National Policy of the Republic of Dagestan, which is more inclined to announce its intentions than put them into practice, or else which tries to make use of social institutions which were set up without its involvement, the religious institution, in the form of the Mufti's Office of Dagestan, has been quite regularly involved over recent years in the spiritual life of the northern regions, in particular KhMAO and YaNAO.

Although at present the vast majority of imams in the mosques of YaNAO and KhMAO come from Tatarstan or Bashkortostan [Yarlykapov 2020], the Spiritual Directorate of the Muslims of Dagestan (SDMD) has the possibility of sending its own appointees, natives of Dagestan, as assistants to the imams of mosques in the northern towns. In particular, it sent its representative from Dagestan as an assistant to the Imam of Surgut, and he works at the local mosque and is responsible for communication with his fellow countrymen. The activists in Surgut have noticed his influence on the Dagestani community in the town. The SDMD representative in Novy Urengoy, one of the assistants to the Mufti of YaNAO, who works in that town, was transferred there a year ago from a town in KhMAO, where he had been the assistant to the imam for several years.

Besides, the Dagestani Mufti's Office regularly sends delegations to Novy Urengoy to organise the *mawlid* in the month when the prophet Muhammad was born, and from time to time arranges *dhikr* at the mosque and distributes the newspaper *As-Salaam*, published under the aegis of SDMD, among the local Muslims [Yarlykapov 2020].

From time to time, every year, particularly on the day of the nativity of our beloved prophet Muhammad, imams, theologians and scholars went out. They come to our town, they go to all the towns <...>. The Spiritual Directorate of Dagestan sends them. They are such learned people, they come, read khutba [sermons] here, and do mawlid (AFM, M., Novy Urengoy, 2019).

Nevertheless, in Akhmet Yarlykapov's opinion, the influence of the SDMD on the local Muslim community is not great, partly because in the North many Dagestani Muslims have accepted the ideas of Salafism and radical Islam as a whole, and regard the emissaries of the Mufti's Office as polytheists (see in greater detail: [Yarlykapov 2020]).

It is evident that the activity of the SDMD in this regions is set in train in various circumstances of force majeure, such as the terrorist attack in Surgut in 2017, perpetrated by a young Dagestani sympathiser of IS.¹ During the following year many towns of KhMAO were visited not only by delegations of ordinary members of the SDMD, but by significant religious figures. Thus in 2015 the Deputy Mufti of the Republic of Dagestan, Akhmad Kakhaev, and the imam of the Central Mosque in Makhachkala, Mukhammadrasul Saaduev, both visited KhMAO. Kakhaev preached in the mosque at Surgut, and then came to a meeting with young Dagestanis held by the local *zemlyachestvo* and dedicated to the topics of 'Islam, the religion of peace and kindness', and 'Extremism' ['Zammuftiya RD...' 2015]. Saaduev not only preached in the mosque at Surgut, but also gave a lecture to the students of the university, within the framework of 'a major educational tour of the territory east of the Urals'. Both preachers condemned IS and radical tendencies in Islam and called upon their fellow countrymen not to be taken in by their propaganda.

'Our visit was dictated in the first place by our concern for our coreligionists from our own country. When, at home in Dagestan, we hear something about your good deeds, we are very glad. And vice versa: we are upset when we learn that someone's behaviour has been unworthy of a Muslim. So as only to be glad, we must somehow keep young people in the bosom of true, moderate Islam. That is why we came. And, of course, just to look at you — to see your faces,' explained the imam of the mosque of Makhachkala regarding the meeting [Prokopenko 2019 (2015)].

There were, as far as one can see, no such prophylactic visits by influential religious personages from the SDMD to Novy Urengoy in response to the incident of 2017, nor did the Dagestani *zemlyachestvo* attempt to initiate any.

According to data from the activists of the *zemlyachestvo* in Surgut, the initiative to invite religious personages from the republic to the

¹ This was the incident that spurred the official representative of the government of Dagestan in KhMAO into action. Minnats reacted with a letter to the municipal administration: 'We assured them that we would participate at any moment, wrote a letter to the administration, but afterwards we were already working with the representative' (AFM, Tatyana Gamaley, Makhachkala, 2018). Afterwards the Surgut NCA took the initiative and created mobile brigades of Dagestanis, who, as 1 September [the beginning of the school year. — Trans.] approached, patrolled the grounds around the schools.

North came, in this case, from the present head of the *zemlyachestvo*. Through one of his relatives in the SDMD he initiated the visit of religious authorities from the Spiritual Directorate to conduct explanatory conversations with his fellow countrymen in order to counteract the rhetoric of radical preachers. It remains unclear whether this was preceded by a request for such a meeting from the law-enforcement agencies or the regional administration, but it is obvious that they approved this measure. Here the leader of the *zemlyachestvo*'s actions respond to the interests and, possibly, anticipate the request of the authorities of the host community. In turn, there was a meeting between representatives of the *zemlyachestva* of KhMAO and YaNAO and the representatives of the SDMD in Dagestan.

In Dagestan the Mufti, Sheikh Ahmad Afandi, met a delegation of the leaders of the diasporas of Yugra and Yamal. This informaton from URA.RU was confirmed by the official representative of the republic in KhMAO, Nizami Magomedov.

At the meeting, Ahmad Afandi asked his fellow countrymen about living conditions in the regions and about the authorities' attitude towards them, and called upon the leaders of the diaspora to pay the greatest possible attention to the image of people from the Caucasus. 'It is important to have educational conversations and meetings, particularly with young people, attracting them to your circle, to strengthen brotherly relations and elevate their morals. People's opinion of Dagestan will depend on the culture, upbringing and behaviour of Dagestanis,' said the sheikh, as quoted on the Islamic religious portal Islamdag [Stepygin 2018].

The host community

Both organisations, the Surgut NCA and the Novy Urengoy Vatan Diaspora, are registered in Surgut and Novy Urengoy respectively. Thus, whereas the institution of the permanent representative formally belongs to the Republic of Dagestan, the *zemlyachestva* are constituted as social organisations in KhMAO and YaNAO.

Both the Surgut NCA and the Novy Urengoy Vatan Diaspora are represented at certain consultative meetings at the municipal administrations. As a rule, the leaders of all the significant *zemlyachestva* of the town sit on such bodies. At Novy Urengoy there is the Consultative Council on Questions of the Harmonisation of Interethnic Relations attached to the mayor's office; besides the leaders of the administration and representatives of the clergy, it includes the leaders of the national cultural social organisations, including Vatan. The leader of the diaspora is also a member of the Social Council attached to the office of the leader of the municipal administration.

To the question of what the main challenges dealt with at the local Social Council are, a member of the Novy Urengoy administration who is also a member of the council replied 'We have representatives of the department of the Ministry of the Interior, they work with us, that is, on crime' (AFM, A., Novy Urengoy, 2019). From further conversation with him it became clear that the agenda for the harmonisation of interethnic relations was largely drawn up by the Ministry of the Interior (and this was confirmed by the leader of Vatan). The regional authorities use the leaders of the *zemlyachestva* so as to delegate to them responsibility for the local Dagestani community, expressing no doubts about its reality, unity, and integration with the *zemlyachestvo*. In other words, the leaders of the *zemlyachestva* are forced not only to listen to claims against their compatriots, but also to take measures against those of them who have 'disgraced themselves'.

They draw attention to something at some time... to put it bluntly, a certain ethnicity, among the representatives of the ethnicity the number of, well, crimes or offences has increased. Such-and-such or such-and-such took place during certain events. Either they behaved badly, or somewhere, in some public places, they were... well, to put it bluntly, under the influence, or something else. So they draw attention to that, they let the leaders of the diasporas know about it so that they can have some admonitory conversations, perhaps take some measures to improve some cultural interactions, or some rules of behaviour, and so on (AFM, A., Novy Urengoy, 2019).

It is interesting that when asked by the interviewer whether the leaders of *zemlyachestva* attempt to solve their fellow countrymen's problems through the work of the council, the same informant answered in the negative. In his opinion, the reason this does not happen is the Caucasian representatives' sense of pride, which moves them to deal with difficulties by themselves and not ask the administration for help.

In turn, an activist of the *zemlyachestvo* expressed the view that there was little chance of solving the actual problems of his fellow countrymen within that council, or in any other official structure of the municipal administration.

I myself understand that no one there has an answer to that question [discrimination against people from Dagestan when they apply for jobs]. And I look at their reaction. Their reaction is always, always official. 'Ekaterina, bring us a paper from this or that person saying that he is not being hired because of his ethnicity. And I will help you, I will deal with it.' That's the official answer. And always, 99% of them use that official style (AFM, U., Novy Urengoy, 2019).

At sessions of the council the representative of the *zemlyachestvo* has to defend his fellow countrymen against accusations, mostly of being members of extremist organisations, but also other infractions.

In that environment — you know how in the films there are positive and negative heroes — I am always the negative hero. And I am always defending my own people. Perhaps my fellow countryman is a bad man, perhaps he will understand what I have done for him, perhaps he won't. That's not what it's about. But if it's about things getting out of hand, if the chief of police starts to report, saying that there have been 100 crimes in the city this year, and 15 of the people are Kumyks, I say: 'I don't understand. Are Kumyks from outer space, or what? Weren't there any Russians, any Chechens?' But every time they report: so many committed in the year, and of them, 3% by these, 4% by those, 6% by Dagestanis. That was at the beginning, seven or eight years ago, and it's always been like that. It goes on for a year, two years, three years... Always the same. I say, once I read out: 'You said: three, four, five, seven Dagestanis, and two of those. Fine, rounding it all up, let's say, roughly speaking, 20% of all crime. Dagestanis make up 7% of them. So why are we always talking about Dagestanis, or Chechens, or Nogais, looking at them specially? Who are the other 80%?' (AFM, E. B., Novy Urengoy, 2019).

Still the leader of Vatan sees some advantage for himself personally and for obtaining authority in the *zemlyachestvo* from participating in the work of the Social Council. In particular, he has got to know people in the municipal administration and established informal connections through which he has found answers both to his own business questions and to his fellow countrymen's problems.

In addition, a representative of the *zemlyachestvo* is invited to participate in spot checks on the prisons of the region together with the Federal Penitentiary Service: 'They visit their fellow countrymen, set them on the straight and narrow' (AFM, M., Novy Urengoy, 2018).

The attention paid to the *zemlyachestva* by the Ministry of the Interior informs their agenda and the nature of their activities. The leaders of the *zemlyachestva* deliberately hold all their meetings 'visibly' to the local administration and particularly the Ministry of the Interior. 'So, nevertheless, when we used to have a more or less large-scale meeting, I would let the administration know that we were meeting, and that we had such-and-such points on our agenda' (AFM, E. B., Novy Urengoy, 2019). The building of the *zemlyachestvo* house, although it was announced as the possibility of meeting without fear of arrest by the enforcement agencies, did not free the *zemlyachestvo* activists from the need to inform those agencies and the municipal administration of forthcoming meetings and their agenda.

There is a huge awning, and room for 500 people. And we had our meetings there, and even if I let them know, it's for the education of young people, against extremism and terrorism, or some other meetings, those topics come up. Or else there are some sorts of misunderstanding. All Russia got to know of it once, when there was a crime committed amongst the Nogais and Chechens, and everyone got excited about it, briefly, I don't know whether there were Dagestanis mixed up in it or not. At times like that we get together, we meet, call a meeting, here and there. The authorities are afraid that it will spill over into interethnic conflict. And so as to prevent that sort of quarrel, conflicts on an ethnic basis, we meet at once, we meet and try to nip it in the bud (AFM, E. B., Novy Urengoy, 2019).

The attitude of the administration of Novy Urengoy to the Dagestani *zemlyachestvo* as a whole and to its leader in particular seems quite typical for Russian reality. Irina Nam, characterising the situation regarding ethnic 'diasporas' (in the sense of communities, and not only institutions) in Tomsk, writes:

The state has recourse to the services of the NCA as a representative of the diaspora, because it needs channels of communication with ethnic communities. <...> [T]he migrants, and the authorities, and a significant part of society are guided intuitively by primitive ideas about it.

The authorities do not perceive the leaders of the NCA as people who have voluntarily taken on the burden of social activity and are responsible, in that sense, only to the members of their social organisation. They expect them to carry out without fail the decisions of the authorities, without giving them the necessary rights, powers or resources [Nam 2015: 39].

The head of the Surgut NCA sits, together with other leaders of *zemlyachestva*, on the Coordinating Council on Questions of Ethnic and Religious Communities at the mayor's office at Surgut. Over the last decade there has been a series of conflicts in Surgut which the general population of the town has put down as interethnic, and which involved people from Dagestan (and this was particularly stressed by the local mass media and representatives of the law-enforcement agencies and regional authorities). The Surgut administration's ethnic council, which included representatives from the main *zemlyachestva* of the town, effectively made them account for the actions of their fellow countrymen. The conflict between representatives of the Dagestani NCA and the police at the annual Sotsvetie festival of ethnic cultures on 12 June 2011, and also the boycott of that festival by the *zemlyachestva* of Dagestan, Chechnya, Azerbaijan, the Yezidis and the Volga Bulgars as a result of the OMON regularly exceeding its powers towards people from those

communities, show how complicated the relationship between the regional authorities and the *zemlyachestva* is.

In these conditions, the Dagestani NCA decided to change the style of its relationship with the authorities and the enforcement agencies. In 2014 the new head of the NCA evidently bet on the preventative coordination of his activity with the Surgut authorities, principally the law-enforcement agencies. Within this policy, for example, a meeting of representatives of the police with young Dagestanis was held. The people who attended were effectively scolded for their bad behaviour and the deputy head of the department of the Ministry of the Interior, Igor Topchiev, remarked: 'Your ethnic group and a number of others are being specially monitored. You're being watched and observed' [Stepygin 2014].

Over the last few years the Dagestani NCA has voluntarily involved itself in work to prevent and resolve situations of conflict involving fellow countrymen. Dagestani rapid response units are being set up under the aegis of the head of the NCA and accompany the police when they attend such conflicts ['Pravda chto li? ...' 2013]. This may obviously be seen both as an attempt on the NCA's part to monitor possible situations of conflict and a declaration of its readiness to act as collectively responsible to the municipal authorities and the community for the actions of its fellow countrymen. In particular the NCA has taken upon itself to meet with young recent arrivals, most often students, and inculcate the norms of social behaviour, 'so as not to irritate the locals' (AFM, K., Surgut, 2018).

The Dagestani NCA has also offered to be a mediator in questions regarding military service in KhMAO. The head of the diaspora takes personal responsibility for the behaviour of Dagestanis who have come to serve in the region, and uses the resource of the *zemlyachestvo* to settle conflicts when they arise: I was told of a case when a Dagestani had been breaching discipline in his unit, but after talking to the head of the *zemlyachestvo* 'improved' and was thereafter well regarded there. This assumption of responsibility for Dagestani conscripts has borne fruit and practically abolished the unspoken rule in the local military commissariats not to recruit people from the republic.

[The leader of the NCA] said: 'Wherever there's a situation, I'll be there in person immediately!' (AFM, K., Surgut, 2018).

Once there was a phone call from the Far East, and I said 'Let me talk to him.' He wasn't from Surgut, we took responsibility for people from Surgut, but he was from Lyantor. But I talked to him all the same. Afterwards I was in touch with the C. O., I rang up and asked, 'How's he doing?' And he said 'I don't know what you said to him, but he's as good as gold' (AFM, B., Surgut, 2018).

The Dagestani NCA in Surgut proclaims its loyalty to the regional authorities outside its competencies as a *zemlyachestvo* as well. Thus it was the head of the Surgut NCA who was the inspiration and one of the organisers of the rally dedicated to the anniversary of the annexation of the Crimea by Russia on 7 March 2015. Besides officials and deputies, the open air gathering was attended by representatives of the *zemlyachestva* despite the March frosts, the Caucasian dance ensemble attached to the *zemlyachestvo* danced on the stage, and there was a performance by a singer invited from Dagestan [‘Dagestanskiy miting...’ 2015]. On the initiative of the NCA, Dagestanis from all over the KhMAO came along.

Yes, Dagestani society, people came from all over the region, thirty or forty from every town. There must have been around eight hundred people. We applied for five hundred, and then they said, ‘If more come, you’ll be fined,’ so we said, ‘Make it a thousand.’ And we had already said ‘There shouldn’t be too many people coming’ (AFM, K., Surgut, 2018).

The NCA also takes part in other social events which formally have nothing to do with the declared aims of its constitution. For example, as the permanent representative in the KhMAO said, ‘in all the towns when there are, say, voluntary community work days, we get the timetable direct from the administration, when they happen in spring and autumn, say, as it were, voluntary community work, we try to take part in the life of the town’ (AFM, K., Surgut, 2018).

When analysing the interaction between the *zemlyachestva* and the local authorities, it is worth considering the question of how representative they are as an institution for the majority of immigrants in the town. The specifics of the evolution of such institutions in Russia frequently gives rise to the situation when the activists of the official *zemlyachestva* and the majority of those whom they are supposed to be representing exist in different dimensions and different social roles [Voronkov 2002]. For example, in his examination of the national cultural autonomies active in Russia, Alexander Osipov discovers different motivations amongst their members. Those who belong to the intelligentsia are interested in the language and culture of their group, and sometimes in its social problems, for businessmen participation in the NCA’s activities is a means of social self-realisation or a kind of charitable activity, and for religious activists and politicians it is more of a PR project [Osipov 2004: 176–177]. He goes on to remark: ‘The most diverse configurations are possible, and there is only one that is practically never encountered in reality, and that is the “community” that embraces within its structure the majority of the members of an ethnic group in a particular territory and coordinates all activities within that group’ [Ibid.: 180].

In the case under discussion, when it is a matter of the *zemlyachestva* as a whole, one might disagree with this last assertion. At present both structures, in Surgut and in Novy Urengoy, are well known to their fellow countrymen, which follows from interviews with Dagestanis living in the two towns. Interaction between migrants is quite well set up within the community, primarily in terms of reaction to extreme situations, for example when one of them is in conflict with someone else, particularly if the law-enforcement agencies are involved, and also in difficult life situations. Both *zemlyachestva* organise collections for the funerals of Dagestanis who have died as migrants and assist in sending the bodies home and collecting the necessary documents. Here there is an important difference between the Surgut NCA and the Novy Urengoy diaspora. The Vatan Diaspora, which came into being comparatively recently, much later than the Surgut NCA, was evidently organised out of an informal community of migrants who had arrived in the town at the end of the twentieth or beginning of the twenty-first century. In the conditions of a relatively small town and a significant homogeneity in the community (most of the Dagestani migrants who live and work in Surgut are Kumyks who come from villages in North Dagestan), it evolved in the direction of consolidation and of limiting those contacts with the host community that were a frequent source of conflict. A confirmation of that choice is the fact that the *zemlyachestvo* has acquired its own territory by building a *zemlyachestvo* centre. Judging by the data from the interviews, the leader of the *zemlyachestvo* is inclined to cut off the Ministry of the Interior's pretensions towards his fellow countrymen, demonstrating that it is inappropriate to evaluate the scale and character of crime in the town in ethnic terms.

During the first decade of the Surgut NCA's existence it was indeed run by old migrants who were already long incorporated into the local socium, and did not have such vital social and economic problems as their recently arrived fellow countrymen. This all changed in 2014: the present leader, who has himself been living in the region for a relatively short time, went for tighter interaction both with his fellow countrymen and the local authorities.

It is obviously harder for the Surgut NCA to organise its work relying on the consolidation and unity of all its fellow Dagestanis: the migration here is on a larger scale and more diverse (no one particular ethnic group is dominant) than in Novy Urengoy, and the town is perceptibly bigger. At the same time the local authorities expect the NCA to act as mediator between them and the migrants, and to take responsibility for its fellow countrymen, and particularly for their illegal activities. Accepting this challenge, the NCA is concentrating its activity on precisely this sort of interaction, and on occasion initiates it.

The unofficial contacts between the *zemlyachestva* and the originating communities are very wide. As examples one might adduce a number of directions in which informal translocal ties connect the originating society with the migrants who live in the North. Interaction in migration is often based on village or district identity (for more detail see: [Kapustina 2019]). If a *zemlyachestvo* is to a large extent an institutionally constructed community of migrants, and not a formal institution isolated from the majority of them, it takes an active part in promoting these ties.

You know what I like in the Dagestanis here? We have our own diaspora here. And not long ago someone's relative, or her brother, had an accident there, God preserve us... Everyone came together, saw her off, and she flew home... Everyone takes care of each other, nobody here would be left helpless. If anyone needs help, well we have this togetherness, and I like that (AFM, I., Novy Urengoy, 2019).

A telling example is organising the transport of the body of a dead person from Novy Urengoy to their homeland (almost everyone who dies is taken to Dagestan to be buried, and therefore this has become one of the most important functions of the *zemlyachestvo*). Over the entire period of the organisation's activity, about eighty bodies of deceased Dagestanis have been transported. Even before the organisation was officially established, activists bought a light van with a refrigerated compartment for conveying the bodies of the dead. Over the last few years, the deceased have begun to be transported to Dagestan by air, because this service has become significantly cheaper. One of the most important functions of the diaspora in this sphere is assisting with documents and other organisational questions (the postmortem, etc.). Since according to the norms of Islam a dead person should be buried as quickly as possible, preferably before sunset on the day of his / her death, the relatives want to get through the formalities as quickly as possible before transporting the body: having the death certificate and other documents issued. A collection is taken through the leaders of the *zemlyachestvo* to help the dead person's family, especially with transporting the body and travel for the relatives. Money is collected from fellow countrymen, and a cashier appointed to gather in the money. The association used to have a community fund for this purpose.

As well as helping their fellow countrymen in migration, the Dagestanis collect money through the *zemlyachestvo*, or more precisely through people appointed for particular villages, for social needs in their native villages. "There is another point that concerns my village. We have a mosque in the village and a cemetery, and they need to be maintained. And, as you know yourself, there is unemployment there and no money. We all come together as

a village, and every village does the same here' (AFM, M., Novy Urengoy, 2019). These projects can be on a large scale, and involve co-operation with the agencies of the local authorities. Thus, one successful businessman in Surgut, together with the local authorities, financed and organised the building of a road from his village to the regional centre, half the funds being provided from the regional budget. Another example is an activist for the Novy Urengoy *zemlyachestvo* who obtained and installed street lighting for his native village, which is in one of the plains regions of Dagestan. However, such cases of co-operation between members of the *zemlyachestvo* and the local authorities in Dagestan are no indication of interaction at the official level, but take place as a result of private connections and agreements between people. For example, the head man of the village where street lamps from the North were installed is the younger brother of the donor.¹

Conclusion

The process of migration between states may be highly formalised, and the parties involved or their governments may use migration for explicit political purposes [Pries 1999: 25]. After analysing the available evidence of the interrelationship between the regional authorities of the Republic of Dagestan and the structures of *zemlyachestva* in two regions of Western Siberia, one may conclude that between them there exist weak and nominal contacts limited to formal declarations by both sides. Either the potential of the *zemlyachestva* does not interest the authorities in the republic, or else it is beyond their control: they cannot imagine what mechanisms they might put in place to manage this potential and use it for their own purposes. One of the most important tasks when working with *zemlyachestva* is considered to be activity to prevent extremism and terrorism among their members and the Dagestanis in the region as a whole.

In turn, the Dagestani *zemlyachestva*, while formally taking part in all the initiatives of the ministry and the authorities of the KhMAO and YaNAO, do not have any presence at all in the originating community and as social organisations are effectively invisible to it. In the host community the *zemlyachestva* try to make a preventative demonstration of their loyalty to the regional authorities and particularly the enforcement agencies, and also to diffuse any mistrust on the part of the authorities towards people from Dagestan, who are constantly being suspected of extremism and criminal activities. In this way, the positions of representatives of both the host and

¹ On informal assistance by migrants and their institutions to the originating community see in more detail: [Kapustina 2019].

originating communities who are placed in positions of power are brought together by mistrust of the *zemlyachestva* and the efforts to monitor them.

The Dagestani *zemlyachestva*, by all accounts, do not so much need a dialogue with the local authorities or to receive dividends from it, or to decide vital questions, as they need to protect themselves from its attacks and demands. In these conditions, the Surgut *zemlyachestvo* has staked its position on political loyalty and activism, while that in Novy Urengoy has preferred to create a closed space for its activities. At the same time, both structures participate in official occasions, which are designated by the local authorities as intended to increase ‘tolerance’ in society — ‘ethnic pavilions’, sports events, and so on.

In parallel with this, informal associations of migrants, organised on the principle of belonging to one or another settlement (or less frequently, region), influence the originating community by charitable work and local social and economic projects. Also, as shown by the example of Novy Urengoy, wider informal associations may in fact become institutionalised as official *zemlyachestva*.

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Abbreviations

AFM — Author’s field materials collected in Surgut, Novy Urengoy and Makhachkala in 2015, 2018 and 2019

Minnats RD — Ministry of National Policy and Religious Affairs of the Republic of Dagestan

NCA — National Cultural Autonomy

SDMD — Spiritual Directorate of the Muslims of Dagestan

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