The EU’s Eastern Neighbourhood
Migration, borders and regional stability

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Labour migration from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries, particularly from Central Asia, to Russia is now widespread. It affects the majority of Russian regions, with migrants being mainly employed as unskilled labour across many sectors of the economy (Ryazantsev and Horie 2010: 5, 22–23). The need of the Russian economy for foreign labour is today recognised at the level of national policy.\(^1\) At the same time migration has come to be seen as an urgent and pressing social problem by a variety of agents in a number of fields – political, social and academic – and has become a topic of public debate, triggering comment and action from the media. In this context ‘integration’ has over the last couple of years become the predominant term used by politicians, journalists and academics to discuss issues of labour migration and migration policies, displacing previously common notions such as assimilation and adaptation. Serving as an umbrella concept, integration not only describes the problems encountered by migrants (in terms of a lack of integration) but also offers a strategy, a positive programme for solving them. The concept is also universal in the sense that it circulates between the academic and political discourse.

This chapter focuses on the integration of migrants from CIS countries coming to Russia under a visa-free regime to work as low-skilled workers\(^2\) and on the agents involved in the process of their integration, namely administrative officials, employers and members of the civil society (both migrants and members of the host community), with emphasis being placed on the national and local level. It is based on recent empirical research carried out by the authors at the Centre for Independent Social Research within the framework of the project Labour Migrants in Petersburg: Identifying Problems and Developing Recommendations,\(^3\) which investigated social problems of migrants in St Petersburg with regard to their regularisation and interaction with state institutions, employment and working conditions, housing and medical care. The research included interviews with migrant workers, their employers and officials dealing with migrants, as well as desk research and regular monitoring through the consultation of relevant official documents and numerous media and online publications.

It is important to remark that the phenomenon of labour immigration in Russia is undergoing rapid changes. Almost every week new government
projects, institutions and civic initiatives are being set up and new regulations are being introduced. The present chapter will only offer a snapshot of the current situation (in late 2012 and early 2013), mainly relying on experiences made in St Petersburg, one of Russia’s cities particularly attractive for labour migrants. It will begin by introducing some concepts related to the integration of migrants in the European context, identifying different levels and types of integration and analysing the contradictions typical of European immigration policies. The second part will then examine Russia’s current immigration policy and outline the specifics of the ‘turn to integration’ in this policy field. The third part will investigate the contribution of a range of governmental and non-governmental agents to the integration of migrants on the local level, using the example of St Petersburg. In conclusion the authors will compare European and Russian tendencies in terms of the integration of immigrants and highlight the distinctive characteristics of the Russian situation.

Integration as a political and analytical category

Immigration is one of the most vigorous sources of cultural diversity in contemporary societies, which brings up the idea of a required mechanism that would facilitate social cohesion and stability and prevent tensions and cultural misunderstandings. Global social thought of the twentieth century has come up with two major alternative approaches to immigration as a source of cultural diversity: assimilation and integration. The assimilationist approach presumes that if immigrants ‘want to be accepted as full and equal citizens, they should assimilate into the national culture, exchange their inherited or imported identity for one derived from their new country and undergo a kind of cultural rebirth’ (Parekh 2008: 83). Unlike assimilationists, whose views have recently been recognised as ‘unjust, unrealistic and illiberal’, integrationists ‘appreciate that immigrants might wish to, and indeed have a right to, retain parts of their cultural identity, and that integration could and should be “thin”, limited mainly to society’s “common institutions”’ (Parekh 2008: 86).

Russian scholarly debates refer to two types of relationships between adaptation and assimilation (Mukomel’ 2013: 695). The first one performs as a continuum or path that immigrants should follow when they arrive in their country of destination. The chain ‘adaptation – integration – assimilation’ presupposes that they gradually adjust to a new society with a follow-up incorporation into it and transformation into local citizens. Russian debates maintain the same logic of switching from assimilation to integration, which is linked to the re-evaluation of a primordial approach to culture and the acceptance of multiple and contextual identities. Therefore, the second approach sees integration as a two-way process, which involves both immigrants and a receiving society. They both are expected to adjust to each other to achieve a certain degree of integration.

The integration of immigrants is a multi-layered phenomenon as well as a complex concept which refers to the discourse on the role of migrants in the
host society. As a concept it is contextual, that is discursively framed in national models, and politically biased through its use as an instrument in politics. Nowadays integration is an issue of high priority for policymakers in European societies (Joppke 2007b: 245). According to Goodman (2010: 769) it is even one of the most pressing policy and social challenges that liberal nation-states currently face. Although integration is a practical category taken from the world of politics, scholars use it to analyse various aspects, conditions and levels of integration even though its applicability as an analytical category is highly debatable (Joppke and Morawska 2003: 4). The following is an attempt to outline general tendencies in the scholarly and practical uses of integration through an overview of studies of integration policies in European states with particular emphasis on aspects that offer a useful analytical perspective applicable to the Russian situation.

Above all, integration policy is seen as a mechanism for producing and maintaining the boundaries of the liberal nation-state in terms of welfare and valued statehood (Koopmans 2010: 21; Pajnik 2007: 851). First, researchers have indicated a neoliberal turn in both welfare and integration policies as well as a turn, or return, to assimilation across Western Europe (Jørgensen 2012: 249). Despite differences across welfare states (Koopmans 2010: 8–9), scholars have advanced that overall welfare has become a deficit public good, and integration policies are now being formulated with the aim to limit migrants’ access to it. Integration is being framed as providing access to the welfare state and full social benefits rather than achieving it through the welfare system (Jørgensen 2012: 251). The neoliberal economic project also presumes that the focus on socio-economic integration shifts the burden to individual immigrants, who become responsible for their integration (Jørgensen 2012).

Second, much of the literature on immigrants distinguishes a trend from difference-friendly multiculturalism towards universalistic assimilation in integration policies (Joppke 2007b: 243; Nagel and Staeheli 2008: 415–416). Formulated and coordinated primarily on the national level, these policies are more concerned with abstract discussions about national values and their protection and for this reason are rather symbolic than concrete tools of integration (Jørgensen 2012: 252). Although institutions dealing with migration and integration vary across EU countries, they all share a mind-set that stresses the need to preserve the foundations and values of the nation-state (Pajnik 2007: 850–851). Processes of integration and naturalisation re-enact a nation’s ideologically approved origins (Pajnik 2007: 862), and integration promotes an image of the host country as a homogeneous entity (Pajnik 2007: 853). This usually takes the form of civic integration policies (targeted selection, language acquisition, integration courses and various systems of assessment) that are being used as techniques of integration. Valenta and Strabac (2011: 667) define this approach as state-sponsored obligatory integration. On the one hand, migrants are required to assimilate through naturalisation, on the other hand, they are kept ‘at a distance in a kind of a postcolonial isolation’ (Pajnik 2007: 856). Much like everyone else, immigrants are always excluded and included at the same time: excluded
as whole individuals and included as sectoral players or agents with specific assets and habitual dispositions in specific fields or systems (Joppke and Morawska 2003: 3; see also Pajnik 2007: 850).

Studies on policy-making in the field of immigration and integration point to the contradictory logic of this policy on the local, city or municipal level. This can be explained as a gap between discourse and practice, as an unsuccessful transfer of nationally formulated policies to the local level or as an outcome of diverging political rationalities on the local and national level (Jørgensen 2012: 245). Indeed, scholars usually pay great attention to the relationship between these two levels, to the question whether there is competition or congruence and to the extent that local approaches are independent from the national one. Jørgensen (2012: 268), for example, concludes that while the national political rationale and institutional logic are characterised by a tough and restrictive approach to integration, motivated by neoliberal ideology, local approaches are based on a rationale and logic of pragmatism and on the management of cultural diversity. Local integration policies, unlike national ones, are perceived as more sensitive towards the diversity of migrants and their demands (Jørgensen 2012: 257; see also Pajnik 2007: 855). Local governments work with people rather than ideas. In addition, civil society is more influential on the local level (Jørgensen 2012: 260).

Researchers also distinguish between various components of integration, which can be political (civic engagement, citizenship, national membership), economic (employment) or social and cultural. On the practical level, they emphasise concrete spheres or domains of integration, such as welfare, language acquisition, housing, job training and job placement for newcomers, health care, education, culture and leisure (e.g. Joppke and Morawska 2003; Koopmans 2010; Pajnik 2007). Particular attention has been paid to the political background and techniques of civic integration (Joppke 2007a, 2007b). To promote civic skills and to increase the commitment to national values, governments have defined a series of requirements (‘civic hardware’), including integration contracts, classes, tests and ceremonies (Goodman 2010: 754). Civic integration of this kind implies two objectives that Goodman defines as the performance of incorporation (integration courses, mandatory tests and a top-down policy of homogenising acculturation) and state membership, related to concrete legal statuses and rights (Goodman 2010: 755 and 768). It has thus been suggested that integration has become a solution to presumed failures of border controls, functioning as a device for the selection of migrants, a disciplinary mechanism and a process of certification for those deemed to be worthy of ‘the privilege of citizenship’, instead of a by-product of citizenship, non-discriminatory treatment and investment in human capital (Kostakopoulou 2010: 843–844).

Studies of European integration policies thus point to the key role of a dialectic of inclusion and exclusion in the mechanisms of integration. As the following analysis will show, the ambivalence or contradictory nature of migration policies is also highly relevant for the Russian situation.
The ‘turn to integration’ in national migration policy: conflicting trends

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia has experienced a number of migratory waves, each of them triggering changes in the national immigration policy of Russia and its CIS neighbours. As Vladimir Mukomel’ (2005: 11–43) has shown, migration caused by ethnic conflicts on post-Soviet territory has gradually given way to economic migration resulting from the social and economic development in Russia and other CIS countries. Correspondingly, policies targeted at refugees and forced migrants or aimed at the repatriation of compatriots have become of peripheral interest while those touching on the status of foreign citizens working on the territory of the Russian Federation have taken on greater social significance. Monitoring and controlling labour migration (and combating illegal immigration) have become central policy objectives. At the same time, rigid regulations and ineffective institutions have often made it difficult for immigrants to obtain a legal status and led to informal or even criminal practices that have forced the majority of labour migrants into a shadow labour market. The year 2007 saw, however, major changes that inaugurated a new era in Russia’s immigration policy. The rules of entry to Russia and those regulating the duration of stay for foreign citizens were simplified and regularisation procedures (registration, work and residence permits) became more accessible for migrants. In July 2010, an amendment to the Federal Law ‘On the Legal Status of Foreign Citizens in the Russian Federation’ authorised labour migrants to work for households as domestic help or doing construction and repair work. This licence, better known as ‘patent’, has enjoyed considerable popularity with migrants, as it was easier to obtain and renew than an ordinary work permit. On the whole, the principal objective of immigration policy in Russia since the collapse of the Soviet Union has been concerned with the registration, legalisation and control of labour migration and the identification of undocumented or, in Russian political rhetoric, illegal migrants while questions pertaining to the integration of immigrants were ignored. Indeed, most of the labour migrants arriving in Russia in the 1990s and early 2000s spoke Russian, found accommodation and work on their own and coped themselves with safety problems in Russian cities. The authors’ studies have shown that they did not regard Russia as a foreign country and often had social ties that were a legacy from the Soviet period (Brednikova and Tkach 2010: 51–57).

In recent years a ‘turn to integration’ has taken place in Russia’s immigration policy. The first sign of this was Vladimir Putin’s pre-election article ‘Russia: The National Question’, published on 23 January 2012 in the Nezavisimaya Gazeta. One of its sections, entitled ‘Problems of immigration and our integration project’, contains a number of reflections comprising a political programme for the integration of migrants in Russia, here understood rather in the sense of assimilation. Eighteen months later, on 13 June 2012, Putin, who had been re-elected president, signed into law the Concept of State Migration Policy in
the Russian Federation, which discussed in more detail questions of adaptation and integration. This text can be considered a milestone in contemporary immigration policy. For the first time Russia’s need for labour migration was officially acknowledged and along with it the need to perfect immigration policy: ‘For the realisation of the positive potential from migration processes, the whole system of their regulation in the Russian Federation requires modernisation’. Currently, Russia, like many European countries, is experiencing serious demographic challenges because of falling birth rates, an ageing population and a decline in the share of the working-age population. As a result, promoting the adaptation and integration of immigrants, as well as the development of constructive relations between them and the host society, has now been declared one of the tasks of immigration policy. The ‘Concept’ thus supports the trend towards a liberalisation of immigration policy, making it easier to obtain a permit or status or to apply for family reunification. The basic aim is to create agreeable and comfortable conditions for new migrants through various measures such as the ‘development of infrastructure in the sphere of labour migration on the basis of a collaboration between state, private and commercial organisations’; ‘ensuring access of foreign citizens and members of their family to social, medical and educational facilities corresponding to their legal status’; and the ‘creation of programmes supporting constructive collaboration between immigrants and the host society’.6

However, although both the ‘Concept’ itself, which has a recommendatory character, and the legal initiatives resulting from it rhetorically declare the importance of integrating migrants, they have in fact created practical barriers to these goals, as integration is given equal priority to the preservation of the values and discourses of the host nation-state. Whereas the socio-economic contribution of labour migrants to the development of the Russian society is acknowledged as significant, immigrants nevertheless are not regarded as enjoying full rights in the labour market. The state’s declared goal is ‘the organised acquisition of foreign workers’. This recommendation found expression in the organisation of so-called centres of preparation for labour migrants on the basis of bilateral agreements, implemented in Russia by a department of the Federal Migration Service. Currently, a number of centres have been opened in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan (soon to be followed by others in Armenia and Uzbekistan) that are linked to employment agencies in Russia. The idea behind this initiative is – linguistic, professional and legal – ‘integration from abroad’ in order to facilitate later integration into Russian reality. The procedures have been designed to prepare labour migrants for specific employments in specific places. The status and effectiveness of these centres is not yet clear and requires research. In the authors’ opinion, the initiative reduces the migrant to a Gastarbeiter, that is, somebody tied to a specific workplace and profession, with few options for competing in the open labour market and changing employers, a state of affairs less conducive to integration. Opportunities for migrants in the open labour market are similarly restricted by the quota system introduced in 2006, whereby the federal centre severely limits
the annual number of work permits for each region. This measure not only makes immigrants more vulnerable but also hurts some employers, especially small and medium-sized enterprises, mostly neglected in favour of large companies. Despite criticism, including from inside the state administration, that this contradicts the idea of economic development, the quota system has not been abolished.

Access to health services has been another issue. Whereas Russian citizens benefit from free universal health care, employers will only be authorised to hire foreign citizens who have acquired a mandatory health insurance policy (Nikolaeva 2013), an idea first promoted by the Minister of Labour of the Russian Federation in early 2013. Since health care is already financed through taxes this places an additional burden on migrants.

On the cultural level, the ‘Concept’ opposes an assumedly homogenous Russian society with its ‘cultural and historical traditions and local customs’ to immigrants who might display ‘inappropriate, aggressive, provocative and disrespectful behaviour’. The rhetoric of political leaders thus creates and reproduces a normalised version of the ethnic and cultural otherness of migrants. Integration is here understood as the ‘civilising’ of migrants, i.e. through their acquaintance with Russian high culture, namely literature, history and the Russian language. It is reduced to a form of civic integration at the heart of which is the obligation of immigrants to acquire new cultural skills in order to confirm their right to remain and live in Russia:

It is important that immigrants can adapt normally to our society. Yes, it is a basic requirement that people wanting to live and work in Russia should make our culture and language their own. Starting next year, it will be obligatory to pass an examination on Russian language, history and literature, the history of the Russian state and law in order to receive or extend immigrant status. Our state, just like other civilised countries, is ready to elaborate corresponding courses of instruction and to provide them to immigrants.

Federal Law No. 185 of 12 November 2012 (‘On Amendments in Article 13.1 of the Federal Law “On the Legal Position of Foreign Citizens in the Russian Federation” and Article 27.2 of the Federal Law “On Education”’), entered into force on 1 December 2012, has made it mandatory for foreign citizens arriving in the Russian Federation without requiring a visa to have at least a basic knowledge of Russian if they apply for a permit to work in the retail, housing and services sectors or in public utilities. Documentary proof takes the form of a certificate delivered after the applicant has successfully passed a language test. Neither the test nor preparatory language courses are provided free of charge.

Thus, the ‘turn to integration’ in Russia’s current immigration policy is characterised by inherent contradictions. The state acknowledges its economic and demographic need for labour migrants and its responsibility for their
integration into the life of the host society. At the same time, the programmes and ideas proposed for integration keep immigrants at a distance from this society and its resources. Preserving the *ethnos* of the nation-state remains the prevailing idea of integration policy in Russia. The tasks of integration, which are essentially anti-repressive, have been assigned to the Federal Migration Service and the police, whose basic modus operandi has been honed for other tasks. Both agencies are to a large degree responsible for monitoring and controlling immigration flows and combating illegal immigration. At present, neither the legislation nor the various institutions seem to be ready for systematic progress in the sphere of integration.

**Immigrant integration on the local level: the case of St Petersburg**

*The governmental approach to integration*

The contemporary political structure of the Russian Federation is organised according to the principle of the ‘power vertical’, which entails the strict ideological and economic dependence of local executive power from the federal centre and subordination to its decisions. Despite the insufficient development of an integration policy on the federal level, local officials are trying to bring their work into line with the Concept of State Migration Policy, although the latter does not have the status of a law but only expresses general principles and recommendations. It is argued here that the contradictions of the national integration policy in the sphere of immigration are reproduced to a greater or lesser degree on the level of the Russian regions, in this case of St Petersburg.

St Petersburg, Russia’s second-largest city, is attracting an increasing number of labour migrants from other CIS countries that share a visa-free regime with the Russian Federation. In 2011 the Federal Migration Service in St Petersburg and the surrounding Leningrad region issued 186,033 work permits, mostly for low-skilled immigrants from Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Ukraine.10 There exists indeed a strong demand for this kind of workers in the local labour market. In addition to industry and agriculture, migrants are currently employed in the construction and street retail sectors, as street sweepers, cleaners, waiters, all-purpose helpers and porters in shopping malls, in public transport and as child minders and carers for the elderly. Having received work permits and registered, they become part of everyday life in the megalopolis. However, the ‘turn to integration’ in immigration policy has meant that labour migrants will now have to apply separately for work and residence permits.

In St Petersburg, there is currently no single specialised official body responsible for questions of integration. While the Federal Migration Service, in 2010, has created a department for cooperation and integration which is meant to develop a strategy for the integration of foreign citizens into Russian society and coordinate local initiatives and programmes in this field, its main administrative task since 1992 has been the monitoring and control of foreigners on the territory of the Russian Federation, and in particular the combating of
illegal immigration (Gladarev and Tsinman 2011: 509). This still remains a priority, even after the promotion of integration has become part of its remit. As a rule, the responsibility for integration is spread between different city committees (executive bodies) such as those responsible for external communications, labour and employment, health, social policy, housing and education. These and other committees draw up and implement programmes for the employment of migrants and for the monitoring of their working conditions, health insurance and social security, accommodation and language instruction. However, experts generally acknowledge that in practice the intended measures have not yet reached a sufficient scale and have been hampered by organisational problems, lack of finance and existing legal rules. Frequently, initiatives get stuck at the planning stage or are implemented in a selective and fragmentary manner – in a few city districts, during a short-term campaign or the tenure of a particular official. Thus, in 2012, all districts of Petersburg set up official Russian-language courses for migrants but these were closed down after a year or so, partly because there was no demand for them and partly because they had not been properly planned, lacked funds and employed questionable teaching methods. In the authors’ view, this and other failures can be attributed to officials who know little about the way a migrant’s everyday life is organised and who are therefore incapable of developing effective mechanisms and techniques to facilitate integration. Furthermore, interviews conducted with officials have shown that their actions are often based on stereotypical preconceptions, in which migrants are often seen as disrupting the social order, as potential agents of criminal behaviour and epidemics or as competitors for jobs. On the other hand, there have been a number of local initiatives implemented successfully over several years. In the following, two of these will be examined more closely, particularly in view of how they reflect the dialectics of inclusion and exclusion of migrants. The first is concerned with housing, the second with cultural activities.

Research conducted by the authors has shown the diversity of housing among migrants, who often face great difficulty in finding decent accommodation in St Petersburg. Some occupy rent-subsidised rooms at their place of work, others rent beds for the night or rooms in crowded communal apartments and still others live in evacuated houses or squats (Brednikova et al. 2012). Since the Spring of 2011, low-skilled migrant workers living in St Petersburg or the Leningrad region have obtained the right to rent accommodation in hostels converted from former factory dormitories and other types of housing. The programme is being implemented by the city administration and housing committee with the support of the Federal Migration Service (FMS) with the aim of solving the residential problems of labour migrants. Currently 11 such objects are operating and another 89 are planned to open up by 2018. They offer labour migrants accommodation that is relatively cheap (EUR90–110 per month), safe and comfortable. The workers’ hostels have dormitories with three to eight beds and offer the shared use of a kitchen, bathrooms, laundry facilities, safe boxes and other amenities.
Each resident has a bed, cupboard and shelf; a resident cleaner and janitor look after the premises.

Never before had the city government regarded social housing as a solution, since finding accommodation was previously left to the migrants themselves. The project therefore bears witness to the interest of local authorities in improving the living conditions of labour migrants and, more generally, their quality of life. However, according to the authors’ observations, workers’ dormitories as a physical space and an arena of interaction of migrants with local authorities have been designed in a way that prevents the migrant from acting as an autonomous subject enjoying the same rights as citizens. Firstly, the administration concludes a rental agreement not with individual migrants but only with their employers who thus take decisions on behalf of their workers. This institutionalises the employers’ responsibility for their employees beyond the working hours: when incidents such as breakages or a breach of regulations occur the hostel’s administration informs the employer and may demand compensation. There is also a tendency to house migrants close to their work to save travelling time and to allow employers to control their workers more effectively – partly for this reason, corridors in these hostels are under CCTV surveillance. An expert from the St Petersburg housing committee explicitly advanced this argument for local employees in the housing and utilities sector: ‘(Labour migrants) must live close to the houses, backyards and refuse collection points where they work.’ Migrants are thus seen exclusively as a source of labour.

Secondly, such hostels have an operating regime that is oriented towards an everyday control of residents, their movements and behaviour. A hostel is a type of housing designed for the collective accommodation of migrants, where men and women are housed separately and families are not allowed to live together. Migrants are not awarded full rights to their dwelling place: they can only enter or leave at specific times (each occupant has an electronic key), the courtyard for leisure (and smoking) is fenced off from the street, and residents are not allowed to invite guests or decorate the personal space of their rooms. Such a regime is informed by the notion of Gastarbeiter, that is, somebody who is not supposed to have other interests except earning money. Residents effectively find themselves in the position of minors who are forced to ask permission from the hostel’s administration if their plans differ from the building’s working regime.

This suggests that a workers’ hostel, originally aimed at integrating migrants, works more like a company with a binding universal schedule of operation and little space for privacy even outside working hours. The concept of the workers’ hostel aims to make the city safe from migrants and migrants safe from the city. It reproduces the fears and prejudices that hinder integration rather than developing it effectively.

The second long-term and much better-known integration project in St Petersburg relates to the cultural sphere. In 2006 the Tolerance programme was launched with the aim of ‘confirming the values of civic solidarity,
securing harmonious coexistence and constructive interaction of all ethnic and confessional groups present in the city, the prevention of all forms of xenophobia, the formation of effective mechanisms of social integration and cultural adaptation of migrants. The programme is being run by the committee for external relations as part of a process of mutual adaptation of migrants and the host society and of their interaction on the basis of mutual respect and social equality. The local authorities who initiated and implemented the programme were obviously willing to take on responsibilities for creating a general atmosphere of tolerance in a social context characterised by a significant level of xenophobia.

However, the Tolerance programme has been conceived in a way that tends to homogenise migrants, assigning them to specific ethnic diasporas and associations or communities based on their national culture of origin. The goals promoted by these state-supported organisations are often very remote from the interests and problems of most labour migrants arriving in Petersburg to earn money. An important aim of the programme has been the organisation of festivals and other cultural events where representatives of the diaspora acquaint Petersburgers with their national music and dances, cuisine and handicrafts, therefore leading to a ‘folklorisation of migrants’ (Pajnik 2007: 860). However friendly and interested such a relationship to the ethnic other may be, it also tends to keep migrants at a distance from other members of the local society. Indeed, migrants are generally regarded as culturally unsuited for life in a Russian city and incapable of respecting imagined ‘traditional Russian values’. For this reason, migrants are thought to need teachers or mentors who will help them to become familiar with ‘Petersburg rules of everyday behaviour’. An example of this attitude is offered by the so-called Labour Migrant’s Manual, the first publication of this kind in the history of post-Soviet migration, which was published in St Petersburg in 2012 in Russian, Uzbek, Tajik and Kyrgyz. The brochure is of interest both discursively and visually. Labour migrants arriving in St Petersburg are represented by their working tools – a mason’s trowel, a decorator’s brush and scraper or a street sweeper’s broom – while members of the host society appear as human individuals: a police officer, a city guide, a doctor and a teacher, a visual presentation that triggered a public debate calling into question the very effectiveness of the Tolerance programme. One of the chapters, entitled ‘Useful Advice’, admonishes migrants to follow cultural rules as practiced in Russia’s ‘cultural capital’. For instance, migrants should not ‘everywhere and always wear traditional national dress, since it attracts attention that is not always necessary’; ‘not continually wear tracksuits, especially together with outdoor street shoes (tracksuits are used for sports)’; ‘not go out into the street wearing a house robe’; ‘not crouch, instead of standing, when in public places’; ‘not cook food on balconies, in courtyards or in the street’. These and other recommendations mark off the migrant as a priori uncivilised, uncultured and lacking social competence, as an ethnic other whose behavioural skills are so foreign to the local community that he requires help in understanding basic rules of public and private life.
The analysis of the work of local authorities shows that together with the opportunities they offer to migrants they also place restrictions on the lives of migrants. In particular, the institutional mechanisms of integration mean that migrants do not enjoy full access to welfare; they are monitored and isolated from the ‘local’ population, and labelled as ethnic and cultural others. Official initiatives for integration that are inspired by the idea of controlling migrants create the reverse effect: integration can cut off migrants from the ‘local’ population, and their access to social institutions is not always free. Moreover, as research conducted by the authors shows, state agencies often try to avoid direct contact.

**Employers and ethnic organisations as substitutes for state-led integration**

While the government has initiated the project of integration and provided an institutional and legal framework for the process, the administration frequently has shown little interest in interacting directly with migrants, rather delegating some functions to intermediaries, notably employers and diaspora or ethnic organisations.

Currently employers are, for example, held responsible for the regularisation of migrants: companies are required to apply for quotas, obtain work permits for the migrants they employ and monitor their legal status in Russia. In addition, they must provide some social support for migrant workers, in particular solving issues of registration and accommodation as well as ensuring that they are covered by a health insurance policy. Employers thus almost bear full responsibility for their foreign employees and the Federal Migration Service’s task is reduced to control employers’ actions in this regard.16

Certainly, this kind of support for migrant workers, who face long and complicated bureaucratic procedures, has many advantages, especially where big companies have significant resources, for instance to build a dormitory or to hire staff who look exclusively after the migrants’ paperwork. Other employers, however, are more likely to break the law and operate in a ‘shadow’ market. The policy obviously creates obstacles for small businesses where migrant labour is most in demand. By forcing employers to shoulder large responsibilities for their foreign employees, it also tends to transform otherwise formal labour relations into a system of mutual moral obligations. Thus, the majority of migrants interviewed in the authors’ study refer to their employers as a ‘master’ and describe them in moral categories (‘good’/‘bad’, ‘kind’/‘evil’, ‘generous’/‘greedy’ etc.). Among its consequences are abusive practices. Migrants are more likely to be exploited, for example through unpaid overtime or work at the home of the employer, while employers have reported small fraud or theft by migrants.

Today, in St Petersburg, there are many ethnic or, as they refer to themselves, ‘national’ organisations (Uzbek, Tajik, Azeri etc.). Despite their apparent differences, they all perform in fact similar functions, namely the promotion of a specific ethnic, or national, culture and practical support for
compatriots. The local government sees these organisations as representatives of an ‘ethnic culture’ and usually invites their leaders to attend the various meetings organised by the executive branch responsible for dealing with migrants’ issues. In St Petersburg, these organisations were involved in the Tolerance programme described above. But their role has been limited to provide samples of ‘ethnic high culture’ to the exclusion of everyday culture. Thus, these organisations participate in the construction and reproduction of an innocent, loyal and ethnic other that reinforces boundaries between the host society and migrants. In addition, they focus on supporting compatriots, in general by helping them to accomplish paperwork or to find a job or dwelling place. Most of these services have to be paid for, which means that the organisations actually operate as market intermediaries, even though they have the status of non-profit organisations. For these reasons it is argued here that both employers and ethnic organisations, who act as intermediaries of the state, in fact reproduce the same contradictory logic of inclusion and exclusion of migrants in regard to the host society as the state. Indeed, the migrants’ relations with their employer effectively closes them off from society, and the cultural boundaries erected and emphasised through ethnic organisations reinforce this pattern. In a way this is hardly surprising since the state has expressly mandated these actors to implement its policy of integration, based on this very logic.

**Grassroots initiatives of integration: networks and civic activities**

Integration is not only a top-down process. Migrants’ networks of support and solidarity have been important and effective tools of integration. Recent years have also seen the emergence of several grass-roots initiatives that comprise both migrants and members of the host society. Civil society should therefore be seen as another agent of integration.

Unlike ordinary local citizens, migrants have a smaller set of competencies in the new location, limited social ties and fewer sources of information. Social networks that include migrants and citizens have therefore become extremely important for social integration. New communication technologies, such as mobile phones and the internet, have greatly expanded the range and effectiveness of such networks. According to the authors’ research, the main function of these networks is the transmission of information about jobs, housing and various sources of help. However, networks of this kind are not always a panacea for migrants. Some are too small and isolated to be efficient. Moreover, the nature of the relations between members, which are thought to be based on mutual moral obligations and therefore on trust, have led to numerous cases of betrayal and abuse.

The authors’ study has shown a slowly increasing rejection of attempts to achieve integration only through social networks. One of the indicators of this process is the emergence of alternative agents of integration, notably grass-roots initiatives from within civil society. Furthermore, migrants have become
more aware of legal recourses to solve their problems and to withdraw from shady transactions, a development linked to an increasingly important legal framework, the duration of migration and the more recent public debate about the rights of migrant workers. They no longer hesitate to approach non-governmental organisations, such as The Anti-Discrimination Centre (ADC) ‘Memorial’ or the Saint Petersburg International Cooperation Centre of the Red Cross. They also try to protect their labour rights more publicly. In October 2012, for instance; 50 Tajiks working as street sweepers in St Petersburg joined a trade union and went on strike to claim unpaid wages.17

One of the grassroots initiatives promoting integration is the Children of St Petersburg project, started in Spring 2012 by local citizens who act as volunteers to teach Russian to children of immigrant workers.18 Its main objective is to facilitate the adaptation of children to their new life and to prepare them for school. In addition to language classes, teachers provide other services such as sightseeing trips, excursions and accompanied theatre visits.

Members of the civil society and mechanisms of immigrant integration operate independently from the state and are not engaged in politics. As a result, they are able to fill gaps in the state’s policy. However, such civic initiatives are sporadic and mostly lack the necessary resources and personnel or the planning capacity required to successfully complete their task.

Conclusions

Immigration policies in Russia and the EU countries share a view of migrants as residents that lack certain competences and have to prove loyalty upon entering the national territory and afterwards remain under various forms of control that ensure that they are rendered harmless. This is the logic of state management of migration and the Russian case is not unique here. Moreover, both in Russia and in the European Union, national migration policies are based on a logic that simultaneously includes and excludes migrants. This does not mean that the state has two different policies, one providing migrants with opportunities for integration and another that is depriving them of such opportunities. It is rather that these opportunities (institutions) themselves inherently entail barriers that hinder and restrict a migrant’s integration into everyday life.

However, in contrast to many European countries, integration is a recent problem for the Russian state. After two decades of combating illegal migration the state is now promoting integration, thereby acknowledging the importance of labour migration for the economic and social life of Russian society. Until now, the turn to integration has been mainly rhetorical, as many policy proposals have not yet been transposed into laws and most institutions designed to be responsible for integration have not yet been established. This chapter has provided only a snapshot of the current situation and it is clear that the creation of such institutions will take some time and that the evaluation of the social effects produced by the turn to integration will require further research.
In the sphere of integration, the state acts as a monopolist, and attempts to involve other agents in the process have not been very successful, because the state has either imposed responsibilities on these agents while subjecting them to strict controls (notably in the case of employers) or ignored or even rejected their initiatives (as in the case of civil society organisations). Contrary to what has happened within the European Union where these initiatives have been supported by the state, the situation in Russia is characterised by the state’s attempts to bring them under control or to block them. This can be explained by the weakness of civil society in Russia and by the key role that national security plays in the state’s migration policies.

The current policy towards migrants produces a specific type of integration that could be called ‘fragmented’ (Portes and Zhou 1993, quoted in Bolt, Özuikren and Phillips 2010: 182). First, the process of integration has a dialectical relationship with exclusion and control. Thus, a migrant living in a workers’ hostel can be said to have become integrated in terms of housing, but at the same time the surveillance regime to which he is being subjected there effectively isolates him from the neighbourhood. Similarly, a migrant, despite steady employment and regular earnings, might find himself completely dependent on his employer who, having made investments to ensure the migrant’s integration, then proceeds to exploit him. Second, the present politics of integration and institutionalisation are not sensitive to different scenarios and biographical situations that shape a migrant’s everyday life, because they proceed from the assumption that there exist homogeneous categories of labour migrants and act on it. Third, integration is fragmented because migrants are integrated to varying degrees in different spheres of life. Thus, the state’s policy has defined as its priorities for integration the legalisation of migrants and their acquisition of Russian-language skills but neglects such fundamental issues as medical and social insurance, which are left to the personal responsibility of the migrants themselves. Other integration agents demonstrate the same contradictory logic. Their lack of resources only allows them to develop sporadic and isolated integration projects which do not offer the multifaceted assistance needed by migrants to become successfully integrated into the host society.19

Integration is not only a political project of the state but the result of daily efforts accomplished by migrants. Some migrants regard themselves as being completely integrated even when they have no contacts with state institutions or long-term relations with locals. More, as Joppke and Morawska (2003: 3–4) put it, ‘the non-integrated immigrant is a structural impossibility, because from the day she sets foot in the new society, she is always already “integrated” and engaged in certain fields and systems, be it the (in)formal economy, residential area, family or ethnic group’. Integration cannot be certified, it is an ongoing process to which the state should contribute by providing the necessary assistance and not by playing the role of a gendarme.
Notes

1 See the press release of the Federal Migration Service on the Concept of State Migration Policy of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2025. Online. Available at: www.fms.gouv.ru/upload/iblock/07c/kgmp.pdf (last accessed 20 August 2013).

2 Some of the ideas presented in this chapter equally apply to high-skilled migrants, whose stay in Russia is subject to other, more liberal laws and regulations.

3 The study was completed in 2011 and implemented as part of the project Complex Action on Protection of Migrants’ Rights of the Saint Petersburg International Cooperation Centre of the Red Cross (funded by FP7, No. 2010/256–106). The authors would like to thank the project ‘Homes, Phones and Development. Longing and Transnationality Through New Technologies at the Central Asian–Russian and the Thai-Burmese Borders’, funded by the Academy of Finland, for financial and institutional support during work on this chapter, as well as the project EUBORDERSCAPES for financing the translation and copy-editing of parts of the chapter. They would also like to thank Graham Stack for his help with translating and copy-editing.


6 See note 1 (authors’ translation).

7 See note 1 (authors’ translation).


9 See note 8 (authors’ translation).


11 For more detailed information, see the website of the Committee for the Management of Municipal Property at: http://gosfondspb.ru/bronirovanie/zhilishhnyj-fond-kommerneshkogo-ispolzovaniya/dohodnye-doma/.

12 See the official website of the programme at: http://spbterance.ru/. In 2011 a new version of the programme was launched under the title ‘Programme for the Harmonisation of Intercultural, Interethnic and Interconfessional Relations: The Nurturing of an Atmosphere of Tolerance in St Petersburg; 2011–2015’.


14 It should be noted that the manual was only made available through the programme’s website, but has been authored by the regional association A View on the Future, with support from the FMS of St Petersburg and the Leningrad region. At the time (2012), representatives of St Petersburg’s city administration acknowledged that the programme’s implementation had not lived up to its expectations. In 2013, a complementary programme, entitled ‘Migration’, was initiated with the aim to ‘provide measures to develop mechanisms for attracting qualified workers
and specialised programmes for short- and long-term labour migration, thus increasing the geographic mobility of the population within the North-Western federal region and the adaptation of migrants’ (‘Problemy trudovoi migratsii – delo vesh i kazhdogo’. Online. Available at: http://sbptolerance.ru/archives/10416).

15 ‘Spravochnik trudovogo migranta’, pp. 38–39 (see also note 13).

16 If St Petersburg NGOs active in the field of human rights have at least rhetorically, and often actively, defended the issue of migrants’ rights, they have so far neglected the rights of employers, a topic usually approached with a presumption of guilt.


18 For more details, see the association’s website at: http://detipeterburga.ru.

19 Since this chapter was written in Spring 2013, the situation described here has undergone major changes for the worse. It now appears that the civic initiatives and even governmental programmes designed to further the integration of labour migrants no longer form part of the mainstream attitude towards migrants and constitute rather an exception against a background of growing xenophobia which is either ignored or, in some cases, even promoted by the state authorities in public debates and through legislative initiatives. Since late July and early August 2013, one can observe an obvious retreat towards combating ‘illegal’ migrants as the key mechanism of migration management, just as in the 1990s and early 2000s. This recent trend can be attributed to a general political and public climate, which includes bursts of nationalism and xenophobia actively promoted by the legislative and executive authorities both on the federal and local level. This has created favourable conditions for strengthening the position of radical nationalist groups and reinforcing the activism of extremist groups and conservative or patriotic communities and institutes, such as the ‘Cossacks’ and the Russian Orthodox Church. So-called ‘illegal’ migrants have become a convenient target of these groups which have declared them ‘internal enemies’. The drive to fight illegal migration was triggered by a brawl at the Matveevsky market in Moscow on 27 July 2014 between the police and relatives of a rape suspect, Magomed Magomedov. One police officer was hospitalised with a fractured skull as a result of the fight. A series of raids organised by groups of activists and violent attacks on places where migrants work and live (market places, cafes, construction sites) ended with the detention of undocumented migrants. By and large, the police took the side of the extremists, even though their actions were illegal. A detention camp was set up almost immediately in Moscow. The shortage of detention facilities forced the Moscow police to open a temporary tented camp for several hundred immigrants, most of them Vietnamese, although nationals of Egypt, Syria and Afghanistan were also detained. The massive deportation without delay of migrants who received almost no legal support and which sometimes separated children from their parents, as well as other abuses of human rights, can be considered as evidence that migration management in the Russian Federation still has not adopted a long-term perspective with the aim to further the integration of labour migrants. Finally, the Federal Migration Service has drafted a bill to set up 83 new detention centres for illegal immigrants across the country.