

The triangle of (non)-cooperation: migrants, diaspora and local actors in Russia

This paper is devoted to the migration research in the Russian Federation. The country is currently the second largest migrant recipient country in the world, but as its net migration is not sufficient to supplement for the natural loss of the population, it has to reorient its policies to increase the immigration significantly. In this paper I first provide an overview of the changes in the migration policy in Russia since its independence. I then proceed to the discussion of the role of local actors, in particular local authorities and diaspora communities. I argue that diaspora communities in Russia should not be equated with the established migrant communities, because they differ for a number of reasons. The paper then examines the relations among local authorities, migrant and corresponding diaspora communities. I present four scenarios of interplay among these actors, tentatively entitled Pact, Cohabitation, Conflict Escalation, All Against All. The Pact situation represents a silent pact between diaspora and government elites, the optimal scenario under which new migrants face the most favorable situation for inclusion; Cohabitation, when local authorities are against new flow of migrants, but the diaspora community welcomes newcomers ; Conflict Escalation, in which case diaspora opposes its enlargement, but the local authorities do not actively prevent the flow of new migrants; All Against All, when both local authorities and diaspora community are opposed to new flows of migrants.