

Review of bachelor thesis

The author: Nikoloz Azikuri

The title: The Context of Russia's Passportization Policy in Georgia

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The submitted bachelor thesis, in its predominantly descriptive character, deals with political science subject of Russian-Georgian relationships in their aspect of citizenship laws and policies. The author also provides information about some of the consequences of the above-mentioned policies. In that sense he provides valuable and detailed information about the bigger issue of how citizenship policies are created and used in political conflict, particularly when it comes to Russia and Georgia.

It is necessary to state that the author worked on his thesis almost completely independently from my supervision. Initial consultations were focused mostly on the choice of subjects for his bachelor thesis, then the author left and submitted to me his thesis a couple of days before submitting it for defense. I was pleased to find out while reading the thesis for this review that he did a pretty good job.

The most impressive parts is the amount of sources he amassed to provide different views on the issue. He also refrained from explicit propaganda of exclusively one point of view, although it is clear what his conclusion is.

My main objection is, contrary to the title, lack of wider historical and demographic context in which "passportization" policy is taking place in the selected countries. The author assumes that the reader knows what happened in the modern history of the region and also socio-demographic parameters of its inhabitants.

The selected theoretical framework is more of an explanatory model for specific situation but serves the purpose in this work. Methodologically the thesis is consistent.

Considering my assessment explained above, I recommend the thesis for defense and suggest the mark 2 (very good).

I am now following with some specific questions, remarks for the defense commission:

- P. 9 „The 2008 August war involving Georgia and Russia is in fact one of the most widely covered armed conflicts in the modern world.“ This is hard to believe (Afghanistan, Iraq, Israel-Palestine)

- P. 13 „Nationals enjoy certain benefits such as protection and social services that are not available to non-nationals and they in turn have to pay taxes and usually serve in the military,“ Is this for the context of Georgia, because non-nationals can, in certain regimes, also claim social services?
- The 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness are the key international conventions addressing statelessness. They are complemented by international human rights treaties and provisions relevant to the right to a nationality. Vs „Nevertheless, Natoli (2010) maintains that despite the fact that there is no single treaty regime regulating international nationality law, there are certain restrictions set on states in this area by international customary law (p. 399).“ Can you please explain?
- P. 19 „Vladimir Putin’s senior economic adviser during his first term (2000-2004) was Andrei Illarionov, a libertarian economist whose core idea was to modernize Russian economy and reduce its financial burden (Cornell and Starr, 2009). Therefore it is not surprising that the initial citizenship law tightened rules and regulations pertaining to naturalization of the former Soviet citizens.“ Why isn’t it surprising?
- Did the people of Abkhazian and Ossetia apply for Russian citizenship during the waves of mass passportization? The author claims the Russian move was illegal because the individuals were not stateless as required per amendment to the Russian citizenship law and that they became Georgian citizens because they haven’t rejected to do so. But who are these people, are they ethnic Russians, did THEY want dual citizenship but were not allowed to have it because of Georgian citizenship law?
- P. 39 „radical nationalist organization such as the Congress of Russian Communities“, what type of organization is it?
- Impressive list of references but in online references there is no date indicating when they were retrieved.