

Summary

The Master Thesis *Russian Migration Policy Development: Immigration from the South Caucasian States to Russia (1992-2002)* seeks to analyze the development of the Russian migration policy since the disintegration of the USSR and demonstrate its impact on immigration processes from the South Caucasian States (Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan) to Russia. It is argued that the Post-Soviet experience in the field of migration could significantly enrich the debate on international migration

Most importantly, it clearly shows the false dichotomy between forced and voluntary migration. When forming the migration regime, Russia established a position against ethnic Russians living outside of the Russian Federation as well as former Soviet citizens in an effort to distinguish them from other international migrants. As a result, Russia formed the migration regime on the forced-voluntary model but described all migrations in the Post-Soviet region as forced and presented the above mentioned group with a special forced migration status applicable only to migrants with Russian citizenship. This model violated the principle of international standards by introducing a dichotomy between forced migrants with or without the status of Russian citizenship. This policy was intended to help ethnic Russians to resettle in Russia and to keep the borders within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) open.

This policy changed rapidly as security began to play a prominent role in the national agenda. Due to the securitizing of migration processes and lack of financial resources, the Russian Government strengthened immigration controls and made the fight against illegal migration its primary goal. This shift also affected ethnic Russians and former Soviet citizens in other CIS Republics.

After 1989 both ethnic Russians and titular nations from the South Caucasian Region fled to Russia because of ethnic conflicts and the desperate socioeconomic situation. Russia served an active role in the conflicts and diversified South Caucasian migrants due to its own political inclinations. South Caucasian immigration became mostly irregular economic migration in the 1990s as was also the case in other CIS countries. Enormous irregular immigration flows and most notably the war in Chechnya, gave rise to a phenomenon labeled Caucasophobia, which describes an extremist and xenophobic attitude towards Caucasian immigrants in Russia. It is argued that this is also a result of

the current Russian migration policy, which is unsystematic and incoherent.

Thus, Russia serves as an example as to how a relatively liberal migration regime can change and securitize. While this type of development has occurred in other countries (e.g. European), only in Russia has the entire process of a re-appropriation of migration policy taken place within ten years, which makes the intricacies of this process far more visible and noteworthy for analysis. This development is clearly illustrated through the example of the South Caucasian States since these states reflect important migration flows and features from the 1990s.