

Dreams of Multipolarity

How Russia's Immigration Strategy Became a Tool for Foreign Policy

Kyle Kostashuk
MA Student
Carleton University

Russia Introduces a New Exam for Migrants

- 1 JANUARY 2015: Temporary labour migrants applying for a work permit/patent have to pass a comprehensive exam
 - ✓ Russian History
 - ✓ Russian Law
 - ✓ Russian Language

RESTRICTIVE MEASURE

Policy Formation Period: 2010 - 2014

Hypothesis

The comprehensive exam for temporary labour migrants is part of a larger immigration strategy that uses migration as an international relations tool to accomplish foreign policy objectives.

However, it remains unclear how successful this strategy has been.

Contents

- i. Where do temporary labour migrants come from?
- ii. What are they other possible policy drivers?
- iii. Are there other examples of Russia using migration policy as an international relations tool?
- iv. What are Russia's foreign policy objectives?
- v. Who is exempt from the comprehensive exam?
- vi. What have been the outcomes of the comprehensive exam in terms of migration and support for the EEU?

Immigration to Russia, 2013

**Former Soviet countries
(CIS countries only)**



Data source: Federal State Statistics of the Russian Federation (Mihaylova, 2017, p. 202)

Net Migration: the difference between the total number of incoming and outgoing migrants

Mihaylova, I. (2017). Russia's new concept of the state migration policy until 2025: A reform towards effective policies for international economic migrants? *Geopolitics, History, and International Relations*, 9(1), 176-214. doi:10.22381/GHIR9120178

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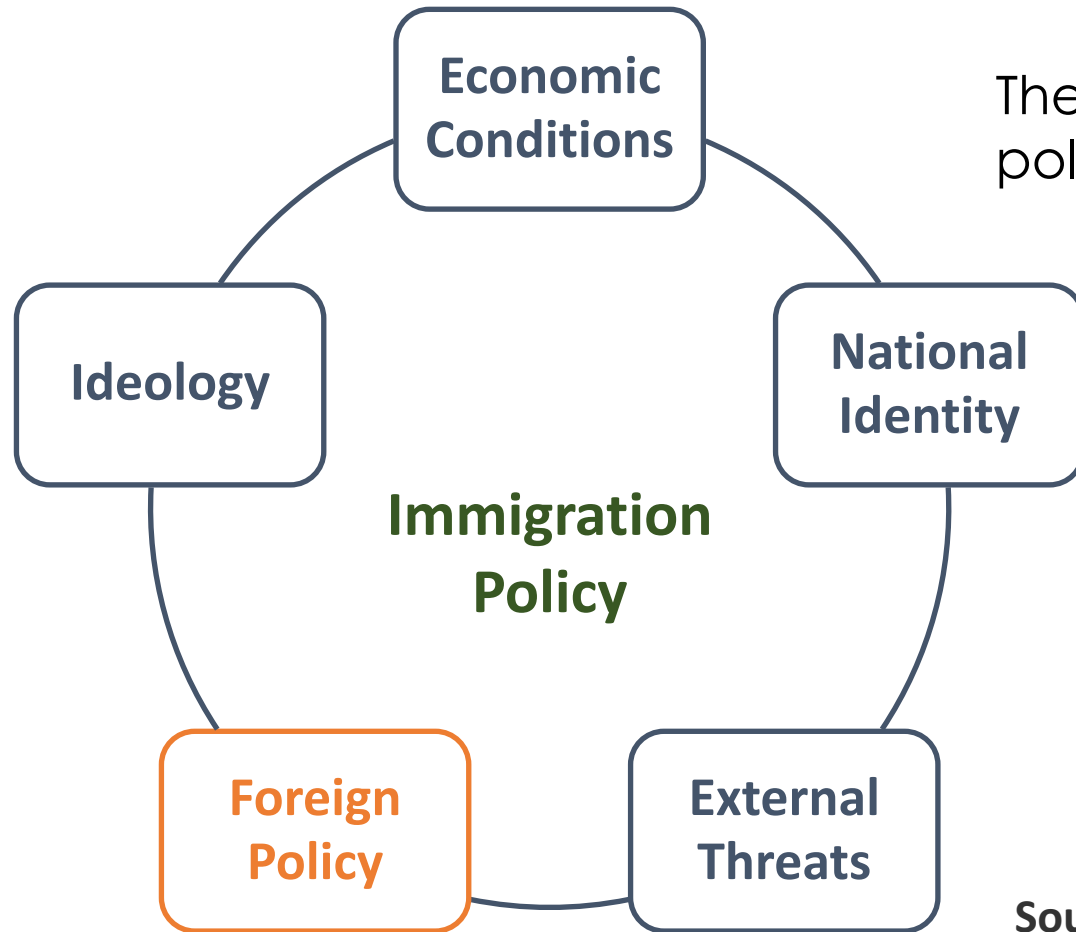
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Drivers of Immigration Policy



There are five main drivers of immigration control policy according to Eytan Meyers (2004).

“The main decision...is *how many immigrants of dissimilar composition to accept.*” ~ Eytan Meyers (2004, p. 11)

Source: Meyers, E. (2004). *International immigration policy: A theoretical and comparative analysis*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Other Possible Drivers

Factors that liberalize immigration

- **Economic Conditions**
 - positive economic growth
 - low unemployment
- **External Threats**
 - Declining incidents of terrorism
 - Perceived low crime rate

Factors that restrict immigration

- **National Identity**
 - growing nationalism (peak in '13)
- **Ideology**
 - Conservative values

Foreign Policy???

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ii

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vi

Other Examples

- ✓ General visa-free policy for most former Soviet countries
- ✓ Lifting and imposing immigration measured periodically
- ✓ Tit-for-tat visa policy with other countries
- ✓ Failure of past Eurasian integration attempts and the new approach under the ***Eurasian Economic Union (EEU)***

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vi

The Eurasian Economic Union (EEU)

- 1 JANUARY 2015: The EEU came into being allowing for the **free movement of labour** among member states
 - **Members:** Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia, and Kyrgyzstan
 - **Notable non-members:** Tajikistan and Uzbekistan

LIBERAL MEASURE

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Russia's Foreign Policy Objectives



Particulars of the Exam

- Highly qualified specialist are exempt
- EEU members are “exempt”
no work permit = no exam

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iii

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Outcomes

- Increase in migration of Kyrgyzstan (**EEU members**)
- Decrease from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan (**non-EEU members**)
- Redirection from Russia to other destinations
- Support for EEU since 2015
 - **Kyrgyzstan:** stable (80 – 85%)
 - **Tajikistan:** declining (less than 70%)
 - **Russia:** declining (less than 70%)

CONCLUSIONS

- **Foreign Policy objective:** Multipolar International System
- **Path:** EEU
 - **CARROT:** liberal immigration policies (e.g. free movement of labour) for EEU members (i.e. Kyrgyzstan)
 - **STICK:** more restrictive immigration policies (e.g. exam) for non-members (i.e. Tajikistan and Uzbekistan)
- **Summary:** The comprehensive exam was introduced to *punish* the major migrant sending countries that have not joined the EEU (Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) in order to *incentivize* them to join.

CLOSING QUESTIONS

Are there problems with an **immigration strategy driven by foreign policy objectives**?

What will happen when **temporary migration becomes more permanent** (EEU)?

What will happen if Russia achieves EEU expansion and experiences **higher rates of immigration**?

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КОНЕЦ

Спасибо за внимание!