

Argentine Immigrant Policy: A Qualitative Analysis of Changes and Trends from 2016 on

Authors : Romeu Bonk Mesquita

Abstract : Argentina is the South American number 1 country of destiny to intraregional migration flows. This research aims to shed light on the main trends of the Argentine immigrant policy from 2016 on, when Mauricio Marci was elected President, taking the approval of the current and fairly protective of human rights Ley de Migraciones (2003) as an analytical starting point. Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) serves as the theoretical background, highlighting decision-making processes and institutional designs that encourage or constraint political and social actors. The analysis goes through domestic and international levels, observing how immigration policy is formulated as a public policy and is simultaneously connected to Mercosur and other international organizations, such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Thus, the study revolves around the Direccion Nacional de Migraciones, which is the state agency in charge of executing the country's immigrant policy, as to comprehend how its internal processes and the connections it has with both domestic and international institutions shape Argentina's immigrant policy formulation and execution. Also, it aims to locate the migration agenda within the country's contemporary social and political context. The methodology is qualitative, case-based and oriented by process-tracing techniques. Empirical evidence gathered includes official documents and data, media coverage and interviews to key-informants. Recent events, such as the Decreto de Necesidad y Urgencia 70/2017 issued by President Macri, and the return of discursive association between migration and criminality, indicate a trend of nationalization and securitization of the immigration policy in contemporary Argentina.

Keywords : Argentine foreign policy, human rights, immigrant policy, Mercosur

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