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Failures and Prospects of Regional Organizations: Lessons from the Post-Soviet Space and Beyond

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The proliferation of regional organizations has become a marked feature of global affairs in the second half of the 20th century driven, in part, by the dissolution of the power blocks and shifts in political orientations of the former satellite states away from the bipolar alliances.¹ The disintegration of the Soviet Union that gave birth to the fifteen independent states sparked a new momentum of growth and change in regional organizations. Despite the reign of nationalist forces that contributed to the end of the USSR, the leadership of post-Soviet states quickly realized that a complete disintegration from the former “brotherly republics” and isolation from the neighboring territories would be disastrous for their countries. Driven by the practical needs of national security and development, post-Soviet leaders deemed the creation of regional organizations as necessary for coping with the demise of the centralized communist state.²

The experiments and experiences of the post-Soviet countries with regional organizations drew attention from regional analysts as they provided a natural laboratory for studying the causes and effects of regional integration and disintegration, assessing its impact on future developments in the post-Soviet states, and comparing it to the initiatives taking place in Europe and other regions. The multiple themes and patterns of regional integration and fragmentation have been epitomized in the emerging partnerships and break-ups of relationships between the post-Soviet countries, which also face the need to coordinate their policies with the groups of states from the adjacent regions.

What are the driving forces behind the creation and endurance of regional organizations within the post-Soviet space? What can be learned from these experiences about the future of regional initiatives in the post-Soviet territory and beyond? These are the questions we aim to explore in this project. We analyze a number of regional organizations encompassing post-Soviet states, examine the challenges and limits they face, and explore the motivations behind the recurrent attempts at the top-down integration in different issue-areas of the post-Soviet countries.

We begin with an overview of the regional projects created either by the post-Soviet governments themselves or with their participation including a brief examination of these projects' performance record. Many regional unions have undergone changes in both their memberships and tasks over the course of their short lives. Others have fallen into oblivion but nonetheless survived despite the setbacks thus posing a question about the factors that explain the perseverance of regional unions. We attempt to answer this question in section two. In doing so, we draw on the main theoretical perspectives on interstate cooperation but also point out distinct regional dynamics unfolding in the post-Soviet territory. Section three presents a number of lessons that can be drawn from the unique and common experiences of the regional integration and fragmentation in the post-Soviet space that can provide insights on questions concerning the future of regional organizations.

Our main conclusions are as follows. Regional organizations, which have been formed by or encompassed the post-Soviet countries, vary greatly in functional scope, institutional set-up, membership, and impact, similarly to the different integration schemes that exist around the world. The explanations for this diversity also vary from considerations of economic gains to geopolitics, concerns with the institution of new regional orders, and even the bottom-up

processes triggered by the flows of trade, money, and people and sustained by the efforts of non-governmental groups. Regional organizations will persist, even though they will continue to face external trials and internal tribulations, but their debacles are only indicative of the failings of top-down attempts at integration, but not the failures of regionalization.

Integration Projects in the Post-Soviet Territory

The decade following the dissolution of the Soviet Union witnessed a flurry of efforts aimed at the institutionalization of cooperation among the newly independent states as well as between the former Soviet republics and other countries outside the post-Soviet territory (see Table 1).

Following the establishment of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) formally tasked with the advancement of interstate cooperation in political, economic, environmental, humanitarian, cultural, and other fields, the CIS member states signed a collective security treaty in 1992, which evolved into the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) in 2002 with its own military base in Kant, Kyrgyzstan, and permanent combat-ready Collective Operational Reaction Forces (CORF) created in 2009.

As economic projects uniting all CIS members were rather unsuccessful in furthering integration, the CIS framework was augmented with a series of agreements for deepening integration between the subsets of the CIS states. Consequently, the Russian-Belorussian Union appeared in 1995, and a custom union between Belarus, Russia, and Kazakhstan was signed into existence in 1996. Further, the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEc) uniting energy producers (Kazakhstan and Russia), transit countries (Belarus, Ukraine) and affiliates (Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) emerged in 2000. In 2005, the EurAsEc simultaneously granted Uzbekistan membership and merged with the Central Asian Cooperation Organization, which, in

essence, represented a sub-regional version of the CIS and experienced many of the same challenges and problems.

In 1996, Russia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan, each sharing a common border with China, engaged the latter in the “Shanghai Five” forum originally concerned with security and confidence-building measures in the border areas of these states. With the incorporation of Uzbekistan, the regular meetings of the “Shanghai Five” grew into the present-day Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). In addition to more traditional items, such as respect of national sovereignty and mutual non-interference in domestic affairs, the vastly expanded agenda of the SCO presently includes such issues as joint opposition to terrorism, separatism, and religious extremism, promotion of regional stability, economic cooperation and development.

States and regional organizations outside the post-Soviet territory also initiated a number of projects with the post-Soviet states. Turkey, for example, spearheaded the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) organization, and Iran promoted the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova formed GUAM with the support and strategic patronage of the Western partners. In 2005, GUAM was submerged into the Community of Democratic Choice, where the three Baltic states plus Slovenia, Romania and Macedonia play a leading role. In 2006, it was cloned into the Organization for Democracy and Economic Development (ODED).

Other sub-regional cooperation groups in Eastern and Central Europe include the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) aimed at developing the Barents Euro-Arctic region socially and economically, the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS) focusing on the environment, economic development, energy, education, human security, and culture, and the Central European Initiative (CEI), one of the largest and oldest forums of regional cooperation in Central, Eastern and South

Eastern Europe advancing cooperation among countries with different political orientations and economic structures.

Despite the countless imperatives for regional and sub-regional cooperation, including shared economic, political, environmental, and social concerns, overlapping populations, and, in some cases, the similarities of cultures, language, and developmental practices, not a single regional project has lived up to its full potential.³ The post-Soviet space has seen decline in the share of intra-regional exports and imports.⁴ The aspirations for the economic union were marred by the cycles of trade and energy wars. The annual gas disputes between Russia and Ukraine have given way to the intermittent wine battles between Russia, Moldova, and Georgia and the meat and sugar crises between Russia and Ukraine. Uzbekistan has periodically cut off its energy deliveries to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and closed its borders to cheap products from neighboring Kazakhstan.⁵ The most advanced economic projects have been limited to a custom union between Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan and a Single Economic Space (SES) launched by the same countries in January 2012, which future remains uncertain.

The CIS developed a highly sophisticated, albeit largely immobilized, institutional structure and approved over a thousand of documents, none of which had been enforced or implemented in full. This pattern of endorsing but never enforcing a cooperative agreement has become emblematic of the majority of regional initiatives. Only regional security organizations and regional projects that unite the EU member states and post-Soviet states have scored higher than initiatives at economic integration.

In spite of the profound skepticism and criticisms of regional initiatives in the post-Soviet territory, many loose associations of the post-Soviet countries survived and a few have even gained strength.⁶ The CIS just celebrated its 20th anniversary, and its most ardent critics admit

that disbanding this organization would bring about more negative than positive consequences. New integration initiatives continue cropping up among the post-Soviet states and with their participation. Regional elites go to a great extent to form an impression of the full-blown cooperation in the post-Soviet space.⁷ What explains the tenacity of regional organizations and inclination of regional elites toward however limited forms of regional integration?

Regional Organizations in the Post-Soviet Territory: Why Did They Survive?

The longevity of some regional projects of the post-Soviet countries, which were dubbed as “abortive” from the start, and resilience of many others facing internal difficulties and dealing with external trials has been a subject of an ongoing debate. Following the convention established in the wider scholarship on regional and international organization, we present these explanations in clusters chimed in with the main theoretical perspectives on regionalism⁸ bearing in mind that this discussion is necessarily abridged in both detail and scope.

One of these theoretical perspectives - neo-liberal institutionalism - has become an indisputable theoretical leader in the scholarship of interstate cooperation. A key condition for the establishment and survival of a regional organization, according to this perspective, is the actors’ belief that cooperation will yield better results in the long run than their unilateral actions, and that a regional organization will assist the states in lowering transaction costs accompanying their efforts at cooperation by regularizing and monitoring interactions and facilitating the flows of information.⁹ The creation of regional organizations in the post-Soviet territory was driven by an interest, even an imperative to solve a wide range of common problems accompanying the post-Soviet transition, with which no affected country could cope successfully on its own. Economic restructuring, modernization of crumbling infrastructure, and maintenance of transportation and energy networks, among many other shared concerns, called for multilateral

management and cooperation. The latter was also inspired by a hope - at least on a part of some governments - that cooperation will bring about mutual benefits to all participating states.

Two decades later, the post-Soviet states still continue to face a variety of cross-border problems resolvable only with participation of all affected states. Following the neoliberal logic, such continued problems are thought to bring opportunities for continued cooperation in the post-Soviet territory. Yet, the presence of common dilemmas by itself has been a weak explanation for the persistence of at least some post-Soviet regional projects, which proved to be inept to ameliorate them. Indeed, the neo-liberal explanations have been rightfully criticized for conceptualizing inter-state organizations as fundamentally welfare providing.¹⁰ In other words, the neoliberal studies of regional institutions often expect that various cooperative arrangements will ensure the long-term utility gains for participating states. Through the optimization of interstate trade, simplification of travel, or facilitation of the movement of labor, regional unions are supposed to improve the states' long-term national welfare. The failure to observe these gains is, then, interpreted as the regional organizations' lack of success.

Certainly, the long-term impact of policies resulting from regional cooperation is not neglected by the governing elites who make decisions about regional integration. However, as the abundant evidence on political incumbents demonstrates, their short-term interests in securing their posts in the government will always be paramount. The democratically elected leaders will be more attuned to the interests of "core" constituencies supplying them with sponsorship and electoral support, while the authoritarian leadership will cater to those interests that are instrumental for maintaining their power.¹¹ By looking at regional organizations as instruments for post-Soviet political elites to maximize their term in office and personal political

influence we gain another analytical perspective to explain the continued existence of multiple regional organizations in the post-Soviet region.

This type of explanation points to the fact that political will and interests of the post-Soviet leadership have been one of the determining factors of regional cooperation among the post-Soviet states.¹² Support for regional initiatives has often been predicated on the assessment of the extent to what regional projects could contribute to the accomplishment of narrow and personalized interests of regional elites.¹³ The SCO activities are particularly emblematic in this regard. It has been argued that the SCO member-states rely on multilateral cooperation within the framework of this regional organization to preserve their power in the face of the growing threats of international democratization. The norms, activities, and values of the SCO promote the authoritarian status quo against domestic challengers and external critics of these states' governments. In this way, the SCO has served the interests of the leadership of its member-states by providing them with a tool of authoritarian resistance to regional and global democratic trends.¹⁴

In addition to neoliberal perspectives and analysis of the interests of elites, realist approaches can be brought to bear on the continued proliferation of regional organizations among the post-Soviet countries.¹⁵ Both the hegemonic stability and neoclassical realist perspectives maintain that the presence of a regional hegemon willing and capable of assuming the costs of establishing and sustaining regional organizations often leads to the establishment of institutions and emergence of interstate cooperation.¹⁶ In the post-Soviet space, the political, economic, and military preponderance of Russia has been an important determinant of integration processes among the post-Soviet states.¹⁷ Russia-centeredness of the regional projects exposed them to ebbs and flows of the Russian economy and political whims of the Russian ruling elites. The

volume and scale of regional economic ties have followed the patterns of Russia's economic development and its economic policy.¹⁸ The success of the regional initiatives spearheaded by the Kremlin has been largely determined by Russia's capabilities to influence developments in the post-Soviet states and its commitment to the realization of the multi-lateral projects.

Despite their weariness of Russian historical dominance in the region, the neighboring states have often acknowledged the necessity of Russian participation in the regional projects uniting post-Soviet states. Thus, for example, the Central Asian Union consisting of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan was initially framed as a self-sufficient economic union (which later became Central Asian Economic Union in 1998 and accepted Tajikistan as a member). Having added a joint Council of Defense Ministers to coordinate issues of regional security in 1995, the Union expanded its mission to fight terrorism, extremism and trans-border crime. However, when joint military action was considered, the underlying struggle for power and mistrust between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan prevented the states from carrying out any military exercises. As a result, the four states had to acknowledge that Russian participation was pivotal for the success of the Union, and the 2000 Central Asian Economic Union summit decided to extend the invitation to Russia, indisputable regional hegemon, to join the organization¹⁹.

GUAM (GUUAM with a temporary participation of Uzbekistan) presents another illustration of enduring impact of hegemonic power on the creation and preservation of regional organizations in the post-Soviet space. The founding states of GUAM – Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova - publicly assured that this regional organization was an effort at improved regional cooperation. However, many analysts and critics of GUAM contend that continued activities of this organization with an outreach to the EU, NATO, the US, and other

Western states has become an act of power balancing against Russia and its enduring dominance in the post-Soviet space.²⁰

Regional organizations can perform a variety of functions, which define the nature and degree of institutionalization of the patterns of states' cooperation. The majority of studies of the post-Soviet organizations concentrated on the managerial, functionalist, and welfare-maximizing side of regionalism, where many regional projects have failed, while others underscored the impact of power dynamics on the regional projects. There is, however, yet another aspect of regional cooperation jettisoned by the studies of regional integration as unrepresentative of "true" regionalism. It lays emphasis on the importance of regional meetings and summits where participating governments can convey their views and perspectives on what could become a new regional order, especially during the times of crises causing disruption in the regional normative and institutional fabric. The majority of regional projects of the post-Soviet republics have played a rather modest but important role of supporters and facilitators of these states' interactions among themselves and with other international actors, helping them to cope with the break of the established order, discern their differences, and define common ground for forging new partnerships and institutional ties. Some of the more successful regional initiatives, such as the BEAC, BSSC, and CEI have relied on the model of policy forums and working groups for discussing the areas of common concern and negotiating appropriate solutions. As such, regional organizations survived and multiplied not because they necessarily delivered the declared improvement of material welfare of regional partners, but because they have been useful and much needed common meeting place to clarify, identify and forge new relations between the states.

Last, but not least, regional cooperation and integration in the post-Soviet territory has been spurred and sustained by the understudied “bottom-up” processes of growing social, political and economic interactions initiated by non-state actors, including members of the business community and civil society. These interactions encompass the existing heavily interlinked businesses scattered across the post-Soviet borders²¹ and civil society groups, which share their experiences of political participation, revolutionary practices, donors, and institutional connections.²² These and other sub-national dynamics²³ have been left out of the regionalist studies but captured in the new conceptual framework of ‘regionalization’ - an unplanned, spontaneous, and long-term down-up process of regional change and social transformation through social, political, economic, and other practices of a variety of non-state actors.²⁴ Regionalization conceived as such bottom-up process of cooperation between non-state actors may provide an additional impetus for continued state-level cooperation within the framework of the existing regional organizations. The interconnection between the youth resistance groups of Ukraine and Georgia during the “color” revolutions, for instance, have added to the success of their protests and to the ensuing political affinity between these two states. Such post-revolution political realignment eventually led to increased cooperation between these countries institutionalized in the “Democratic Alliance,” which consequently outgrew into Community of Democratic Choice that included nine Balkan, Baltic and Black Sea states.

Connected to the processes of regionalization, the post-Soviet territory has witness the emergence of cross-border ties that develop below the national level between the local and regional authorities. The BEAC, CBSS, CEI, and BSEC are the examples of these initiatives of states and sub-national actors that received a name of “microregionalism.”²⁵ What the localities can gain from participation in microregional programs and projects, and how the participation of

broader sectors of population can influence civic developments in the participating regions and states are interesting although under-researched questions for consideration. Furthermore, the cooperation between non-continuous subnational political units of different states seeking greater independence from their respective metropolies may be geared toward defragmentation in the region: in 2006 Abkhazia, Transdnierstria and South Ossetia founded Community for Democracy and Human Rights that seeks to promote their struggle for independence and development.

All in all, on both theoretical and empirical level, there is an acknowledgement that bottom-up regionalization and microregionalism may aid efforts of regionalism in the post-Soviet territory.²⁶ However, research in innovative arrangements involving subnational units of government, non-state actors, and distinctive forms of interstate cooperation trails behind the rapidly developing practices of non-state driven regional cooperation.

Lessons Learned and Future for Regional Organizations

What follows from this short survey of selected regional organizations is that regional cooperation is a multifaceted and multi-purpose undertaking. It may entail the creation of formal institutions or much looser forms of cooperation based on only few rules, mechanisms for coordination of states' actions, and more or less regular interactions among their representatives. Regional cooperation is neither a linear nor progressive development resulting in the deep integration embodied in a multilateral or supra-national entity with extensive regulatory authority and a strong sense of regional identity. There are no universal pathways to successful regionalism, and our views of both "success" and "regional integration" are inevitably influenced by the theoretical positions determining the ways in which we understand what constitutes a regional organization and what its *telos* is. The latter, that is, the final objective or the desired end result of regional cooperation varies considerably in practice.²⁷

As the experiences of the post-Soviet states demonstrate, achieving economic integration is not the only end point of cooperation. Assuring regional governance or coordination of activities concerning public goods, such as maritime resources, unique eco-systems, or extinguishable species, and providing a medium for discussing sustainable development, climate change, or innovations in science and education have figured strongly among the objectives of several regional projects, such as the BEAS and CBSS. A number of post-Soviet states have sought to strengthen their sovereignty, international standing, and, in the case of Russia, regional hegemony through their participation in regional organizations. Kyrgyzstan, for instance, has viewed its membership in post-Soviet regional organizations as a vehicle for keeping its troubled economy afloat. For both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan attaining the greater actorhood in international politics has been a strong motivation for joining the above mentioned regional organizations. Armenia in its turn has seen regional projects backed by Russia as an opportunity to ensure its national security, particularly vis-à-vis Azerbaijan.²⁸ Many post-Soviet leaders have benefitted personally from participation in regional projects. The post-Soviet governments do not always perceive regional cooperation as a vehicle for developing and implementing joint solutions to the problems of common concern, but rather as an instrument of the national or regime self-assertion in domestic and international politics.²⁹ It is important to be cognizant of these differences in the desired end results from regional cooperation in the analyses of regional processes around the world.

Even when the goal of regional cooperation is to maximize the member-states' welfare and all governments share interests in a collaborative approach to mutual concerns, it is not a foolproof recipe for regional integration and it does not mean that regional cooperation will succeed. The reviewed experience of the post-Soviet efforts at regional integration is a clear

demonstration of this dilemma. The imperatives for collaborative resolution of common problems of the post-Soviet nations have not sufficed to beget full-fledged cooperation among these states.

It has long been noticed that the most successful regional projects are those initiated and sustained by relatively prosperous international actors.³⁰ It is not surprising, therefore, that the most successful regional projects encompassing the post-Soviet states have been those supported by the better-off countries outside the post-Soviet territory. CBSS, BEAS, and CEI have been active in implementing a variety of short- and medium-term small-scale projects funded by the pooled resources of their members or sponsored by the grants of international donors, particularly, the EU. The most effective projects have trailed the Union's policies, such as its Northern Dimension partnership and other programs, and have been strategically developed within the various initiatives of the EU. The shared identity defined by the norms and principles of democratic and accountable governance and the respect for human freedoms along with the focus on issue areas with relatively low geopolitical stakes have also facilitated cooperation within these frameworks. However, even in these realms the lack of resources and appropriate infrastructure has been an acknowledged obstacle to regional cooperation.

As for the post-Soviet states, the dearth of institutional, informational, financial, human, and technological resources has severely limited prospects for cooperation in the post-Soviet space. Central Asia, in particular, has been paralyzed by its relative political and economic deprivation. With the exception of Kazakhstan, none of the Central Asian states has a sufficiently developed industrial base beyond food industry and extraction of raw materials. For several post-Soviet republics plagued by unresolved conflicts and recurrent political turmoil, internal political integration and management of economic crises are the paramount goals. Their participation in

regional organizations will remain subordinate to the more immediate domestic concerns. The implication therefore, is that the existence of a viable state may be a necessary prerequisite for successful integration, even more so than the existence of shared cross-border problems and mutual interests in collaborative solutions to them. The political and economic weaknesses of several post-Soviet republics have become a source of their vulnerability and greater dependency on Russia. As a result, they all developed closer ties with Moscow than among themselves. Russia has become a locomotive of regionalism in the post-Soviet territory, but also an obstacle to regional integration due to the lack of the Kremlin's genuine interest in strengthening multilateral foundations on one hand, as well as the fears of other post-Soviet states in the Russian neo-imperialism on the other hand.

The divergent national interests and fears of Russian domination gave rise to uneven patterns of interactions and influence in the post-Soviet territory, serving as a reminder that there is nothing inherently benign or celebratory about cooperation among states. The latter, like any social process, is not fundamentally free of the power relations and can result in the richer and more powerful states reaping considerably more benefits from regional cooperation compared to the weaker and less powerful states. The latter are not, however, defenseless. As the experiences of the post-Soviet countries demonstrate, the smaller groups of states seeking to strengthen their position on certain common interests that are of limited concern to the wider region or a state dominating regional politics can engage in sub-regional cooperation and seek deeper integration with the adjoining regions and states.³¹

Concluding Remarks

Regional organizations, as exemplified by the CIS, SCO, CAEC, GUAM, and other regional projects, are clearly about many things. Some regional and sub-regional initiatives, such as SAS

and CAEC, were established with an economic rationale; others, such as CSTO and GUAM were based on common security or political concerns. The BEAC, CBSS, and CEI were formed with the goal of coordination of activities concerning public goods and providing policy forums for discussing sustainable development, environmental issues, and human dimension. Strengthening the integration core within the CIS was the idea behind the Union of Belarus and Russia. Still others, such as the CIS itself, were set up to promote cooperation on every conceivable dimension within the region. For Russia, regional organizations have been about advancing its geo-political and geo-economic goals and balancing against American unilateralism. For other states, primarily, Georgia, Ukraine, and Moldova, regional groupings provided an opportunity for joint opposition to the Russian hegemony and a platform for appeals to the West.

The diversity of the existing cooperative arrangements in the post-Soviet territory rules out the identification of a single regional or sub-regional model able to account for the emergence, depth, and outcomes of cooperation. Instead, regional organization should be thought of as consisting of multiple regional and sub-regional projects aimed at different ends, representing different interests and ideological positions, and reflecting strengths and weaknesses of the individual states. These organizations can be confronted with multiple issues – the lack of resources, weak member-states, opposing geopolitical agendas, and cultural diversity – affecting the degree of integration and outcomes of inter-state cooperation.

Taken together with the studies of other regions and regional organizations, the evidence from the post-Soviet space seems to reaffirm the conclusion that extensive management of interstate relations has often been more of an exception rather than the rule. The supranational entities like the EU are neither common, nor, according to some analysts, desirable for their own sake as they do not systematically ensure optimal results for all participating states and are also

prone to managerial failures.³² The more limited forms of regional integration are more common in the interstate relations. The conditions determining the proper level and scope of regional organizations are still a subject of theoretical deliberation and empirical investigation. What the experiences of the post-Soviet states seem to suggest is that in the period of “interregnum”, when the elements of the old institutional and normative framework are in flux and the new stable order is still in the making, loose forms of regional cooperation, such as policy forums, can provide the states with opportunities to discuss and negotiate their vision of the new regional order. These cooperative arrangements become all more important when the member states differ in their bargaining power, preferences, and domestic institutional makeup. Over time, these arrangements oriented toward policy dialogue, can be progressively augmented with other pillars, such as economic growth or human dimension of cooperation.

Several regional projects in the post-Soviet territory have begun as regional forums. Russia, China, and Kazakhstan, for example, relied on the platform of the “Shanghai Five” to affirm the common values and understandings of the similarity of their national concerns. Regular meetings and interactions under the aegis of the SCO have become important for confidence building among the participating states, as well as for the creation of some sort of transparency concerning their political ambitions. Importantly, the experiences of the SCO demonstrates that as platform for negotiations, it is not merely another “talking shop”, but the “embodiment of a new set of values and norms” governing the future interstate relations in the region.³³ It exemplifies how the loose regional organization can become an instrument in the pursuit of a new regional order through the definition and institutionalization of certain values and norms, which may operate in opposition to the accepted principles of liberalism, democracy, and freedom. These experiences call for a different analytical toolkit shifting the focus from

regional organizations onto regional orders and underscoring the role of competing ideas, representations, and discourse.

In our discussion of the driving forces of regional integration, we also noted a dynamic process of regionalization in the post-Soviet territory, a “bottom-up” process triggered by the flows of trade, money, and people and sustained by the efforts of non-governmental actors.³⁴ These regional processes happening below and above the state have been captured by the conceptual frameworks of ‘new regionalism.’ Although, this new approach treats regional integration processes spurred by the state and non-state actors as complimentary, the differentiation between regionalism and regionalization remains a useful analytical tool in the study of regional integration and regional organization, the one that allows researchers to make meaningful comparisons between cases of formal regionalism accompanied by the creation of inter-state organizations and informal instances of regionalization, where such institutions may be absent. Furthermore, new regionalism treats regional organizations spearheaded by states a second-order phenomenon compared to the processes of regionalization.³⁵ In other words, even though regional organizations formally created by states may face trials and tribulations, the processes of regionalization may proceed without necessarily being perturbed by it.

Notes

¹ David A. Lake and Patrick M. Morgan, *Regional Orders: Building Security in a New World* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 7.

² Baltic states, which have always resisted the “post-Soviet” moniker, sought out integration in Europe and used various sub-regional projects with other members of the EU as a springboard for joining the Union.

³ M.B. Olcott, A. Aslund, and S.W. Garnett, *Getting It Wrong: Regional Cooperation and the Commonwealth of Independent States* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Robinson, 1999); N. Robinson, "The Post-Soviet Space," in *The New Regional Politics of Development*, ed. A.J. Payne (London: Palgrave, 2004), 179.

⁴ Alexander Libman, "Regionalisation and Regionalism in the Post-Soviet Space: Current Status and Implications for Institutional Development," *Europe-Asia Studies* 59, no. 3 (2007): 2007, 401.

² Annete Bohr, "Regionalism in Central Asia: New Geopolitics, Old Regional Order," *International Affairs* 80, no. 3 (2004): 485-502.

⁶ K. Malfliet, L. Verpoest, and E. Vinokurov, (eds.) *The CIS, the EU and Russia: the Challenges of Integration* (New York: Macmillan, 2007).

⁷ Libman, 415.

⁸ We define regionalism as a top-down process of institutionalization of interstate relations initiated by the governments within a geographic region where both coordination and cooperation occur as a result of intergovernmental bargaining. See Rick Fawn, "'Regions' and Their Study; Wherefrom, What for and Thereto?" *Review of International Studies* 35 (2009): 5-34.

⁹ For an overview, see Beth A. Simmons and Lisa L. Martin, "International Organizations and Institutions," in *Handbook of International Relations*, eds. Walter E. Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse, and Beth A. Simmons (Sage Publications, 2002), 192-211.

¹⁰ Lloyd Gruber. *Ruling the World: Power Politics and the Rise of Supranational Institutions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 5.

¹¹ Gruber 56-57.

¹² A. Hurrell, “Explaining the Resurgence of Regionalism in World Politics,” *Review of International Studies* 21, no. 4 (1995), 331-358.

¹³ P.G. Roeder, “From Hierarchy to Hegemony: The Post-Soviet Security Complex,” In *Regional Orders: Building Security in a New World*, eds. D. Lake, and P. Morgan (State College: Pennsylvania State University, 1997), 220.

¹⁴ Thomas Ambrosio, “Catching the ‘Shanghai spirit’: how the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Promotes Authoritarian Norms in Central Asia,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 60, no. 8 (2008), 1321-1344.

¹⁵ See Randall Schweller, and David Priess, “A Tale of Two Realisms: Explaining the Institutions Debate,” *Mershon International Studies Review* 41(1997), 1-33.

¹⁶ Hurrell 49-50; P. Kubicek, “Regionalism, Nationalism and Realpolitik in Central Asia,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 49, no. 4 (1997), 639.

¹⁷ Malfliet, Verpoest, and Vinokurov, 2.

¹⁸ I. Kobrinskaya, “The Post-Soviet Space: From the USSR to the Commonwealth of Independent States and Beyond,” In *The CIS, the EU and Russia: the Challenges of Integration*, eds. M. Katlijn, L. Verpoest, and E. Vinokurov (New York: Macmillan, 2007), 13-21.

¹⁹ Roy Allison, “Regionalism, Regional Structures and Security Management in Central Asia,” *International Affairs* 80, no.3 (2004), p. 474

²⁰ <http://www.kommersant.com/page.asp?id=-5141>

²¹ Libman, 402.

²² Taras Kuzio, “Civil society, youth and societal mobilization in democratic revolutions,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 39, no. 3 (2006): 365-386.

²³ The newly forged criminal network can be thought of as dysfunctional manifestations of regionalization. See Roy Allison. p. 465

²⁴ Finn Laursen (ed). *Comparative Regional Integration: Europe and Beyond*. (Abington; Ashgate Publishing Group, 2010), 24.

²⁵ A. Breslin and G.D. Hook, “Microregionalism and World Order: Concepts, Approaches and Implications,” In *Microregionalism and World Order*, eds. A. Breslin, and G.D. Hook (New York: Macmillan, 2002), 1-22; R. Dwan, and O. Pavliuk, (eds.) *Building Security in the New States of Eurasia: Subregional Cooperation in the Former Soviet Space* (New York: EastWest Institute, 2000).

²⁶ Fawn, 30.

²⁷ Ikboljon Qodraboyev, “From Central Asian Regional Integration to Eurasian Integration Space? The Changing Dynamics of Post-Soviet Regionalism” (Eurasian Integration Yearbook, 2010), 206-232, available at http://www.eabr.org/media/img/eng/research-and-publications/IntegrationYearbook/2010/a_n3_2010_14.pdf; L. Van Langenhove and D. Marchesi, “The Lisbon Treaty and the Emergence of Third Generation Regional Integration,” *European Journal of Law Reform* X, no. 4 (2008), 477-496.

²⁸ Ian Bremer and Alyson Bailes, “Subregionalism in the Newly Independent States,” *International Affairs* 74, no. 1 (1998), p.137.

²⁹ Dawn and Pavliuk, 261; see also Roy Allison, “Virtual Regionalism, Regional Structures and Regime Security in Central Asia,” *Central Asia Survey* 27, no. 2 (2008), 85-202.

³⁰ Dwan and Pavliuk.

³¹ G. Hook, and I. Kearns, “Introduction: The Political Economy of Subregionalism and World Order,” In *Subregionalism and World Order*, eds. G. Hook, and I. Kearns (New York: Macmillan, 1999), 1-16.

³² See, for example, Giulio Gallarotti, “The Limits of International Organization: Systematic

Failure in the Management of International Relations,” *International Organization* 45, no. 2 (1991), 183-220.

³³ Ambrosio.

³⁴ L. Fawcett, “Regionalism from a Historical Perspective,” In *Global Politics of Regionalism: an introduction*, eds. M. Farrel, B., Hettne, and L.V. Langenhove (London: Pluto Press, 2005), 21-37; B. Hettne, and F. Söderbaum, “Theorizing the Rise of Regionness,” In *New Regionalism in the Global Political Economy*, eds. S. Breslin, C.W. Hughes, N. Phillips, and B. Rosamond (London: Routledge, 2002), 33-47.

³⁵ Laursen, 24.