Global Governance and Interaction between International Institutions:

The Challenge of the Eurasian International Organizations

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Abstract: This essay is an introduction to the special issue and it outlines the main guiding puzzles and questions raised in different contributions. The Special Issue asks the following general questions. How Eurasian organizations are “embedded” in the global and regional governance networks? What empirical and ideational strategies are implemented on the part of these organizations? How do they interact with traditional international institutions? The contributions in this issue develop different empirical and theoretical approaches to address these puzzles and to contribute to our understanding of Eurasian International Organizations as actors in global governance and economy.

Keywords:

Global Governance, Eurasia, International Organizations, Regionalism, Global Economy, World Politics

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The interplay and contradictions between the global and regional governance remain one of the most frequently discussed topics in the contemporary studies of international economics and world politics.\(^1\) Since the early 1990s, numerous studies investigated the clash and interaction between *global* liberalization of trade, migration, investments and establishment of global (regulatory) regimes, on the one hand, and *regional* projects at international integration and cooperation, on the other hand. The later were often perceived as “building blocks”, but also as “stumbling stones” for the global institutions (given that regional governance may be associated with creating new protectionist barriers fragmenting the global markets). The interconnection between the WTO and regional integration initiatives like the EU, MERCOSUR or ASEAN would be a good example in this context.

Today, regional international organizations are viewed as institutions strengthening global order, complementing it in areas it fails to function, but also challenging it. More recent literature, however, introduces a new set of regional institutions created by authoritarian states (i.e., non-democratic regional organizations) and looks into the competition between established global institutions (e.g., the UN, World Bank or IMF) and institutions of Western nations with global reach (e.g., NATO) against these new regional initiatives. In this case, there are much more doubts about the complementarity between the established global governance

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\(^1\) The authors are list alphabetically and they contributed equally to this essay. Alexander Libman appreciates the support of the MOE Project of Key Research Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences in Universities of China (Center for Russian Studies of East China Normal University), Project Number: 16JJDGJW004. Anastassia V. Obydenkova is grateful to the Institute for Economic Analysis (IAE-CSIC, Barcelona), to the Center for Institutional Studies of the National Research University — Higher School of Economics and to the Institut Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals for hosting her as a research affiliate, as a leading research fellow and a visiting professor.
institutions and the authoritarian regionalism; the evidence on how non-democratic regional organisations and established global governance institutions interact is very limited.

Furthermore, the boundaries between regional organizations and projects are porous and frequently contested: there are many overlapping and competing regional projects based on different construction and understanding of region-ness and neighborhood (EU and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) are sometimes perceived as an example of this sort of competition). Interaction between these projects also received substantial attention in the existing literature (e.g., in the case of the EU and the neighboring countries; EU Eastern neighborhood initiative and competition of the EAEU for former Soviet States).

The goal of this special issue is to consider these relatively new patterns of interaction between the Eurasian regional international organizations (in particular, the Eurasian Economic Union, Eurasian Development Bank, Eurasian Fund for Stabilization and Development and Collective Security Treaty Organization) and global governance institutions (in particular, the WTO, the World Bank and the IMF), as well as their interaction with other regional projects (e.g., the EU and NATO). Essentially, this special issue asks a question as to how Eurasian organizations are “embedded” in the global and regional governance networks and what empirical and ideational strategies are implemented on the part of these organizations.

Eurasian organizations are of interest for several reasons. First, they are frequently seen as challenging the established global order rather than supporting it (along the lines of literature on non-democratic regional organizations). A substantial portion of existing studies approached the rise of Eurasian regionalism as a process of competition against the Western and global organizations originally shaping the post-Soviet space. This literature looked into the choice between Eurasian regionalism vs. global economic integration as a fundamental one based on economic ideologies and into the competition of norms and values between the OSCE and the post-Soviet regional organizations as a competitors to the existing global order.
Second, Eurasian regional organizations, while remained virtually powerless in the 1990s, became more important in the 2000s and especially in the 2010s (after the Customs Union of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan was created), i.e., constitute a relatively new group of still understudied international organizations. The causes of the emergence of these new actors of world politics are the main focus of existing studies on comparative regionalism. While the internal impact of new non-democratic regional organizations on their own member-states in terms of regime promotion and consolidation was previously addressed, this Special Issue takes the next step in this direction addressing the external vector of development of the authoritarian regionalism: how do they interact with traditional international institutions?

At the same time, regional organizations emerged in post-Soviet Eurasia have strong historical dimension. Numerous legacies of the centralized Soviet economy and legacy of the Communist Party, such as trade links, energy infrastructure, diasporas, the nature of migration, lingua franca, but also a number factors influencing public opinion and attitudes and eventually support to projects of regional integration – all these factors have left profound impact on modern politics, society and economic development in the region as well as on diffusion of norms and values with implications for international strategy.

The special issue contains contributions with very different empirical and theoretical focuses covering the variety of issues. The first set of essays look at the evolution of Eurasian regional organization in the environment shaped by activities of global governance institutions and other important regional actors (like the EU). Izotov and Obydenkova start with theoretical analysis of ideational, or axiological, interaction between European and Eurasian regionalism; Gast looks at Eurasian regionalism as a reaction to the perceived global pressures on the authoritarian regimes; and Dragneva and Hartwell ask insofar this regionalism is capable to trade liberalization. The next three papers explicitly investigate the interaction (or lack thereof) between Eurasian and non-Eurasian institutions in the trade (Libman), finance (Vinokurov) and military (Gawrich and Guliyev) dimensions. Golovnin and Ushkalova complement this analysis
by looking at the development of Russia’s strategy in the global and regional governance institutions. The subsequent two papers (Yarashevich and Eder) focus on the ability of the Eurasian regionalism to turn into a “developmental” project and its implications for its interaction with global and regional governance. Finally, the concluding essay takes the debate on the international interactions of global and regional international organizations to the next level. It summarizes the findings of all contributions as a new departure point for future studies of global-regional nexus. It further presents new challenges and puzzles that aspire to define and to contribute for future development of the studies on international interactions of global and regional institutions world-wide. Overall, this special issue aspires to contribute to better understanding of Eurasian International Organisations as actors in world politics and global economy, as well as of their complex interactions with other international and global organizations.