

THE POST-SOVIET REGIONAL INTEGRATION PROCESS

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ABSTRACT

THE POST-SOVIET REGIONAL INTEGRATION PROCESS

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This thesis examines the Russian-led regional integration processes that emerged after the dissolution of the USSR. The disintegration of the Soviet Union resulted in the break up of economic, social and technological ties between the member states. This situation led the countries in the post-Soviet area to face deep economic and social crises. Many different integration efforts have been carried out in order to eliminate these problems and to establish new ties between the newly independent countries that emerged following the disintegration. These integration processes are examined in light of the prominent theories on regionalism, such as Neofunctionalism, Liberal Intergovernmentalism and New Regionalism Approach. Therefore, examining the regional integration processes, this thesis aims to examine the factors that facilitate and complicate the Russian-led post-Soviet regional integration process.

Keywords: Regionalisation, Integration, Regional integration, Post-Soviet space, Eurasian economic integration.

ÖZ

SOVYETLERİN YIKILMASINDAN SONRA GERÇEKLEŞTİRİLEN BÖLGESEL ENTEGRASYON SÜRECİ

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Yüksek Lisans., Avrasya Çalışmaları

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Bu tez, SSCB'nin dağılması sonrası Rusya öncülüğünde ortaya çıkan bölgesel entegrasyon süreçlerini incelemektedir. Sovyetler Birliği'nin dağılması, üye devletler arasındaki ekonomik, sosyal ve teknolojik bağların kopmasına neden olması nedeniyle bölgede yer alan ülkelerin derin ekonomik ve sosyal krizlerle karşı karşıya kalması sonucunu doğurmuştur. Bu sorunları gidermek ve dağılmadan sonra ortaya çıkan yeni bağımsız ülkeler arasında yeni bağlar kurmak için birçok farklı entegrasyon çabası yürütülmüştür. Bu entegrasyon süreçleri, Yeni Fonksiyonelcilik, Liberal Hükümetlerarasıcılık ve Yeni Bölgesellik Yaklaşımı gibi bölgesel bütünleşme üzerine öne çıkan teoriler ışığında incelenmektedir. Bu nedenle, bu tez, bölgesel entegrasyon süreçlerini bahse konu teorilerin önerileriyle inceleyerek, Avrasya bölgesinde Rusya öncülüğünde ortaya çıkan bölgesel entegrasyon süreçlerini kolaylaştıran veya zorlaştıran faktörleri incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Bölgeselleşme, Entegrasyon, Bölgesel entegrasyon, Sovyet-sonrası alan, Avrasya ekonomik entegrasyonu.

To My Parents,
Neziha & Nejdet ERTÜRK

and

To My Beloved Wife Simge
and
Dearest Daughter Nisan

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Association Agreement
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CACO	Central Asian Cooperation Organization
CES	Common Economic Space
CET	Common External Tariff
CHG	Council of Heads of Government
CHS	Council of Heads of States
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CU	Customs Union
CUC	Customs Union Commission
DCFTA	Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area
EAEC	Eurasian Economic Commission
EAEU	Eurasian Economic Union
EAIC	Eurasian Intergovernmental Council
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
ECU	Eurasian Customs Union
EDB	Eurasian Development Bank
EU	European Union
Eurasec	Eurasian Economic Community
FTA	Free Trade Area
GATT	The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IMF	International Monetary Fund

IPA	Inter Parliamentary Assembly
MERCOSUR	The Southern Common Market
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NIS	Newly Independent States
NRA	New Regionalism Approach
NTB	Non Tariff Barriers
OBOR	One Belt One Road
ODED	Organization for Democracy and Economic Development
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PCA	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
PSS	Post-Soviet State
PTA	Preferential Trade Agreement
RIA	Regional Integration Agreement
SEAEC	Supreme Eurasian Economic Council
SES	Single Economic Space
TEAEU	Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VAT	Value Added Tax
WTO	World Trade Organization
WWII	Second World War

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Scope of the Thesis and Argument

This thesis will analyze the regional integration attempts led by Russia after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The disintegration of the Soviet Union had ended up with catastrophic consequences for its members. With the disintegration, 15 newly independent states were established and the infrastructures between these former members of the USSR in the sectors such as economy, energy, trade, education, transportation, security and health were fragmented. One of these newly independent states, the Russian Federation, is perceived as the heir to the Soviet Union as a result of the retention of ownership of all former Soviet embassy properties, as well as the old Soviet UN membership and permanent membership on the Security Council. In this regard, in order to eliminate the uncertainties arising from the disintegration of the Soviet Union, a number of regional integration initiatives have been established by Russia.

The answer to the question of why regional integration policy is preferred in this process lies in the developments in the international relations system after the Second World War. The devastating consequences of the WWII obliged the belligerent countries to work collectively. Hence, they tried to build the very first examples of multilateral attempts to obstruct potential conflicts. Unlike the previous attempts before WWII, the new vision of collective attempts aimed to prevent conflicts by sharing economic and social interests instead of declaring obligatory measures in sphere of security. As a result of transformation of vision, while the outcomes of the efforts before WWII were international organizations, afterwards they were integration processes. As the first example of this integration process, the European Union (EU) instilled hope to other countries attempting to build regional

integrations. This sense of hope grew and reached to the Eurasian region after the collapse of the USSR, and led to the formation of some concrete initiatives for regional integration. The process that was initiated with the foundation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) followed by the formation of the Eurasian Economic Community (Eurasec) which evolved to the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) in 2015.

In this thesis, my research question is “What are the factors that facilitate and complicate the Russian-led post-Soviet regional integration process?” In order to answer this question, I will thoroughly evaluate the post-Soviet regional integration process in light of mainstreaming integration theories, namely Functionalism, Intergovernmentalism and New Regionalism Approach. As each theory can only explain some pieces of the integration puzzle that emerged in the post-Soviet area, more than one theory were selected and various assertions of these three theories were used. These regional integration theories have been developed to analyze the emergence and functioning of the European Union model in general and there was no study examining the post-Soviet integration efforts in light of these integration theories. In this context, this thesis aims to fill the gap in the regional integration literature. Nevertheless, the thesis will not compare the regional integration projects initiated by Russia in the post-Soviet area with the European Union model of integration.

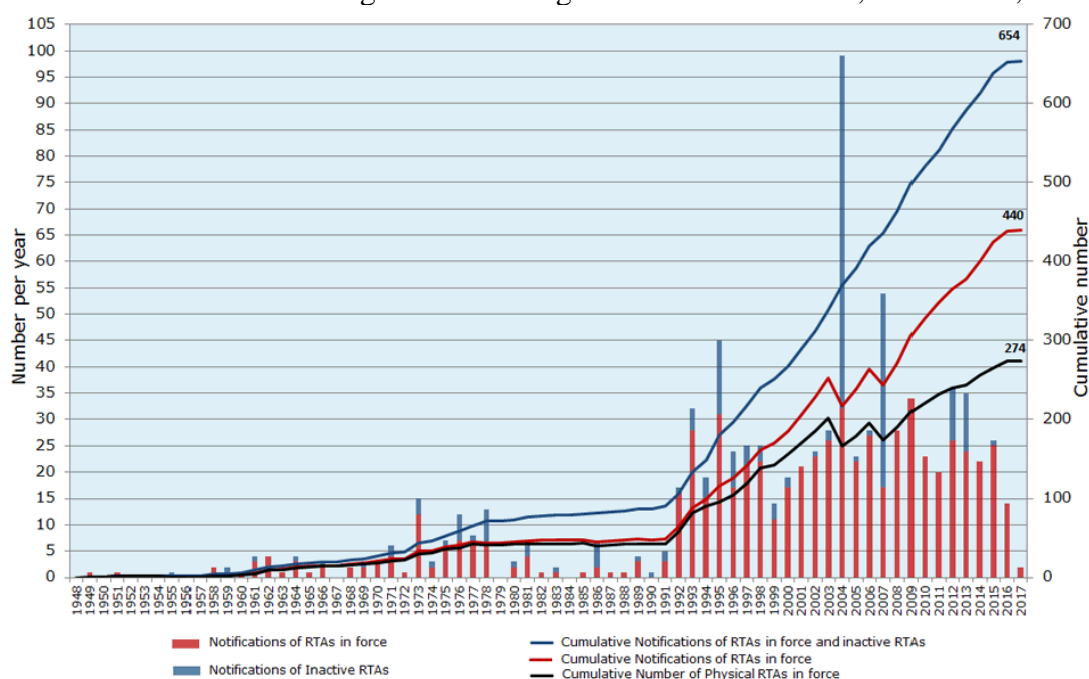
In order to analyze the Russian-led post-Soviet regional integration process in light of prominent integration theories, firstly I will present regional integration theories and then the history of post-Soviet regional integration experiences. Secondly, I will discuss the drawbacks that may hinder the success of the integration efforts. Lastly, I will answer my research question comparing my outcomes with the assertions of the theories.

1.2. Literature Review

Regional integration is a popular trend in today’s world and regional integration projects are being implemented in almost all regions of the world. The international system that emerged from the establishment of GATT/WTO and IMF international organizations continued to be valid from the onset of the Second

World War until the end of the Cold War (METI Report, 2016, 623). Ensuing the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the unipolar world built around the USA began to fragment, and this has considerably accelerated the efforts for regional integration through the emergence of regional blocs and a more polar system; thus, regional forms of association have become main components of international economic and political organization. (Lane, 2014, 4). Therefore, a great variety of integration organizations were established and the old ones were reformed after the end of the Cold War (Heinonen, 2006, 4). Nowadays, with few exceptions, almost all states currently participate in at least one regional integration agreement or carry out projects for participation and - all 146 member states of the WTO- are involved in a regional integration agreement (RIA). The table prepared by the WTO displaying the trends of regional integration movements over the years is provided below.

Table 1: Evolution of Regional Trade Agreements in the world, 1948-2017, WTO



Following the popularization of the concept of regional integration, scholars progressively began to express their views on the historical development of regionalization processes. In this sense, there are some differences in the literature regarding the emergence of regionalization waves. For instance, Mansfield and Milner (1999, 592) assert that four new waves of regionalism have emerged over the course

of the last two centuries. The first wave of regionalism covered the period from 1830s onwards to the First World War. The second wave spanned the interwar period. The third wave extended over the period between 1950 and 1970, and over the period from the 1980s to the present. According to Mansfield and Solingen (2010, 147-148), the first wave of this classification occurred as a European phenomenon and related to the emergence of international liberal trading system whereas the second wave arose in the aftermath of World War I, as economically discriminatory policies caused a sharp decline in world trade as a result of “beggar-thy-neighbor” trade policies. On the other hand, Hettne (2003, 23-24) divides waves of regionalism into two; the first wave, namely old regionalism, occurred during the Cold War Era; and the second wave, namely new regionalism, evolved in the era of globalization under a multipolar world. According to this classification, old regionalism was started by state actors with a top-down approach. Contrarily, new regionalism originated and developed by the works of non-state actor’s on a voluntary basis. In this regard, objectives adopted by old regionalisms primarily centered around specific areas, the most important being economy and security. The protectionist orientation of old regionalism has also been displaced by the multidimensionality of new regionalism. Dragneva and Wolczuk (2013, 1) contribute to Hettne’s definition by stating that “New Regionalism” is particularly concerned with non-Western and non-democratic states, and their different stages of economic development.

The concepts of regionalism and regionalization have many different meanings in the literature, and their meanings have changed over time. According to Dragneva and Wolczuk (2013, 1), regionalism refers to “the tendency of states to form regional groupings”, whereas Zelenicka (2008, 3) defines the concept of regionalism as “the formation of groupings or associations of states in a particular region by sharing the same identity and feeling belonging to a particular region based on geographical location and closeness, cultural heritage, same values or similar historical experience”. Kembayev (2009, 8) characterizes regionalization as “the increasing interdependence of states around the world” as a reflection of and a reaction to globalization, and states that, due to its attempt to be a political unity, the European Union is the most well-known example of this process. On the other hand, Breslin and Higgott (2000, 344)

reveal the difference between the two concepts and designate regionalism as “the process of intergovernmental dialogue and treaties and government-led cooperation projects”, while regionalization refers to “processes that are independent of state policies and projects that take their driving force from the market rather than government plans”. In parallel with their definitions, Pempel (2005, 19-20) acknowledges regionalization as a term referring to a dynamic, social, bottom-up and often economically-oriented and socially-driven process; and regionalism is more of a policy-driven, inter-governmental, top-down process that “involves primarily the process of institution creation”. Libman (2015, 355) made a similar distinction between these two concepts. As for him, regionalism refers to an increase in economic and social relations between companies and social groups of a particular region independent from governments and formal processes, while regionalization refers to the formation of cooperation between government agencies and official institutions through formal processes such as signing of agreements and establishing official groupings. Sakwa (2015, 13) defines the three forms of regionalism: micro-regionalism, meso-regionalism and macro-regionalism. Each of them is pertinent to different parts of the world today. According to Sakwa, micro-regionalism is mostly economy-based and refers to formations aimed at increasing the welfare of all people, lifting restrictions on the cross-border movement of goods, services, capital and goods between neighboring countries. This type of regionalism is best represented by the European Union, NAFTA and the WTO. On the other hand, meso-regionalism is essentially related to politics and refers to international organizations, such as the Council of Europe, which cover a broad range of countries to provide greater security. Lastly, macro-regionalism refers to international groupings established to fulfill political missions with the help of a functioning organization, namely World Trade Organization (WTO), Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Furthermore, integration is another important concept in relation to the subject which also englobes different definitions and subsections in the literature. In this context, the most significant ramifications regarding this concept are economic and political integration. Balassa (1961, 174) perceives the economic integration as a

process since “it encompasses measures designed to abolish discrimination between economic units belonging to different national states” and as a state of affairs as “it can be represented by the absence of various forms of discrimination between national economies”. Balassa (1961, 179) also sets forth that “practically, the only mutually acceptable rule for close economic cooperation between democratic societies is the rule of the free market”. According to Balassa’s definition, the most important objective of economic integration is to ensure free circulation of goods, services, capital and labor and common economic decision-making through the unification of two national economies. In order to achieve this purpose, it is necessary to harmonize national laws and economic policies by eliminating all remaining obstacles to the free circulation of production factors (Balassa in Kembayev, 2009, 11). On the other hand, Lindberg (1963, 6) defined political integration as, “the process whereby nations forgo the desire and ability to conduct foreign and key domestic policies independently of each other, seeking instead to make joint decisions or to delegate the decision-making process to new central organs, and the process whereby political actors in several distinct settings are persuaded to shift their expectations and political activities to a new center”. Political integration, according to Haas and Schmitter, refers to “any arrangement under which existing nation states cease to act as autonomous decision-making units with respect to an important range of policies” (Haas and Schmitter in Hosny, 2013, 149). Another scholar, Wallace (1990, 9), understood the concept of integration as “the creation and maintenance of intense and diversified patterns of interaction among previously autonomous units”, whereas Hodges (1972, 13) defined the aforementioned concept as “the formation of new political systems out of hitherto separate political systems”.

In the regional integration literature, there are numerous studies that analyze the objectives, capabilities and results of post-Soviet integration projects. While some of these studies examine the impacts of integration projects on political systems and institutional structures of the countries, others analyze the economic impacts arising from the changes in the customs systems.

Schmitter (2004, 47) propounds that all regional integration projects could be divided separately based on their transformative and reproductive abilities. According to Schmitter's definition, transformative integration, as can be seen in the EU case, has the capacity to transform the political and social structures and sovereignties of member states, including all forms of relations between states. As opposed to transformative integration, reproductive integration merely reproduces the characteristics of its participants as well as the interstate system of which they are part. In this context, Roberts and Moshes (2009) examine the ability of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), acknowledged as latest integration project in the region, to make a significant impact in the region. In conclusion, they emphasize the lack of ability of projects to transform sovereignty due to tension and coordination problems amongst the member states.

Inspired by Stepan's scientific research on federalism, Libman and Vinokurov (2010, 2011b) have developed two different approaches towards regionalism: "coming-together" and "holding-together". While the former is an outcome of bargaining among sovereign states interested in creating a union without having past ties; the latter is an outcome of efforts to keep an already established unit together through the central government's bargaining with individual regions for the degree of their autonomy. In their research, they identified the integration projects that generally emerged in the Eurasian region as cases of holding-together regionalism. These researches concluded that, in contrast to the general belief, past historical ties between countries could hinder the success of regional integration processes.

In her research focusing on CIS, Obydenkova (2011) claims that regional integration theories of the EU could also serve as useful tools for analyzing integration projects in the Eurasian region. In this context, she argues that both neofunctionalism and intergovernmentalism would be considered as theories appropriate to the region. However, as this study does not cover the New Regionalism Approach theory, there is still room left for further research. In addition, she compared Eurasian regionalism with European integration and posed the question as to why little progress has been achieved despite the fact that integration has undeniable advantages.

In conclusion, similar to the claims of Libman and Vinokurov, Obydenkova argued that the existence of historical ties is not adequate to ensure successful integration, and that factors such as public support and market economies governed by democratic regimes are crucial for the success of integration.

Vymyatnina and Antonova (2014, 12) examined the economic features of the Eurasian Union by comparing it to the CIS, the first integration project of the region. They contend that many of the prominent factors underlying the failure of CIS were still present. In studying the CIS, they note numerous reasons, including lack of desire of states to transfer their newly-acquired sovereignty and their preference to develop bilateral agreements rather than engage in multilateral attempts towards regional integration, each of which led to the dysfunction of the organization. Kembayev (2009) studied the legal aspects of the regional integration institutions, such as the CIS, the Union State of Russia and Belarus, and the Single Economic Space in the post-Soviet space. In studying these regional integration institutions, he noted that regional integration could help members of the region in increasing stability and security in the region. However, in parallel with the arguments by Vymyatnina and Antonova, Kembayev also propounded that the lack of political motivation of potential member states to surrender a part of their sovereignty is the major problem of post-Soviet integration.

Dragneva and Wolczuk (2014) drew up a report entitled “Eurasian Economic Integration: Institutions, Promises and Faultlines” for the London School of Economics and stressed the fault lines in the composition of the project. According to their view, due to concentration of power around the presidents of all countries participated in the project, the vision of states regarding integration project is merely determined by leaders, without the support of public opinion or elites of countries. In this context, they argued that the most important condition for the success of integration depends on the conduct of profound institutional reforms within the governments of the member states.

1.3 Theories of Regional Integration

The ideas and predictions of different theories of international relations need to be examined in order to be able to explain the mechanics of regional integration in all its aspects and in a satisfactory manner. At this stage, it should be noted that the issue of regional integration has not been examined by the broader theories of international relations; but rather by the theories of integration derived from these schools. For instance, the classical realist theory, which became the focus of international policy studies after the Second World War, acknowledges that international cooperation is not possible due to the anarchic nature of the international system. Likewise, scholars working on the traditional liberal theory, which dominated the discipline of international relations between the two wars, do not have significant studies on regional integration. In this sense, the issue of regional integration has been extensively examined by theories of intergovernmentalism deriving from realism, and functionalism deriving from liberalism.

There are two prominent contesting theories on regional integration; functionalism and intergovernmentalism. Other theories developed by scholars are generally variants and derivatives of these two theories. In this study, along with these two theories, New Regionalism Approach, theorized recently, will be examined since it is formulated based on a different perspective. These theories were selected not only because they are the most prominent and respected theories, but also because they are comprehensive in terms of every aspect of integration, and the most competent ones to explain the motives of regional integration. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, several theories were preferred over one generally accepted explanation, due to the assumption that each theory can only explain some fragments of the integration puzzle, and that only one theory will remain inadequate to analyze integration efforts in the post-Soviet area.

1.3.1. Functionalism

As a variant of liberal approach, functionalism is in consistency with the assumption of liberal approach suggested by Moravcsik (2003, 3) as “the fundamental actors in international politics are rational individuals and private groups, who organize and exchange to promote their interests.” As a result of a bottom-up point of

view adopted by liberalism, the demands of individuals and social groups are seen as external causes of the interests underlying state actions. Consistent with the liberal approach, functionalism is a theory that challenges the state-centered worldview, and functionalists deal with the question whether nation states are the most appropriate form to fulfill needs of society (Heionnen, 2006, 54). As a pluralist theory and in contrast to assumptions of realist theories, functionalism rejects the idea that states are the sole actors of international stage and claims that the role of nation states would diminish in time (Bache, 2011, 10).

Since the emergence of regional integration movements in Europe, the classical theories related to the subject have been generally focusing on European integration (Laursen, 2008, 3). Mitrany, who is regarded by other scholars as the forefather of regional integration studies, theorized functionalism to explain the integration of Europe. Mitrany stated that there are many social and economic problems that can only be overcome through cooperation beyond national borders, and that such type of cooperation cannot be achieved by politicians who only seek for the interests of their own states at the expense of the benefit of whole society. Instead, economic and technical experts are more likely to cooperate to surpass these problems with the help of a bottom-up and cooperative learning process (Mitrany in Kim, 2011, 8). Similar to Mitrany's assertion, Obydenkova (2008, 8) suggests the main ideas of functionalism that the exercise of political authority is inadequate to solve social concerns at regional scale/level, which in return puts pressure on political authorities to undertake supranational judicial reforms, and that the welfare benefits of supranationalism pave the way to further reforms.

Mitrany developed the idea of cooperative learning process in the following years; and, in order to explain the nature of European integration model, he defined a mechanism identified as "functional spillover" or "ramification". According to the spillover concept of the functionalism theory, a cooperative practice learned from a successful integration carried out on a technical field, would leap to other areas if the experience is mutually beneficial; and, if it demonstrates the potential benefits of cooperation in other areas, the bottom-up functional spillover pressure (from low

politics such as economic issues to high politics such as the pooling of sovereignty) created by this process would lead to the regional integration (Mitrany in Kim, 2011, 9). Kembayev (2009, 13) introduces the definition of spillover as follows: “As states integrate in limited functional or technical areas, they increasingly find momentum and inevitably follow it for further rounds of integration in related areas”. Nye (1968, 410) identified some measurable indicators of the spillover. These include the growth of key institutions, the development of private sector, the increase of public knowledge about the integration, and the influence on governmental policies to reduce corruption. Nye also indicated that the increasing “politicization” is a clear sign of positive progress towards the ultimate goal of integration, the Union.

Functionalism has been criticized by scholars for ignoring the political aspect of forming functional international organizations and making an inconsistent prediction in relation to the future of integration. However, it still stands out as an important theory, since it constitutes a critical milestone in the history of the integration theory and is a nurturing source for the neofunctionalism theory.

In his book entitled “The Uniting of Europe” first published in 1958, Haas points out a new theory called neofunctionalism, arguing that functional theory is insufficient to explain the nature of European integration process (Jansen, 2006, 9). Since the founder of the theory was convinced that the general theory of regional integration was inadequate both theoretically and empirically (Jansen, 2006, 10), Haas attempted to attribute a theoretical character to studies of regional integration with his new theory (Heionnen, 2006, 55).

According to the newly developed theory, the spillover pressure alone is not sufficient to enable integration to proceed and the presence of political pressure is necessary, especially in cases when the integration is blocked for some reason. As opposed to Mitrany’s theoretical assumption, Haas also claims that economic or technical aspects of integration could not be separated from politics, and that efforts of the relevant elites are of vital importance for the advancement of integration (Haas in Kim, 2011, 10). In this sense, neofunctionalism differs from functionalism in that the former, according to Haas, accepts the relationship between political and

economic powers and the vital role of the elites in the integration process (Akombe, 2005, 42-43).

The concept of spillover developed by Haas is the main driving force for the integration in neofunctionalism and it describes the evolution of regional integration. According to this concept, the success of the integration of two former independent sectors in resolving common problems through the establishment of common rules will spread to other sectors encouraging them to integrate. Scholars of neofunctional theory assert that the economic sector is the starting point for integration as it involves less controversial issues and its benefits can be reaped quickly. According to the political spillover term put forward by Haas, integration efforts spread from the economy sector to more controversial areas of political sector (Faber in Jansen, 2006, 13). In this sense, neofunctional theory is an example of transformative integration since it accelerates progress and facilitates the interaction between different sectors (Robert-Moshes, 2015, 5).

According to Haas, the cooperation of governments, national elites and supranational institutions is important in terms of achieving political integration, the most important of them being “national elites” due to their strength to influence public decision-making processes and interests in deepening integration (Haas in Jansen, 2006, 15). Meanwhile, Haas also referred to supranational institutions, the third actor, as an indispensable condition for integration (Haas in Robert-Moshes, 2015, 5). He also attaches great importance to them in ensuring political integration, stating that once established, these institutions which constitute the technocratic basis of integration play a crucial role in the expansion of integration (Haas in Jansen, 2006, 15). According to another prominent neofunctionalist scholar, Leon Lindberg, supranational institutions are the key enablers of spillover effect and are interested agents who can use their own resources and powers to advance integration (Lindberg in Robert-Moshes, 2015, 5).

In order to achieve success in regional integration studies, the founder of neofunctional theory, Haas, distinguished three essential conditions for regional integration: pluralist social structures, high degree of economic and industrial

development leading to financial accumulation, and similar ideological orientations amongst the elites of the integrating countries (Haas in Jansen, 2006, 11-12). Another integration scholar, Nye (1970), on the other hand, divided the conditions determining the integrative potential of a region into two as structural and perceptual conditions. He also found that perceptual conditions were more influenced by the integration process, while structural conditions were relatively stable and generally unaffected by the integration process. According to Nye's classification, structural conditions consist of pluralism, economic similarities of units, adaptation capacity of member states and elite value complementarity, while perceptual conditions consist of equality perception in the distribution of benefits, perceptions of external persuasion and low or exportable visible costs (Nye, 1970, 814-820).

The most fierce criticism about the theory was made by Haas, who was the creator of the theory at the same time: neofunctionalism is not a mature theory but a pre-theory (Haas in Jansen, 2006, 10) and due to lack of a theoretical basis, it was not applicable outside the model of European integration (Haas in Heionnen, 2006, 59). Furthermore, the theory has been considered obsolescent, and the theorists of the first wave integration noted a divergence between the discourse and the reality in integration projects outside Europe (Robert-Moshes, 2015, 6). Haas also criticized the neofunctional theory for its failure to predict the future of EU integration and underestimated the role of nationalistic sentiments (Breslin/Higgott/Rosamond in Jansen, 2006, 10) and the hampering effects of resistance from national authorities (Schmitter in Robert-Moshes, 2015, 6). These effects proposed by different scholars became evident when the European integration was halted by "empty chair" crisis, which began in July 1965 and ended in December of the same year (Lesiewicz, 2015, 95) as a result of nationalist policies followed by Charles de Gaulle, the then president of France (Robert-Moshes, 2015, 6). Parallel with this criticism, Fligstein (2008, 11) have asserted that the spillover concept was over-emphasised by neofunctional theory, and it would be unrealistic to expect the integration to move from the low politics towards high politics, which is highly concerned with the national interests. Another criticism about the theory is that it ignores the importance of the international context and the external factors that may facilitate or hinder the realization of integration.

Schmitter (2004, 56) stated that the international context may in some cases accelerate integration by forcing member states to follow common policies, and in some cases external shocks from the international environment may slow it down.

1.3.2. Intergovernmentalism

In the 1960s, the experience of European integration was stagnant under the influence of the “Empty Chair Crisis” and the future of the integration process had been endangered as a result of Charles de Gaulle’s nationalist actions to veto British membership. At this point, assumptions and predictions of the neofunctionalism theory proved not to be compatible with the empirical reality (Heionnen, 2006, 60). This paved the way for a new theory to better explain the situation in Europe. Therefore, under these circumstances, Stanley Hoffmann put forward the theory of intergovernmentalism as a response to neofunctional analysis of European integration (Bache, 2011, 13). Unlike Haas, who sought to distinguish neofunctionalism from international relations, Hoffmann viewed the regional integration phenomenon as a sub-discipline of international relations, and thus did not strive to develop his theory as a separate theory (Jansen, 2006, 18).

Contrary to neofunctionalism’s core assumptions, the theory of intergovernmentalism, which adopts a state-centric vision, accepts all the assumptions of the realist theory of international relations (Kim, 2011, 11). Hoffmann approached the regional integration phenomenon from perspective of nation-states and recognized them as dominant actors in the realm of international relations. In accordance with the assumptions of the realist theory, intergovernmentalist scholars considered states as actors that only act in their self-interests and survival (Obydenkova, 2010, 90). Though of utmost importance to the theory of neofunctionalism, Hoffman did not attach importance to the spillover concept and stated that the integration process did not evolve in nature, but instead, national interests were strictly necessary to achieve integration (Heionnen, 2006, 61; Jansen, 2006, 20). In this context, Hoffmann described the European Union integration process as a process initiated and sustained by the nation states of the region for the continuation of their national sovereignty and stated that the provision of European unity is of secondary importance in this process (Hoffmann in Jansen, 2006, 20). Hoffmann also rejected functionalist

ideas that governments would submit to pressure from the national elites and elites would be the most important actor of integration process (Hoffmann in Bache, 2011, 13). In this sense, to intergovernmentalism theory, the pace and direction of regional integration is determined by the policy convergence among states to fulfill domestic needs through interstate bargaining (Kim, 2011, 12).

Hoffmann described the conditions for a successful integration for intergovernmentalism theory as the integrating units must be political communities and these units should come from a pluralistic structure with the presence of pro-integrative political leaders (Hoffmann in Jansen, 2006, 19). He also attached importance to historical experiences and stated that integration is hindered and less likely when nation states are burdened with historical ties while the possibility of integration is high for units with less historical ties and experiences (Hoffmann in Jansen, 2006, 19).

Intergovernmentalism theory was developed into “Liberal Intergovernmentalism” with the work of Andrew Moravcsik in the early 1990s (Jansen, 2006, 18). Considering that the predictions of the neorealist theory were insufficient to explain European integration, the main aim of Moravcsik was to combine the arguments of neorealism and neoliberalism about the concept of regional integration in order to explain the dynamics of the integration process more powerfully than previous integration models (Heionnen, 2006, 63).

Similarly to Hoffmann's method, Moravcsik firstly started out with a critique of the neofunctionalist theory and stated that the theory was insufficient to explain the developments that took place in European integration (Bache, 2011, 14). Moravcsik (1993, 476) expressed that the theory must have an analytical base with a deductive approach and have the ability to predict the future, leaving Hoffmann's approach on integration at this point. With the aim of putting the theory on an analytical basis, Moravcsik (1998, 27) states that his theory can also be used to analyze integration projects in other parts of the world.

Moravcsik (1991, 75) defines the European integration as “the primary source of integration lies in the interests of the states themselves and the relative power each

brings to Brussels.” and this definition shows that the premises of liberal intergovernmentalist and neorealist theories are overlapped on the significance of states in international relations. Similar to the views of intergovernmentalism, Moravcsik (1994, 53) describes governments as actors acting rationally, follow their domestic interests and pursue their own goals. In this context integration is formed through interstate bargaining. Contrary to the arguments of neofunctionalism about interstate bargaining, the bargaining process does not cause the decrease of the power of the governments; but surprisingly it increases the power of the nation-states (Moravcsik, 1993, 486).

Moravcsik emphasized the significance of economic interests of nation-states and intra-regional trade volume for the increase in demand for integration and stated that integration demands are high in areas where there is high dependence on regional trade such as Europe (Obydenkova, 2010, 91). According to Moravcsik (1998, 3), since nation-states primarily pursue their economic gains and it is easier to reach an agreement on low politics such as economy, harmony between states in the economic sphere is a major factor increasing the chances of integration to occur. At the same time, Moravcsik (1993, 476) stressed that the existing international economic interdependencies are important for the establishment of European supranational institutions, and that these institutions provide the nation states with a convenient environment for solving the problems arising from economic interdependencies. However, Moravcsik stated that, despite all positive effects, the supranational institutions are not the main actors in the preferences for integration and these decisions are taken by the nation-states (Bache, 2011, 15).

Finally, the liberal intergovernmentalism departs from neofunctionalism in terms of its assumptions about the leader state. In this context, while neofunctionalism underlined the negative role of a leader state, liberal intergovernmentalism has welcomed and attached importance to the leader state of the region as a lever for integration and donor willing to pay the unproportional cost of integration (Obydenkova, 2010, 91).

1.3.3. New Regionalism Approach (NRA)

As already mentioned, the first integration movements in the modern sense began in the 1950s in Europe and neofunctionalism and liberal intergovernmentalism theories were introduced to explain the integration studies that emerged during these periods. However, by the 1980s, the international community had witnessed several structural transformations in the fields of global system such as the change of the bipolar Cold War structure, the relative decline of American hegemony, the erosion of the Westphalian nation-state system and the restructuring of the global political economy (Hettne and Söderbaum, 1998, 2). In this way, new theories emerged after the understanding that theories such as neofunctionalism and liberal intergovernmentalism were insufficient to analyze the present situation (Wunderlich, 2004, 2). The NRA emerged under these circumstances.

As mentioned above, while the first wave of regionalism has usually been linked to the protectionist trends of the post WWII world and it has been a significant feature of the international relations during the Cold War, the second wave of regionalism is associated with the recent global transformation process of international order (Wunderlich, 2004, 19). As a movement developed out of voluntary actors such as non-state actors from within the region, the NRA is regarded as the second wave of regionalism (Jansen, 2006, 23) and it is separated at many points from the Old Regionalism that began in the 1950's and faded away in the 1970's (Hettne and Söderbaum, 1998, 1).

Hettne and Söderbaum (1998, 2), the most prominent scholars of the NRA, described the New Regionalism as “a comprehensive, multifaceted and multidimensional process, implying the change of a particular region from relative heterogeneity to increased homogeneity with regard to a number of dimensions, the most important being culture, security, economic policies and political regimes”. Furthermore, Hettne (2003, 23) stated that with the emphasis on multidimensionality and open regionalism, the NRA is displaced the dominant economic and security objectives and protectionist orientation of the Old Regionalism approach. As a result of the emphasis on open regionalism and multidimensionality, the NRA has defined

the regionalism as an informal process led by non-state actors, rather than recognizing it as a formal process carried out by predominantly states (Jansen, 2006, 24).

Another reason for the emergence of the theory is that classical theories are designed exclusively to explain the efforts of regional integration in Europe, so that these theories are inadequate in explaining the regional integration studies in the rest of the world (Söderbaum and Taylor, 2004, 2-3). Despite this direction of analyzing the efforts of regional integration in the world outside Europe, the NRA has chosen not to ignore the experiences of European integration but to investigate its effects on integration projects in other parts of the world. According to Hettne (1994, 34), European regionalization influenced the regionalization efforts that took place in the rest of the world in two ways, positive and negative. According to Hettne (1994, 35), while positively affected countries have seen European integration as a success story and launched new regional integration projects inspired by European integration, the negatively affected countries considered it an exclusive project and started their own integration projects as a countermeasure.

Scholars of the NRA have defined the requirements for the success of regional integration projects. According to scholars of NRA, cultural, economic and political homogenization is the most important prerequisite for the success of integration projects. Hettne (1998, 9) stated that cultural homogenization is an important factor for the regionalization to begin and homogenization in the fields of security, economy and politics is necessary for regionalization to expand and achieve success.

In order to underline the dynamic character of regionalization and to examine the evolutionary nature of the process, the NRA scholars suggested “regionness” concept for understanding the development and construction of regions (Jansen, 2006, 25). Hettne and Söderbaum (2000, 12) define the concept of regionness as “the process whereby a geographical area is transformed from a passive object to an active subject, capable of articulating the transnational interests of the emerging region”. According to Hettne and Söderbaum (2000, 12-26), regionness starts with the level of regional space and continues to regional complex, regional society, regional community and to its hypothetical last level; region-state. Openness of external relations, communication

between the civil society organizations of the members of the region and the pressure of the integration by these actors and the creation of a single regional identity are the necessary factors to move from one level to another.

Contrary to the intergovernmentalist theory, the scholars of the NRA stated that the views on regionalization should not be state-centered, and that the state is only one of the actors in regionalization. Instead of attaching importance to the role of state for the process of regionalization, the NRA places a great importance to non-state actors coming from civil society and the market since informal networks and efforts are equally crucial beside the state-driven formal institutional structures for the building of a region (Jansen, 2006, 26).

Another important feature of the NRA theory is its stance against globalization and consequences of the globalization process. NRA scholars who claim that the theory is also a qualitatively new theory (Söderbaum 2002: 28), have expressed that the concepts of development, peace and ecological sustainability are brought back to the agenda of regional integration by civil society actors (Hettne, 1999, 22). At this point, the NRA scholars have referred to Polanyian concept of "double movement". In his work, Polanyi analyzes the capitalism of the 19th and the 20th centuries and describes the modern society as the result of the struggle between two opposing forces; the expansion of market and attempts of civil society for self-protection against the destabilizing effects of this expansion (Spindler, 2002, 10). According to Hettne (2003, 31), with their primary movement of expansion, market forces challenged the crucial values of civil society actors and second movement is the efforts of these actors in order to preserve their values. In this sense, regional integration efforts are seen as a response to globalization, and the regionalization strategy is accepted as an opportunity to overcome the potential negative consequences of globalization (Hettne, 1999, 6). With regard to this feature of NRA, by pooling authority at regional level, states are attempting to revive political regulation in order to have a better balance between global economy and regional values (Telo, 2007, 7).

1.4 Three Steps of Regional Integration in the Post-Soviet Space

In their researches concerned with the development of regional integration projects among post-Soviet states scholars as Libman (2011, 1334), Hancock and Libman (2014, 7) and Moldashev and Aslam (2015, 5) generally divide Eurasian regionalism into three distinct periods. According to this periodization, the first stage of Eurasian regionalism is the initial years of post-Soviet, 1991 to 1993, and the aim was to find solutions to the problems with the currency resulting from the disintegration of the common currency, namely “Ruble Zone”, after the demise of the Soviet Union. In the integration efforts carried out in this period, the countries in the ruble zone were intended to continue to use the Soviet ruble as a means of payment (Vymyatnina and Antonova, 2014, 21). This approach ultimately proved unsuccessful since it could not offer the expected outcomes (Dabrowski, 1995, 17). Factors such as printing more money than the agreed quote by multiple emission centers, increasing energy prices and Russia’s national identity policies led to the breakup of the ruble zone around 1994 (Vymyatnina and Antonova, 2014, 21). This stage is also marked by the creation of CIS on December, 1991 with ambiguous and wide-ranging goals (Hancock and Libman 2014, 7). The approach of Russia to integration among post-Soviet states in this stage was limited to the resolution of the issues of Soviet legacy such as nuclear weapons left over from the Union (Moldashev-Aslam, 2015, 5).

The second stage of the Eurasian regionalism, which took place between 1993 and 2000, was named by scholars as “The Stage of Deepening Transition” (Vymyatnina and Antonova, 2014, 12). In this stage, the post-Soviet states followed the path of establishing economy-based and the EU institutions-like organizations such as the Customs Union of 1995, the Eurasian Economic Community (Eurasec) of 2000 by Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, and Tajikistan, and the Union State of Russia and Belarus in 1999 (Hancock and Libman, 2014, 8, Libman, 2011b, 1334). The stance of Russia on integration in this period has changed in order to increase its influence on the post-Soviet states through the establishment of multilateral regional institutions (Moldashev-Aslam, 2015, 6). In this stage, several integration initiatives were also established that excluded Russia such as GUAM Organization for Democracy and Economic Development in 1997 and in Central Asia, the Central

Asian Economic Cooperation in 1998 and the Central Asian Cooperation Organization (CACO) in 2002 (Vymyatnina and Antonova, 2014, 13-14). However, in spite of the ambitious rhetoric related to economic and political integration, integration in this period has remained a series of incomplete agreements and often limited to repeated rituals of integration (Hancock and Libman, 2014, 8). Moreover, the integration efforts undertaken during this period are often associated with the need to protect authoritarian regimes and strengthen their rule through which Allison (2008, 185) calls "virtual regionalism" or "defensive integration" and Libman's definition, (2011, 1334) "asymmetric regionalism".

Vymyatnina and Antonova (2014, 17) named the third stage of the Eurasian regional integration as "The Post-transition Stage" as a demonstration of ended transition period in post-Soviet countries. The period from the early 2000s to the present is characterized by a redefinition of regionalism in the post-Soviet space (Libman, 2011b, 1334). With the help of economic growth supported by high oil prices, Russian Federation started to follow a more ambitious foreign policy in asserting its traditional area of influence in the near abroad through promoting Russia-centered regional institutions (Moldashev-Aslam, 2015, 6, Trenin, 2010, 202). According to Libman (2011, 1335), the reasons for this transformation that occurred in Russian foreign policy at the beginning of the 2000s were the favorable internal political and economic conditions in Russia, Putin's ambitious policy of restoring Russian influence over international affairs and Russian population's valuing of relations between Russia and the post-Soviet states. Again in this period, the cooperation that the ruling elites supported each other against their opposition continued as a consequence of the transformation process that resulted in the coming of the authoritarian governments in post-Soviet states (Libman, 2011b, 1334). For this reason, it is argued that the "virtual" or "asymmetric" regionalism arguments remain valid in this period (Vymyatnina and Antonova, 2014, 17).

The third stage of Eurasian regionalism witnessed the establishment of several economic institutions such as Common Economic Space in 2003, Eurasian Development Bank (EDB) in 2006 and the Customs Union between Belarus,

Kazakhstan and Russia in 2010. As noted above, while agreements signed in the first two periods did not come into force, the states generally complied with the agreements signed in the third period (Hancock and Libman, 2014, 8). For example, while the customs union agreement signed in 1995 had entered into force very limitedly, the customs union agreement signed in 2010 was considered the first regional integration agreement to fulfill all functions (Dragneva and Wolczuk, 2013, 58). Another example of this is EDB. Unlike preceding economic institutions established in previous periods of regional integration, EDB has received large amounts of funding from members (primarily Russia) to finance projects that support regional integration (Hancock and Libman, 2014, 8).

As can be seen on the definitions above, periodization made by academicians is concerned with the general situation of the regional integration process taking place in the Eurasian region from 1991 to the present. On the other hand, this thesis examines the regional economic integration of Eurasia in two stages such as, the experiences prior (between 1991 and 2007) to the establishment of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and the process that started in 2007 with the steps taken to establish the EAEU and continues to the present day. In this context, the basic forms of regional integration that emerged between 1991 and 2007 will be examined firstly. Then, advanced forms of regional integration, which took place from 2007 to the present day, will be examined.

1.5. Methodology and Outline

In this thesis, the documentary research method will be used. Documentary research includes the use of books, articles in scientific periodicals, international agreements and treaties, official documents as well as legal documents, newspapers, reports, researches and materials of media. In this sense English and Turkish sources will be used.

This thesis will be made up of five chapters. The first chapter introduces the study, explains the methodology and the organization of the thesis. In the second chapter I will focus on regional integration process in the post-Soviet space from 1991 to 2007, where I will introduce the evolution process of the Eurasec through the CIS

and the Union State of Belarus and Russia. In the third chapter, I will discuss various forms of integration attempts in the post-Soviet area since 2007. In the fourth chapter, I will thoroughly evaluate the whole process of regional integration experiment in the post-Soviet space under the light of mainstream theories on regional integration to reveal contradictory elements of the process. Along with this evaluation, I will benchmark the post-Soviet integration experience against the EU experience. Finally in the fifth chapter, in conclusion, I will seek to answer my research question by defining the prerequisites for future of regional integration in the post-Soviet space.

CHAPTER 2

REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN THE POST-SOVIET SPACE

(FROM 1991 TO 2007)

2.1. Background

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the first wave of integration was an element of the bipolar world that emerged after the Second World War, and the intentions of the blocs were to restrict the movement of each other. In the meantime, regional integration has been used by the western bloc in order to prevent the spreading policies of the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Union was established in 1922 and was destroyed as a result of a number of events in 1991. Economic and political liberalization policies, which were initiated by Khrushchev and then continued to be implemented by Gorbachev under the names “perestroika” and “glasnost” triggered the collapse of the Union. At this point, there were efforts to establish a "Union of Sovereign States", which is highly integrated in foreign policy, defense and economic affairs (Russel, 1996, 22), but as a result of the unsuccessful coup attempt in August 1991, the members of the Soviet Union left the Union at great speed and declared their independence. With the Minsk agreement signed in December 1991, the Soviet Union was formally demolished, and the future of Soviet territories and people living on it became uncertain (Kembayev, 2009, 26).

One of the most important consequences of the disintegration of the Union is the end of the Cold War period that began after the Second World War since the perception of regional integration has changed dramatically after the end of the bipolar world. Following these major events, the region of Eurasia was under the influence of

a rapid wave of regional economic and political cooperation similar to that of the rest of the world.

The main purpose of the integration efforts among the states that declared their independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union has been to remove the uncertainties that emerged in the territories and people of the union after the collapse (Hartwell, 2013, 411). For this purpose, 39 different regional integration projects were carried out and 36 different integration organizations were established between 1991 and 2010 (Vymyatnina and Antonova, 2014, 10).

The integration efforts that took place in Eurasia after the end of the Cold War are separated from the general trends in some points, despite the fact that they are in harmony with the rising trend of integration observed throughout the world. The main element that separates the Eurasian region from the rest of the world in this regard is the difference in the starting point for the regional integration. Regional integration projects in different regions of the world have emerged through the creation of new structures for the purpose of increasing economic activity, while the efforts for regional integration in Eurasia have emerged as a result of the disintegration of a previously existing polity, namely Soviet Union, and the main reason for the emergence of regionalism has been the problems of the post-Soviet states stemming from the common "Soviet legacy" (Libman, 2011a, 3). In accordance with this view, Sakwa (2015, 15) compared the Eurasian integration attempts with the ones emerging in Europe and stated that the European integration was perceived as progressive project that brings together the states that have been competing for many years while integrative projects in Eurasia are associated with a backward looking agenda that include states historically had been part of the same political unity aimed at the re-creation something that was lost.

The president of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbaev, was the first leader to propose the idea of establishing a union under the name of the Eurasian Union among the post-Soviet states in 1994 during an address at the Lomonosov Moscow State University (Glazyev and Tkachuk, 2015, 62, Sultanov, 2015, 98). Nevertheless, it cannot be said that the idea of unity proposed by Nazarbaev was quickly accepted by

other countries of the region, especially Russia. In this period, Russia, which showed low enthusiasm in accepting the idea of the Eurasian Union proposed by Nazarbaev, focused on signing bilateral free trade agreements with other post-Soviet countries (Moldashev-Aslam, 2015, 13). The most fundamental reason for this was that the Russian policy makers' perception of integration with post-Soviet states as a burden for modernization movement of Russia (Grinberg, 2014, 26). However, the negative and disinterested attitude of the Russian leadership to the idea of the Eurasian Union in the 1990s changed over time, and when it came to the 2000s, the Russian leadership began actively promoting regional integration projects among the post-Soviet states (Moldashev-Aslam, 2015, 1). As an official demonstration of this turn in Russian policy over regional integration, in 2011 an article published on Russian newspaper Izvestia by Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin which proposed "close integration based on new values and new political and economic foundation" (Putin, 2011).

2.2. Motives Behind Russia's Change of Policy in Favor of Regional Integration

Since 1991 the Russian policy of regional integration has been influenced by a number of factors. Some of these factors, such as economic crisis and colored revolutions, were compelled Russia to shift its policy towards integration. On the other hand it is considered that other factors such as infrastructure inherited from Soviet term and common values facilitated this policy shift.

2.2.1. Advantages of the Integration

The regionalism movements that followed the dissolution of the Soviet Union are attempts to rebuild a formerly existing alliance, which is different from the regional integration projects that have emerged in other parts of the world. In this context, the fact that the countries subject to regional integration are fragments of a previously existing structure has some implications that facilitate integration.

The most important legacy that post-Soviet states inherited from the Soviet Union as a facilitating factor is considered to be the Russian language, the lingua franca of the region (Obydenkova, 2008, 27, Kembayev, 2009, 188, Libman-Vinokurov, 2012a, 882). Libman (2006, 503) points out that social factors that remained after the Soviet period such as common standards of education, numerous exchange-programs for academics and experts and the existence of social networks

could also play an important role for integration. Along with social factors, the substantial infrastructure built in the Soviet period has a facilitating effect on integration. The region inherited a developed and standardized network of rail routes which interconnects the post-Soviet states (Vinokurov, 2009, 21). Another legacy from the Soviet period to the states of the region was power systems. The region inherited many heat and hydro power stations for electric power generation, a large and united infrastructure of electricity for distribution and cross-border transmission lines for trade of electric power (Libman-Vinokurov, 2010, 13).

Another factor that could facilitate the integration between the post-Soviet states is the geographical proximity. There is interdependence between geographically close states in terms of both critical production processes and the protection of shared external borders, which is considered to be a facilitating factor for integration (Weitz, 2014, 37). As a result of their landlocked position, geographical proximity is considered to be the major facilitator for the Central Asian states on integration issue since the integration is the only solution for these countries to overcome their geographic isolation in the region, both for accessing to natural resources and to the rest of the world (Obydenkova, 2008, 6, and 2011, 88-89).

The last factor that could facilitate the integration is economic. From 1917 till 1991 the economic development had been planned by the Soviet decision makers on the assumption of a single and unified economic entity (Kembayev, 2009, 3). As a result of being components of this unified economic system, there is a huge interdependence between the post-Soviet states on chains of production, supply and consumption (Weitz, 2014, 37). Although the monetary and economic system has collapsed with the disintegration of the Soviets, the preservation of ties between the actors of the economy is considered an advantage in terms of the progress of integration.

2.2.2. Disadvantages of Disintegration

The Soviet Union was established as a federation of 15 Soviet Socialist Republics that are economically and socially interconnected, and for this reason the collapse of the Union had severe consequences for its members and for the region. The

process of transition after dissolution had two dimensions; political and economic. The political dimension was the transition of political system from dictatorship towards democracy and economic dimension was the transition of the economic system from a centrally planned to a market economy. With the implementation of policies for economic transition, the economic and social infrastructures of single economic space disintegrated which caused extensive economic loss and social distraction (Obydenkova, 2008, 5). As a result of disintegration, the integrated payments, budgetary and investment systems collapsed, price subsidies for energy provided by the Russian Soviet to other Soviets were eliminated, transport services are reduced and transport prices were raised and formal customs and trade barriers were introduced (Cherp, Cukrowski and Blaxall, 2005, 37). After the declaration of sovereignty labour migration between countries became complicated, immigration problems among the post-Soviet states and border disputes arose between newly independent states resulting in violence and ethnic cleansing (Kembayev, 2009, 3). Environmental problems and natural threats, terrorist attacks originated from or influenced by the nearby territories and rising human and drug smuggling problems are other results of the disintegration (Obydenkova, 2011, 88).

As a result of the peculiarity of post-Soviet integration mentioned above, while in other parts of the world integration may require a costly transformation of individual economies, in the post-Soviet space it is disintegration that requires extensive resources and effort (Libman, 2014, 344). In this sense, regional integration is considered to be of great importance to the post-Soviet space, as the problems, only to be removed by preservation of existing ties between the countries and re-integrating the region, arising from disintegration affect all countries.

2.2.3. Colored Revolutions

Colored revolutions were a series of protests and political events that developed in the post-Soviet countries during the early 2000's. These revolutionary movements, including the Rose Revolution in Georgia in 2003, Orange Revolution in Ukraine in 2004 and Tulip Revolution in 2005 in Kyrgyzstan, was considered critical in changing Russian policies on foreign affairs towards post-Soviet states (Moldashev, 2015, 15-16). Following the establishment of anti-Russian governments in all three countries

after these revolutions, Russia, which considered these movements as harmful to its influence in the region, felt compelled to create an integration project of its own in order to guarantee its influence on its near abroad (Skriba and Bordachev, 2014, 19). According to Kembayev (2014, 30) the main driving force behind the Eurasian integration is not only the desire to promote political stability and encourage economic growth in the region but also the fear of respective political elites of “colored revolutions”. In this sense, the colored revolutions, together with other factors, are considered to be facilitating effects of regional integration in post-Soviet space.

2.2.4. Economic Crisis

Another factor that facilitates regional integration movements following the collapse of the Soviet Union is considered to be the effects of global economic and financial crises. Although a large literature hypothesizes that crises should impede economic integration and lead to a surge of protectionism, regional integration in the post-Soviet space came into existence immediately after major economic and financial crises (Libman-Vinokurov, 2014, 343). The main reason for this peculiarity is considered to be the type of regionalism; as Libman and Vinokurov (2010, 22) put it, holding-together regionalism. According to Libman and Vinokurov (2012, 874), regional integration is encouraged by economic crises if the heritage of past interdependencies is significant. As an example for this hypothesis, Gleason (2001, 1082) argues that the efforts to establish an economic union within the CIS were reactions to the economic depression that followed the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Libman (2015, 5) writes that regional integration projects emerged after 2007 in the post-Soviet space could be seen as examples of “crisis-driven” regional integration since enthusiastic members of the integration, Kazakhstan and Belarus, were both massively hit by the global economic crisis in 2008 and preferred to protect the economic ties within the post-Soviet space in order to cope with the severe results of the crisis. Similarly, Dragneva and Wolczuk (2013, 84) argue that the impacts of financial and economic crisis of 1998 and 2008 on Russia and its neighbors was accelerated the pace of economic integration in post-Soviet space. In parallel with these views, Roberts and Moshes (2015, 10) writes that the ongoing effects of the 2008

global financial crisis was the one of the most important background drivers for the regional integration process in the post-Soviet space.

2.3. Basic Forms of Regional Integration in post-Soviet Eurasia

2.3.1. Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)

2.3.1.1. Genesis of the CIS

The Soviet Union, which was established by the Union Treaty, signed on December 30, 1922 as the result of the October revolution, faced with the danger of disintegration in the late 80s. The negotiations initiated for the establishment of a less centralized union, namely the "Union of Sovereign States", proposed to prevent the collapse of the Soviet Union, were stopped following the failed August 1991 coup attempt that began on 20 August and collapsed on 21 August (Obydenkova, 2008, 12). As a result of this, in December 1991, the presidents of Belarus, Russia and Ukraine declared that the disintegration of the Soviet Union was indispensable and stopped negotiations for the establishment of a new Union of Sovereign States (Libman, 2011a, 4). The disintegration process of the union was completed in December of the same year with the Minsk Agreement signed by Belarus, Russia and Ukraine. The Minsk Agreement formally established the CIS, which consists of the three states (described as the high contracting parties in the Agreement) mentioned above and is open to all member states of the former USSR and to all other States which will share the principles of the founding agreement (Minsk Agreement, Art 13). As the most important consequence of signing of the agreement, the USSR, which was founded by the 1922 Union Treaty, has ceased to exist in terms of international law and the activities of the former Soviet Union organs have been suspended on the territory of the member states of the Commonwealth (Minsk Agreement, at Preamble). The agreement included generally accepted principles and norms of international law, such as the sovereign equality of states, the prevention of the use of force in international relations, the protection of human rights, and the resolution of disputes through peaceful means. In addition, member states have guaranteed openness of borders, freedom of movement for citizens and of transmission of information within the CIS

(Minsk Agreement, Art 5) and have agreed to pursue a common military-strategic policy, including joint control over nuclear weapons (Minsk Agreement, Art 6).

However, the Agreement contained only 3 of the 15 new sovereign states established after the collapse of the Soviet Union. As a result of the three Baltic nations declaring their independence at the beginning of the process, the number of states not represented in the Treaty was 9. Thus, the three countries that declared the non-existence of the USSR without the official consent of the other nine republics explicitly violated the authority of them (Kembayev, 2009, 29). Another problematic side of the declaration was the three signatories were the heads of the three Slavic republics of the former Soviet Union, suggesting to some that they were creating a “Slavic Commonwealth” (Shoemaker, 2014, 136). The person who concerned the most was Kazakhstan’s President Nursultan Nazarbaev. He was concerned that the Central Asian republics were not represented in the original meetings and held a summit in Alma-Ata on December 21, 1991 in order to resolve the dispute (Dragneva and Wolczuk, 2013, 16). After the signing of the Alma-Ata Arrangements, with the exception of Georgia, all the newly independent states (NIS) of the USSR joined the three original signatory states of the Minsk Agreement. At the end of the meeting, the leaders signed the Protocol to the Agreement Establishing the CIS, the first legal basis for the operations of the new regional organization. As noted above, the signatory states of the Minsk Agreement were defined as “high contracting parties” in the text of the agreement. This definition has been discussed at the Alma-Ata meeting and consequently the dispute has been resolved by adding the clause “the contracting parties create the Commonwealth on the principle of sovereign equality” to the protocol. Thus, all member states are considered as high contracting parties or co-founders with the protocol. Another document of the summit was the Alma-Ata Declaration. The declaration which contains several important provisions was signed by all 11 post-Soviet republics (Kembayev, 2009, 29-30). With the signing of this joint declaration, the representatives of the member states have expressed their intention to “build democratic states ruled by law and to develop relations between them on the basis of mutual recognition of inalienable right to self-determination, equality, noninterference in each other’s internal affairs, renunciation of the use of force or

threat to use force, economic or other levers of pressure” (The Alma-Ata Declaration, Preamble). The declaration also stated that the CIS “is neither a state nor a supranational entity” and “co-operation between members of the Commonwealth will be carried out in accordance with the principle of equality through coordinating institutions formed on a parity basis and operating in the way established by the agreements between members of the Commonwealth” (The Alma-Ata Declaration). Thus, with the two documents, considered to be the founding documents of CIS (Obydenkova, 2008, 12), signed at the end of the summit, the CIS was formally established and the Soviet Union was officially demolished (Dragneva and Wolczuk, 2013, 16).

The founding documents of the CIS did not go beyond establishing the CIS and proclaiming the collapse of the USSR and did not set up a system to protect the common economic area of the USSR and provide common military policy and control of nuclear weapons. In order to solve these problems, the main document of the CIS, the CIS Charter, was adopted with the participation of 7 countries; Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan on 22 January 1993 (Obydenkova, 2008, 12). The Charter was ratified by the summer of 1994 by all states except Turkmenistan and Ukraine (Dragneva and Wolczuk, 2013, 16). The document, which clarifies and develops the official structures of the CIS, constituted the legal basis for the realization of CIS activities (Kembayev, 2009, 33). The Charter contains objectives that include both the political and economic dimensions of CIS integration (Obydenkova, 2010, 91). The Charter stipulates that the CIS is “based on principles of sovereign equality of all its members” and aims at serving for “further development and strengthening of the relationships of friendship, good neighborhood, interethnic harmony, trust, mutual understanding and mutually advantageous cooperation among the Member States” (CIS Charter, Preamble). In accordance with these provisions, the Charter declares the CIS as a voluntary body of independent and equal states that do not have any supranational authority (Dragneva and Wolczuk, 2013, 16).

After the entry into force of the Charter, member states began to work on economic integration quickly and in September 1993, the Economic Union Treaty was

signed by 9 member countries in Moscow. The Treaty marked an important transformation in the CIS approach to the economic integration since it introduced a new regional integration approach that relied on the experience of the European Union and did not aim to maintain the economic ties of the Soviet past (Libman, 2011a, 7). For example, the Treaty set a number of clear priorities for the CIS members such as “The Treaty was based on the necessity of formation of the common economic space on the principles of free movement of goods, services, workers, capitals; elaboration of concerned money and credit, tax, price, customs and foreign economic policies, rapprochement of the methods of management of economic activities, creation of favorable conditions for development of direct production links.” (Economic Union Treaty, 1993, Preamble). Nevertheless, the Treaty, which envisaged a gradual transition process to the stages of a multilateral free trade organization, customs union, common market and monetary union, respectively, has not been put into practice since it was not been ratified by Russia (Dragneva and Wolczuk, 2013, 16). Another development in the field of economic integration is the customs union established in 1995. The customs union agreement was initially signed by Belarus and Russia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan joined the agreement in the following years (Daly, 2014, 83). However, the project failed due to reasons such as Russia unilaterally raising import taxes and lowering its credibility in terms of further economic co-operation (Kubicek, 2009, 243). Thus, the 1995 customs union project, which described by Vinokurov (2017, 56) as a false start from the very beginning, did not produce the expected results, as it could not go beyond being a superficial political and propaganda action aiming at saving the reputation of President Boris Yeltsin, whose popularity has weakened in Russian Federation (Wisniewska, 2013, 8).

2.3.1.2. Institutional Structure of the CIS

The institutional structure of the CIS is determined by the founding treaty of the Commonwealth, the Charter. According to this, in the Charter, 10 organs were determined, namely principal policy-making, coordinative and executive, administrative and assistive organs. The main policy-making bodies of the CIS are the Council of Heads of States (CHS), the most powerful body in all areas of the Union (CIS Charter, Art. 21), and the Council of Heads of Government (CHG), which

operates with limited power, especially in the field of economy (CIS Charter, Art. 22). These organs, which were established at the Alma-Ata summit held in December of 1991, are also the oldest organs of the CIS (Kembayev, 2010, 47).

The CHS is the highest body of the CIS that discusses and solves questions related to the common interests of the member countries of the Community, while the CHG is the body that coordinates the co-operation of executive bodies on the economic, social and other common interests of CIS member states (Obydenkova, 2010, 100). As stated in the "Rules of Procedures" issued in October of 2002, which sets out the procedures of the Commonwealth, these two principal decision-making structures, take decisions by consensus.

These non-permanent CIS principal organs may hold regular meetings at least twice a year at periodic intervals and extraordinary meetings may be convened by the initiative of one of the participating countries (Kembayev, 2009, 47). The meetings of these organs are chaired by the presidents or prime ministers of a participant state on a rotating basis determined in alphabetical order of the Russian alphabet (Rules of Procedure, Rule 8).

The CIS executive-coordinative organs that mentioned by the CIS Charter are the Council of Foreign Ministers, the Council of Defense Ministers, the Council of the Frontier Troops Chief Commanders and the Economic Council. Apart from those mentioned in the CIS Charter, there are a number of additional sectoral councils based on separate agreements that work in fields such as industry, agriculture, transport and trade etc. (Kembayev, 2009, 49). Similar to the decision-making method of the principal organs of the CIS, decisions of the coordinative-executive organs are taken solely on the basis of consensus. However, the decisions taken by these bodies are advisory and not binding.

The organ defined as the administrative body of the CIS is the Executive Committee. The "Regulations on the Executive Committee" published in 2000 defines the Committee as a single permanent executive, administrative and coordinating body of the CIS. According to the Regulation, the Committee is responsible for organizing the activities of the CHS, the CHG, the Council of State Foreign Affairs Councils, the

Economic Council and other bodies of the Commonwealth. Among the most fundamental tasks of the committee are the preparation of proposals to expand economic co-operation within the framework of the CIS; the creation and functioning of the free trade zone, the provision of favorable conditions for a transition to a higher level of economic cooperation, and the development of common economic areas in the future (Obydenkova, 2008, 33). Article 6 of the Regulation also gives this body the right to make proposals and prepare draft documents to the CIS Councils, but its use is limited to "only in cooperation with the CIS countries and CIS organs". According to Article 15 of the Regulation, the committee is led by the CIS Executive Secretary appointed by the CHS on the proposal of the CIS countries. The Committee is located in Minsk and it has a branch in Moscow.

The assistive organs of the CIS that organized in the form of advisory units are the Inter Parliamentary Assembly (IPA), the Economic Court and the Commission on Human Rights. As a result of their structuring as consulting units and not having any supranational power, the operations carried out by these bodies have no significant impact on the principal organs of the CIS (Kembayev, 2009, 56).

The most prominent of these bodies was the IPA, which was formally established in March, 1992 as "an advisory body for the discussion of questions and the consideration of document drafts of mutual interest" (Obydenkova, 2008, 32). The first signatories of the agreement were Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The agreement was signed between 1993 and 1996 by Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova. Ukraine, which signed the agreement in 1999, became the last state to join the agreement. According to article 36 of the CIS Charter, IPA "shall conduct inter-parliamentary consultations, discuss the questions of cooperation within the framework of the Commonwealth, and elaborate corresponding proposals". Article 3 of the CIS Charter specifies the rules concerning the election of members to the Assembly. According to this rule, Assembly consists of representatives elected or appointed by the member state parliaments in accordance with the internal regulations and procedures of the member states. Regular sessions of the IPA are held not less than twice a year in St. Petersburg (Obydenkova, 2008, 32).

Another assistive organ of the CIS is the Economic Court. The Court was established with “Statute of the Economic Court of the CIS” approved by the CHS in 1992 as a judicial organ “with a view of the maintenance of the uniform application of the agreements concluded by the participant states of the CIS as well as the economic obligations and contracts based on them by the resolution of disputes arising from economic relations”. The mandates of the Court also include resolving disputes arising during the implementation of economic commitments made by the member states of the Commonwealth and other disputes classified as within its mandate by agreements of member states (Obydenkova, 2008, 33). However, since the decisions adopted by the court are merely advisable to the states that violate the rules of CIS and have no binding force, it is considered that the court does not work effectively in resolving the disputes. In accordance with this view, Kazakhstan President Nazarbaev made a statement at the CHS summit held in Astana on September 17, 2004, saying that nobody pays any attention to the decisions adopted by the CIS Court (Dragneva and Wolczuk, 2013, 56).

The last assistive organ of the CIS is the Commission on Human Rights which established by the Charter of CIS. The 33rd article of the Charter provided that the Commission “shall be a consultative body of the Commonwealth and shall supervise the observation of obligations on human rights assumed by the member states within the framework of the Commonwealth”. The main motivation for the establishment of the Commission was the population problems that emerged after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. In this sense, Russia showed the greatest effort to establish the Commission in order to protect the Russian population living outside their titular nationalities. In spite of these efforts, the Commission did not start its activities because of the political problems between the CIS states in relation to these issues (Kembayev, 2009, 58).

2.3.1.3. CIS Customs Union of 1995

The most negative result for countries after the collapse of the Soviet Union was the catastrophic economic recession. In order to emphasize this matter Boris Yeltsin declared that as post-Soviet states they have realized that they cannot live without each other at a CIS summit held in Minsk in January 1993 (Becker, 1996,

120). Following this declaration, in September 1993, a treaty was signed between the CIS member states to form a free trade area, to be followed by a customs union and later an economic union. In the following years, a customs union agreement was signed by Russia and Belarus in January 1995. The agreement signed by states included objectives such as “to eliminate all internal barriers with the purpose of the establishment of the freedom of movement of goods between the participating states; to establish common custom duties in trade with third countries; and to create “the same-type mechanism of the regulation of their economies based on the principles of market economy and unified legislation” (Agreement on Customs Union, 1995, Article 1). Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan joined the agreement in 1996 and Tajikistan signed the agreement in 1999 (Wisniewska, 2013, 7).

Lawson and Erickson (1999, 4-5) studied the first customs union project in the framework of CIS and wrote that the project has failed due to the fact that there were no standardized customs tariffs, customs procedures and Value Added Taxes (VAT) levels between the countries and lack of a reliable system of payment and fair competition among member countries. In parallel with Lawson and Erickson, Wisniewska (2013, 7) contends that as a result of lack of trust, member countries followed protectionist policies to support their weak economies which were unprepared to face competition. Similarly, Michalopoulos and Tarr (1997, 130-132) argued that the biggest difference of the customs union of CIS in 1995 is lack of competition among members. They claim that while the customs union projects of EU have ability to promote and sustain competition within its borders, the CIS customs union could not create competition within the CIS territory. Moreover, implementation of customs union agreement increased the inefficiency due to the protection of the Soviet Union's production structures and had negative consequences in trade for both small countries and larger countries of the union. Kembayev (2009, 131) writes that factors such as continuing economic decline, different economic policies and their substantial disagreements over trade policy with other countries made the objectives put by the document unrealistic in short term.

As a result of factors mentioned above, despite the numerous agreements signed in order to integrate the economies of post-Soviet states the first customs union in the framework of CIS has failed to produce expected outcomes envisioned in the founding agreements and the customs union remained largely on paper (Dragneva and Wolczuk, 2013, 63-64).

2.3.1.4. Evaluation of the CIS

The CIS, which was set up to solve the problems that arise after the collapse of the Soviet Union, was initially declared as the most important Eurasian regional integration agency after the disintegration of the USSR in 1991 (Weitz, 2014, 29) and different views have been put forward about the CIS. According to an important part of these views, the CIS is considered unsuccessful because of its inability to achieve the goals set during its establishment. Contrary to these views, there are scholars who think the CIS is important for the integration processes that take place in the region.

Sakwa and Webber (1999; 381), who saw the CIS as a project that was ambitious but lacking necessary equipment, stated that the project failed to create a common society for joint military forces and a common currency. For them, the reason for this failure was two opposing policy implementations; on the one hand the establishment of CIS facilitated the independence of the former Soviet republics, and on the other hand urged states to cooperate. Parallel to this view, Bykov (2016, 186) stated that the primary objective of the new independent states was to provide economic development, and that the objective of cooperation failed because of fear of losing its independence. Olcott (1999, 61) stated that each state had its own priorities and that the leaders were not willing to surrender the newly acquired sovereignty to an international institution.

Hett and Szkola (2015, 4) have linked the failure of the CIS the different interests and divergent positions of their member states. According to Brzezinski and Sullivan (1997, 41), Yeltsin's aim is to revitalize the collapsing Soviet Union and to establish a European Union-like union in the future. Another aim of Russia for establishing CIS was that the CIS was its sphere of influence and Russia had the right to intervene in CIS states in order to protect the rights of ethnic Russians (Kubicek,

2009, 241). The Belarusian leader, Shushkevich, regarded the CIS as a means of raising his states profile by making Belarus the new center of the CIS. However, according to Ukrainian President Kravchuk's opinion, the CIS was a temporary regime to facilitate the transition process to independence, and suggested that the states should loosen their bonds with the union as they strengthened the economies. In this sense, Kravchuk regarded the CIS as a way of organizing a “velvet divorce” from the former USSR, rather than seeing it as a new community, and focused specifically on becoming an independent state in economic terms (Wisnievska, 2013, 7). In addition to Ukraine, many states, such as Georgia, Azerbaijan and Moldova, have little or no enthusiasm to the CIS from the beginning as a result of being suspicious of Russian intentions, but these states have signed an agreement due to the pressure from Russia and the threat of economic sanctions (Kubicek, 2009, 242).

As a result of the factors mentioned above, the CIS has often been interpreted as a tool of 'civilized divorce', a well-known phrase of Leonid Kravchuk, rather than a successful regional integration effort (Libman, 2012, 877, Molchanov, 2009, 336). The mechanism of the decision-making process based on consensus and the contradictions between members made deep reforms impossible (Libman, 2011a, 8). Thus, although the CIS was designed to provide a means to both manage the collapse of the Soviet Union and to maintain and strengthen ties between post-Soviet countries, the CIS historically experienced difficulties securing implementation of many of the agreements signed by its member governments (Weitz, 2014, 30). Besides, most of the agreements signed under the CIS remained “ink on the paper” and were never implemented (Kubicek, 2009, 241, Obydenkova, 2010, 90). According to Libman (2011, 8), the acts and agreements that passed by governing institutions of the CIS at the regular meetings were usually not implemented, even not expected to implemented. Another reason for the failure of the CIS was that the CIS has never had the sufficient supranational powers to compel cooperation between the new independent states. In addition to this, Glazyev (2015, 62) stated that the weak discipline of fulfilling mutual obligations undermines the confidence in the CIS and this has overshadowed the first regional integration efforts in the post-Soviet space.

Despite the aim of democracy and human rights protection, economic and political development through regional integration, the CIS has sometimes been marked for its use for opposite purposes. Kubicek (2009, 240) stated that when it comes to regional integration, authoritarian leaders could not be willing to commit themselves to regional organizations that might be contrary to their political privileges; but instead, they could gather around a common goal such as fending off Western powers who are interested in spreading democracy in the region. In parallel with Kubicek's statement, Libman contends that (2015, 178) there is substantial evidence that the CIS is used as a tool of autocracy promotion.

However, Russia, the largest and most enthusiastic founder of the organization, is considered to have changed over time in its approach to the CIS. In the early 1990's, domestic issues such as the reorganization of the institutions of new state, the transition of Soviet planned economy to market economy and management of the breakup of the USSR, had priority over Boris Eltsin, President of the newly independent Russia, and his government and as a result of this prioritization they tended to view the CIS as a mechanism for implementing a "civilized divorce" rather than a structure for managing economic integration (Dragneva and Wolczuk, 2013, 82). Nevertheless, it can be assumed that Moscow's view on the organization has changed with the election of Putin as president. When he came to office Putin has promised that relations with the CIS countries will take precedence and that Russia has taken some steps to strengthen its role in the region, as he fully recognized the declining role of Russia both in the global stage and in the post-Soviet space (Kubicek, 2009, 246). Firstly in 2006, in his Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, the president Putin praised the CIS for "clearly helping us to get through the period of putting in place partnership relations between the newly formed young states without any great losses and played a positive part in containing regional conflicts in the post-Soviet area" (Weitz, 2014, 29-30). Secondly, with the article published in the newspaper *Izvestia* titled as "A new integration project for Eurasia: The future in the making", the president of Russia praised the CIS again by declaring "the commonwealth remains an irreplaceable mechanism that helps bring our positions closer together and enables us to elaborate a common view on key issues facing our

region, in addition to the tangible benefits it affords its members”. In his article, Putin also claims that the CIS experience enabled the states to launch a many layered, multi-speed integration process in the post-Soviet space, and gave a lead to establishing of institutions such as the Union State of Russia and Belarus, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Eurasian Economic Community, the Customs Union and finally the Common Economic Space. In parallel to this view, Dragneva and Wolczuk (2013, 31) believe that foreign observers tend to pay low attention to the importance of the CIS; and, that for many years the CIS activities have laid the groundwork for economic integration for the future. In parallel with this assertion, Selivanova (2014, 2) claims that the creation of the CIS helped each NIS to freely choose its own way and the optimal model of national development and economic improvement according to national traditions and interests. Similarly, Sevim (2013, 50) praises the gathering power of the organization and argues that although there were critics about the organization that it could not reach its goal of establishing cooperation between post-Soviet states, so far it managed to keep its eleven member states around one table.

Finally, although the CIS has succeeded in bringing together the states that have gained their independence following the collapse of the Soviet Union and in preventing possible conflicts between them, neither economic nor political goals or objectives listed in the establishment treaties have been achieved. The most important reasons for failure are fundamental disagreement over the goals and purposes of the CIS, the fear of losing newly acquired independence, and the inability of the organization to achieve the expected economic development and political integration goals due to the fact that the signed agreements are not implemented. In view of today's developments, it seems that even the most enthusiastic member of the CIS, Russia, has often begun to work on different integration projects, abandoning the efforts to improve the CIS institutions, although often insisting that the CIS should be protected (Bordachev and Skriba, 2014, 20). As an example of this policy shift, Libman (2010, 12) argues that a position in the CIS is not attractive for Russian officials and some key appointments in the CIS institutions are sometimes used as an “exile of honor” for high ranking Russian politicians. For these reasons, today the CIS is considered to be an organization where the problems of member states are discussed and issues of "low

politics" such as railway transport and police co-operation are being discussed; and, as a result of having not enough power, it does not demand anything from political or economic issues of its members, nor obligates its members (Kubicek, 2009, 248). Similar to the historical development of the British Commonwealth as a ceremonial organization basically for countries sharing common history, language and traditions, the CIS was preserved as a weak forum designed only for discussions between heads of state (Bordachev and Skriba, 2014, 20). Thus, when it came to the second half of the 1990s as the idea of a multilateral political and economic union based on advanced forms of integration and covering the entire CIS was proved unsuccessful, the idea of developing integration models at different levels and speeds was adopted.

2.3.2 Union State of Belarus and Russia

As mentioned in the previous section, the disagreement between the interests of the elite in the NIS made it impossible to carry out the advanced integration of all CIS countries led the integration advocates to seek different solutions. For this reason, the focus of integration is shifted to the concept of "integration at different speeds and levels", in which the form, pace and degree of mutual cooperation are determined according to the desires of involvement of the respective countries (Glazyev-Tkachuk, 2015, 62). This concept was initially shaped by the integration project named as "Union State of Russia and Belarus", a project that is progressing step by step to create economic, military, customs, money, legal, humanitarian and cultural space.

2.3.2.1 The Origins of the Russia-Belarus Integration

Although the processes of integration between the post-Soviet states generally began with the disintegration of the USSR, the history of the integration efforts between Belarus and Russia dates back to an earlier period.

Historically, the restructuring process to rebuild the economy that began after the WWII made Belarus heavily dependent on Russia for needs such as energy and raw materials. In economic terms, energy supplies Belarus receives from Russia at favorable prices and the large Russian market where the state can sell its products, especially in the defense industry, are the reasons that drive the two countries into integration (Kembayev, 2009, 97). In geopolitical terms; the fact that Belarus, which

is bordered by the Baltic states, Poland and Ukraine, is regarded as the key country for defense by the Russian leadership is one of the elements that bring the two countries closer to integration (Trenin, 2005, 68).

Although Belarus officially started to follow a multi-vectored foreign after the demise of the USSR, this policy has shifted abruptly with the election of pro-Russian Lukashenko as the president of Belarus in 1994 (Korosteleva, 2015, 115). As a consequence of factors mentioned above, the country was not enthusiastic to leave the Soviet Union even after the dissolution unlike other post-Soviet states and participated in all integration projects initiated by Russia in the period that began after the disintegration to the day.

2.3.2.2 Establishment of the Union State

Given the general situation in Belarus, it was inevitable that the disintegration of the USSR had dramatic consequences in the country. Accordingly, with the increase in the prices of the raw materials entering the country and the decrease in the traditional markets of the goods manufactured in the country, the country was dragged into the economic downturn. The search for closer political and economic ties with Russia, which was initiated in order to find a solution to these problems, was further enhanced by the victory of pro-Russian Alexander Lukashenko in the first presidential elections.

After the rise to power of Lukashenko Belarus became more effective in championing new economic integrationist deals with Russia (Korosteleva, 2015, 115). Thus, in 1995 Lukashenko and his Russian counterpart Yeltsin signed an “Agreement on a Customs Union” and “Treaty on Friendship, Good Neighborhood and Cooperation”. These agreements were soon followed by the signing of Treaty on the Commonwealth of Russia and Belarus in 1996, the Treaty on the Union of Russia and Belarus in 1997, the Declaration on Further Unification of Russia and Belarus in and the Treaty on Equal Rights of Russian and Belarusian Citizens 1998 and lastly the Treaty on the Creation of the Union State in 1999 (Danilovich, 2006, 160, Korosteleva, 2015, 115). The last treaty signed in 1999, included projections of removal of customs between the two countries and transition to a common budget and common currency

as well as establishment of some political institutions such as a High Council of State, a Parliament and a Council of Ministers (Vieira, 2016, 3).

Nevertheless, despite the enthusiastic rhetoric used by the leaders of both states, it became clear that the implementation of agreed and ratified agreements, as seen in the CIS project, would not be as easy as expected (Balmaceda, 2013, 58). Firstly, the divergence between the parties over the institutional structure of the Union caused great difficulties during the preparation of the Union Treaty. The final point of integration would not have been explicitly set in any document that was signed, and this would cause the parties to follow different paths (Danilovich, 2006, 161). For example, while Belarus sought a rapprochement for economic and financial reasons, Russia was approaching the project almost entirely for geopolitical reasons (Van Herpen, 2014, 199). As another example, in 1999, Lukashenko proposed to immediately merge two countries and introduce the posts of president and vice-president, while the Russian side insisted on the continuation of the bilateral negotiations (Danilovich, 2006, 166). Secondly, significant differences in terms of population, size and economic systems between the two countries made it impossible to implement the articles contained in the treaties (Kembayev, 2009, 96-97). In particular, the divergence between the economic systems of the two countries was causing problems since the Belarusian leadership was reluctant to reform its highly state-run economic system towards market economy and open it to Russian capital (Garbe, Hett, and Lindner, 2011, 196). Third and last, the domestic political problems between the two countries prevented the implementation of the articles of the treaties. The most important problems between the two countries in this period stem from the consolidation of Belarusian authoritarianism and Russia's reaction to this situation (Vieira, 2016, 4). For example, following the arrest of two employees of the Russian news channel ORT who went to Belarus to report on the lack of customs control between Belarus and Lithuania in 1997, Russian side threatened to review the "Treaty on the Commonwealth of Russia and Belarus" and banned Lukashenko from entering Russian territory (Drakokhrust and Furman, 2002, 241).

In the late 90's, the project of Belarus and Russia integration which had a negative outlook due to the factors mentioned above proceeded in a different direction after the appointment of Vladimir Putin as president of the Russian Federation by Boris Yeltsin.

2.3.2.3 Russia-Belarus Integration after Putin

The Russia-Belarus integration project initiated at the beginning of the 90s was a project carried out by Boris Yeltsin's personal endeavors and it was inevitable that the president change had great consequences for the project. As a result of the election of Putin and the pragmatism policy that Russia has started to implement in international relations, the ambiguities in the relations between the two countries since the beginning of the project became more visible (Korosteleva, 2015, 115). During this period, subsidies provided by Russia to Belarus continued, such that Russian energy subsidies were equal to 14 per cent of the Belarusian GDP and Belarus was able to buy Russian oil with advantageous prices, to refine it, and to sell the products on the international market (Van Herpen, 2014, 201). But on the contrary to the Yeltsin era, as a result of pragmatist foreign policy that Russia started to implement after Putin's election Russian authorities expected to harvest tangible economic benefits from this support and to see more clarity in the future of the project (Danilovich, 2006, 167, Korosteleva, 2015, 115). Putin, who began to pursue a more ambitious strategy against Belarus, turned down the proposal made by Lukashenko in 2002 to regard the two states as equal due to the fact that the Belarusian economy was only %3 the size of Russia's (Vieira, 2016; 6, Kembayev, 2009, 118). Putin went further in September 2003 and laid down his conditions for a merger on the model of Anshchluss, where West Germany in 1990 absorbing the six East German Laender, and offered Belarus to join the Russian Federation as six oblast (Trenin, 2011, 46; Baev, 2008, 147). The offer, which is regarded as a threat to Belarus's independence and territorial integrity, has been rejected vehemently and the integration with Russia has begun to be considered as a danger for the first time in the history of Belarus (Vieira, 2016, 6).

The Russian-Belarus integration, which stalled after Belarus rejected the Russian offer, entered an even bigger crisis after steps taken by Lukashenko in order to balance Russia in foreign policy. The first step taken for this purpose was the

resumption of Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) negotiations with the EU. The first step taken by Belarus for this purpose was to restart negotiations on the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with the EU, but Russia's response was to impose a quota on gas in 2002 and suspend gas supply to Belarus in 2004 (Korosteleva, 2015, 115). Few years later due to disputes in the gas and oil trade between the two countries Lukashenko threatened to quit the bilateral project and form instead a Union State with pro-Western president of Ukraine, Viktor Yushchenko (Van Herpen, 2014, 201-202). Belarus, which distanced itself from further integration with Russia, decided to peg its national currency to US dollar in 2007 and boycotted the CSTO summit held in 2010 (Vieira, 2016, 7).

In December 2007, a year before the presidential election in Russia, speculation began to circulate that the two countries would unite under a new constitution and this would have been declared during Putin's visit to Minsk, but the visit ended with only declaratory calls for closer cooperation (Kembayev, 2009, 119-120). As a result of rhetorical support provided by politicians from both countries (Putin, 2015), the initial aspirations for integration were no longer having a place in political agendas of both sides.

2.3.2.4 Evaluation of the Union State of Belarus and Russia

There is a general consensus among scholars that the Belarus-Russian Union State project, launched for the creation of a customs union, a common economic area, monetary union and eventually a federal state, has failed. Some of the reasons of this failure are discussed below.

The first cause of the failure is related to the method used from the very beginning of the integration process. Accordingly, although emphasis is placed on the will of the peoples of Russia and Belarus and the interests of the citizens of the two states in the preamble of the Union Treaty, the priorities of the peoples of the two countries have not been taken into account in terms of political decision-making and democratic participation (Kembayev, 2009, 120). In this sense, it can be said that instead of the "bottom-up" approach based on the will of the people of both countries, the "top-down" method based solely on the presidents' personal political ambitions is

preferred. Vieira (2016, 4-5) argues that the main reason for the preference of this method is the "electoral populism" policy, which is used by leaders of both countries to gain advantage in the electoral process. Wisniewska (2013, 8) agreed with Vieira and writes that the Union State project was in fact superficial political and propaganda action aimed at rescuing the reputation of President Boris Yeltsin, whose popularity in Russia had been weakening. In line with these arguments, Deyermond (2004, 1201) contends that the union has failed to achieve the purpose of its establishment because it does not materially benefit both countries, but maintains its presence in order to increase domestic support for political purposes.

The second cause of the failure is related to the growing divergence between the goals of parties through time. This divergence began at a time when negotiations on the establishment of the union were being conducted. Accordingly, Van Herpen (2014, 198) argues that the Belarussian leader Lukashenko intended to become the new president of the Union State after Yeltsin left his post, while Yeltsin wanted to be remembered as the leader who reunited the former Soviet republics. The divergence became even deeper after Putin's election as president. In this period, Lukashenko defended the idea of the unification of two politically equal countries merge by a supranational legislature, while Putin laid down his conditions for a merger on the model of German Unification and offered Belarus to join the Russian Federation as six oblasts (Trenin, 2011, 46, Baev, 2008, 147).

The third cause of the failure is related to the tremendous economic imbalance between the countries. Vieira (2016, 6) argues that underlying reason for the policy shift after Putin's election was this economic imbalance since Belarus' GDP amounted to only 3% of the size of Russia's. Kembayev (2009, 121) claims that along with the weakness of the economic organs of the Unions State, the economic superiority of Russia prevents the realization of a "union of equals" as envisioned by the Union Treaty. Deyermond (2004, 1998) argues that economic coordination in the Union State has hindered as a result of the inequality in size between the two countries. Vymyatnina and Antonova (2014, 22-23) states that the planned currency union with Russia under the Union State would not be the best or even a feasible option due to the

economic imbalance between the two countries and would even hurt Belarusian economy.

The fourth cause of the failure is related to the inconsistency between the ideas put forward during the establishment of the union state and the policies applied by the leaders on integration. Although the treaty establishing the Union State was signed in January 2000 with the ambition of creating a common political, economic, military and cultural space between Belarus and Russia, it was observed that the project was merely successful in military terms but failed economically and politically (Deyermond, 2004, 1997). Ambrosio (2006, 424) agreed with Deyermond and argued that the Union State has been a success since “it has protected Belarus’s political system against specific pressures and general trends evident in Europe.” Furthermore, Ambrosio (2006, 425) defines the relationship between the two countries as an anti-democratic alliance to protect Belarus from political reforms and made an analogy between the Union State and the "Holy Alliance" formed in 1815 between Austria, Prussia and Russia to protect their conservative governments against the rising tide of liberalism. Vymyatnina and Antonova (2014, 24) argues that there is a trade-off between the two countries; that Russia is selling energy products to Belarus which the country is heavily dependent on, at cheap prices, and that Belarus is supporting Russia in international politics in return. Parallel to the claims of Vymyatnina and Antonova, Jarabik (2009, 2) writes that Belarus supported Russia's "great power" policies in the region in exchange for cheap credit and other economic benefits, and that both states are satisfied with the outcome.

Despite progress in the area of common migration (Vieira, 2016, 7) and common defense (Deyermond, 2004, 1999), the "Russia-Belarus Union" project, which has failed politically and economically for the reasons listed above, is supported by the Russian and Belarusian politicians as a means for popular support especially during election periods. Since the initial integration aspirations were no longer part of either the Russian or the Belarussian leaderships’ political agenda (Vieira, 2016, 7), integration projects are being currently discussed and realized in other formats such as Eurasec and Eurasian Economic Union.

2.3.3. Eurasian Economic Community (Eurasec)

2.3.3.1. Background

As mentioned in the previous chapters, the regional integration initiatives established in the mid-90s has failed as a result of a number of reasons such as the tendency of the elites to maintain their powers (Libman-Vinokurov, 2012a, 875), the inadequacy of Russia to meet the costs of integration, and the fact that the countries of the region perceive Russia as an enemy to their independence processes (Rakhimov, 2010, 97). However, it is suggested that these factors began to decline towards the 2000s and this gave rise to new opportunities for integration in the post-Soviet space (Libman-Vinokurov, 2012b, 157). Thus, the countries of the region which had a skeptical approach to regional cooperation and integration in the years when the CIS was established gained a more pragmatic point of view in the 2000s (Vinokurov, 2013, 16).

On the other hand, the ideological change of Russia, which is the driving force of the process, on regional integration in the framework of CIS has also been effective in this period. For example, in 1996, the Russian government proposed a "multi-speed integration" project with the participation of CIS countries, who expressed their readiness and willingness to integrate (Selivanova, 2014, 157). With this policy shift, the Russian government started making efforts to integrate at least those CIS countries which were willing to retain closer economic and political relations with Russia (Kembayev, 2009, 129). This new approach continued to be implemented during the first presidential term of Putin as well. Instead of the former approach which defined Russia as the leader of the CIS, the new approach that started to be implemented after 2000's favored multi-speed integration among interested post-Soviet states with emphasis on economic pragmatism (Moldashev-Aslam, 2015, 14). In 2011, Putin (2011, 1) published an article in the Russian newspaper *Izvestia* and emphasized the importance of multi-speed integration approach with the statement of "the CIS experience enabled us to launch a many-tiered, multi-speed integration process in the post-Soviet space and to set up much needed institutions ... such as the Eurasian Economic Community".

In this context, the Central Asian states such as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have also showed interest in the Russian proposal, along with Belarus, which was already negotiating the establishment of a union state with Russia in these years.

2.3.3.2. The Establishment of Eurasec

Eurasec's predecessor organization is the Customs Union established by Belarus and Russia in 1995, later joined by Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan (Libman, 2011a, 10). The Customs Union Agreement which was signed after the Treaty on the Economic Union within the CIS framework, failed to meet the expected results. However, in 1996, it became evident that the Customs Union treaty failed because of economic stagnation that started after the collapse of the Soviet Union as well as the unrealistic targets in the treaty. Later, the four countries - the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation together with the Kyrgyz Republic, signed the Treaty on the Deepening of Integration in Economic and Humanitarian Fields in March 1996. The four countries that signed the Treaty declared that they did not plan to abandon or replace the CIS, but instead confirmed "their participation in the CIS and their readiness to carry out integration processes in its framework" in the first article of the Treaty. According to the Treaty the objective of the four countries was to establish "a Community of Integrated States" in the framework of the CIS aimed at "the gradual deepening of the integration in the economics, science, education, culture, social sphere and other fields under the observation of the fundamental principles of international law". The second article of the Treaty included the following declaratory goals of the Community; "(1) improvement of life conditions, protection of human rights and freedoms, the achievement of the social progress; (2) maintenance of the stable democratic development of the states; (3) formation of a single economic space; (4) development of minimal standards of social protection; (5) harmonization of legislation; (6) coordination of foreign policy and ensuring a decent place on the international scene; (7) joint protection of the external borders of the state's parties, struggling of criminality and terrorism".

In February 1999, Tajikistan joined the four countries after the end of its civil war and an Agreement on Customs Union and Common Economic Zone signed by five countries. Although the Agreement was quite an extensive document consisting of 70 articles, it did not contain any deadlines for the achievements of its goals (Kembayev, 2009, 133). The continuous failure of the agreements in order to establish a customs union and a common market in the CIS framework necessitated a new approach and institutional restructuring. As a result of this need, five countries - the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Republic of Belarus, the Russian Federation, the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Tajikistan signed the Treaty on the establishment of the Eurasian Economic Community (Eurasec) in Astana on October 10, 2000. According to Preamble of the Treaty the countries showed their determination to increase the effectiveness of their cooperation in order to develop the processes of integration between them by signing the Treaty. The parliaments of the states have ratified the Treaty and it came into force in May 2001 (Dragneva and Wolczuk, 2013, 19).

Eurasec should not be considered separately from the regional integration efforts that have emerged in the post-Soviet space in the previous years. According to Kembayev (2009, 133), the major objective of the Treaty was to supplement previous agreements. He emphasizes that the second article of the Treaty such as “agreements concluded earlier between the Contracting Parties and the decisions of the integration management organs shall continue to have effect unless they are contrary to this Treaty” establishes the connection between the previous agreements.

2.3.3.3. Institutions of the Eurasec

The supreme institution and highest decision-making body of the Eurasec is the Interstate Council, according to Article 5 of “The Treaty on the Establishment of the Eurasian Economic Community”. Article 5 of the Treaty also includes the main functions of the Council such as to deal with “fundamental issues of the Community relating to the general interests of the state’s parties” and to decide on the strategy, means and prospects for developing integration and to take decisions for implementing the objectives and purposes of Eurasec.

According to the Treaty, the Council meets once a year at the level of heads of state and twice a year at the level of heads of government and adopts all its decisions by unanimous vote. Furthermore, according to the "Rules of Procedure" document, which signed by 5 member states on 31 May 2001 and sets out the order of organizing and holding Interstate Council meetings, the procedures of preparing and taking decisions, any member state may call for extraordinary meetings. According to Article 5 of the Treaty, the meetings are chaired by a representative of the Contracting Party chairing the Interstate Council at such time and according to Article 4, The Chairmanship of the Interstate Council shall be held by rotation in the Russian alphabetical order by each Member-State of the Community for one year term.

Although it is accepted that the decisions of the Council are mandatory for the member states and have to be implemented by each member state (Libman, 2011a, 18), the decisions of the Council have no direct legal power since Article 13 of the Treaty states that “decisions of the Eurasec authorities shall be enforced by the Contracting Parties by passing the required national regulatory legal acts as provided under their national laws”.

As the main executive organ of the Eurasec, the Integration Committee is a permanent body of the Community. According to Article 6 of the Treaty, the Integration Committee is composed of the deputy heads of governments of the contracting parties. Another permanent organ of the Community is Commission of Permanent Representatives which consists of the representatives of the contracting parties appointed by the presidents of states. The Commission is assigned to assist the Committee in its activities by the Treaty.

According to Article 4 of the Treaty, the Committee meets at least once every three months and as in the case of Interstate Council, meetings are presided by rotation in the alphabetical order by each member state of the Community for one year.

Article 6 of the Treaty sets out the tasks of the Committee as; “to ensure coordinated action between the EAEC bodies; to prepare proposals regarding the agendas of meetings of the Interstate Council and the level of participating officials, and prepare also draft resolutions and documents, to prepare proposals regarding

formation of the Eurasec budget and control its implementation and to control the enforcement of resolutions of the Interstate Council.”

The decision-making method of the Integration Committee contains considerable differences from the decision-making methods of the regional integration bodies established before Eurasec. Contrary to the decision-making methods of regional integration bodies established earlier, the Integration Committee takes its decisions with weighted voting principle (Libman, 2011a, 19). According to this system each member country having a quota of votes determined by its share of the Community's budget (Dragneva and Wolczuk, 2013, 19) and Russia obtain 40 votes, Belarus and Kazakhstan 15 votes, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan 7.5 votes. A two thirds majority is required in order for a decision to be passed by the Committee.

Secretariat, which is located in Moscow and Almaty, is the executive body of the Eurasec. Day-to-day activity of the Committee is entrusted to this body with a full-time general secretary appointed for a three-year period who is appointed by the Interstate Council on a proposal by the Integration Committee (Dragneva and Wolczuk, 2013, 19). According to Article 6 of the Treaty, as the chief administrator of the Community, General Secretary can participate in the meetings of both the Interstate Council and the Integration Committee. It is also stated in the same Article that “the Secretariat shall be formed of citizens of the Member-States on quota basis prorated for the respective contributions of the Contracting Parties to the Community Budget, and of persons employed on contract basis”. In order to ensure the independence of the Secretary General and the staff, the Treaty stipulates that employees should not request or receive instructions from any member state or any authority other than the Community.

Article 7 of the Treaty defines the Interparliamentary Assembly (IPA) of Eurasec as “a parliamentary cooperation body within the Eurasec considering issues of harmonization of the national laws of the Contracting Parties and bringing them into conformity with the agreements made in the Eurasec format for the purposes of implementing the tasks of the Community”. It is comprised of delegates from the parliaments of Eurasec member states. According to the “Regulations on the IPA”

document approved by resolution of the Eurasec Interstate Council in May 2002, the contracting parties of the Community has the following numbers of delegates in IPA: Russia – 28 delegates, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan each 14, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan each 7. The decision-making mechanism in the IPA involves weighted voting since Chapter 4 of the Regulations on the IPA includes that IPA adopts resolutions by a qualified, two-thirds majority of votes from the number of the Assembly members present at the meeting, and with respect to procedural questions, by a simple majority of votes. In this regard, the weighting voting system follows the same pattern such as absolute veto of Russia and the requirements of an at least two-country coalition to pass any decision.

According to the Treaty, IPA shall; “(1) develop fundamentals of legislation in the basic spheres of legal relations falling within the competence of the Interstate Council, (2) adopt standard drafts as basis for development of national legal acts, (3) be able to extend recommendations to the Interstate Council, requests and recommendations to the Integration Committee and the parliaments of the Contracting Parties, and submit inquiries to the Community Court.” As in the case of CIS IPA, Eurasec IPA is located in St. Petersburg.

The Community Court is a judicial body of Eurasec which envisaged by the Treaty. According to Article 8 of the Treaty, the Court is entrusted with providing guarantees of uniform enforcement by the member states and considering economic disputes arising between the member states on issues of implementation of decisions of the Eurasec bodies.

As a result of the Agreement between the CIS, CHS and Eurasec Interstate Council, the functions of the Community Court started to be implemented by the CIS Economic Court until the Community Court is fully established (Kembayev, 2009, 145). However, the Community Court was started to be functioning as an independent body of Eurasec since January, 2012 after the Interstate Council of Eurasec adopted “the Statute of the Eurasec Court of Justice” in July, 2010 (Eurasec Today, 2013, 12, Dragneva and Wolczuk, 2014, 10).

According to the Statute of the Community Court issued in April 2003 and approved by the Interstate Council, each member state is represented by two judges who are appointed by the IPA of Eurasec on the proposal of the Interstate Council for a term of six years. The Community Court is seated in Minsk, the Republic of Belarus.

2.3.3.4. Establishment of a Single Economic Space in Eurasec

It is stated in the second article of the “Agreement on Foundation of Eurasian Economic Community” that the main purpose of the Eurasian Economic Community is to create a customs union and then a common economic zone (in other words a single economic space). In this regard, the main purposes of establishing the common economic zone are listed in the third article of the “Agreement on a Customs Union and a Common Economic Zone” signed in 1999 such as; “(1) the effective functioning of the common (internal) market in goods, services, capital and labour; (2) the creation of conditions for the stable development of structural reorganization of the economies of the Parties with a view to improving the living standard of their peoples; (3) the introduction of a coordinated tax, monetary, credit, foreign exchange, financial, trade, customs and tariff policy; (4) the development of unified transport, energy and information systems; and (5) the establishment of a common system of measures for state support of the development of priority sectors of the economy and of cooperation in production and in science and technology.”

As experienced in the European integration, a customs union must first be established for the emergence of a common economic area. In this regard, Article 7 of the Agreement states that “The Common Economic Zone shall be established in stages” and “The first stage shall have as its goal the completion of the establishment of the Customs Union and the Common Customs Zone”. According to Article 21 of the Agreement, participant states agreed to establish the Customs Union as a trade and economic association in conformity with generally recognized international norms and rules. The article also included the components of the Customs Union such as; “(1) a common customs zone; (2) a common tariff; (3) a regime that excludes all tariff and non-tariff restrictions in mutual trade with exceptions provided the Agreement; (4) simplification and subsequent elimination of customs controls along the internal customs borders; (5) uniform mechanisms for regulating the economy and trade, based

on universal market principles of management and on harmonized economic legislation; (6) common governing institutions; and (7) a single customs policy and the application of single customs regimes". In addition, the Treaty expresses that the executive organ of the Customs Union will be the Integration Committee during its formation.

On the other hand, Article 23 of the agreement states that "Parties shall establish time frames for the completion of the establishment of the Customs Union with additional agreements, taking into account generally accepted international norms and rules." In this sense, the process of establishing the Customs Union failed because the Treaty had no deadline for the establishment, nor were there any precise conditions for the implementation of the provisions.

The Agreement of 1999 foresees to advance to the establishment of the Common Economic Zone after the completion of the establishment of the Customs Union. Accordingly, the Article 7 of the Agreement states that "The second stage shall consist of the establishment of the Common Economic Zone, including the formation of a common (internal) market for goods, services, capital and labour, the introduction of a common economic policy and the establishment of a single infrastructure, and the completion of the harmonization of the legislation of the Parties ensuring the operation of the Common Economic Zone." The first Article of the Agreement defined the common economic zone as "the zone consisting of the territory of the Parties in which uniform mechanisms operate for regulating the economy, based on market principles and the application of harmonized legal norms, there is a single infrastructure, and a coordinated tax, monetary, credit, foreign exchange, financial, trade and customs policy applies, ensuring free movement of goods, services, capital and labour." The Article 4 included the most important principles in establishing the Common Economic Zone as non-discrimination, mutual advantage; and mutual assistance, good will, equal rights, responsibility for obligations assumed, and transparency.

However, Article 7 of the Agreement also states that "The transition from stage to stage shall depend on the actual achievement of the specific objectives of this Agreement and on the fulfilment by the Parties of the obligations they have assumed."

and as in the case of the Customs Union process, it is thought that the absence of a clear deadline and precise conditions for the implementation of the provisions of the Agreement hampered the establishment of the Common Economic Zone. It took a long time for the provisions of the agreement to be fulfilled so that the Customs Union between Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia in 2010, and the establishment of the Single Economic Space between the same countries in 2012 have fulfilled the provisions of the treaty.

2.3.3.5. Eurasec and Eurasian Integration

Eurasec, which was established in 2000 in order to transform the Customs Union project of 1995, was initiated within the CIS as a more realistic and functional organization, officially dissolved on 1 January 2015 concurrently with the establishment of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) (Dragneva and Wolczuk, 2013, 141, Vinokurov, 2017, 56). However, despite the fact that it officially ceased to exist, the debate among scholars on the significance of the Community in terms of Eurasian integration is ongoing.

According to Kembayev (2009, 135), while the establishing agreements of CIS do not include any provisions on the legal status of the Commonwealth, the first article of the Eurasec Treaty explicitly provided that the contracting parties of the Treaty establishes an international organization. He also writes that the Community has some elements of supranationalism.

Libman (2010, 11) emphasized the promising institutional features of Eurasec. He stated that, unlike the consensus-based CIS, the Community introduced a weighted voting and financing system and this has offered a new approach to solving one of the key problems of Eurasian regionalism; the dominance of Russia. Another difference between the Community and the Commonwealth stems from the conditions of their establishment. According to Libman (2011, 10), while the Commonwealth has its origins directly in the collapse of the USSR, the Community was established by independent states as a regional integration project. In parallel to Libman's view, Glazyev and Tkachuk (2015, 67) praise the Community as the first example of

Eurasian integration based on equality among partners, international law and respect for democratic norms.

Another difference in the conditions of establishment was due to the economic situations of the countries. Different than the period of establishment of the CIS, which the participants of the Treaty was suffering under devastating results of the dissolution, the post-Soviet economies started to grow rapidly in 2000's and this had positive effects on the interaction between countries of the region (Kembayev, 2009, 167). Libman (2011, 11) writes that the Community had a clear focus on the economic agenda from the beginning while the CIS had also strong political and military goals along with its economic objectives. In parallel to Libman's views, Dragneva and Wolczuk (2013, 19) writes that one of the key objectives of the Community was integrating into the world economy and the international trade system, namely the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Glazyev and Tkachuk (2015, 66) defines the Community as the parent organization of post-Soviet regionalism projects and the first successful example of project-based approach in the history of the region. Similarly, Roberts and Moshes (2015, 3) praises the Community for providing a useful forum to push for the next stage of integration. Vinokurov (2017, 56) argues that more than a hundred agreements were signed under the aegis of the Community and it was an institutional springboard for other initiatives. Dragneva and Wolczuk (2014, 10) claims that one of the most important institutional development of the post-Soviet regionalism was the establishment of the Court of the Eurasian Economic Community.

In addition to positive views on the importance of the Community, there are negative views and criticisms on the significance of Eurasec regarding post-Soviet regional integration. For example, Kubicek (2009, 247) writes that much of the stated agenda of the Community was similar to the original goals of the CIS such as the creation of a CU, a unified energy market and standardized currency regulation and as in the case of the CIS, its goals were more declaratory than actually implemented. Erokhin (2014, 408) argues that the Community does not have much potential since it does not have much room to expand in Europe and as a result of its high dependence

on Russia, it cannot rival the wealth of a single EU country, Germany. In parallel to these views, Weitz (2014, 32) writes that since its efforts have failed to create effective multinational regulatory bodies, the Eurasec has proven to be an ineffective institution. Similarly, Libman (2011, 21-22) argues that although the Eurasec achieved more than the CIS in terms of economic integration, most of its declaratory targets turned out to be unrealistic and were finally abandoned. The most important reason of this failure according to Kembayev (2009, 168) was the enormous heterogeneity of its members which originated from different levels of per capita GDP of the states and incompatible trading regimes and this heterogeneity was resulted with the lack of political commitment among members of the Community for regional trade liberalization. In parallel to this view, Hett and Szkola (2015, 4) argues that the Eurasec failed as a result of different interests and divergent positions of its member states.

Kembayev (2009, 168-169) criticizes the decision-making procedures of the Community and writes that although the goals of the EU were taken as an example in the establishment phase, the institutional architecture of Eurasec was not designed to allow the emergence of supranational institutions. In this sense, contrary to the EU example, all the powers in the decision-making process of Eurasec were given to the Interstate Council and the Integration Committee was designed as an agency working under the Council, to prevent the emergence of the driving force necessary for the progress of integration. In parallel with these views, Libman (2011, 34-35) writes that as in the case of the CIS, elements of the supranationality are extremely weak in Eurasec since the Community was run by the governments and their agencies and as a result of this institutional architecture non-governmental agencies have no access to the Community.

As a result of the above-mentioned reasons, the strategy of integration at multi speeds and at multi levels had started, and as a result of this strategy, three members of the union; Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia, decided to establish a CU in 2007. Following the establishment of the ECU in 2011 and the establishment of the EAEU in 2015, the Eurasec officially ceased to exist.

CHAPTER 3

ADVANCED FORMS OF INTEGRATION IN THE POST-SOVIET SPACE (FROM 2007 TO PRESENT)

3.1. Background

As mentioned in the previous chapters, the post-Soviet integration has emerged to overcome the possible negative consequences of the disintegration of the Soviet Union, and the existence of the USSR has been formally lifted by the CIS treaty signed by the newly independent states of the former USSR. After the establishment of the CIS, many treaties were signed by the post-Soviet states in different years for the formation of a common customs union and a single economic space, but these treaties remained mere ink-on-paper and did not enter into force. As a consequence of this failure, instead of covering all of the region's states, a strategy of integration at different speeds and levels has begun to be implemented between countries that are only volunteering and interested in integration. Following the start of this new strategy, Eurasec was first established as a basic level integration institution, followed by the advanced forms of integration institutions such as Eurasian Customs Union in 2010, Single Economic Space in 2012 and finally the Eurasian Economic Union in 2015.

Nevertheless, the idea of establishing a union in Eurasia between the countries of the region is not new. It was Kazakhstan's president, Nursultan Nazarbaev, who first called for the creation of a fully-fledged Eurasian Union of States in early 1994 as an equivalent of the EU (Dragneva and Wolczuk, 2013, 17). In October of the same year, Nazarbaev prepared a draft document on the establishment of the union and presented it to the CIS heads of states. In the draft paper, Nazarbaev specified four basic principles for the project in order to facilitate economic relations between former Soviet states and to establish stability in the region such as (1) economic pragmatism,

(2) voluntarily nature, (3) common efforts to maintain stability in the region and (4) multi-speed integration (Moldashev, 2015, 2). Although he began to position himself as the father of the integration project and see the project as his personal victory, his draft document awoke no interest in the region at the time (Hett-Szkola, 2015, 11).

The reluctant position of the regional states, especially Russia's, towards Nazarbaev's proposal had been changed after the recurrent failure of regional integration projects established after the CIS. The main reason for this policy shift was the desire shared by each state of the region to increase the competitiveness of post-Soviet countries which were slow to adapt to the world economy, particularly in trade and investment (Robert-Moshes, 2015, 3). Another important factor is the reluctance of the post-Soviet states to transfer their sovereignty, which they intend to protect intensively in the early periods of integration, to a supranational institution (Glazyev and Tkachuk 2015, 61). The shift on the Russian stance on regional integration has occurred significantly after Putin's election as president and the Russian foreign policy has reconciled with Nazarbaev's proposal in the beginning of 2000s (Moldashev-Aslam, 2015, 15). According to Libman (2011b, 1335) there are three reasons for this change such as the Russian government was able to pay more attention to regional integration as of early 2000's since it had reduced the threat from alternative power centers within Russia, the post-Soviet region was the best place to start restoring its influence in international affairs and the public support in Russia for improving its influence within neighboring states. After this policy shift, Russia has started to use the regional integration concept as its official rhetoric and developed a concept that combines the post-Soviet 'vector' of integration with the 'Western' and 'Eastern' vectors (Libman-Vinokurov, 2012, 205). In his seminal article published in the Russian newspaper *Izvestiya* on 3 October 2011, Putin proposed setting up a harmonized community of economies stretching from Lisbon to Vladivostok and 'from the Atlantic to the Pacific'. The main reason for this policy shift is the worldwide increase in oil prices in the early 2000s. As a result of increased state revenues for Russia generated by high energy prices, Russian policy makers chose to forge its own integration project instead of cooperating with Western partners and worked to re-establish its influence in the region for this purpose (Bordachev-Skriba, 2014, 17-18).

3.2. Eurasian Customs Union

One of the most important consequences of the disintegration of the USSR, as mentioned in previous chapters, was the fragmentation of the customs union and common economic space between the Soviet republics. For this reason, the most important goal of the integration efforts that emerged after the disintegration was on the reconstruction of the fragmented economic unity. The first initiative to rebuild the fragmented economic union was the customs union established between Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia in January 1995. However, the initiative remained declaratory with no change to the ineffective economic institutions of CIS and the customs union failed due to the fragmented and weak legal framework (Dragneva and Wolczuk, 2012, 3-4, 2013, 63).

As a result of multispeed and multi-level integration policies that started to be implemented by Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia after the failure of initiatives to form an economic union, the dialogues were restarted in 2006 between these three states. In 2007 the decision was taken by these states on Eurasec Intergovernmental Council summit in Dushanbe to establish a trilateral customs union, Eurasian Customs Union (ECU) in order to coordinate their policies regarding economy, currency and migration (Weitz, 2014, 32). The ECU was established as part of the Eurasec (Carneiro, 2013, 1) and as a result of this it inherited the agreements signed within Eurasec and its organizational structure was designed in accordance with the organizational structure of Eurasec (Dragneva and Wolczuk, 2013, 38). Accordingly, from 2007 until 2011, Interstate Council of Eurasec was appointed as highest organ and a reduced format of Court of Eurasec was appointed as the dispute settlement authority of the ECU. The most important institutional development that emerged in this period was the establishment of the Commission of the Customs Union which was set up by a separate treaty, the Treaty on the Commission of the Customs Union (Dragneva and Wolczuk, 2013, 38). The Commission was established as the permanent executive and regulatory body of the ECU. The Treaty defined the main task of the Commission as to provide the conditions for operation and development of the ECU. According to Article 4 of the Treaty, each member state had one representative and these representatives should work in the Commission on a permanent basis. The most important feature of the

Commission was its supranational nature. According to this, parties of the Treaty surrendered a certain degree of their authority on customs issues to the Commission and resolutions that adopted by the Commission had an obligatory nature for the member states. The Treaty distributed the votes of the member states in the Commission as Belarus 21.5, Kazakhstan 21.5 and Russian Federation 57 and the funding of the Commission's budget was shared by the Interstate Council of Eurasec, the supreme body of the institution, in accordance with the agreed proportions of the parties.

The implementation of the Treaty comprised two stages. The first stage began when the Commission held its first meeting in February 2009 and agreed a "Common External Tariff" (CET) (Hartwell, 2013, 412). The CET came into force on 1 January 2010 and a single external tariff for third countries started to apply for the first time since 1991 (Wisniewska, 2013, 11). The CET prepared based on external tariffs applied by Russia on trade with third countries (Shumylo-Tapiola, 2012, 11). As a result of this Russia changed only few tariff lines after the application of the CET but approximately 60 per cent of articles were affected for Kazakhstan (Dragneva and Wolczuk, 2013, 63). The second stage began when Commission prepared the draft document of the "Agreement Concerning Customs Code of the Customs Union" in November 2009 in Minsk. The Interstate Council of Eurasec adopted the Customs Code in July 2010. The Code was concerning on the regulation of customs procedures and the control and payments for goods crossing over the external borders of the customs union (Shumylo-Tapiola, 2012, 12). The Code also harmonized the procedures and non-tariff regulations implemented on external customs by each state (Dragneva and Wolczuk, 2013, 64). The Code entered into force in 2010 and started to be implemented on 1 July 2010 between Russia and Kazakhstan and on Belarus on 6 July 2010 (Wisniewska, 2013, 11). After the implementation of the Code, the control and internal duties between member states on border customs was abolished in July 2011 in order to create free movement of goods (Dragneva and Wolczuk, 2013, 22, Weitz, 2014, 32).

The ECU, which defined a common customs code and customs tariff, transferred the authority on external trade to a supranational institution and removed the internal customs controls between the member states, is regarded as successful in terms of the period in force (Mktrchyan, 2013, 32). The ECU was replaced by another integration institution when the three states agreed to establish the Single Economic Space between 2012 and 2015 (Movchan and Emerson, 2018, 1). In the meantime, with the decision taken by the presidents of the three ECU member countries, all responsibilities of the Customs Union Commission were transferred to a new body, the Eurasian Economic Commission (EAEC) (Dragneva and Wolczuk, 2013, 25).

3.3. Single Economic Space

The idea of establishing a common economic zone between emerging states following the collapse of the Soviet Union has been on the agenda of the post-Soviet states since the early 90s. For this purpose, the Eurasec, which is aimed to form a single economic space in post-Soviet space, was established in 1999 with the agreement signed by Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Four years later, in 2003, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia and Ukraine declared their intentions to form a SES and signed an agreement at a meeting in Astana, however, developments in Ukraine, especially the Orange Revolution, began to slow down the process and finally the project was shelved (Dragneva and Wolczuk, 2013, 24). After this unsuccessful attempt, the efforts for the establishment of SES were carried out within the institutional framework of Eurasec.

Encouraged by the successful efforts to establish the ECU in the framework of Eurasec, in Minsk on 27 November 2009, the presidents of the three states passed a resolution to move to higher level of integration by establishing the SES between 1 January 2012 and the end of 2015 (Podberezkina and Podberezkin, 2014, 54). Following documents were also signed by the presidents in 18 November 2011; the Treaty of Eurasian Economic Commission, the Regulation on Eurasian Economic Commission (EAEC) and the Declaration on Eurasian Economic Integration, which foresaw foundation of Eurasian Economic Union in 2015 (Wisniewska, 2013, 11-12). Thus, with the entry into force of the treaties that establishes the SES in 1 January 2012, the ECU has been replaced by SES and in 1 February 2012 all the powers and

responsibilities of the Customs Union Commission transferred to the Eurasian Economic Commission (Vymyatnina and Antonova, 2014, 3-4). The EAEC also took over the functions of the Eurasec Integration Committee concerning the creation of the SES (Glazyev and Tkachuk, 2014, 65).

The main goals of the SES were outlined in the founding documents as:

- Ensuring the four freedoms; free movement of goods, services, labour and capital
- Improving the living standards of people of the members by creating conditions for stable and sustainable economic progress
- Applying harmonized policies on finance, taxation, trade, customs and tariffs
- Improving the infrastructure of transport, energy and information technologies for implementation of common policies
- Assisting industrial, research and technological sectors (Glazyev and Tkachuk, 2014, 63, Podberezkina and Podberezkin, 2014, 54).

3.4. Eurasian Economic Commission (EAEC)

As the permanent regulatory body of the integration process, the EAEC was established in 18 November 2011 with the signing of the “Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Commission” by the leaders of the member countries of the ECU. The headquarter of the institution is in Moscow. The EAEC replaced the ECU Commission and began to carry out its operations in February 1, 2012. The Treaty also established the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council and all responsibilities and powers of Interstate Council of Eurasec were transferred to this institution by the date of 18 November 2011.

As the first supranational institution to appear in almost 25 years of post-Soviet integration (Libman and Vinokurov, 2012, 3, Roberts and Moshes, 2015, 6), the EAEC has a two-tiered structure and consists of the Council and the Collegium which work in accordance with the EAEC Rules of Procedure (Glazyev and Tkachuk, 2014, 66, Dragneva and Wolczuk, 2013, 25). One of the significant changes that came with the

establishment of the Commission is the end of the treaty-based approach when the decisions of the integration institutions enter into force. As a result of having supranational powers, decisions which have been finally accepted by both tiers of the Commission, directly become part of legal documents of the ECU and SES, without any ratification of parties (Wisniewska, 2013, 24).

3.4.1 Institutional Framework of the Commission

As the principal decision-making body of the EAEC, the Council consists of one deputy prime minister of each participant states. As a result of being the political body of the EAEC, the Council is charged with missions such as harmonizing the interests of member states and supervising the Commission's efforts in order to decide on the general directions of its operations.

As a consequence of being the political tier of the Commission, the Council passes its decisions by consensus. In cases where the members cannot reach the consensus the issues are forwarded to the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council and are resolved by the presidents of each state (Wisniewska, 2013, 23).

The lower tier of the Commission is the Collegium, or the Board. As the permanent executive body of the Commission, the Board consists of three commissioners from each state (Dragneva and Wolczuk, 2013, 25) who are appointed for four years (Wisniewska, 2013, 23). The Board, formed by taking the structure of the Commission of the European Union as an example, is organized in 23 different departments responsible for different fields.

As a result of being a supranational institution which modeled as the EU's Commission, officials of the Board are assigned to only executive missions and are not merely representatives of their states (Libman and Vinokurov, 2012b, 3) but are expected to reflect the interest of the organization as a whole (Glazyev and Tkachuk, 2014, 67). Another element that emphasizes the supranational character of the Board is its decision making method. Contrary to the decision-making method of the Council, the Board takes decisions by two thirds majority of the votes (Kirkham, 2016, 117). As a consequence of "one country- one vote" principal adopted by the founding treaty, for the first time in the regional integration structures in post-Soviet space, a country

could be outvoted by other members (Dragneva and Wolczuk, 2014, 12). Thus, the principle of proportional voting with the contribution to the budget, used since the establishment of ECU, has been abandoned and the rule has been adopted that all members have equal voting rights (Glazyev and Tkachuk, 2014, 67).

According to the article 133 of the Regulations on the EAEC, the duties of the Board are executing the decisions of the Supreme Council and other supreme and executive bodies of the EAEU, giving recommendations to the Council and monitoring the implementation of EAEU agreements. Even though the Board is designed and established in order to ensure and enforce the implementation of the law of integration process, it does not truly have supranational powers since the political tier of the EAEC, the Council has the power to revoke or change decisions taken by the Board (Kembayev, 2016, 187).

3.5. Eurasian Economic Union

The historical roots of the EAEU date back to the years in which Nursultan Nazarbaev proposed the idea of establishing a union of Eurasian states in 1994 at the Lomonosov Moscow State University (Glazyev and Tkachuk; 2014, 62). The main motivation for Nazarbaev to make this proposal was the ideas of Lev Gumilev, the well-known ideologist of the Eurasian school, about the unity of the geographic and cultural-historical ties of the people living in the vast lands of North and Central Eurasia (Sakwa, 2014, 18-19).

After the ECU, which was established by the treaty signed in 2007 and became operational in 2010, the leaders of the three member countries signed a Declaration on Eurasian Economic Union in order to express their desire for further integration. As a result of this declaration, the SEC was established in 2012, and on May 29, 2014, the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union was signed by three leaders at the session of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council held in Astana (EAEU Commission, 2015, 30). The EAEU began fully operational since January 1, 2015. Thus, the process for the establishment of EAEU, the last step of the three-stage process, was completed (Roberts and Moshes, 2015, 2). However, rather than a new project, the EAEU is considered as the continuation of previous integration efforts such as Eurasec (Gatev

and Diesen, 2017, 136-137). As a result of this, the legal entity of the Eurasec ceased to exist with the establishment of the EAEU (Vinokurov, 2017, 56). Two more countries, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan, became full-fledged members of the Union after their parliaments ratified the EAEU Treaty in January and May 2015, respectively. A year later, in 2016, an agreement was signed by the member states to create a common market for pharmaceuticals and medicinal products and it began operational in May 2017 (EAEC, 2017, 9). Next phase of the integration was the preparation of a new customs code. In April 2017, “The Treaty on the Customs Code of the Eurasian Economic Union” was signed by the member states in order to improve customs regulation and ensure a balance of interests between state bodies and the business community (EAEC, 2017, 9). The new Customs Code began to operate the customs procedures in the EAEU on January 1, 2018.

While the official statement for the establishment of the EAEU was comprehensively upgrading, raising the competitiveness of and cooperation between the national economies, and promoting stable development for raising the living standards of the nations of the member states (EAEU, 2015), the leaders of the founding states of the EAEU made divergent statements about the Union. For example, Nazarbaev emphasized the significance of the EAEU as an instrument to boost economic competitiveness throughout the region (Nazarbaev, 2014). Putin, president of Russian Federation, stressed the importance of the project for the modernization of economies of the member states (Putin, 2014). Lastly Lukashenko, president of Belarus, emphasized the connecting potential of the project in order to build a “greater Europe”, that stretching from Lisbon to Vladivostok” (Lukashenko, 2014).

3.5.1 Institutional Framework of the EAEU

According to the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union (TEAEU), supreme bodies of the EAEU consist of two institutions, the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council (SEAEC) and the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council (EAIC).

The highest supreme body of the EAEU is SEAEC. In accordance with the provisions of the TEAEU, the Council consists of the heads of the member states and meets at least once a year to adopt decisions. At the request of any member state or the

Chairman of the Council, extraordinary meetings can be held to resolve the Union's urgent problems. The Supreme Council adopts its decisions and dispositions by consensus. Some of the powers of the Supreme Council are determining the strategy and directions of the Union, appointing judges of the Court of the Union, deciding on negotiations with a third party on behalf of the Union, making decisions on issues that no consensus was reached on lower bodies of the Union etc.

The second supreme unit of the EAEU, EAIC comprised of the heads of government of the member states. According to the TEAEU, EAIC meets whenever it is necessary but at least twice a year. The Intergovernmental Council adopts its decisions by consensus. According to the TEAEU, it exercises its powers in areas such as ensuring implementation of the Treaty, making decisions on any issues for which no consensus was reached in the meetings of the Council of the Commission, approving the drafts of the budget of the Union etc.

The Eurasian Economic Commission (EAEC) was established as the executive body of the Union in 2011 started its work in 2012. The organizational structure and duties of the Commission will not be repeated in this section since it has already been mentioned in the SES section.

As the dispute settlement body of the Union, the Court of the EAEU was established and became operative in 2015. The Court is a relatively new institution since the participant states of the Union decided not to reform the Court of Eurasec but to establish an entirely new body (Diyachenko and Entin, 2017, 54). The Court comprises of two judges from each member states. With the proposal of the participant states, SEAEC appoints the judges for a term of nine years.

The Court is authorized to ensuring the uniform application of the TEAEU, international treaties signed in the framework of EAEU, other treaties concluded with the third parties, and decisions adopted by bodies of the EAEU. According to the basic regulatory document of the Court, the Statue of the EAEU Court, business entities can also apply to the Court.

It is obvious that, although the institutional design of the EAEU has similar characteristics with the regional integration organizations established in the region in the past, it differs from previous experiences at some points. According to Kazharski (2012, 1) the EAEU shows certain signs of operational supranationalism unlike all previous regional initiatives emerged in the region. Similarly, Kembayev (2014, 29) notes that especially the economic dimension of the EAEU has some elements of supranationalism.

3.5.2. Enlargement Prospect of the EAEU

As mentioned in the previous sections, the EAEU was established after the Treaty which signed by Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia came into force in the first day of January, 2015. Soon after, the international community witnessed the accession of Armenia and Kyrgyzstan to the EAEU. Thus, as of 2018, the EAEU is composed of five members. However, due to the enthusiastic declarations made by the leaders on accession of CIS states that are not members of the EAEU and the articles included in the founding documents of the union, it is considered that the union has a vision of enlargement.

International activities of the EAEU with regional associations, international organizations and governments of countries are performed by its supreme and executive bodies. The formats of interaction vary, such as signing a memorandum of understanding and deepening cooperation or making agreements for establishment of an FTA.

To date, the bodies of the EAEU interacted with the CIS members, states from the Asia-Pacific region and other international associations in order to promote international cooperation along and beyond Eurasian space.

3.5.2.1. The CIS Countries

The CIS countries have diverged in different ways due to their economic, social and political conditions. As a result of these conditions, while the Baltic States changed their direction to the European Union and then became a member of the union, other CIS member states in the European continent such as Ukraine and Moldova conducted negotiations on entry into the European Union. On the other hand, the Central Asian

states have welcomed the integration projects initiated by Russia, albeit at different levels, because of their landlocked geographical position and the intensity of their economic relations with Russia.

3.5.2.2. Ukraine

Due to its geographical location, economic size and its connection to the European Union market, Ukraine has always been regarded as one of the most important countries for the success of the ongoing integration projects (Dragneva and Wolczuk, 2013, 181). However, Ukraine has started to pursue an anti-Russian policy in the international arena due to the events that began in 2014 as a result of the cancellation of long-term negotiations with the EU by the then pro-Russian President, Victor Yanukovich. The process that began as a result of these events was further exacerbated by the annexation of Crimea by Russia from Ukraine and the beginning of pro-Russian separatist movements in the east of Ukraine. For these reasons, Ukraine is not expected to participate in a short-term regional integration project driven by Russia.

3.5.2.3. Moldova

Another state which is a member of the CIS and located in the European continent is Moldova. As a landlocked country located between Romania and Ukraine, its economy is structurally dependent on Russian natural gas resources, since the Russian energy company, Gazprom, owns a 50 percent share of the Moldovagas Company (Parmentier; 2014, 47). Furthermore, Glazyev and Tkachuk (2015, 79) argue that Moldavia's choice to become a member of the ECU and CES will ensure the economic development of the country since it will gain access to the less competitive markets of Belarus and Russia. However, a Moldovan economist, Prohnych (2012, 9), argues that Moldova's participation in the ECU will increase production costs and the competitiveness of Moldova's exports will worsen.

Under the light of these assessments, it is considered that the country has to make a choice among the EU and Russian integration projects. Although the Association Agreement signed between the EU and Moldova in 2013 proved that Moldova would follow a path towards the EU, Moldova did not close its doors

completely to the Eurasian integration. Moldova's pro-EU policy was abandoned after Igor Dodon was elected President in 2017. He declared that the agreement signed with the EU in 2014 did not provide the expected economic impact, therefore the agreement would be canceled and an application would be made to join the EAEU. After these declarations, a Memorandum of Cooperation was signed between Moldova and EAEU in 2017 and in accordance with Moldova's request; this country was granted observer status in the EAEU which is the first step towards the country becoming part of the Union.

3.5.2.4. Georgia

Georgia located in the Caucasus, has a great geostrategic importance both for Russia and for the objectives of the EAEU. The cooperation between Georgia and EAEU is of great importance both for providing Union's land connection to Armenia and for strengthening the relations the Union with Azerbaijan and Iran, which are rich in oil and natural gas (Gordadze, 2014, 56).

The relations between Russia and Georgia have always been problematic throughout history. Among the countries that gained independence after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Georgia was considered the country that expressed the idea of independence the most (Kakachia, 2010, 88). It is considered that the diplomatic crises between Georgia and Russia, which emerged from the 1800s to the present and resulted in annexation and war in some periods, are effective in the formation of this identity and national consciousness. Consequently, this situation led Georgia to pursue a pro-Western and pro-European foreign policy, and consequently worsened its relations with Russia. The latest crisis that emerged in 2008 between the two countries and led to war has resulted in Russia's occupation of Georgia's South Ossetia and Abkhazia regions. In response to this occupation, the Eastern Partnership Initiative led by Sweden and Poland in 2009 was welcomed by Georgia, and this process came to an end by signing an Association Agreement (AA) Georgia and the EU in 2014 (Tsereteli, 2014, 133).

Saakashvili, who took office as a result of the Rose Revolution in 2003 and followed an anti-Russian and pro-Western policy during his term in office, lose his

seat in the 2013 presidential elections and left the Presidency. Presidents and politicians who took office after this date have made different statements about regional integration projects led by Russia. Ivanishvili, then Prime Minister of Georgia, in his interview with Radio Free Europe on September 4, 2013, emphasized the importance of the Russian market for the Georgian economy and stated that his country could become a member of EAEU if it did not contradict Georgia's integration into the European Union and NATO (Interview: Georgian PM Still Aiming For EU, 2014). Although Saakashvili's successors had abandoned his strict anti-Russian policies, the country still refrains from the integration projects in which Russia is involved, due to the continuing impact of the war in 2008 (Lukyanov, 2015, 298). Despite positive statements made by incumbents of Georgia, the country maintained its pro-EU and pro-NATO stance by signing an AA and a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) in 2014.

Consequently, since the AA and DCFTA is incompatible with the provisions of the ECU (Libman, 2015, 11) and the EU officials declared that countries engaged in the ECU could not sign a DCFTA or an AA (Tsereteli, 2014, 133-134), it is not expected that Georgia will be a participant of the EAEU in the near future.

3.5.2.5. Azerbaijan

Throughout history, Azerbaijan has been an important state for regional actors due to its rich energy reserves and geostrategic location. The country is of great importance for Russia not only because of its geostrategic location that connects the EAEU to Iran and India, but also it is an important alternative energy supplier through the route from the Caspian Sea to markets of Europe (Gordadze, 2014, 56). For this reason, Russia has put intense pressure on Azerbaijan to participate in different integration projects under its leadership. On the other hand, because of the free movement of labor which is an element of economic integration, it is considered as an advantage for Azerbaijan that 2 million Azerbaijani guest workers who are currently working illegally in Russia would obtain legal work permits (Cornell, 2014, 145). In addition, the possibility of an increase in trade turnover due to the decrease in customs duties and removal of non-tariff barriers is considered as another advantage for Azerbaijan (CESD Report, 2013, 3).

Despite aforementioned advantages, since its independence, Azerbaijan has pursued a policy of not participating in regional integration projects led by Russia. There are different reasons for this situation. First of all, Azerbaijan considers the organizations established under the leadership of Russia as an effort to revive the Soviet Union (Cornell, 2014, 147). Second, it is argued that Azerbaijan does not prefer to participate in a regional integration project with countries that recognize the Armenian position on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (Laurelle, 2012, 11). Third, among the objectives of the EAEU is the conduct of a uniform energy policy and it is claimed that Azerbaijan, which has so far carried its own policy to meet the EU's energy demand, does not want to lose its independence on this issue (Bayramov, 2013, 15). As a result, instead of joining the organizations established under the leadership of Russia, Azerbaijan chose to maintain a balanced official rhetoric between the two power blocs. Moreover Azerbaijan, along with Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, was one of the main components of GUAM: Organization for Democracy and Economic Development, which was allegedly designed to limit Russia's influence in the region (Moldashev, 2015, 3). The organization was founded in 1997 as an anti-Russian coalition with little economic grounding and political agenda (Vymyatnina and Antonova, 2013, 13-14). While the organization was accused by Russia for seeking to counter to the CIS, GUAM members denied the accusation (Hancock and Libman, 2014, 7).

In recent years Azerbaijani diplomats and politicians made different statements on the issue. In 2014, Minister of Economy of Azerbaijan Shahin Mustafayev stated that *“Azerbaijan is not considering the possibility of joining various unions, be it the Eurasian Economic Union or the European Union, since these projects do not only have economic components but also a political implication”* (Azerbaijan not planning to join, 2014). Two years later, in 2016, Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan Elmar Mammadyarov said to the press that Azerbaijan did not reject the possibility of its accession to the EAEU (Godjaev, 2018). On the other hand, Armenian Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan stated in 2018 that:

"Azerbaijan is a country that is blocking Armenia today, adopting unilateral measures against Armenia, and Baku is pursuing a policy that is not aimed at

contributing to any processes of interaction, creating an atmosphere of trust, or establishing human contacts.” (Armenia is against; 2018).

For these reasons, especially as a result of the unsolved conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh between Azerbaijan and Armenia, it is considered that the participation of Azerbaijan in the EAEU is not probable in the short term.

3.5.2.6. Central Asian States

Central Asia, as a region connecting Asia to Europe through the ancient Silk Road, was of great importance both geographically, geopolitically and economically throughout history. The importance of the region continued in the period when it was occupied by the Russian Empire and later became part of the Soviet Union. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, five countries, namely Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, gained their independence. Kazakhstan is one of the founding states of EAEU and Kyrgyzstan has joined the Union later. In terms of the EAEU project, which started out with the vision of bringing countries from both continents together, the inclusion of other post-Soviet states in Central Asia is considered to be of great importance in many respects.

First of all, the border of the Central Asian countries with the Asia-Pacific region is important because of the potential of ECU member countries to benefit from the economic development in this region (Dragneva and Wolczuk, 2013, 104). In particular, its geographical proximity to China makes the Central Asian states a key player for the EAEU. The importance of the region for EAEU reached its peak in May 2015 with a joint statement by China and Russia on the coordination of EAEU and One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative (Breitmaier, 2016, 2). Second, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Central Asia has become one of the main sources of the migrant workers needed by the growing Russian economy. With the help of factors such as existing cultural and historical ties, knowledge of Russian language and presence of ethnic networks in Russia, migration of workers flows from Central Asian states to Russia even continued through the 2008-2009 global economic crisis (Vinokurov and Libman, 2012, 216-217). Finally, the region is important for the implementation of the EAEU's common regional security policies. Central Asia was perceived by Russia as a source of illegal immigration, Islamic terrorism and drug

trafficking (Samokhalov, 2016, 91). On the other hand, even Kyrgyzstan, one of the countries in the region which is a member of the EAEU, is unable to secure its borders (Dragneva and Wolczuk, 2014, 14). As a result of the poorly defined borders inherited from the Soviet Union, even the most ordinary events, such as a cow that violates the borders, can cause serious diplomatic conflicts among Central Asian countries (Vinokurov and Libman, 2012, 224-225). It is considered that these problems can be solved without conflict by the participation of Central Asian countries in the EAEU. Thus, the EAEU and especially Russia are interested in encouraging the Central Asian states to join the EAEU in order to prevent spreading the social unrest and turmoil that is frequently encountered in Central Asian states to other countries of Eurasia (Dragneva and Wolczuk, 2013, 104).

On the other hand, from the point of view of Central Asian states, there are different opinions among the scholars regarding the participation of the Central Asian states in the EAEU. For example, Vinokurov and Libman (2012, 221) highlights the landlocked nature of the Central Asian states and high interdependencies among them and argues that states of the region are destined to cooperate with other parts of Eurasia to overcome its problems. Similarly, Laurelle (2012, 11) points out the current political and economic deadlock that pushes all Central Asian states into a "no other choice" strategy, that forces countries to participate in Russian-led regional integration projects. Jenish (2013, 21), who emphasizes the importance of trading with EAEU countries for Central Asian countries, argues that every 1% trade with Russia will lead to an increase of 0.07% in the growth of national economies. On the contrary to these opinions, Jacobsen (2014, Russia's EAEU) stresses out that there is no potential gain for Central Asian states in participating in EAEU as a result of long lasting Russian domination in the region.

As a result of the aforementioned factors, Central Asian states displayed different attitudes about the EAEU due to their political, economic and geopolitical positions. It is considered that Central Asian countries can be divided into two groups as supporters of integration and those who oppose the idea of integration. In this sense, the group consisting of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are the countries

supporting the integration. On the other hand, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan were historically suspicious of Russian-led regional integration projects (Starr, 2014, 156).

There are mainly two reasons why Tajikistan has a supportive stance for integration. First, the country has a weak and undeveloped economy due to its high transportation costs and poor infrastructure resulting from its mountainous geography (Salimov, *Tajikistan Paves the way to EAEU*, 2015). As a result of this, its economy is more dependent on remittances sent from their expatriate workers working in Russia than any other post-Soviet state (Engvall, 2014, 112). In this sense, joining to the project is attractive for Tajikistan since Russia is not only promising better conditions for migrant workers, but also threatens workers' migration for countries unwilling to participate in the project. Putin told the press in 2012 that citizens of the CIS countries would not be able to enter Russian Federation in 2015 with their domestic passports, but the current system implemented within the framework of the ECU and CES would continue to be implemented (Trilling, *Putin to Central Asia*, 2012). Since over 50% of the country's GDP depends on migrant remittances (Jacobsen, 2014, *Russia's EAEU*), joining to the project is high on the agenda of Tajikistan. The second reason is focused on security policies. Due to its poor military capacity, Tajikistan is in need of military assistance from regional and non-regional actors since it has declared its independence. The country has frequent border disputes with its neighbors, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan (Hett and Szkola, 2015, 9), and is facing the threat of extremist terrorism due to its failure to secure its border with Afghanistan after the withdrawal of NATO troops (Jacobsen, 2014, *Russia's EAEU*). The country's membership in the EAEU is considered to eliminate such security problems through military assistance from member countries.

It is considered that the economic and political situation of Tajikistan is not valid for the two other countries of the region, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, Tajikistan is the weakest country in the Central Asian region in terms of economic and military aspects, and there is no other option other than integration for the country. However, on the contrary to Tajikistan's situation, Uzbekistan has the most diversified economy, the largest establishments of

heavy industry and the largest military forces in the region (Starr, 2014, 161). On the other hand, while economically Turkmenistan enjoys the advantages of exporting its abundant reserves of natural gas, on international relations follows a "permanent neutrality" diplomacy which is included in the founding documents of the state. Furthermore, both countries implement the most state-owned market economy of the region with the help of high percentage of titular nationalities in their populations. With these economic and political advantages, the two countries, which abandoned the Russian orbit both politically and psychologically since their independence (Lukyanov, 2014, 298), were skeptical about the integration projects led by Russia and chose not to participate. As a result of the aforementioned reasons, the two countries are not expected to participate in the EAEU in the short term.

3.5.2.7. Relations with Other Countries

As stated in the establishment documents, participation in EAEU is open to all countries as long as the matters contained in the founding documents of the Union are accepted. In this sense, the competent bodies of the Union have conducted dialogues with many different countries for the purpose of expanding the area of influence of the Union. As a result of these processes the memorandums of understanding documents have signed as the first stage and in some cases free trade agreements are concluded. The EAEU signed the first FTA with Vietnam on 29 May 2015 and the agreement came into force in October 2016 (Robert and Moshes, 2015, 3). With China, a Memorandum of Cooperation was signed in 2012, and a disposition on coordination of the activities of the EAEU and the Silk Road Economic Belt was adopted in 2015. In order to eliminate barriers on trade, promote wide-ranging cooperation and raise the effectiveness of trade, a Memorandum of Cooperation was signed between the EAEU and Mongolia in 2015. In 2016, at the session of the SEAEC, a decision was taken in order to initiate the negotiations on concluding an FTA with India. In 2016, memorandums of understanding were signed with other countries of Asia-Pacific, such as the Republic of Korea, Singapore and Cambodia.

Countries in the Middle East are considered to have significant potential for EAEU. For this reason, negotiations with the countries in the region are carried out. At the same time, countries in the region, such as Israel, Egypt and Jordan are also

announced their interest in signing an agreement about creating and FTA with the EAEU (Hett and Szkola, 2015, 10). Another country of the Middle East that declared its interest in the EAEU is Syria. The prime minister of the country stated to the press that negotiations on joining the EAEU and establishing an FTA are being held in 2015 (Syria wants to join, 2015). In the same year, the decision to start negotiations on the conclusion of an FTA with Israel and Egypt was taken by the SEAEC and the first stage of the meetings was held in 2016. A decision was taken by the SEAEC in December 2016 in order to start negotiations with Egypt and Iran on the conclusion of an FTA. On May 17, 2018, an interim agreement signed between the EAEU and the Islamic Republic of Iran enabling formation of an FTA (Interim Agreement signed, 2018).

In addition to these countries, memorandums of cooperation have been signed with Latin American countries such as Peru, Chile, Mexico, Argentina and Brazil in order to develop bilateral trade relations. Furthermore, the Union is actively conducts dialogues with international organizations and institutions such as, the EU, the ASEAN, the OECD, and the WTO etc.

CHAPTER 4

THE ANALYSIS OF POST-SOVIET REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN LIGHT OF PROMINENT INTEGRATION THEORIES

4.1. Background

The phenomenon of regional integration was put forward with the aim of eliminating the destructive effects of the Second World War and preventing new wars. Particularly in Europe, the destruction of the Second World War forced politicians and elites to establish a more sustainable peace environment through the development of institutions that could significantly reduce the possibility of conflict and war in relations between nations. As a result of these efforts, the European Coal and Steel Community was founded in 1952. In the following years, regional integration theories have been developed by the scholars in order to answer the questions such as why states decided to integrate and how they designed regional integration. The most prominent of these theories are neofunctionalism, intergovernmentalism and new regionalism approach.

However, all of these theories have been put forward to elaborate the experiences of European integration and do not reflect the unique characteristics of integration projects that emerge in the rest of the world, such as Eurasia (Kirkham, 2016, 114). For this reason, in this chapter, peculiar features of Eurasian regional integration will be introduced and these features will be evaluated in terms of prominent integration theories.

4.2. Peculiarities of the Post-Soviet Regional Integration

4.2.1. Emergence of Regional Integration

The way of emergence of regional integration in Eurasia is the most significant factor that distinguishes this process from the integration experiences taking place in other parts of the world. Unlike the establishment of the EU, NAFTA, Mercosur or similar regional groupings, regional integration efforts in Eurasia started after the dissolution of a previously existing single political entity, namely the USSR. In this sense, regionalism in Eurasia emerged not as a result of the desire of a group of previously unrelated states to develop closer cooperation but out of the disintegration of a single economic and political entity (Libman and Vinokurov, 2014, 343-344). As a result of this, Eurasian integration is considered as the first regional integration movement to re-integrate economies that were once part of a single state (Glazyev and Tkachuk, 2015, 61). The newly independent states that emerged from the collapse of the Soviet Union inherited a common economic and educational system and energy, transport and communication infrastructures, also called the Soviet legacy. Hence, the main foundation of regionalism in Eurasia was to solve the problems arising from this Soviet legacy and to lessen the potential devastating consequences of the loss of existing ties. Accordingly, the first regional integration organization in the Eurasian region, the CIS, was considered as a mechanism for "civilized divorce" rather than a regional organization supporting the closer cooperation of its members.

Another feature that distinguishes the integration process in the Eurasian region from other regions of the world was the risks in the region related to security after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the political environment that emerged after the dissolution, the existing uncertainties regarding both the survival of newly emerging states and the territorial integrity of Russia laid the groundwork for the restructuring of post-Soviet economic and political space through regional integration (Libman, 2011, 1324). Similarly, post-Soviet states were ready to participate in regional integration projects to reduce the risks associated with irredentism and the security perception of the Russian foreign policy. However, the risks associated with security and territorial integrity has also led to the reluctance of the regional states to integrate. As one of the permanent features of the post-Soviet integration, the post-Soviet states

have showed unwillingness to share their newly-won sovereignty with the new supranational authorities.

Post-Soviet integration differs from the rest of the world in terms of the impact of economic crises in the development of integration. While a large literature hypothesizes that worsening economic conditions and economic crises should hinder integration process and lead to a surge of protectionism, in Eurasia, on the contrary, integration seems to benefit from economic crises. Libman and Vinokurov (2014, 342) defined the integration that became more likely during the economic crisis period as "crisis-driven integration". According to their theory, worsening economic conditions make the search for domestic alternatives to the existing regional interdependencies more costly, and therefore crisis could encourage cooperation (Libman and Vinokurov, 2010, 22). In accordance with this theory, the experiences gained from the financial-economic crisis in the post-Soviet region in 1998 created a distrust of international economic organizations and prompted a new interest in regional economic integration. Similarly, global economic crisis of 2008 have accelerated the ongoing process of economic integration in the post-Soviet space in order to find new ways to reduce risks.

4.2.2. Main Actors of Integration

The regional integration projects that emerged in the post-Soviet space in the post-Soviet period were different from each other in general but had similar characteristics, such as the main actors of integration. One of the reasons for this is that one of the elements inherited from the Soviet Union by all of the post-Soviet states, namely the strong presidential systems which emerged from the institutions of the First Secretary of the Communist Party (Tishkov, 1997, 269). In the transition periods, the Communist Party rulers were transformed into the heads of the newly established states, while the Soviet nomenclature which remained in power became the new elites of the nascent states and almost all of the projects that emerged in the post-Soviet area were carried out by strong presidents and the new elites. In almost all of the regional integration projects in the post-Soviet space, policy-making and preference-formation are highly centralized and the presidential institution is at the center of the system as the main locus of power. In this sense, also the EAEU has these persistent elements of

the post-Soviet regionalism model. As a result of this, the future of the EAEU depends solely on the will of a few individuals, namely presidents of member states (Kembayev, 2016, 192). Another consequence of the fact that the presidents are the main actors of the EAEU is that there is significantly less room for other actors in the integration process to play their roles. According to Kudaibergenova (2016, 8) the weight of the presidential influence is too high so other political figures of states have less or no power to have an effect on the discourse of integration.

Another peculiarity of the Eurasian integration is the management of projects as top-down processes and lack of support from social groups. As a result of above mentioned factors, regional integration projects in post-Soviet space are established and driven rapidly through a top-down process without consultation with other agents of society (Furman and Libman, 2014, 183). Consequently, integration institutions in the post-Soviet space attract little attention by weak civil society and the involvement of the non-governmental organizations in the affairs of the post-Soviet integration is very limited. It is considered that the same top-down process without a solid societal base applies to the EAEU too, as it does not include the legislative procedures and public involvement. As mentioned above, without the support of society and non-governmental actors, sustainability and legitimacy of the projects have become closely connected with the personality of presidents.

4.2.3. The Asymmetric Nature of Integration

Another factor distinguishes the post-Soviet integration from the EU experience is geographical, socio-economic, and political disparities across the post-Soviet states. The member states of regional integration projects that emerged in the post-Soviet space differ significantly in their levels of economic development, in terms of their demographic and geographic size, amount of natural resources, social infrastructures and political regimes. This disparity is most evident in the size of the economies of the member states of the EAEU, since Russia accounts for more than 80 percent of the GDP of the Union, while Belarus only 3 percent (Kirkham, 2016, 118). As a consequence of this disparity between its members, the post-Soviet integration is defined as an asymmetric integration (Libman, 2011, 1346, Dragneva and Wolczuk, 2013, 32, Okhrimenko, 2016, 476). Since asymmetry is a strong feature of the post-

Soviet integration, it was reflected in the institutional arrangements of all regional integration bodies emerged in the post-Soviet space.

In this asymmetric integration scheme, Russia is undoubtedly the dominant party in terms of population, economy and military might. As a result of being the region's largest trade partner, a protector of the existing structure of political elite, and the supplier of technical and military aids, Russia was often defined as "the economic engine and economic pole of attraction" for integration (Daly, 2014, 91, Obydenkova, 2011, 98). As the largest and wealthiest state in the region, Russia is responsible for providing the labour and carrying the organizational and financial burden and bearing the costs of integration projects (Bykov, 2016, 299). Subsidies and other incentives provided by Russia to other participants of the integration was the main driver of the integration projects in the post-Soviet space throughout. In this sense, it is considered that members at present and prospective members of integration projects are largely dependent on the health of the Russian economy.

4.2.4. Authoritarian Tendencies of Leaders

Another feature distinguishes the Eurasian integration from other integrations schemes which emerged in other parts of the world, such as the EU and NAFTA, is the heterogeneous nature of its members in terms of their political regimes. To date, countries involved in Eurasian integration are considered to have authoritarian and semi-authoritarian political regimes and mostly defined as non-democracies. The roots of these non-democratic and authoritarian states can be traced in managed national elections, power concentration in the hands of powerful presidents and highly limited political freedoms in respective states. The most important evidence of the authoritarian and dictatorial tendencies of the leaders of the member states is their tenure of office in presidency, in some cases, longer than 20 years. Russia is the only exception since it changed its president four times with election results; Kazakh leader Nazarbaev had been in power from 1991 to 2019 and Lukashenko, the president of Belarus has been in power since 1994. Another point that supports these claims is that the three prominent states of the integration, Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan, are positioned in the lowest ranks of civil liberties and political rights according to the data of the Freedom House in 2015 (Freedom House, 2015). In addition to its member

states, the key players in potential Eurasian economic interaction, such as China, India and Iran, are considered to have non-democratic political systems as well.

The fact that the countries involved in integration projects have authoritarian systems has some implications for the form and purpose of integration. Scholars have examined the integration projects created by non-democratic governments in the post-Soviet area from a broad perspective. For example, Libman and Vinokurov (2010, 9) defined the post-Soviet regionalism as the most evident instance of holding-together regionalism in the world since it emerged immediately after the disintegration of the USSR. They also stressed out that, unlike the prominent integration theories suggest, well-developed past ties between participant states could impede integration (2010, 3).

4.3. The Evaluation of Peculiarities of the Post-Soviet Integration

The most prominent theories concerning regional integration, namely neofunctionalism, intergovernmentalism and NRA, were developed by scholars in order to describe, analyze and forecast the course of integration in Europe. The results obtained from the studies carried out within the scope of these theories are also used in the comparative regional integration studies for integration projects emerged in other regions of the world. In this sense, in this section the peculiarities of the post-Soviet regional integration experience will be evaluated with the help of outputs developed by the aforementioned theories in order to define the factors that facilitate and complicate the Russian-led post-Soviet regional integration process.

4.3.1. Emergence of Regional Integration

The EU, which is the subject of the three prominent theories, was established after the Second World War in order to resolve the conflicts between the neighbors of the continent which frequently resulted in long lasting and bloody wars. The first institution that was established during the process of the EU integration was the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). The Community was set up in 1951, by the Treaty of Paris by Belgium, France, West Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands, in other words the "Inner Six Countries of the EU". By 1957, the Inner Six agreed on expanding the integration process to other economic sectors.

Haas, who is the founder of the first grand theory of the EU, used the concept of "spill-over" in order to describe the course of European integration. As a concept of neofunctionalism theory, it refers to the expansionist logic of integration, such as when an initial decision by states to place a certain sector, generally an economic sector, under the authority of supranational institutions creates pressures to extend the authority of these institutions into neighboring policy areas. According to this concept, integration process is an automatic, a self-sustaining and an unstoppable linear process that advances from economic to political areas. According to Haas (1958, 16), the final outcome of the integration will be establishment of a political entity equipped with supranational powers with the help of gains obtained from the spill-over process. However, given the authoritarian tendencies of the states in the region, it is considered that the predictions contained in Haas's theory would not apply to the post-Soviet space since autocratic leaders refrain from taking decisions that could threaten their hold on power. Thus, it is considered that an unstoppable and irreversible process of integration would never be a feature of post-Soviet integration. Post-Soviet integration also differentiates from the EU model since it is defined as the most evident instance of "holding-together" type of integration, while the EU was described as the most successful model of coming-together type of integration. As a consequence, post-Soviet regional integration has been mostly associated with the protectionist tendencies of states and their reluctance to share their sovereignty with supranational institutions.

According to the second integration theory, liberal intergovernmentalism, integration is a process that is driven by nation states through intensive bargaining. The prerequisites of the theory for the success of integration are a pluralistic social structure, a strong pro-integrative elites and political leaders who follow the policy of transnational integration. However, as mentioned in the previous sections, none of the participants of the post-Soviet integration have pluralist social structures or pro-integrative elite to initiate and drive the integration process. Although a leader state has always been existed in the post-Soviet integration process on the contrary to the European experience, it hampered the integration since regional integration projects initiated by Russia are often perceived as attempts at restoring the USSR. Moravcsik

(1993, 476), a prominent scholar of this theory, stressed out the importance of concordance of the economic interests and interdependencies between integrating units as a major factor boosting the chance of success of integration since the nation-states are chiefly driven by economic interests. However, as a consequence of the deteriorating effect of shadow of the past, the countries of the region often showed a desire to manage their economic policies entirely on their own. As another consequence of the Russian dominance it is considered that participant states prefer developing bilateral relations with Russia instead of following the path of multilateralism which is a crucial requirement of regional integration. Hoffman (1966, 905-908) also emphasized the significance of having less common historical experiences for the success of the integration in the initial period of the process since integration is hindered when participants are burdened with historical ties and responsibilities. However, as a result of being once parts of a single entity, there were high interconnections between the post-Soviet states in spheres of economy, education, health etc. and shadow of the past has always been the reality of integration in post-Soviet space.

The scholars of the New Regionalism Approach (NRA) distinguishes their theory from the Old Regionalism of the first wave, which is mainly initiated by state actors from above, and defines the NRA as a process developed out of voluntary initiatives of state and especially non-state actors. Furthermore, as a new approach, NRA displaces the economic and security objectives of old regionalism with multidimensionality and open regionalism. On the contrary to these assumptions, as mentioned above, post-Soviet regional integration has been often characterized with processes driven by powerful state leaders in a top-down approach without the involvement of other social structures and non-state actors. The theory also attaches great importance to cultural, economic and political homogeneity among the members of the region and defines the existence of inherent regional civil society as a precondition for the start of regional integration. However, as noted in the previous sections, since the asymmetry is a feature of the post-Soviet space, heterogeneity between member states is one of the characteristic of the post-Soviet integration, rather than homogeneity. On the other hand, it is considered that estimation of the NRA

theory on emergence of integration is consistent with the situation in post-Soviet integration. According to the theory, external factors, such as the successful regionalization of Europe, affected and accelerated the regionalization efforts in other part of the world both positively and negatively. In post-Soviet regionalization, outcomes of successful Western European integration positively affected and fostered post-Soviet leaders to initiate integration projects which mimic the EU structurally and institutionally. On the other hand, leaders of post-Soviet states have been negatively affected by the EU, especially by the Eastern Partnership program, as a result of the perception of an emerging "fortress Europe" on the borders of the post-Soviet space. According to this suggestion, the last institution established in the post-Soviet space, the EAEU, was merely a geopolitical project as it was a reaction to counterbalance the rising influence of the EU in the post-Soviet space.

4.3.2. Main Actors of Integration

All three theories have different views on main actors of a successful regional integration. According to the neofunctionalist theory, while the national governments constitute the first group of actors, the second group of actors comprise of elites, bureaucracy and other interest groups. Among these groups, Haas defines the national elites as the leaders of the integration process as a result of their ability on affecting the public decision-making process. The last group which has a vital importance for the success of the regionalization process is supranational institutions. In addition to these actors, neofunctionalist theory stresses out the importance of pluralist social structures as in the case of the EU for the success of regionalization process.

As a result of being influenced by the Realism theory, liberal intergovernmentalism basically assumes that nation-states are the most primary units of integration processes. On the other hand, scholars of this theory have taken into account the role of diverse interest groups among nation-states on regionalization process since these groups could affect the interest formation of nation states. At this point, as it perceives nation-states as the main actors of integration process, liberal intergovernmentalism opposes the assumptions of the neofunctionalist theory regarding the importance of supranational institutions for the success of integration process. According to the outputs taken from an analysis of the EU experience, the

supranational institutions of the EU have not intended to reduce the effectiveness of the nation states, quite the contrary they elevated the effectiveness of international bargaining by the reduction of transaction costs. The theory also attaches great importance on pluralist social structures and national elites who press for integration.

The last theory, NRA, stresses out the significance of non-state actors which consists of civil society and the market forces, for the regional integration process. According to the theory, along with formal networks driven by institutional structures of states, informal relations driven by non-state actors between participant states are needed for the success of regionalization. These non-state actors, especially civil society actors, are generally sensitive on cases such as ecological sustainability, development and peace in the region and they have used the regional integration process as a response to the negative consequences originated from the globalization process.

At this point, it is considered that the Eurasian integration does not meet any of the prerequisites accepted by the three theories on regional integration regarding the main actors of integration. Contrary to the assertions of the theories, regional integration processes are highly dependent on the political will of the leaders of each state without a support of a pro-integrative actor from civil society. From the very start of integration process in post-Soviet space, the attitudes of leaders who promote the integration idea have not changed. Furthermore, in this period, two founders of the regional integration, Nazarbaev and Lukashenko, remained in power since the very beginning of the process and Russia is the only example that changed its leader four times as a result of popular elections. At the individual level, the regional integration policies, especially the EAEU which is the final outcome of the process, was perceived by Nazarbaev as a tool for realizing his political ambitions (Hett and Szkola, 2015, 13). Similarly, Lukashenko, a veteran in the integration game, has pursued a pro-integration agenda in order to harvest the economic benefits of integration (Dragneva and Wolczuk, 2013, 208). Lastly, for the strong promoter of the Eurasian integration, Putin, the Eurasian integration plays a geo-strategically key role since it helps strengthening the position of his country in the post-Soviet space and in the world.

Along with their individual goals, it is considered that all of the leaders are primarily interested in preserving and consolidating their own political power with their pro-integrative policies. In this sense, dependency on leaders makes the destiny of the integration process uncertain since it is not clear what will happen when these leaders are substituted by their successors in the future.

Another characteristic feature of the Eurasian integration is the absence of pluralism and existence of non-democratic political regimes. The absence of pluralism is connected with the fact that the elites of post-Soviet states have authoritarian tendencies. As a result of the authoritarian regimes of member states, the processes of regional integration has never been driven by the democratic will of people of the region and thus, the future of integration has been dependent on the continuation of these authoritarian regimes. The establishment of the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) in 2011 as the first supranational organization of the post-Soviet integration process was accepted as an important step on changing the destiny of the regionalization efforts. However, given the existence of weak non-state actors, the influence of the organization remained limited.

4.3.3. Asymmetric Nature of Integration

Neofunctionalism and NRA have similar assumptions on the subject of asymmetry between the members of integration. Both theories emphasize the existence of homogeneity between units as a condition for success. For example, neofunctionalism necessitates the existence of homogeneity among the national elites regarding ideological orientations. In line with this assumption, the theory also attaches importance to symmetry between participants as a condition for determining the integrative potential of a region. Similarly, scholars of NRA attribute importance on homogeneity between members on spheres such as economy, culture and security and stress out that a rise in homogenization among the participants is necessary for a successful integration process. However, as a state centric theory, liberal intergovernmentalism accepts the existence of disparities and asymmetries between integrating units. Moreover, the theory presupposes the asymmetrical interdependence between the units and analyzes the role of this asymmetry on the process of intergovernmental bargaining process.

Scholars have different views on the effects of asymmetry regarding the success of regional integration. Kubicek (2009, 239) claims that the regional hegemons could be helpful on solving collective problems of a region since these hegemons would use regional institutions as a means for furthering their own agenda. Similarly, Hancock (2009, 3-4) stressed out the accelerating effects of hegemons on integration processes as a result of benefits provided by these powerful states to weaker states of the region. Another scholar, Mattli (1999, 46) welcomed the existence of hegemons and asserted that regional hegemons have historically been required for successful integration. Without question, Russia is the hegemon and leader of the region. Russia, along with its relative dominant position on economy, population and size of its territory, also connects three sub-regions of post-Soviet space; European part, Caucasia and Central Asia. At this point, in compliance with views of scholars mentioned above on the issue of the role of hegemons in regional integration process, Glazyev (2014, 94) emphasizes the historical role of Russia in organizing Eurasian integration process and argues that a successful integration in Eurasia could happen if only Russia leads the process.

On the contrary to above mentioned views, the deteriorating effects of asymmetry and heterogeneity between the post-Soviet states on the subject of regional integration are proven as well. As the hegemon of the region, the relative strong position of Russia has been ascertained as one of the most problematic spheres of regional integration in post-Soviet space (Mayes and Korhonen, 2007, 14). It is also considered that dominant position of Russia resulted from its strong economy reduces the multilateralism policy and pushes the states of the region to follow bilateral relations. In addition, the diversity of the economic potentials of participant countries, namely heterogeneity, is considered to be another obstacle for a successful integration. This heterogeneous character of the states is considered to be a factor that limits the opportunities and direct economic benefits of the integration. Dragneva and Wolczuk (2013, 32) pointed out the risks of asymmetric interdependence between the units since smaller economies of post-Soviet space could easily be affected by the possible negative developments in economy of Russia. With the help of economic asymmetry,

relatively strong country of the region could turn into a money lending body to weaker member states and this could worsen the situation regarding economic dependency.

Alongside with economy, asymmetry between units has significant implications on the sphere of politics. It is considered that the chance of success of integration reduces as the diversities in size become apparent. Moreover, compared to homogenous blocs, integrating groupings characterized with asymmetry experience greater problems as a result of unequal distribution of gains. It is argued that this is also applicable to the post-Soviet integration experience since the asymmetrical situation of post-Soviet states was accepted as the reason for the failure of regional integration efforts made after the disintegration of USSR. In this asymmetrical set-up, the integration institutions, namely EAEU, are mostly dependent on policies followed by Russia and these institutions were easily bypassed in many incidents by Russian side for geopolitical reasons. However, the exploitation of integration institutions as a geopolitical device by Russia has disruptive effects on the integration projects at large since it highlights the hegemony of Russian side within the post-Soviet states, thereby activating sensitivities regarding sovereignty in the member states. In conclusion, as a result of above mentioned factors it is considered that the asymmetrical character of post-Soviet integration hinders regional integration processes in the region.

4.3.4. Authoritarian Tendencies of Leaders

While all of the three theories attach great importance on pluralistic social structures and democracy in order for a successful integration process, the post-Soviet integration has always been characterized with a significant level of autocracy. In order to analyze the effects of authoritarian tendencies for regional integration in the post-Soviet space, scholars such as Ambrosio (2006), Collins (2009) and Allison (2008) have coined the terms such as “protective integration” and “regime security approach”. According to these terms, autocrats of the post-Soviet states take advantages of their autocratic regimes in order to protect their dominance and silence the opposition movements with pro-democracy agendas. Libman (2011, 25), in accordance with these approaches, argues that the rhetoric of integration can be used by the autocrats as a tool for providing legitimacy to their regimes.

Furthermore, it is considered that autocratic regimes tend to support each other against democratic influences coming from abroad without restricting their dominance, which is called “autocracy promotion” and “defensive integration” (Hancock and Libman, 2013, 16, Allison, 186, 2008). According to scholars, China and Russia have been promoting and propagating autocracy in the region for these reasons. The motivation of Russia for doing so is to prevent the cooperation between the states of the region and the EU, since the EU generally does not prefer to intensify cooperation with autocratic states. On the other hand China, with the help of its success on economy, provides a viable alternative model to Eurasian countries and tries to hinder their cooperation with the Western powers.

As another impediment for the regional integration process, autocracy limits the integration abilities of participating states. By nature, autocratic states are not capable of carrying out stable and sustainable regionalization processes since they tend not to follow binding forms of regional integration (Vinokurov and Libman, 2012, 162, Dragneva and Wolczuk, 2013, 2026). Similarly, autocratic states are reluctant to subordinate their sovereignties to any kind of supranational decision-making bodies. This reluctance is most visible on attitudes of national elites who remained in power since the dissolution of the USSR. Since the integration process limits their privileges by international laws and legal institutions, these incumbents are typically oppose the idea of integration.

As a result of above mentioned factors, integration rhetoric in Eurasia which was used generally to silence the opposition and block other regional powers to get involved resulted with unsuccessful regional agreements that remained largely on paper. For these reasons, it can be argued that the existence of autocracy and absence of democracy severely hampered the success of integration process.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

One of the most important results of the Second World War is that regional organizations become one of the major pillars of the global governance. The EU, which was established to prevent the emergence of new wars in the region, emerged in Europe as a success story after surviving many problematic periods. The EU, which is the most advanced example of regional integration in the world, has successfully passed the monetary union and then continued the process by taking steps to ensure political unity. Inspired by the experience of the EU's successful integration process, different efforts have been made towards a free market-based regional integration in other parts of the world.

At a time when scholars were conducting scientific studies on regional integration, the USSR, which was located at the opposite pole of the EU due to the implementation of a centralized economy model, was formally disintegrated in 1991, after its 74 years of existence. Thus, as the disintegration of the USSR coincided with the rise of regional integration efforts in the world, the first idea to solve the social and economic problems arising from the dissolution was to sign a regional integration agreement between the 15 countries that gained their independence. As a result of these efforts, the CIS was established to carry out the civilized divorce process rather than a regional cooperation organization established as a result of voluntary participation in order to harvest economic benefits. Since the CIS implemented two opposing policies at the same time such as encouraging the former Soviet republics to declare their independence and urging states to cooperate, the organization has failed.

The second integration process, the Union State of Belarus and Russia was described by scholars as pseudo-integration since the will of peoples from both states have never been included in the process. Another reason for this claim was absence of democratic processes and dependence of the organization on the personal attitudes of leaders. Therefore, it is considered that from the very beginning of the process, the steps taken for establishing the Union State were used as integration rhetoric by the leaders in order to legitimize their rule in respective countries.

The third integration project emerged in the post-Soviet space was Eurasec. Established by the will of voluntary states within the CIS, the Eurasec followed a policy of integration in different speeds and depths in order to advance the integration to further stages. Besides, for the first time in post-Soviet integration schemes, the organization had some features of supranationalism. However, as a result of the problems arisen from representation in decision-making bodies, enormous heterogeneity of its participants and divergent intentions of its member states, the organization failed to create the expected economic benefits for its members.

The fact that the integration projects carried out since the disintegration of the Soviet Union failed to produce the expected outputs paved the way of the launching of the Customs Union in 2010 between Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia. With the help of successful results of the ECU, the three founders decided to launch the Single Economic Space in 2012. In the same year, international community has witnessed the formation of the Eurasian Economic Commission as the first supranational institution of the Eurasian integration processes. Finally, the three founders signed the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union in Astana on May 29, 2014; and on January 1, 2015, the Eurasian Economic Union; the last step of the Eurasian integration so far, was become operational, as scheduled in the Treaty. The founder states have successfully enlarged the Union by the accession of Armenia and Kyrgyzstan in the same year.

The EAEU has scored success on some matters such as preventing the escalation of conflicts in the region and removing non-tariff barriers on trade between the member states (Breitmaier, 2016, 2). However, given the high level objectives included in the founding documents and declared by the leaders of the states and its

relative capability on reaching necessary resources, it is considered that the Union could not have reached its full potential and have not met the expectations so far. This result is considered to be not surprising since the establishment of the EAEU included the prevailing peculiarities of the post-Soviet integration from the very beginning of the process. Most significantly, in his famous article published in 2011 on Russian newspaper *Izvestia*, Putin declared that the EAEU will be based on universal integration principles as an essential part of Greater Europe united by shared values of freedom, democracy, and market laws. However, the reality has not matched these positive declarations as a result of growing skepticism between the sides originated from the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation. Before this incident, two years later from Putin's article, the official discourse has already changed radically with the official condemnation of the values of the EU as "sexless and infertile" and Russia opposed to join the dark chaos of Europe (Sakwa, 2014, 27). Scholars persistently stressed out the importance of establishing links for cooperation between the two integration projects as a condition for success (Korosteleva, 2016, 79, Hartwell, 2013, 420, Vinokurov and Libman, 2012, 209). Furthermore, Glazyev and Tkachuk (2014, 82 emphasized the usefulness of EAEU for the EU since the Union could be a more effective partner than individual states. However, the existence of deep incompatibilities between the sides limits the possibility of this kind of cooperation between the integration projects. The values which interconnect European states are respect for human dignity and human rights, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law. On the other side, participants of Eurasian integration process are generally characterized with having different economic systems with capitalist monopolies under the rule of authoritarian regimes led by strong presidents. This incompatibility between the sides considered to be the most significant impediment on the way for cooperation between the two organizations.

In order to clear the hurdles on the way for the cooperation of two models of regional integration, it is considered that some comprehensive reforms must be carried out which are vital for a successful integration process. The most crucial reform is providing a favorable environment for democracy in respective states. As mentioned in the related section, countries characterized as non-democracies face significant

problems while providing credible commitments. In this sense, democratization is the most important tool for advancing regional integration and promotion of democracy is indispensable for the success of the integration process (Libman, 2011, 24). Promotion of democracy and including it in the negotiation processes between members will also be helpful for resolving the problematic issues originated from inequality of the integrating states. At this point, it is evaluated that readiness of the Russian side for democracy is required since it is the biggest party of the integration scheme. The existence of democracy in the negotiation processes will be helpful for removing skepticism originated from threat perceptions of states regarding their sovereignties. In this sense, Russia, instead of imposing its position on other members of the EAEU, should invest in soft power and offer compromises when necessary in order to become a more attractive integration center (Bordachev and Skriba, 2014, 22). As mentioned above, the absence of will of the people of each state and non-involvement of elites in the integration process is argued as a weakness of Eurasian integration. With democracy promotion, the problem of dependence of regional integration process on a limited number of people's, mainly to the president of each state, could be solved as well. Furthermore, application of democracy could be helpful of removing uncertainties of the future of the integration project by assigning necessary powers to the people of the region to drive the integration process and to stable official institutions merely responsible of managing and advancing the project. Lastly, along with the establishment of rule of law and system of justice, democratic applications could facilitate the formation of economic liberalization which is regarded as a premise of a successful regional integration.

Another major weakness of the Eurasian integration project is considered to be the low administrative and institutional capacity of member states which hinders the advancement of the process to further stages. In this sense, in order for the project to achieve success, a fundamental reform should be applied for a successful modernization of institutions by each state. In addition to domestic institutional reforms, supranational units which are not dependent on any particular state should be established in order to implement and enforce the Eurasian codes independently. The Treaty of the EAEU vests supranational powers to the bodies of the Union. However,

this authority remained largely on paper in practice since the decisions made by these bodies, which are obligatory for implementation for all member states, are sometimes not implemented by the member states. Moreover, the same situation is valid in the case of dispute-settlement bodies of the Union since the Court of the EAEU is not the final arbiter of the law of Eurasian integration. As experienced in the example of the EU integration process, the existence of supranational institutions that equipped with substantial amount of power to conduct effective independent policies are of great importance on solving problems which cannot be solved bilaterally. In this sense, it is considered that the integration process in Eurasia could be advanced to further stages if only supranational institutions become fully-operational. With the help of these institutions, the problems originated from factors such as autocratic tendencies of leaders, asymmetric nature of integration and dependence of the whole process to the will of the leaders could be solved since these institutions perform their activities independently and member states will be represented equally within these bodies.

The Eurasian integration is a comprehensive project with large objectives such as liberalizing economies, advancing industrial capacities of its participants, providing an environment for integrating the two integration projects and establishing a space for coordination from Lisbon to Vladivostok. On the other hand, as mentioned in the relevant parts of this thesis, the Eurasian integration process has been historically characterized with a number of negative peculiarities hindering the success of the project. It has been demonstrated in this thesis that these peculiarities are dominant over also in the last institution established as the last step of the process, the EAEU. Along with these negative historical legacies, the events of recent years also produced an unfavorable international atmosphere for integration. In this sense, in order to eliminate the antagonism between the EU and the EAEU, it is necessary to create new opportunities for dialogue between sides. More importantly, the future of Eurasian integration depends rigidly on establishing effective supranational institutions, on constituting of a transparent mechanism for the settlement of disputes between the parties and on establishing democratic systems that encourages the participation of civil society actors' in the decision-making processes.

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APPENDICES

A. TURKISH SUMMARY/TÜRKÇE ÖZET

SOVYET SONRASI BÖLGESEL ENTEGRASYON SÜRECİ

Bu tez, Sovyetler Birliği'nin yıkılmasından sonra Avrasya bölgesinde ortaya çıkan bölgesel entegrasyon süreçlerini incelemektedir. Çalışmanın sorusu, Sovyetler Birliği'nin dağılmasından sonra Rusya öncülüğünde başlatılan bölgesel entegrasyon çabalarını kolaylaştıran ve sekteye uğratan etmenlerin hangileri olduğu üzerinedir.

Arka Plan

Sovyetler Birliği'nin parçalanması, üyeleri açısından yıkıcı sonuçlar doğurmuştur. Dağılma ile birlikte 15 yeni bağımsız ülke ortaya çıkmış ve Birlik çerçevesinde oluşturulan ve uzun yıllar işleyen ekonomi, enerji, ticaret, eğitim, güvenlik ve sağlık gibi sektörlerdeki hizmet altyapıları parçalanmıştır. Dağılmanın ardından ortaya çıkan yeni ülkelerden biri olan Rusya Federasyonu; uluslararası anlaşmalar doğrultusunda Sovyetler Birliğine sağlanan hak ve yükümlülükler (Birleşmiş Milletler Güvenlik Konseyi daimi üyeliği gibi) ile birlikte Sovyet dış temsilciliklerinin taşınır ve taşınmazlarını devralması gibi nedenlerle, Sovyetler Birliğinin yasal mirasçısı olarak kabul edilmiştir. Bu bağlamda, dağılmanın yıkıcı sonuçlarının bertaraf edilmesi amacıyla Rusya Federasyonu tarafından, eski Sovyet üye ülkeleri arasında yeni bölgesel entegrasyon modelleri öngören birtakım projeler başlatılmıştır.

Bölgesel entegrasyon kavramı, İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nın ardından uluslararası ilişkilerin gözde konularından biri haline gelmiştir. Savaşın yıkıcı sonuçları, düşman devletlerin bölgesel entegrasyon yoluyla biraraya gelerek bölgesel entegrasyon

kurumları oluřturmasını saęlamıřtır. Bu řekilde oluřturulan ok taraflı kurumlar eliyle, sonu savařa varabilecek yeni anlařmazlıkların ve atıřmaların nlenmesi amalanmıřtır. Bu dnemde ortaya ıkan entegrasyon abaları sonucunda kurulan kurumlar zellikle ekonomik ve sosyal alanlarda ıkarların ortaklařtırılması yoluyla blgesel btnleřme amacına ynelmiřlerdir. Birinci Dnya Savařı sonrası dnemde ortaya ıkan kurumların ise salt gvenlik amacıyla kurulan kurumlar olmasından hareketle, İkinci Dnya Savařı sonrası dnemde uluslararası iliřkiler alanında blgesel entegrasyon aısından bir anlayıř deęiřiklięi yařandığından bahsedilebilir. Bu anlayıř deęiřiklięinin ilk rn olarak kabul edilen Avrupa Birlięi (AB), savařın yıkıcı etkilerinin bertaraf edilerek aralarında tarihsel anlařmazlıklar bulunan lkelerin ekonomik ve sosyal ıkarlarının ortaklařlařtırılması yoluyla gelecekte ortaya ıkması muhtemel yeni savařların nlenmesi amacıyla kurulmuřtur. AB'nin blgesel entegrasyon yoluyla elde ettięi bařarı, dnyanın dięer blgelerinde bulunan ve ekonomik ve sosyal problemlerini zvmeye alıřan lkeler iin de bir umut ıřığı olmuřtur. Bu anlamda, Sovyetlerin yıkılmasından sonra Rusya nclięinde kurulan Baęımsız Devletler Topluluęu (BDT), Avrasya Ekonomik Topluluęu (AET) ve Avrasya Ekonomik Birlięi (AEB) gibi blgesel entegrasyon kurumlarının, AB'nin kurulma amalarını model alan kurumlar olduęu deęerlendirilmektedir.

Tezin Konusu

Tez iin seilen konunun, gerek Avrasya blgesinin tarihi, gerekse blgede ortaya ıkan gncel uluslararası iliřkiler meseleleri gibi birtakım nedenlerle nemli olduęu deęerlendirilmektedir. Birinci olarak alıřmada, Sovyetlerin daęıldıęı yıl olan 1991 yılından gnmze kadar geen srede, Rusya nclęünde bařlatılan blgesel entegrasyon projeleri btncl bir biimde ele alınmıřtır. Konuya iliřkin literatr tarandığında dięer alıřmaların yalnızca bir projeye/kuruma odaklandıęı, btncl olarak ve geliřimsel bir biimde srecin incelenmedięi grlmřtr.

İkinci olarak, bir nceki blmde de bahsedildięi zere, yeni blgesel btnleřme akımının ilk ve en bařarılı rneęinin AB olması, uluslararası iliřkiler literatr aısından konunun yalnızca AB merkezli ele alınması ve blgesel entegrasyon konusunda ortaya atılan teorilerin Avrupa merkezli olması sonucunu

doğurmuş, AB örneği dışında kalan bölgesel bütünleşme çabaları çok az ele alınmıştır. Bu çalışmada ise Avrasya entegrasyon süreci, genel itibarıyla AB entegrasyonunu değerlendirmek amacıyla geliştirilen “Fonksiyonelcilik”, “Hükümetlerarasıcılık” ve “Yeni Bölgesellik Yaklaşımı” teorilerince ileri sürülen savlar ışığı altında incelenmiştir. Bu açıdan çalışmanın özgün olduğu değerlendirilmektedir.

Tez Yapısı

Çalışma, beş bölümden oluşmaktadır. İlk bölümde bir giriş yapılarak çalışmanın kapsamı, yapısı ve yöntemi sunulmuş ve konuya yönelik literatür taramasına yer verilmiştir. Yine bu bölümde, bölgesel entegrasyon teorilerine yer verilmiş ve Sovyet sonrası dönemde ortaya çıkan entegrasyon süreçlerinin dönemlere ayrılması konusunda bilgi sunulmuştur.

İkinci bölümde, ilk olarak Rusya'nın bölgesel entegrasyona yönelik politikasında yaşanan değişimin nedenleri ele alınmış, ardından entegrasyonun temel düzeyleri olarak kabul edilen BDT, Belarus-Rusya Birlik Devleti ve AET gibi entegrasyon kurumları, gerek tarihsel gelişimleri ve kurumsal yapıları, gerekse bölgenin entegrasyon süreçlerindeki önemleri açısından ele alınmıştır.

Çalışmanın üçüncü bölümünde, Avrasya entegrasyon süreçlerinin ileri düzey kurumları olarak kabul edilen Avrasya Gümrük Birliği (AGB), Tek Ekonomik Alan (TEA), Avrasya Ekonomik Komisyonu (AEK) ve son olarak Avrasya Ekonomik Birliği incelenmiştir. İncelemede, AEB'nin kuruluş aşamaları ve kurumsal yapısına ilave olarak Birliğin genişleme potansiyeli değerlendirilmiştir. Bu anlamda eski Sovyet ülkeleri, Birliğe katılma potansiyelleri açısından tek tek ele alınmıştır.

Dördüncü bölümde, Sovyet sonrası bölgesel entegrasyon süreci, Fonksiyonelcilik, Hükümetlerarasıcılık ve Yeni Bölgesellik Yaklaşımı teorilerince ortaya atılan savlar ışığı altında analiz edilmiştir. Son bölüm olan beşinci bölüm ise sonuç bölümüdür.

Bölümler

Çalışma, Avrasya bölgesinde Rusya öncülüğünde yürütülen bölgesel entegrasyon süreçlerinin analiz edilmesi amacıyla hazırlanmıştır. Bir süreç olarak bölgesel entegrasyon, sürece dahil olan ülkelerin belirli ortak ilkeler doğrultusunda yola çıktıkları ve sonucunda kurallar ve bu kuralların uygulanmasını gözeten uluslarüstü kurumlar oluşturdukları bir olgu olarak tanımlanabilir. Bu bağlamda, gerek çatışmaların önlenmesi, gerekse kurumsallaşma açılarından başarılı bir geçmişi bulunan AB entegrasyon süreci, dünyada bölgesel entegrasyonun en iyi sonuçlandığı süreç olarak kabul edilmektedir. Sovyet sonrası entegrasyon süreci ise birçok açıdan AB deneyiminden farklıdır. İlk olarak, Sovyet entegrasyonu, daha önce bağımsız olan birimlerin biraraya gelerek bütünleşme süreci içine girmeleri şeklinde ortaya çıkmamış, aksine daha önce bir bütün halinde bulunan birimlerin dağılmalarının ardından ortaya çıkmıştır. İkinci olarak Sovyet entegrasyon süreci, sıfır tabanlı AB sürecinin aksine Sovyetler Birliği döneminden, sürecin gidişatını gerek pozitif, gerekse de negatif anlamda etkileme potansiyeli olan birçok olguyu miras almıştır. Bu açılardan bakıldığında, bu çalışmada yeni oluşmaya başlayan Avrasya entegrasyonunun, halihazırda dünyanın en iyi bütünleşme modeli olduğu kabul edilen bir kurumla karşılaştırılmasının doğru sonuçlar vermeyeceği kabul edilmiş, bunun yerine bugüne kadar ortaya konan çabalar sonucunda ortaya çıkan sürecin, teorilerin öne sürdüğü savlar doğrultusunda değerlendirilmesi yöntemi tercih edilmiştir.

Bu nedenlerle, çalışmanın ilk bölümünde önde gelen üç bölgesel entegrasyon teori incelenmiş ve söz konusu teorilerin bir entegrasyonun başarıya ulaşması için şart koştukları koşullar derinlemesine incelenmiştir. Bu teorilerden ilki olan Fonksiyonelcilik, David Mitrany tarafından uluslararası ilişkilerin liberal yaklaşımının bir varyantı olarak geliştirilmiştir. Söz konusu teori, liberal yaklaşımın birey merkezci ve çoğulcu fikirlerinden hareketle uluslararası arenanın tek aktörlerinin devletler olduğu fikrine karşı çıkmakta ve ulus-devletlerin zaman içinde yok olacağını öne sürmektedir. Teoriye göre bölgesel entegrasyonun ilerlemesi, “işlevsel yayılma” (functional spillover) adı verilen bir süreç eliyle gerçekleşmektedir. Buna göre ülkeler arası entegrasyon, çatışmaların daha az olacağı teknik alanlarda başlamakta, bu

alanlarda elde edilen başarılı sonuçların etkisiyle entegrasyon siyasi alana doğru yayılmaktadır. İşlevselcilik teorisi, uluslararası kurumlara yeteri kadar önem vermemesi ve bölgesel entegrasyonun geleceğini öngörmede başarısız kalması gibi gerekçelerle eleştiriye uğramış, bu eleştirileri sonucunda Haas tarafından Yeni İşlevselcilik teorisi geliştirilmiştir. Haas'a göre yayılma etkisi entegrasyonun ilerlemesi için tek başına yeterli olmamakta olup özellikle sürecin tıkandığı anlarda mutlaka politik baskı yoluyla entegrasyonun ilerlemesi sağlanmalıdır. Haas, başarılı bir entegrasyonun üç şartının hükümetler arası işbirliği, entegrasyona hevesli elitlerin varlığı ve işleyen ulusüstü kurumlar olduğunu belirtmiş, sayılanlar içinde en büyük önemi, politik karar alma süreçlerindeki potansiyel etkileri nedeniyle elitlere atfetmiştir. Yine Haas, bölgesel entegrasyonun başarıya ulaşabilmesinin üç koşulunun, çoğulcu sosyal yapı, ekonomik ve endüstriyel gelişmişlik ve benzer ideolojik yönelimler olduğunu belirtmiştir.

Tezde incelenen ikinci teori olan Hükümetlerarasıcılık, 1960'lı yıllarda AB entegrasyonunda yaşanan "Boş Sandalye Krizi"nden kaynaklanan durgunluğun etkisiyle Stanley Hoffman tarafından geliştirilmiştir. Realizm teorisinin bir türevidir ve bu tezin bütün varsayımlarını kabul eden Hükümetlerarasıcılık, Fonksiyonelciliğin aksine devleti merkeze alan ve devletleri uluslararası ilişkilerin en önemli aktörleri kabul eden bir teoridir. Bu anlamda tezin savunucuları, devletleri yalnızca kendi çıkarlarını ve varoluşlarını gözeten birimler olarak kabul etmekte, bu anlamda entegrasyonun yalnızca devletlerin çıkarları ile uyumlu olması şartıyla devletlerin faaliyetleriyle başlatılıp sürdürülebileceğini kabul etmekte, yayılma etkisinin varlığını ise yadsımaktadırlar. Teorisyenlere göre AB entegrasyonu, devletlerinin devamlılığını ve milli egemenliklerini sürdürmek isteyen ulus-devletlerce başlatılmış olup bölgesel bütünlüğe ulaşılması hedefi ikincil önemdedir. İlave olarak teori, entegrasyon sürecinin ülkelerin çıkarları doğrultusunda gerçekleştirilen hükümetlerarası pazarlık yoluyla ilerlemekte olduğunu ve bu aşamada ulusal elitlerin hükümete baskı yapmasının söz konusu olmadığını savunmaktadır. Bu anlamda teori, entegrasyona hevesli ulusal elitlere başat önem atfeden İşlevselcilikten ayrılmaktadır. Tezin savunucuları, entegrasyonun başarısının

entegrasyona hevesli ülke liderlerinin varlığına ve çoğulculuğa imkan veren toplum yapılarına bağlı olduğunu iddia etmektedir.

Çalışmada ele alınan üçüncü ve son teori, Yeni Bölgesellik Yaklaşımıdır (YBY). 1980'li yıllara gelindiğinde uluslararası alanda, İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nın ardından kurulan iki kutuplu dünya sona ermesi ve Amerikan hegemonyası görece olarak erozyona uğramış olması gibi önemli gelişmeler yaşanmıştır. Bu ortamda, bölgesel entegrasyon konusunun incelenmesi için geçmiş yıllarda ortaya atılan Fonksiyonelcilik ve Hükümetlerarasıcılık teorilerinin yetersiz kaldığı düşüncesiyle Hettne ve Söderbaum tarafından YBY ortaya atılmıştır. Bölgesel entegrasyon çalışmalarını eski ve yeni olmak üzere iki aşamada inceleyen Hettne ve Söderbaum, ilk aşamada yürütülen entegrasyon projelerinin Soğuk Savaş döneminin karakteristik bir özelliği olan korumacılık yaklaşımının etkisi altında başlatıldığını, yeni yaklaşımın ise devlet dışı kurumlar tarafından gönüllülük esasıyla yürütülen entegrasyon projelerini ihtiva ettiğini ifade etmiştir. Bu anlamda YBY, bölgesel entegrasyonu kültürel, ekonomik ve politik boyutları olan ve devlet dışı aktörlerce yürütülen kapsamlı, çok yönlü ve çok boyutlu bir süreç olarak tanımlamıştır. Entegrasyonun başarısının şartı, kültürel, ekonomik ve politik türdeşlik (homogenization) olarak tanımlanmıştır. Teorinin savunucularına göre kültürel türdeşlik entegrasyonun başlaması, ekonomik ve politik türdeşlik ise entegrasyonun ilerlemesi ve başarı kazanması için elzemdir.

Çalışma, Avrasya bölgesinde yürütülen bölgesel entegrasyon süreçlerini 1991-2007 yılları arasında ortaya çıkan temel düzey entegrasyon projeleri ve 2007 yılından Avrasya Ekonomik Birliği'nin (AEB) kurulmasına kadar olan dönemde ortaya çıkan ileri düzey entegrasyon projeleri olmak üzere iki bölümde incelemektedir. Bu çerçevede, çalışmanın ikinci bölümünde entegrasyonun temel düzeyleri olan BDT, Birlik Devleti ve AET ele alınmış, üçüncü bölümde ise AGB, Tek Ekonomik Alan, AEK ve AEB gibi kurumların kuruluşları, kurumsal yapıları ve entegrasyon süreci açısından önemleri üzerinde durulmuştur.

Sovyetler Birliği sonrası Avrasya entegrasyon sürecinin ilk kurumu olan BDT, 1991 yılının Aralık ayında Belarus, Rusya ve Ukrayna arasında imzalanan Minsk

anlaşması ile kurulmuştur. BDT'nin kurucu anlaşması olması dışında bu anlaşma, 1922 yılında kurulan Sovyetler Birliği'nin varlığına uluslararası hukuk açısından son veren anlaşma olması açısından da önemlidir. Yine Aralık ayının 21'inde imzalanan Alma-Ata Anlaşması ile -Gürcistan ve üç Baltık devleti hariç olmak üzere- bağımsızlığını kazanan devletlerin kalanları da Topluluğa dahil edilmiştir. Kurucu anlaşmalar, yalnızca BDT'nin kurulması ve Sovyetler Birliği'nin varlığının sona erdirilmesi hükümlerini ihtiva etmekte, ortak ekonomik alanın yürütülmesi, ortak askeri politikaların belirlenmesi ve nükleer silahların kontrolüne ilişkin herhangi bir hüküm içermemektedir. Birliğin dağılması ile ortaya çıkan sorunların çözülebilmesi amacıyla 1995 yılında BDT Gümrük Birliği kurulması için çalışmalar yürütülmüş, ancak ortak gümrük prosedürleri ve tarifelerinin belirlenememesi ve ülkeler arası vergi sistemlerinin uyumlaştırılmaması gibi nedenlerle başarı sağlanamamıştır. Genel itibarıyla BDT, bir bölgesel bütünleşme projesinden ziyade, daha önce varolan bir yapının sorunsuz bir biçimde dağıtılması amacıyla ortaya çıkarılan bir kurum olarak değerlendirilmektedir. Bu durumun, BDT'yi kuran anlaşmanın uyumsuz politik yönelimler içermesinden kaynaklandığı değerlendirilmektedir. Örneğin, anlaşma ile hem Sovyetler Birliği'nin sona erdirilmesiyle ülkelerin bağımsızlıklarını elde etme süreçleri hızlandırılmakta, hem de ülkeler arası işbirliğinin artırılması amaçlanmaktadır. Söz konusu başarısızlıkta, yeni kazandıkları bağımsızlıklarını kaybetme korkusuyla hareket eden devletlerin süreci ileri taşımakta gönülsüz olmalarının da payı olduğu değerlendirilmektedir. Bütün bu nedenlerle BDT, başarılı bir bölgesel entegrasyon kurumu olarak değil, dönemin Ukrayna devlet başkanı Leonid Kravchuk'un deyimiyle bir çeşit anlaşmalı boşanma aracı olarak tanımlanmış, kurucu anlaşmalarda ve diğer dokümanlarda yer verilen hedefler çoğunlukla uygulama alanı bulamayıp kağıt üstünde kalmıştır.

Avrasya bölgesel entegrasyonunun ikinci temel düzey projesi, Belarus-Rusya Birlik Devleti'dir. Sovyetler Birliği'nin dağılmasıyla bağımsızlıklarını kazanan devletlerin büyük bir kısmını içeren BDT projesinin başarısızlığa uğraması sonucunda, entegrasyona gönüllü ülkeler arasında farklı hızlarda ve düzeylerde entegrasyon projeleri yürütülmesi anlayışı ortaya çıkmıştır. Birlik Devleti, bu anlayış değişikliği sonucunda ortaya çıkan ilk entegrasyon projesidir. Projenin başlatılmasında ekonomik

ve jeopolitik olmak üzere birtakım faktörler önemli rol oynamıştır. Ekonomik faktörler arasında Belarus'un Rusya'dan piyasa fiyatının altında petrol ürünleri satın alması ve ürettiği savunma sanayii menşeli ürünleri Rusya'ya satma imkanı bulması sayılabilir. Jeopolitik olarak ise Baltık ülkeleri, Polonya ve Ukrayna ile sınırı olan Belarus'un Rusya tarafından kilit önemde bir ülke olarak değerlendirilmesi, iki ülkeyi Birlik Devleti projesi altında bütünleşmeye iten faktörlerden biri olarak değerlendirilmektedir. Birlik Devleti'nin kurulma süreci, 1995 yılında iki ülke arasında imzalanan "Dostluk, İyi Komşuluk ve İşbirliği Anlaşması" ile başlatılmış ve ilerleyen yıllarda imzalanan diğer anlaşmalarla devam etmiştir. Bu çerçevede 1999 yılında imzalanan son anlaşma ile iki ülke arasındaki gümrüklerin kaldırılması, ortak mali bütçe oluşturulması ve uygulanması, ortak para birimine geçilmesi ve birtakım yüksek siyasi kurumların kurulması öngörülmüştür. Ancak bir süre sonra, iki ülke tarafından atılan olumlu adımlara rağmen imzalanan anlaşmalarda yer alan hükümleri hayata geçirmenin beklendiği kadar kolay olmadığı ortaya çıkmıştır. Başarısızlığın nedenleri arasında, ülke liderlerinin projeyi farklı bakış açılarıyla değerlendirmesi sayılabilir. Belarus lideri Lukaşenko, projeye ekonomik perspektiften yaklaşp ülkesinin elde edeceği avantajları göz önünde bulundururken, Rusya lideri Putin projeye jeopolitik önem atfetmiştir. İkinci olarak iki ülke arasındaki nüfus ve yüzölçümü ile ekonomik sistem farklılığı, projenin başarısızlığa uğramasında etkili olmuştur. Üçüncü ve son olarak iki ülke arasında sıklıkla yaşanan diplomatik krizler, entegrasyonun ilerlemesine engel olmuştur. Sonuç olarak, önemli ve kapsamlı hedeflerle başlatılan entegrasyon projesi başarısız bir şekilde sonuçlanmış, Birlik Devleti retoriği her iki ülke yönetimi tarafından yalnızca seçim dönemlerinde halk desteği edinmek amacıyla kullanılan bir araçtan öteye gidememiştir.

Avrasya bölgesinde entegrasyonun temel düzeyi olarak kabul edilen projelerin incelendiği bu bölümde ele alınan üçüncü ve son proje AET'dir. Topluluk, 90'lı yılların sonlarından itibaren izlenmeye başlanan farklı hızlarda ve düzeylerde entegrasyon politikasının bir sonucu olarak 2001 yılında kurulmuştur. AET'nin temeli, BDT çerçevesinde 1995 yılında imzalanan ancak başarısızlıkla sonuçlanan BDT Gümrük Birliği olarak kabul edilmektedir. Proje kapsamında ortaya çıkan ilk anlaşma, 1996 yılının Mart ayında Belarus, Kazakistan, Kırgızistan ve Rusya arasında

imzalanan “Entegrasyonun İnsani ve Ekonomik Alanlarda Derinleştirilmesi Anlaşması”dır. Anılan anlaşma ile imzacı ülkeler arasındaki entegrasyonun BDT çatısı altında ekonomik, bilimsel, kültürel ve sosyal alanlara yayılması ve gelişmelerin uluslararası hukukun temel prensipleri doğrultusunda izlenmesi karar altına alınmıştır. 1999 yılında Tacikistan’ın katılımıyla Topluluğun üye sayısı beşe çıkmıştır. 2000 yılında beş ülke arasında AET kurucu antlaşması imzalanmıştır. Kurucu antlaşmanın ülke parlamentolarının onayından geçme tarihi olan 2001 yılının Mayıs ayı, Topluluğun kuruluş tarihi olarak kabul edilir. Antlaşmanın ana hedefleri gümrük birliği ve tek ekonomik alan kurulması olarak belirlenmiştir. Antlaşma metninde imzacı ülkeler tarafından bir uluslararası organizasyon kurulduğu hükmünün yer alması ve Topluluğun birtakım ulusüstü vasıflarla donatılması, Avrasya entegrasyonu açısından önemli gelişmelerdir. Yine Antlaşma ile, BDT içerisinde karar alma süreçlerinde uygulanan oybirliği şartı yerine ağırlıklı oy sisteminin tercih edilmesi, AET projesini diğer projelerin bir adım ötesine taşımaktadır. Bu açılardan Topluluk, Avrasya entegrasyonunda uygulanmaya başlanan proje bazlı yaklaşımın ilk başarılı örneği olarak kabul edilmektedir. Ancak, BDT ve Birlik Devleti örneklerinde de yaşandığı üzere, kurucu anlaşmalarda belirlenen hedeflerin kağıt üzerinde kalması ve uygulama alanı bulamaması nedenleriyle Topluluğun başarısız olduğu kabul edilmiştir. Topluluk, 1 Ocak 2015 tarihinde AEB’nin kurulması ile resmen dağılmıştır.

Çalışmanın üçüncü bölümünde 2007 yılından itibaren kurulmaya başlanan Avrasya entegrasyonunun ileri düzey kurumları incelenmiştir. Yeni dönemin başlamasında, bir önceki bölümde bahsedilen entegrasyon projeleri kapsamında ortaya çıkan kurumların amaçlanan hedeflere ulaşamayarak başarısız olmasının önemli payı bulunmaktadır. Sovyetler Birliği’nin dağılmasının en yıkıcı sonucunun Birlik çerçevesinde yürütülen ekonomi politikalarının parçalanması olduğu düşünüldüğünde, entegrasyon projelerinin neden daima öncelikle bu problemi çözme hedefini belirledikleri sorusu cevabını bulacaktır. Örneğin, dağılmanın ardından ortaya çıkan ilk entegrasyon projesi olan BDT’nin en öncelikli hedefi gümrük birliği kurulması olarak belirlenmiş, ancak 1995 yılında bu amaçla imzalanan anlaşmanın yürürlüğe girememesi nedeniyle proje başarısız olmuştur. 2007 yılına gelindiğinde, yaklaşım ve politika değişikliklerine rağmen problemin devam ediyor olması nedeniyle

entegrasyonun hedeflerinde bir deęişiklik olmamış, gümrük birlięi kurulması hedefi yeni dönemin de öncelikli hedefi olmuştur. Bu amaçla, farklı hızlarda ve düzeylerde entegrasyon yaklaşımının bir tezahürü olarak, Belarus, Kazakistan ve Rusya arasında 2006 yılında gümrük birlięi kurulması çalışmaları başlatılmıştır. Üç ülke arasında 2007 yılında imzalanan antlaşma ile, ekonomi, para ve göç politikalarının koordineli bir biçimde yürütülebilmesi amacıyla AGB'nin kurulması kararlaştırılmıştır. Bu dönemde yaşanan en önemli gelişme, AGB'nin daimi karar alma ve yürütme organı olarak ortaya çıkan ve birtakım ulusüstü vasıflarla donatılmış AGB Komisyonu'nun kurulmasıdır. Bu çerçevede Komisyonu kuran kurucu antlaşmada, imzacı devletlerin gümrük politikaları konusundaki yetkilerinin bir kısmını Komisyon'a devrettikleri ve Komisyon kararlarının bağlayıcı olduęu hususları vurgulanmıştır. İlk defa 2009 yılında toplanan AGB Komisyonu'nun ilk işi, "Ortak Gümrük Tarifesi" belgesinin yayınlanması olmuş ve kararın 1 Ocak 2010'da yürürlüğe girmesiyle birlikte, 1991 yılından beri ilk defa dięer ülkelerle yapılacak dış ticarete ortak gümrük tarifesi uygulanmaya başlanmıştır. 2011 yılının Temmuz ayı itibarıyla ise üç ülke arasındaki gümrük duvarları tamamen kaldırılmıştır.

İmzacı ülkelerin entegrasyonu bir sonraki aşamaya taşıma hedefleri doğrultusunda kurulan ikinci kurum TEA'dır. TEA kurulması, 90'lı yılların başından beri ortaya çıkan projelerin ana hedeflerinden biridir. Ancak geçmiş dönemlerde bu amaçla ortaya konan çabalar, taraf ülkelerde ortaya çıkan halk hareketleri gibi nedenlerle başarısızlıkla sonuçlanmıştır. Bu dönemde ise, AGB sürecinde alınan başarılı sonuçlardan cesaretle, TEA kurulma çalışmalarına tekrar başlanmıştır. Bu çerçevede, 2009 yılında AGB'nin üç üyesince TEA kurulma çalışmalarının başlatılması ve 2012 yılı itibarıyla yürürlüğe girmesi kararlaştırılmıştır. 1 Ocak 2012 itibarıyla TEA'nın kurucu antlaşmalarının yürürlüğe girmesiyle AGB'nin hukuki varlığı sona ermiş, AGB Komisyonu tarafından kullanılan bütün yetkiler TEA çerçevesinde kurulan Avrasya Ekonomik Komisyonu'na (AEK) devredilmiştir. Bu tarihten sonra entegrasyonun daimi yürütme ve düzenleme organı, merkezi Moskova'da bulunan AEK olarak belirlenmiştir. AEK, Sovyetler Birlięi'nin dağılmasının ardından kurulan ilk ulusüstü kurum olması nedeniyle önemlidir. Komisyonun ulusüstü karakterinin bir sonucu olarak, 1991 yılından beri yürürlükte

olan antlaşma esaslı yaklaşım terk edilmiş ve Komisyonca kabul edilen kararlar başkaca bir onay işlemine gerek kalmaksızın AEK ve TEA'nın yasal belgeleri olarak değerlendirilmeye başlanmıştır.

Çalışmanın üçüncü bölümünde Avrasya entegrasyon sürecinin son aşaması olan AEB incelenmiştir. 2014 yılında Astana'da gerçekleştirilen AEK toplantısında üç ülke lideri tarafından AEB'nin kurucu antlaşması imzalanmış, Birliğin 1 Ocak 2015 tarihi itibarıyla tam yetkiyle faaliyete geçmesi ile üç aşamalı sürecin son aşaması tamamlanmıştır. Birliğin kurucuları arasında olan Kazakistan Devlet Başkanı Nursultan Nazabayev, uzun yıllardır bir birlik kurulması konusunda fikir beyan etmekte, bu nedenle Avrasya entegrasyonunun fikir babası olarak kabul edilmektedir. Bu nedenle kurucu anlaşmasının Kazakistan'ın Astana'da gerçekleştirilen zirve sırasında imzalanmasının, Nazarbayev açısından özel bir önem ifade etmektedir. AEB, yeni bir entegrasyon projesinden ziyade daha önce kurulan AET gibi entegrasyon kurumlarının bir devamı olarak kurgulanmış, daha önce imzalanan antlaşmaların Birliğin yasal dokümanları olduğu kabul edilmiştir. Bu bağlamda, AEB'nin kurulması ile birlikte AET'nin varlığı sona ermiştir. İlerleyen yıllarda Ermenistan ve Kırgızistan'ın katılımlarıyla Birliğin üye sayısı beşe çıkmıştır. 2017 yılında imzalanan "AEB Gümrük Kanunu Antlaşması" ile gümrük düzenlemelerinin geliştirilmesi ve devlet kurumları ile özel sektör kurumlarının çıkarları arasında denge sağlanması amaçlanmıştır. Kuruluşu ve faaliyete geçmesi uzun yıllara yayılan bir süreç sonunda gerçekleşen AEB, ulusüstü vasıflara sahip kurumlara sahip olması ve işleyen bir gümrük birliği ile tek ekonomik alanı içermesi gibi açılardan Avrasya entegrasyonu için büyük önem taşımaktadır. Ancak, 2019 yılına gelindiğinde uygulama alanında kuruluş dokümanlarında belirtilen amaçların birçoğunun gerçekleştirilememesi, ilave olarak genişleme hedefine ve bölge ülkeleriyle kurulan diplomatik ilişkilere rağmen birliğin üye sayısında bir gelişme olmaması gibi olgular değerlendirildiğinde Birliğin kuruluş hedeflerinin gerisinde kaldığı değerlendirilmektedir.

Çalışmanın dördüncü bölümünde Avrasya entegrasyon süreci, çalışmanın birinci bölümünde yer verilen bölgesel entegrasyon teorileri çerçevesinde analiz edilmiştir. Daha önce değinildiği gibi, bahse konu teoriler genel itibarıyla AB

entegrasyon sürecinin analiz edilmesi amacıyla geliştirilmiş, Avrasya entegrasyon sürecinin teorik olarak incelendiği bir bilimsel çalışma gerçekleştirilmemiştir. Bu nedenle bu bölümde öncelikle Avrasya entegrasyonunun kendine özgü özellikleri tanımlanmış, ardından bu özellikler teorilerin varsayımları çerçevesinde değerlendirilmiştir. Bu çerçevede Avrasya entegrasyon sürecinin kendine özgü özelliklerinin en başında geleni ve en ayırt edici olan entegrasyon sürecinin ortaya çıkışıdır. Dünyanın diğer bölgelerinde ortaya çıkan bölgesel entegrasyon süreçlerinin aksine Avrasya entegrasyonu, daha önce tek bir yapı içerisinde bulunan ve sonradan dağılan ülkelerin yeniden biraraya gelme çabaları sonucunda ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu açıdan değerlendirildiğinde Avrasya entegrasyon süreci, halihazırda bağımsız olan ülkelerin birleşme arzusundan değil, dağılmakta olan yapının ortaya çıkardığı sorunların çözülmesi ihtiyacından dolayı ortaya çıkmıştır. Sürecin ortaya çıkışı ve ilerleyişi açılarından incelendiğinde, Avrasya entegrasyonunun üç teori tarafından ortaya atılan başarı kriterlerini karşılamadığı görülmüştür. Avrasya entegrasyon sürecini dünyanın diğer bölgelerinde ortaya çıkan entegrasyon süreçlerinden ayıran ikinci temel özelliği, sürecin yürütülmesinden sorumlu aktörlerdir. Her üç teori de entegrasyonun başarılı bir biçimde sürdürülebilmesi ve hedeflerine ulaşabilmesi için çoğulcu bir toplum yapısı, elitlerin varlığı, farklı çıkar gruplarının sürece dahil edilmesi ve aşağıdan yukarı bir yöntem izlenmesi gibi faktörlerin varlığını şart koşarken, Avrasya entegrasyonu Sovyetler Birliği'nin dağılmasından önce yönetimde olup dağılmadan sonra gücünü muhafaza eden dar bir çevre tarafından yukarıdan aşağı bir şekilde ve çoğulcu ve çok sesli toplum yapılarına sahip olmayan hükümetlerce yürütülmektedir. Avrasya entegrasyon sürecinin üçüncü ayırt edici özelliği, entegrasyonun asimetrik doğasıdır. Sürece dahil olan ülkeler, ekonomileri, nüfusları, politik sistemleri ve coğrafi özellikleri gibi açılardan incelendiğinde, ülkeler arasında derin bir asimetri bulunduğu görülmektedir. Bu durum, AEB'nin iki kurucusu olan Rusya ve Belarus karşılaştırıldığında ortaya çıkmaktadır. Rusya ekonomisi, Birlik gayri safi hasılasının yüzde 80'ini kapsarken Belarus yalnızca yüzde 3'ünü karşılamaktadır. Bu açıdan bakıldığında, Rusya'nın birçok açıdan sürecin başat aktörü olduğu sonucu ortaya çıkmaktadır. Diğer taraftan, incelenen teorilerden Yeni Fonksiyoncilik ve YBY açısından, entegrasyon sürecine dahil olan ülkeler

arasındaki homojenlik ve ulusal elitlerin benzer ideolojik yönelimleri sahip olması entegrasyonun başarı şartları arasında sayılmışken, yalnızca Hükümetlerarasıcılık ülkeler arası asimetrinin varlığının entegrasyona engel teşkil etmeyeceğini öngörmüştür. Sürecin geldiği nokta açısından bakıldığında ise, asimetrinin varlığının bütün sürecin kaderini, başat aktör olan Rusya'nın entegrasyon konusunda izleyeceği politikalara bağlı kıldığı ve herhangi bir jeopolitik gerekçe ile entegrasyon kurumlarının işlevsiz kılınabileceği değerlendirilmektedir. Avrasya entegrasyonun dördüncü ve son ayırt edici özelliği, ülke liderlerinin otoriterlik eğilimleridir. Günümüz şartlarında bakıldığında, entegrasyona dahil olan ülkeler tamamı demokratik olmayan sistemlere sahip, bir kısmı otoriter, bir kısmı ise yarı-otoriter liderlerce yönetilen ülkeler olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Bu durumun kaynağı olarak, şeffaf bir biçimde gerçekleştirilmeyen seçimler, gücün liderlerin elinde konsolide edilmesi ve oldukça kısıtlı politik özgürlük ortamı gibi faktörler sayılabilir. Bu şartlar altında üye ülkelerin bir kısmının liderlerinin görev sürelerinin yirmi yılı aştığı görülmektedir. Her üç teoremin de entegrasyonun başarısı için çoğulcu toplumsal yapılara ve demokrasinin varlığına büyük önem atfetmesi nedenleriyle Avrasya entegrasyonu biliminsanları tarafından, gerçek bir entegrasyon süreci olarak nitelendirilmek yerine bir rejim muhafaza aracı veya korumacı entegrasyon olarak nitelendirilmekte ve entegrasyon retoriğinin ülke liderleri tarafından rejimlerine bir meşruiyet sağlama aracı olarak kullanıldığı ileri sürülmektedir.

Sonuç olarak, çalışmada incelenen üç teori açısından değerlendirildiğinde, Rusya öncülüğünde ortaya çıkan ve yürütülen Avrasya entegrasyon sürecinin başarıya ulaşma şansının bulunmadığı görülmüştür. Bu bağlamda, entegrasyon sürecinin beklenen çıktıları üretebilmesi ve iki entegrasyon bloğunun başarılı bir biçimde işbirliği yapabilmesi için birtakım köklü reformların yapılması gerektiği değerlendirilmektedir. Bunların başında her bir ülkede demokrasinin güçlenebilmesi için gerekli ortamın oluşturulması gelmektedir. Bilindiği üzere demokratik olmayan ülkeler, geleceğe dair güvenilir taahhütlerde bulunama kapasitelerinin kısıtlı olması nedeniyle sık sık zorluklarla karşılaşabilmektedir. Demokrasinin güçlendirilerek sürece dahil edilmesinin, entegrasyona dahil olan ülkeler arasındaki asimetriden kaynaklanan problemlerin çözülmesi hususunda da fayda sağlayacağı

düşünülmektedir. Bu anlamda, birçok açıdan Avrasya bölgesinde entegrasyonun öncüsü olarak kabul edilen Rusya'nın demokrasiye geçiş için gerekli reformları gerçekleştirmesi elzemdir. Diğer yandan, Avrasya entegrasyon sürecinin yukarıdan aşağı bir yöntemle ve gerek halkların, gerekse elitlerin katılımı olmadan yürütülmesinin, sürecin zayıf yönlerinden bir başkası olduğu değerlendirilmektedir. Bu noktada, bu durumun demokrasinin geliştirilmesi ve süreçlere dahil edilmesi yoluyla ortadan kaldırılabileceği, ilave olarak sürecin geleceğinin ve kaderinin ülke liderleri gibi kısıtlı sayıdaki insanın iradesine bağımlı olması sorununa da çözüm olabileceği değerlendirilmektedir. Yine demokrasinin güçlendirilmesi yoluyla hukukun üstünlüğü ve kanun önünde eşitlik gibi ilkelerin uygulanmasına elverişli bir ortam hazırlanabilmekte, bu sayede başarılı bir bölgesel entegrasyonun temel şartlarından biri olan ekonomik özgürleşme yolunda ilerleme sağlanabileceği değerlendirilmektedir. Avrasya entegrasyonunun diğer bir zayıf yönü, üye ülkelerin düşük yönetim ve kurumsal kapasitelere sahip olmasıdır. Bu anlamda her bir üye ülke tarafından kapsamlı yapısal reformlar gerçekleştirilmesi gerektiği değerlendirilmektedir. Birlik antlaşması ile Komisyon'a birtakım ulusüstü yetkiler tanımlanmış olmasına ve alınan kararların bütün üyeleri bağlamasına rağmen dönem dönem Komisyon kararlarının üye ülkelerce uygulanmaması gibi nedenlerle bu yetkiler yalnızca kağıt üzerinde kalmıştır. Bu bağlamda yönetsel kapasiteyi artıracak yerel yapısal reformlara ilave olarak, ulusüstü kurumların hiçbir üye ülkeden emir almadan ve etkisi altında kalmadan çalışmasına imkan verecek yasal düzenlemelerin yapılması gerektiği değerlendirilmektedir.

Avrasya entegrasyon süreci, deklare edilen hedefler açısından bakıldığında iki entegrasyon bloğunun koordineli olarak çalışması gibi büyük amaçlarla başlatılan geniş kapsamlı bir projedir. Ancak yukarıda da bahsedildiği üzere süreç, sürecin başarısı önünde engel olarak duran gerek tarihsel gerekse güncel birtakım negatif özelliklerle özdeşleşmiş durumdadır. Bu negatif özelliklere ilave olarak son yıllarda bölgede gerçekleşen Rusya-Ukrayna çatışması ve Kırım'ın Rusya tarafından ilhak edilmesi gibi birtakım olaylar, entegrasyon açısından olumsuz bir atmosferin ortaya çıkmasına neden olmuş ve denklemin çözümünü zorlaştırmıştır. Bu bağlamda, AB ve AEB arasındaki uzlaşmazlıkların ortadan kaldırılması için yeni diyalog kanallarının

geliştirilmesinin, gerek entegrasyon özelinde başarının, gerekse bölge genelinde huzurun ve barışın sağlanabilmesi için elzem olduğu değerlendirilmektedir.

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