

Foreword

The last decades have witnessed the clash of the previously powerful Soviet Union and the rise of dozens of new independent states. At the same time 1990s became the starting point for the increased completion and divergent development of two main forms of regional integration, the European Union and the Eurasian projects.

Although attempts of building a “Common European Home” or Greater Europe “Lisbon to Vladivostok” are over and could hardly be implemented, the further steps towards greater convergence between different parts of the Greater Eurasia are still in place. While the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) is seen as the most advanced form of the post-Soviet space integration, the Chinese initiative “One Belt, One Road” (OBOR) dated on 2013 could mark the new stage of global development.

The emerging connectivity between two Eurasian integration projects pose a new challenge to the European Union as a global actor and other “Western-style” geopolitical projects. The countries located “in between” could also be affected by suggested policy options.

The volume *Economic and Geopolitical Perspectives of the Commonwealth of Independent States and Eurasia*, edited by Oxana Karnaukhova, Alexandra Udovikina, and Bryan Christiansen, addresses several trends and challenges through studies of the CIS and the Greater Eurasia region.

The opening chapter of Sheila M. Puffer and Daniel J. McCarthy gives the historical background of the political and economic developments through two main stages - from the origins of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in the 1920s to the crash of the Soviet Union in 1991, and from 1992 to 2017.

Next, Bryan Christiansen emphasizes the long-term effects of globalization on the CIS and Eurasia and warns from underestimating their role within the globalization trends.

Mariana Gonçalves Dias and Aurora Amélia Castro Teixeira continue the discussion on globalization with the analysis of geopolitical factors in the decision-making process. The special focus is on the national economy of Russian Federation as the dominating geopolitical partner within the EEU project.

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According to Duane Windsor, among systemic issues raised in the CIS countries is the problem of corruption. He focuses on indicators given by Transparency International (TI). This inquiry demonstrates the vital problems of “kleptocracy,” and “business oligarchy”, which are common for all authoritative countries.

Aijarkyn Kojobekova introduces the idea of efficiency of the post-Soviet states by discussing two concepts in the CIS relations – close historical ties with long-standing partnership relations and the economic restructuring of Russia. The opposing partnership composition is reflected in the nationalistic discourse in Kyrgyzstan.

Nataliya Berbyuk Lindström and Cheryl Marie Cordeiro use discourse analysis to demonstrate spurring national images in the Swedish and Russian news media with the case of IKEA.

John David Branch describes a higher education (HE) vacuum in the disciplines of economics and business created by the USSR crash. At the same time he demonstrates the development of a wide range of new educational initiatives by government, not-for-profit organizations, and foreign institutions. So the events of 1990s prompt HE transnationalization in the Baltic States.

The “Sovereign Democracy” concept is discussed by Neziha Musaoğlu. The foreign policy of Russian Federation experienced dramatic changes since the 2000s from the ‘romantique’ to ‘pragmatic’ stage. The concept of sovereign democracy constitutes the source of antiglobalism of the Russian policy towards the West.

Mehmet Durnalı, Şenol Orakcı, and Orhan Özkan turn the attention from the CIS countries to Turkey and continue discussion on Higher Education development and influence of globalization on human capital potential.

The next part of the volume continues the discussion of curriculum reforms in Turkey within the framework of the Higher Education internationalization. The specific focus is given on the changes happened in 2004. As Mehmet Durnalı, Şenol Orakcı, and Orhan Özkan stated, the Eurasian countries have an opportunity to increase their development and contribute to the macro-regional economic and geopolitical importance of the Eurasia as a whole.

Next, Khemis Mohammed analyses components of the USSR hegemonic power, which are large territory, large populations, and solid industrial base. He argues that although after the dissolution of the Soviet Union the CIS has lost some components of influence, it still attempts to overtake the symbolic image of the post-Soviet region to revise a powerful multilateral organization in realms of security, trade, and finance.

The volume is seen as a collection of cases on the CIS and Eurasian regional development. It covers a variety of problems in the geopolitical positioning of the Eurasian macroregion and independent states of the former Soviet Union.

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Victor Apryshchenko is professor of the Institute of History and International Relations at the Southern Federal University. He is the author of a number of publications including few monographs on history and politics of European nationalism including recently published *'Memory and Securitization in Contemporary Europe'*. He is a member of the Association for the Study of Ethnicity and Nationalism (LSE, London) and Russian Society of Intellectual History (Institute of Universal History, Moscow). He is also a member of the editorial boards of *'Cogito. Almanac of History of Ideas'*, *'British Studies'*, and *'Man of Secondary Fiddle'*. He is the Deputy Director of EU Center at South-West of Russia and Head of MA programme in Ethnic and Confessional Issues in Modern World. In 2004 Victor Apryshchenko was awarded the Royal Society of Edinburgh Fellowship (Edinburgh), in 2007 was a recipient of Carnegie Foundation Fellowship, and in 2011 Paulsen Fellowship (LSE, London). Victor Apryshchenko is Academic Coordinator of the Jean Monnet NEMESIS Network.