



PAPEL DA EAEU NA FORMAÇÃO DE ALIANÇAS POLÍTICAS E ECONÔMICAS: DESAFIOS E PERSPECTIVAS

ROLE OF THE EAEU IN THE FORMATION OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ALLIANCES: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

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RESUMO

Histórico: A questão do papel da União Econômica Eurasiática na formação de alianças econômicas e políticas continua relevante. A análise de documentos e opiniões de especialistas mostra que, atualmente, há muitas questões fundamentais não resolvidas no funcionamento da EAEU, associadas aos interesses divergentes das elites políticas e aos interesses econômicos das empresas. Isso sugere uma falta de coordenação da política econômica e um papel insuficiente na formação de alianças econômicas e políticas.

O artigo tem como objetivo identificar os principais fatores que impedem a formação e o funcionamento da EAEU como uma aliança.

Materiais e métodos: Foram analisados vários artigos científicos e casos reais de resolução de conflitos relacionados à EAEU.

Resultados: Como resultado do estudo realizado, os principais problemas que impedem a formação completa de alianças econômicas e políticas foram sistematizados com a ajuda de instrumentos políticos. A falta de vontade dos estados-membros da EAEU de se comprometerem, o desejo de controlar todas as áreas de cooperação em seus territórios e as





diferenças nas prioridades geográficas não permitem a criação de uma política coordenada unificada.

Conclusão: A falta de vontade de limitar os interesses nacionais é um impedimento fundamental para a formação de alianças estratégicas.

Palavras-chave: Integração; Curso político; Espaço de mercado único; Conflito armado; Interesse geopolítico; Soberania.

ABSTRACT

Background: The issue of the Eurasian Economic Union's role in the formation of economic and political alliances remains relevant. The analysis of documents and expert opinions shows that currently, there are many unresolved fundamental issues in the EAEU's functioning associated with the divergent interests of political elites and the economic interests of business. This suggests a lack of coordination of economic policy and an insufficient role in the formation of economic and political alliances.

The paper aims to identify the main factors hindering the EAEU's formation and functioning as an alliance.

Materials and methods: Several scientific papers and real conflict resolution cases related to the EAEU were analyzed.

Results: As a result of the conducted study, the key problems hindering the full-fledged formation of economic and political alliances were systematized with the help of political instruments. EAEU member states' unwillingness to commit, desire to control all areas of cooperation on their territories, and differences in geographical priorities do not allow for building a unified coordinated policy.

Conclusion: The unwillingness to limit national interests is a key deterrent to forming strategic alliances.

Keywords: Integration; Political course; Single market space; Armed conflict; Geopolitical interest; Sovereignty.

1 INTRODUCTION

The organization and implementation of globalization have determined the formation of political and economic integration associations. The analysis of the general practice of their creation shows that most often associations are created on an economic basis. By stabilizing the internal political situation in member states, they exert a gradual influence through political mechanisms and the expansion of the legal contractual framework. In some cases, crisis phenomena are observed among the members of such associations. More often, they are on the verge of disintegration for political reasons.





Moscow's initiative to create the Eurasian Economic Union was meant to strengthen its influence by creating a regional economic bloc of countries with the help of a single market space and a customs union. Initially, the task was to reduce the influence of foreign trade and economic and political associations on the EAEU countries. In the assessments of researchers and experts, the EAEU is not an integration association pursuing a coordinated international foreign policy, but a four-tier organization with a limited set of supranational competencies (Zaikina, 2022). The EAEU member states have a common political discourse, but their goals for joining this bloc differ (political influence, economy, security, political conflict, territorial dispute). The members are not ready to consolidate political and economic national courses in the face of sanctions and the special military operation in Ukraine (Glazatova & Daniltsev, 2020). The sanctions pressure on Russia has harmed all EAEU member states (primarily their logistics, monetary and currency relations, exports, and imports) (Korovnikova, 2023). The current agenda is the EAEU's role: does it promote Russian interests or is it an integration association? According to experts, Eurasian integration cannot replace political relations with Western countries.

The purpose of the paper is to identify the main factors preventing the resolution of conflicts between the EAEU members.

2 METHODS AND MATERIALS

To achieve this goal, we collected and analyzed scientific literature on the topic for 2016-2024. Our analysis formed the foundation of the study and the main lines of thought in this field.

Based on the theoretical basis, 2024 news articles were selected to confirm and analyze the statistical data presented in research papers. Using research papers and news articles, we analyzed specific cases of cooperation and conflicts within the EAEU and between the EAEU and other organizations.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The key development area of the Russian Federation's economic policy in the context of sanctions and competition is the development of exports. In foreign policy, the model of strategic alliances is important for strengthening Russia's positions (Yakushev, 2018). The features of Eurasian regionalization include the opportunities for forming economic alliances





and informal institutions with the world's leading economies in South Asian countries that have economic and geopolitical meaning. Qualitative transformations of cooperation models determine the emergence of new socially conservative ideologies that integrate world confessional values and sustainable development (Glazyev, 2016). According to researchers, many geopolitical alliances, by their attitudes, act as a factor in undermining the established world order. Their functioning is often based on the principle of being friends “against” someone. NATO is an example of such a conflict-prone alliance. Such confrontations divert significant resources from the member states. The ideas and principles forming the Eurasian project’s basis go beyond its borders.

Our analysis shows that joining alliances entails political risks. Civilizational conflicts can take the form of cultural and value annexations manifested in rejecting fundamental civilizational values. Thus, in the EU, family values and Christian principles are rejected leading to the decline of the local population and its gradual replacement by representatives of the Islamic faith. Most interstate alliances, including the EU, are prone to confrontation with the EAEU. This results in attempts to organize multimodal transport corridors, bypassing Russian territory. Any alliance, in addition to political and economic integration, must have transport communications sufficient for interaction. Russia has land and sea transport capabilities to organize alliances (Leksin, 2022).

The main goal of the EAEU created for regional economic integration is the formation of a single market for capital, labor, goods, and services and international cooperation between the member states’ economies. The EAEU has an international legal standing (Pynko, 2024). Currently, we note productive cooperation between the EAEU and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (GDP of participants in 2021: 50.5%), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) (GDP of participants in 2021: 24.5%), and Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS) (GDP of participants in 2021: 27%). The alliances with the SCO and ASEAN are priorities of Russian state policy determining the need to create a joint geopolitical space for development. However, there are collective judgments regarding Russia's role in the EAEU’s integration processes with other alliances and its leading positions in the post-Soviet space, which affects potential partnerships. The Ukraine-related sanctions against Russia show the disunity of the EAEU members towards Russia. The EAEU is viewed as a project of the elites rather than the societies of the member states.

Each alliance is distinguished by a different degree of consolidation of territorial communities. The simultaneous participation of some EAEU members in the SCO and





BRICS confirms this. The SCO is characterized by a strong consolidation of the commonwealth, and BRICS – by a neutral sanction integration potential. The ASEAN's creation was meant to distance the member states from the political influence of major world powers. These cooperation formats are distinguished by their heterogeneous content. Despite sanctions, Indonesia, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, Thailand, Mongolia, and Singapore are interested in cooperating with the macroregion within the framework of the free trade zone (Akopova et al., 2023). Such cooperation models have become widespread because they contribute to balanced value chains. The number of observers and partner countries is growing. The consolidation of the efforts by the SCO and BRICS actors around the EAEU conditionally divides the EAEU space into two macro levels, forming a security belt and conditions for the strategic development of a cross-border region (Golovina, 2021).

These value and semantic-based foundations are important for the preservation of the civilizational identity of most states. Following global economic trends, the structure of interstate political and economic interests is unstable despite the declaration of values in official documents. One can observe hidden inclusions in other states' geopolitical plans and interests. For example, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan, which tend to develop a multi-vector foreign policy, demonstrate similar approaches to economic and political cooperation today. This approach has short-term benefits. The consequence of these processes is the instability of the bloc-related political and economic spaces in the EAEU. On the one hand, this contributes to the planning and implementation of megaprojects between alliances. On the other hand, this slows down the implementation of such projects until better times. An example of such a project is the multimodal cargo transportation system from the PCR to the EU, the New Silk Road passing through the EAEU member states. The destabilization of relations between the US, the EU, and Russia led to the fact that the PRC changed its intentions, redirecting its cargo and bypassing Russian territories. Another EAEU megaproject is the Northern Sea Route initiative. Due to sanctions, the development of non-transshipment foreign trade between the EU and the Asia-Pacific countries is held back. A specific world order adjusts projects on cross-border cooperation between interstate alliances. The third example is related to the international North-South multimodal transport corridor, three branches of which pass through the EAEU member states. The SCO shows interest in it, but its full-fledged implementation is hindered mainly by infrastructure restrictions, and serious work is already underway to overcome them (Azerbaijan and Russia cooperate with Iran which is under sanctions; the PRC cooperates with Kyrgyzstan even though it is under secondary sanctions for economic





cooperation with Russia). External players often try to disrupt such local world orders through the turbulent influence of international armed conflicts (for example, Ukraine/Russia, Kyrgyzstan/Tajikistan, Azerbaijan/Armenia), or color revolutions (for example, in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Georgia, etc.), violating the internal social order. It is possible to overcome this within the framework of the co-evolution model based on the perception of the EAEU as a beneficial political and economic alliance and the establishment of new world orders. However, there are other political tools to block the development of members in inter-country alliances widely used today. This includes sanctions, protectionist duties and tariffs, customs delays in transit goods, restrictions on technology exports, asset blocking, and others (Leksin, 2023).

Assessing the EAEU's role in the formation of economic and political alliances, J.G. Golodova and N.V. Grechkin critically evaluate the possibilities of this bloc in terms of financial integration. The authors systematize political and economic contradictions and highlight many problems in bilateral relations. According to Golodova and Grechkin (2022), the full implementation of the integration model requires limiting the national sovereignty of the EAEU member states in the economy and politics, and they are not ready for this.

According to M.S. Komov, the effectiveness of the development of international alliances largely depends on the EAEU member states' transit potential as a source of economic resources to replenish national budgets. Its full implementation requires investments in infrastructure projects and diversification of integration processes, and it is advisable to create alliances with other blocs to expand mutual opportunities. Based on 2013-2020 data on the cargo turnover of the EAEU countries, Komov assesses its impact on the profitability of the transport system and concludes the statistical instability of this influence stating that the transit potential was used inefficiently. The author suggests that the effective realization of the EAEU's transport potential partly depends on interaction with competing political and economic alliances (Komov, 2022).

The EAEU pursues a targeted policy to expand friendly relations (with India, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America). However, the EAEU's success remains largely declarative. This argument is supported by the unstable interest in participation in the EAEU on the part of Tajikistan, where entry into the EAEU has not been raised at the level of the internal political agenda. Tajikistan announced that it studied Kyrgyzstan's experience to support the statement that the EAEU is a project for political elites rather than business, for which it poses a threat (Alekseenkova et al., 2017). Kyrgyzstan has received considerable economic benefits from joining the EAEU. However, due to the multi-vector nature of its foreign policy,





it also shows an unstable interest in participating in the bloc. Uzbekistan has shown neutrality towards EAEU membership, limiting itself to observer status (TRT na russkom, 2023). Thus, the EAEU does not represent a coordinated financial, economic, and customs force (Devyatkov, 2017; Podymov, 2023).

4 CONCLUSIONS

The EAEU as a cross-border entity is currently characterized by institutional immaturity. It is premature to say that the EAEU member states are integrated into the global trading system. The EAEU is trying to use some instruments to develop external alliances (memorandums of cooperation, non-preferential trade agreements, free trade zone agreements).

The main problem of building relationships with partners is their unwillingness and reluctance to assume obligations to comply with the requirements of contracts and attempts to eliminate tariff and non-tariff barriers. The EAEU is forced to approach each potential and current member in a different form and at a different speed to form political and economic alliances. The creation of free trade zones is complicated by the EAEU members' desire to control trade in services and investments manifested in the unwillingness to assume agreed obligations. According to some EAEU members, the single market of this bloc does not function properly. The EAEU members, despite belonging to the bloc, have different geographical priorities in politics (establishing good political relations) and the economy (organizing complementary trade flows and protectionism, lifting tariff and non-tariff restrictions, balancing benefits from investments). Most often this refers to the EU and China. The trade deficit between the PRC and the EAEU members hinders the formation of political and economic alliances. Investment, transport, and logistics projects are attractive sectors for EAEU cooperation. In the EAEU itself, a common approach to political and economic participation has not been formed among the member states because few are ready to sacrifice their national sovereignty and interests.

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