

**Regime of Good-Neighborliness:
Kazakh-Russian Relationship in the Wake of
Ukrainian Crisis**

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Abstract

The outbreak of Ukrainian Crisis and the Russian involvement in its development have seriously influenced foreign policy agenda all around the world. More important for Russia, it has created serious reverberations in the Near Abroad – geographical area, which was traditionally attributed to the Russian sphere of interests. Rejecting the traditional security and geopolitical approaches towards explaining Russian activity in the Southern neighborhood, this research is aimed at giving an Institutionalist interpretation of the relationship between Russia and its biggest post-Soviet partner - Kazakhstan. Upon examination of the progress made in Kazakh-Russian relationship from 2005 through the lenses of Regime theory, this research underlines the transformation taking place inside of their formal arrangements and the chances of Astana to find a better position in cooperating with Moscow. By contextualizing the events and the processes occurring on the bilateral and multilateral-integration level, as well as pointing out the key-interests and preferences of Nazarbayev leadership, this thesis accentuates the obligations and role performed by Russia as an imposer of the regime vis-à-vis Kazakh government. It characterizes the regime, its main principles and conditions required for its change, which are all present in the wake of Ukrainian Crisis. In addition, it provides the hints of the further development.

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Introduction

“We are neighbors; nobody selects the neighbors, neighbors given by God. Our ancestors, we, and our descendants will live in the same way. It is much better to strengthen relations and construct a basis for the future”, - Nazarbayev to Putin during Interregional Cooperation Forum in Yekaterinburg, Russia, 2013.¹

Rising opinion about Russia as a revisionist power in the light of the Ukrainian events, assumes that it will review the status quo and will use the similar tactics of making other post-Soviet republics comply with its interests. Given that the most part of them depend on Russia in number of ways either on bilateral and/or multilateral levels, and are a home for sizable Russian communities, the Ukrainian conflict may strongly influence their perspectives of dealing with a ‘Big Brother’ in Moscow. Those countries which share a common border and competing interests with Russia, face a challenging international situation and may express their anxiety in foreign policy.

For Kazakh government the infringement of Ukrainian territorial integrity is believed to pose a serious threat.² Kazakhstan also possesses a sizeable ethnic Russian population (more than 20%), mostly settled in the North, along the longest landborder on the continent - with Russia, so the pretext of protecting Russian minority may be exploited. In addition the rising activity of cooperation between Kazakhstan and China, the biggest Russian competitor, are strengthening the impression of Astana’s fear.³ With the public exchange of statements concerning Kazakh statehood (by Putin)⁴ and perspectives of withdrawal from the Eurasian

¹ Editorial Board of the Official Website of the President of Russia, “Press-Release on the Results of the Interregional Cooperation Forum of Russia and Kazakhstan,” *President of Russia*, accessed June 2, 2015, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/19600>.

² Abdujalil Abdurasulov, “Could a ‘Ukrainian Scenario’ Play out in Kazakhstan?,” *BBC News*, accessed May 19, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26549796>.

³ “Kazakhstan Drifts to China Amid Tension with Russia,” accessed May 17, 2015, <http://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles/item/12888-kazakhstan-drifts-to-china-amid-tension-with-russia.html>.

⁴ Ian Traynor and Europe editor, “Kazakhstan Is Latest Russian Neighbour to Feel Putin’s Chilly Nationalist Rhetoric,” *The Guardian*, accessed March 14, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/01/kazakhstan-russian-neighbour-putin-chilly-nationalist-rhetoric>.

Union (by Nazarbaev)⁵ the consensus of media perceiving Kazakhstan's actions as a try to secure itself rises.

At the same time, the leadership of Nazarbayev, the biggest 'friend' of Putin after Lukashenko, is continuing a "verbal balancing act."⁶ The reaction of the regime hardly indicates any particular concern over the crisis and its developments toward Kazakhstan. During the events in Crimea Nazarbayev addressed to his Russian counterpart in the phone call, saying that Kazakhstan as strategic partner of Russia understands its commitment to protect the interests of the national minorities.⁷ The Kazakh Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) stated on the referendum in Crimea, naming it "free expression of popular will".⁸ Nazarbayev also commented on Euromaidan events implying that with all violations of international legal norms, it is the fault of Ukrainian authorities since they mismanaged their foreign relations and prioritized politics over economic prosperity. He noted that the sanctions will be useless, albeit they might affect the economy of Kazakhstan.⁹ The same position was expressed by Kazakhstan in the multilateral discussions under EEU with Belarus.¹⁰

As for the recognition of Luhansk and Donetsk republics, several new agencies report that Kazakh MFA did not give any comments; the representatives limit their statements to "it

⁵ "Russian and Kazakh Leaders Exchange Worrying Statements," accessed April 30, 2015, <http://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/field-reports/item/13050-russian-and-kazakh-leaders-exchange-worrying-statements.html>.

⁶ Joanna Lillis, "Kazakhstan: Ukraine Crisis Cements Astana In Russia's Orbit," *EurasiaNet*, April 1, 2014, <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/68218>.

⁷ "Phone Conversation with Russian President Vladimir Putin," *Official Site of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan*, March 10, 2014, http://akorda.kz/en/page/page_216113_telefonnyi-razgovor-s-prezidentom-rossiiskoi-federatsii-vladimirom-putiny.

⁸ "Kazakhstan is sympathetic to the Russian decision on Crimea," *RIA NOVOSTI*, accessed May 21, 2015, <http://ria.ru/world/20140318/1000082522.html>.

⁹ "Press-Briefing Following the Official Visit to the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Participation at the Nuclear Security Summit in The Hague," *Official Site of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan*, March 25, 2014, http://www.akorda.kz/en/page/page_216254_brifing-po-itogam-uchastiya-v-rabote-sammita-po-yadernoi-bezopasnosti-v-gaage.

¹⁰ "Putin, Lukashenko and Nazarbayev discussed the Ukrainian Crisis," *PCH*, accessed May 21, 2015, <http://rusnovosti.ru/posts/335959>.

is very difficult question”¹¹ – the universal formula given 7 years ago to Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Kazakhstan did abstain from voting on resolution on territorial integrity of Ukraine in the General Assembly, but this principle was emphasized by Nazarbayev during his meeting with Poroshenko.¹²

How should one classify the relationship pattern of the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan and whether this classification implies the existence of a certain mechanism of response to crisis situations?

Qualified as a multidimensional regime, Kazakh-Russian relationship does experience transformation in the wake of Ukrainian Crisis, and Kazakhstan tries to find its position and acquire the status-quo. Nevertheless, these changes do not alter the underlying norms and principles of continuing Eurasian integration and cooperation with Russia, but taken together with the Ukrainian Crisis, they are likely to increase the power of Astana in their cooperation framework in the long run which can ultimately result in the ultimate shift in the mutual arrangements. Keeping in mind the high complexity of the cooperation and negotiation pattern and the challenges faced by Kazakhstan, and avoiding the perspectives of threats and state security, which are popular in application towards Russia dealing with its CA neighbors, the primary objective of this thesis will be to provide an alternative explanation of the nature of the relationship through the prism of the Regime Theory, norms, principles, and bargaining happening between two neighbors.

Kazakhstan and Russia

Looking at Kazakh—Russian relationship from the perspectives of Regimes is justified both by the nature of Kazakh foreign policy and by its specific focus on Russia. On the international arena, it pursues multi-vector policy with the strong normative content and

¹¹ “Has Kazakhstan recognized the results of the elections in Donetsk and Luhansk?,” *Kursiv.kz*, accessed May 21, 2015,

http://www.kursiv.kz/news/details/vlast/priznaet_li_kazakhstan_itogi_vyborov_v_nepriznannykh_dnr_i_lnr/.

¹² “Kazakhstan Supports Territorial Integrity of Ukraine,” *Official Web-Site of President of Ukraine*, accessed May 21, 2015, <http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/31971.html>.

emphasis on international cooperation. This concept was numerously restated on the diplomatic and state level, most recent in “Foreign Policy Concept for 2014 – 2020 Republic of Kazakhstan”.¹³ Underlining the goal of economic development, fulfillment of the national strategies, its internal and external characteristics, geography and necessities of preserving sovereignty and security of the state Kazakhstan seeks for the widest possible participation on the regional and world arena of politics. In accordance with such ambitious vision, Kazakhstan actively develops its foreign relations both on bilateral and multilateral level, cooperates with and within international organizations and integration projects. Stated by the Concept, the main principles are equality of the states, non-interference into the internal affairs, mutual benefit, collective conflict-resolution on the basis of UN Charter and international public law.

In the case of Russia, the framework of Regime theory can be justified both by the extent and the depth of bilateral and multilateral cooperation developed after the collapse of the Soviet Union in October, 1992. Currently, relations with Russia are set in the top of the country-priority list and are guided by The Treaty on Good-Neighborliness and Alliance in the XXI century. On the multilateral level, together with Belarus, Kazakhstan stays in the ideological and lobby core of Russia’s interest-sphere in all of the regional post-Soviet cooperation schemes, not only security arrangements, and an integral part of the CIS and EEU as a co-founder. It was Nazarbayev who voiced the idea Eurasian integration in the lecture given at Moscow State University in 1994. Thus, it might not only be an effective stabilizer of Russian policies in the CA, but also a full-fledged legitimate partner and negotiator of its own will.

The extent of cooperation is also remarkable. With its increasing population of 17 million people Kazakhstan is the first Russian partner on the border with Central Asia in its

¹³ “Foreign Policy Concept for 2014 – 2020 Republic of Kazakhstan” (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, April 25, 2014), <http://mfa.gov.kz/index.php/en/foreign-policy/foreign-policy-concept-for-2014-2020-republic-of-kazakhstan>.

independent history. In 2014 15% of Kazakh trade turnover is taken by Russia as well as 33 % of its imports.¹⁴ Considerable part of oil and gas is exported from Kazakhstan with the use of the pipelines and sea ports lying on the Russian territory. Connections exist on the social level between the cities, educational and scientific institutions. Taken with the state-level legal arrangements, such scope definitely requires rules and procedures as well as the bargaining occurring on the every level for the progress of integration.

Third reason, regime requires the patterned behavior and, in this regard, Russian-Georgian conflict of 2008 and Kazakh government's response perfectly underlines its existence. Reaction of Kazakhstan was identical to 2014: Nazarbayev also addressed to the Russian President in the phone conversation, expressing his condemnation of the actions of Georgia in South Ossetia and argued for attraction of the wider international attention to the hostilities.¹⁵ At the same time, Kazakhstan did not support Russia by recognizing Abkhazia and South Ossetia.¹⁶

The majority of specialists on Russian-CA relationship (including Kazakhstan) would incline to analyze this situation through the perspectives of security, energy,¹⁷ and geopolitics. Russian interest towards Central Asia was characterized primarily by security in 'reacting to developments largely beyond its control'¹⁸ or as 'multilateral security cooperation' with an economic dimension.¹⁹ The governments and leadership of the CA states are believed to possess few interests, including security of regime and balancing

¹⁴ Committee on Statistics, "Major Foreign Trade Indicators of the Republic of Kazakhstan for January-September 2014 by country" (Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Committee on Statistics, 2014), <http://stat.gov.kz/getImg?id=ESTAT089501>.

¹⁵ "Nursultan Nazarbayev and Dmitry Medvedev had a phone conversation," *Zakon.kz*, accessed May 21, 2015, <http://www.zakon.kz/60669-sostojalsja-telefonnyjj-razgovor.html>.

¹⁶ "MFA Kazakhstan: recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia is an issue," *vesti.ru*, accessed May 21, 2015, <http://www.vesti.ru/doc.html?id=213090>; "Kazakhstan refused to recognize independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia," *Izvestia*, accessed May 21, 2015, <http://izvestia.ru/news/436044>.

¹⁷ Shamil Midkhatovich Yenikeeff, "Energy Interests of the 'Great Powers' in Central Asia: Cooperation or Conflict?," *The International Spectator* 46, no. 3 (September 2011): 61–78, doi:10.1080/03932729.2011.601115.

¹⁸ Dmitri Trenin, "Southern Watch: Russia's Policy in Central Asia," *Journal of International Affairs* 56, no. 2 (Spring 2003): 124.

¹⁹ Lena Jonson, *Vladimir Putin and Central Asia: The Shaping of Russian Foreign Policy, Culture and Society in Western and Central Asia 1* (London ; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 93–99.

between the great powers. It is hard to find a single-separate country security analysis, while the dominant majority is focused on CA as a region. If separate interests are mentioned, then they serve as a support for the generalization

The cooperation of Kazakhstan and Russia are more than struggle for security, it is the process of constant bargaining over objectives and emergence and compliance with the rules. In order to understand whether any changes in the perception of the Kazakh-Russian relationship occurred, the actions of Astana during this crisis should be contextualized in the most recent cooperation history on bilateral and multilateral level starting from 2005 and juxtaposed to its attitude in the time of similar events during the Georgian Crisis. This contextualization should follow the identification of the principles and norms, and the rules and procedures, guiding the regime.

The thesis will be organized in five parts: the first chapter will give justification for rejecting realist thinking on the situation, the second one will establish the Regime theory and provide clarification of methodology. The third and the forth chapter will focus on the analysis of three major formal cooperation arrangement involving Kazakhstan: CSTO, EEU, and SCO. The analysis will be aimed at determining the specific characteristics of the regime and how it affected the negotiating power of Kazakhstan *vis-à-vis* Russia. The fifth part will summarize the main findings and show how they are related to the crisis situation of 2015. The ultimate objective is to show that through manipulating different cooperation patterns Kazakhs manage to increase their negotiating power in relation to Moscow and to influence the rules and procedures of the regime.

1. How to approach?

Probably, one of the major difficulties in conducting an inquiry of the Russian-Kazakh relationship is evaluating their interaction pattern. In other words, how one should consider their relationship is the question to ask. The ways connecting the Kremlin and Astana stretch throughout the economic, political and cultural spheres. Both states were willing to uphold a lot of cooperation patterns after the collapse of the Soviet Union and extend them into the sovereign reality of CIS. At the same time, after a while, both states have come to the conclusion that new mechanisms of collective action should be invented which closely reflect the patterns of Western-style interstate organizations. The selection of the theoretical approach to the Russian-Kazakh relationship and the relevance of the Ukrainian crisis therefore depend on answers to the following questions: what are the driving imperatives of cooperation between states? How should one classify the relationship pattern of the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan and whether this classification implies the existence of a certain mechanism of response to crisis situations? With all regards paid towards security classicists, I will explicitly argue, in order to understand the impact of the Ukrainian crisis on the bilateral relationship between Astana and Kremlin it is necessary to reject a security perspective for several reasons.

Why not security?

Traditional ways of looking at the relationship of Russia with its post-Soviet, and particularly Central Asian neighbors have always had in their core approaches to security and power balance. The image of a new Great Game and struggle of the dominant powers over the control of the region have deeply penetrated both popular and academic discourses. The image of Kazakhstan was re-conceptualized as ‘gateway to the heartland’ to fit Mackinder’s

vision of the significance of Eurasia.²⁰ Competing powers, namely Russia, China and the US are trying to override each other and to obtain dominance.

Consequently, for the case of Russia it is believed to use economic and political leverage in co-opting the most powerful neighbors in its Near Abroad to its military and political alliances. Such an interpretation of the interstate relationship evokes the original writing on “The Origins of Alliances” by Walt.²¹ His power-thinking was later complemented by Snyder with alliance security dilemma in “Alliance Politics”²², recently applied to the case of Russian-Belarus cooperation by Vysotskaya.²³ In the relations with its powerful Slavic brother Belarus is constantly balancing between the fear of abandonment and the fear of entrapment. Lukashenko tries by all means to balance against his powerful counterpart and use all possible means to keep Minsk out of Moscow’s direct hegemony. Such a situation, as argued, takes place in the light of the Ukrainian crisis between Russian and Belarus leaderships, since while the former needs diplomatic support, the latter is trying to distance itself from both direct and indirect effects of the conflict.²⁴ In such a situation, Vieira argues, the choice of the position will hardly depend on the long-term dependence of the alliance, degree of commitment and relative interest in the issue at stake. While the first two can be explained through the benefits received from the Kremlin, the last will require investigation of the importance of the official stance taken in relation to the crisis.

²⁰ Nick Megoran, ed., *Central Asia in International Relations: The Legacies of Halford Mackinder* (London: Hurst & Company, 2013), chap. Mackinder’s Legacy Today: New Challenges for Kazakhstan and Central Asia.

²¹ In his words, states’ alliance is ‘a formal or informal arrangement for security cooperation between two or more sovereign states’ formed as a response to external greatest threat, which can be posed by the state with greater aggregate and offensive power, geographically proximate and possessing aggressive intentions. For more details see Stephen M Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10747056>.

²² Glenn H Snyder, *Alliance Politics* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1997).

²³ Alena Vysotskaya Guedes Vieira, “Ukraine’s Crisis and Russia’s Closest Allies: A Reinforced Intra-Alliance Security Dilemma at Work,” *The International Spectator* 49, no. 4 (October 2, 2014): 97–111, doi:10.1080/03932729.2014.964520.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 109.

A more internal-oriented approach to the problems of regime is taken by Fumagalli,²⁵ using the omnibalancing theory of David.²⁶ Using specifications made by David in relation to the security objectives of third-world countries, the alignment of Uzbekistan to Russia is explained through the overarching domestic concerns.²⁷ Internal instability and the US and European push for democracy and human rights made Karimov choose the lesser evil and to align with Moscow. Here, although still using the alignment logic descending from the original works by Walt and other scholars the author looks at the state-level concerns.

This research is not aimed at criticizing Neorealist security and alliance thinking, since it does have some explanatory power in the case examined. Indeed, under certain conditions the relationship between Russia and Kazakhstan can be described as a security alliance, where a smaller state joins the regional hegemon. It can be supported both by formal factors, such as Kazakh participation in CSTO, and active involvement in OSCE on the shared agenda, and by the processes happening inside the organizations. Snyder's conception of balancing between entrapment and abandonment can be applied to the events in the earlier relationship history, when under Yeltsin, the Russian policy towards its Southern neighbors was not properly formulated. On the regional level, security thinking can be beneficial in explaining the concern over border management, and the relationship with less stabilized CA leaderships.

Nevertheless, there are five reasons to reject the security-power approach. Firstly, such picture over exaggerates and conceptually misuses the requirement of threats and power balances. The classics of security scholarship vary in their interpretation of balancing

²⁵ Matteo Fumagalli, "Alignments and Realignments in Central Asia: The Rationale and Implications of Uzbekistan's Rapprochement with Russia," *International Political Science Review / Revue Internationale de Science Politique* 28, no. 3 (June 1, 2007): 253–71.

²⁶ Steven R. David, "Explaining Third World Alignment," *World Politics* 43, no. 2 (January 1, 1991): 233–56, doi:10.2307/2010472.

²⁷ Fumagalli, "Alignments and Realignments in Central Asia," 242–244.

between ‘threats’ and ‘power’.²⁸ Still, in their theoritizing about alliances, they all focus on the hardcore security threats and military power. It is hard to find the elements of those in the case examined. What is considered to be a threat for the existence of such an alliance? Did Kazakhstan and Russia measure the relative military capacity of each other? The absence of perils and different conceptions of defense and requirements to the armed forces seriously impede application of security framework. Neither Kazakhstan, nor Russia is facing direct threat to their sovereignty or territoriality, nor are they involved in armed conflict.²⁹

The second issue rising with security thinking is how to regard the Russian role, whether it is a threat or a counter-threat. Whether Kazakh government bandwagons Russia in the light of the Ukrainian Crisis, or whether they are allies in fighting greater peril, like terrorism or the influence of the West. It becomes unclear why Kazakhstan has not chosen China as a greater power, or have not aligned with the US, or the West.

Third, if framed as domestic struggle for survival, the explanatory power of alignment for security is even weaker. Obviously for any foreign or domestic observer the regime of Nazarbayev does not fight for existence. As was shown by the recent 2015 presidential elections, the popular support seems strong and political opposition has very few choices.³⁰ The extent of economic and political cooperation can be characterized as necessary for the support of the Astana leadership. The survival should be disaggregated in the given example to the particular instances of economic and political interests of Nazarbayev’s government, which can be fulfilled by Russia.

Fourth, security approaches regard the role of the regional organizations as far as they serve to promote the interests of the guiding powers. Nevertheless, as reported in the case of

²⁸ Balance of threat vs. balance of power

²⁹ The involvement of Russia in the conflict in Ukraine probably would not be regarded as conflict in the sense which Walt described.

³⁰ Agence France-Presse in Astana, “Kazakhstan’s President Nursultan Nazarbayev Returned with 97.7% of Vote,” *The Guardian*, accessed May 24, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/27/kazakhstans-president-nursultan-nazarbayev-returned-with-977-of-vote>.

CSTO, they fail to fulfill their function. This paradox of regarding the organization's role in extending the influence of regional powers is noted by Cooley in 'Great Games, Local Rules', but it did not receive any specific attention. Formal and informal arrangements should be given bigger attention because they have their own principles respected by the member-states and serve as an arena for bargaining over interests and objectives.

Finally, what these attitudes omit is that the dependence is not unilateral. The growing importance of economic factor and complicating pattern of the Russian-Near Abroad relationship was regarded even by convinced realists, such as Legvold,³¹ but the emphasis was still put on such factors as vulnerability, social and interdependence stability.

³¹ Robert Legvold and American Academy of Arts and Sciences, eds., *Thinking Strategically: The Major Powers, Kazakhstan, and the Central Asian Nexus*, American Academy Studies in Global Security (Cambridge: American Academy of Arts and Sciences : MIT Press, 2003), chap. Great Power Stakes in Central Asia.

2. Theoretical Framework. What is Russian-Kazakhstan relationship?

Regime Theory

The theoretical aspect of this research is based on the complexity of economic-political relationship between Russia and Kazakhstan. The assumption is that not only hard power actions, but other political and economic tools are shaping understanding of the presence or the absence of the danger from Moscow. Therefore, the Russian-Kazakh relationship should not be primarily viewed through the logic of security alliance, but more of a regional regime of political, economic and social cooperation. The participants are engaged into a process of manipulating with the principles and rules, and are taking part in the constant bargaining over the objectives which can result either in better cohesion, or in satisfying

Regime theory summarized by Krasner's edition on "International Regimes"³² can be a useful tool in explaining both the reasons and outcomes of cooperation. Identified as a 'set of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actors' expectations converge in a given area of international relations'³³, regimes are believed to be intermediate variables between basic causal variables, such as power, interest, norms, custom, and knowledge, and outcomes and behavior. Here, the opinions of the three theoretical schools mentioned in the book diverge: both based on the Realist principle of self-help, conventional structuralists assert that regimes do not matter in the projection of causal variable on the outcomes and behavior, while the modified school objects, claiming regimes are useful categories for the explanation of states' behavior in determined issue-areas. The

³² Stephen D. Krasner, ed., *International Regimes*, 11. print, Cornell Studies in Political Economy (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 2004).

³³ *Ibid.*, 2.

third approach is taken by Oran Young in his essay in Krasner's edition which rejects the main premise about the states' inherent struggle for power and survival. On the contrary, they argue for the careful treatment of such categories as balance of power, sovereignty, and anarchy.³⁴

For the adherents of the third approach (including Young), regimes penetrate all areas of international relations, even those which are constantly saturated by conflict. The relationship between the regime and outcome/behavior follow a different way. In the words of Krasner:

...patterned behavior inevitably generates convergent expectations. This leads to conventionalized behavior in which there is some expectation of rebuke for deviating from ongoing practices. Conventionalized behavior generates recognized norms. If observer finds a pattern of interrelated activity, and the connections in the pattern are understood, then there must be some form of norms and procedures.³⁵

In this way, regimes appear in the process of constant interaction with behavior and outcomes. This practice revitalizes and shapes regimes, and adjusts the behavior in accordance with the expectations of the actors. In this way, the regime is seen not as an intervening variable, but as a full-fledged third component of the actor's characteristics. If such a regime exists between the actors (Russia and Kazakhstan) there should be a recognizable pattern of interrelated activity and behavior, particularly in the field of perceiving the external events and crisis involving the party to the regime.

In order to understand what kind of reaction should be expected from the regime under the condition of pressure, it is necessary to identify several characteristics of the regime. Firstly, it is necessary to understand the type of the regime in question. Young disaggregates regimes into the types of 'orders' (regimes) and makes assumptions about their respective reaction to both internal and external incentives. He marks three distinct types: spontaneous,

³⁴ Since first two approaches are based on the same Realist premises of the balance of power and anarchical nature of international system where all states are in the situation of self-help, they will be omitted for the sake of alternative institutionalist perspective given by Young.

³⁵ Krasner, *International Regimes*, 8.

negotiated and imposed. Keeping aside the first type,³⁶ the other two fit well by their requirements to the case of Kazakh-Russian relationship. Both states possess highly centralized and developed state apparatus, which has few limitations for function, and the degree of interconnectivity makes Kazakhstan vulnerable to the pressure by regional hegemon.³⁷

As for the changes, primarily, a difference between principles and norms, and rules and procedures should be understood in the first place. As noted by Krasner, change of the rules and procedures do not represent the change of the regime, since principles and norms are intact.³⁸ What one might truly call a change of the regime is a situation when the underlying norms and principles of the arrangements are altered.

In the case of regime change three ways including internal contradictions, shift in the structure of power in international system, and exogenous forces are presented. Although author asserts that all three exist in any type of regime, he also points out that imposed ones, for instance, are more vulnerable to the shifts in the underlying structure of power in the international system. They are closely tied to the distribution of power; therefore, the change of the hegemon's position will affect the functioning of that regime.³⁹ Among exogenous factors causing transformation, Young names collapses of the other regimes, which even greater facilitates the application to my case.

The Ukrainian Crisis can be interpreted as either an attempt of change of the power structure or an exogenous factor – collapse of the Russian-Ukrainian cooperation regime. If regarded as a negotiated-imposed type of order, then the Russian-Kazakh regime becomes

³⁶ The case of Kazakh-Russian relationship does not definitely fall into the category of spontaneous regime, since from the very beginning it followed a path of negotiations. The collapse of the Soviet Union and subsequent ways of restoring the minimum level of cooperation together with the agreements on arms makes it naive to talk about any spontaneity. Nor, on the other hand it can be exclusively qualified as negotiated since there is a considerable difference in capabilities of the actors.

³⁷ Oran R. Young Krasner, *International Regimes*, 104–105.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 3–4.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 107–112.

open for transformation and the issue at stake is whether it leads to the collapse, or to the increase of negotiated component. In order to find out ‘how far its central elements can be pushed before they begin to blow up’⁴⁰ interaction of the negotiated and imposed characteristics of the regime should be evaluated and observed.

Consequently, the second aspect concerns the rule of bargaining inside the regime. Referred to as institutional bargaining in his later writings,⁴¹ the process should follow a principle of equity. Russia as a hegemon, both formally and informally should in some way recognize the rule of unanimity in the agreements arising between the Kremlin and Astana. Translating it for the purpose of the analysis, it is important to investigate whether and how profound Putin’s team appeals to the opinion of their Kazakh counterparts and how often Kazakhstan can block the arrangement which does not suit its interests.

Third, the nature of the bargaining taking place does matter. Young claims that institutional bargaining makes parties negotiate under the veil of uncertainty, because they do not possess adequate knowledge of each other bargaining range.⁴² Therefore, they look for ways to maximize collective benefit and tend to incline towards productive or integrative bargaining. If the bargaining range is known, then actors will maximize their own benefits. The existence of the uncertainty is undisputable and it is not for the purpose of this research to determine how much knowledge each side possesses concerning the capabilities of one-another. Here, my analysis will start from the assumption that both integrative and distributive bargaining takes place. Integrative bargaining is directed at the better cohesion of the regime, since it establishes the implicit rule to maximize common benefits by negotiations, while distributive tends to maximize the relative benefits of the parties.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 108.

⁴¹ Oran R. Young, “The Politics of International Regime Formation: Managing Natural Resources and the Environment,” *International Organization* 43, no. 3 (July 1, 1989): 349–75; Oran R. Young, “Political Leadership and Regime Formation: On the Development of Institutions in International Society,” *International Organization* 45, no. 3 (July 1, 1991): 281–308.

⁴² Young, “The Politics of International Regime Formation,” 361–362.

Accordingly, Russian-Kazakh 'regime' should be also seen through the prism of the balance between integrative and distributive bargaining outcomes. One should investigate the frequency of the parties' concern over the cohesion of the cooperation and use of the chance to maximize relative gains.

Fourth, as mentioned by the author, inter-party bargaining happens simultaneously with intra-party bargaining, therefore, for a regime it is logical to expect substantive influence from the interest group inside the states, which can propose/oppose/shape the agenda of the agreement.⁴³ If those groups state their own position as a unit, it signifies strong convergence of the interests on the substate level, and if these claims are met by the state representatives on the collective level, the commonality of interest under regime is established.

Fifth, the ability to draw linkages between the issues in a given regime area or across different types of agreement should be reviewed.⁴⁴ Young did not come to a deliberate conclusion on the impact of linkage on the formation of the regime; reasonable patterns to connect the issues on the table should be expected from such centralized state entities like Kazakhstan and Russia.

Sixth, other factors, like agenda setting, nature of the product of the bargaining outcome and composition of the group participants should be kept in mind.⁴⁵ Whether Kazakhstan generally owns right to draft content, to define the objective of bargaining, and to attract other CIS states on its behalf are the last aspect to be looked in the agreement pattern.

In which direction does the order move during a crisis: transformation or decomposition? Can Russia be flexible and appeal to conciliatory means in its policies towards Kazakhstan during the time of crisis which they face? To what extent and does Kazakhstan accept the negotiation or imposition of the rules and norms and how eager is it to accept and promote changes in the bilateral relationship? Conformity with this

⁴³ Ibid., 363.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 365.

⁴⁵ Young, "Political Leadership and Regime Formation," 284.

characterization shapes the success of the regime, which guarantees its durability and propensity to change, but not to de-compose under the exogenous pressure. Young draws similar hypothesis on the determinants of the success, speaking that under the condition of exogenous crisis, the probability of success to negotiate the regime increases.⁴⁶ In order to confirm or deny this statement, examination of the Russian-Kazakh relationship according to the criteria described above is required. First, it will determine whether negotiated component of the regime matters under the huge disparity in capabilities between the actors, second, how it shapes the process over the regime in the time of crisis.

A small remark which should be made here is that regime theory will be applied only in the case when both actors share the adherence to the most diffuse regime in the international system – principle of sovereignty. Krasner puts it in the superstructure of the multiple layers of international system and states that all other patterns of regime making are possibly only in the case, when states respect the supreme principle of sovereignty and its regime.

Given its high concentration on the balance of power and threat, complexity in understanding alignment logic, and the absence or the vagueness of overarching domestic concerns, security logic does not suit the case of the Russian-Kazakh relationship. Extended patterns of negotiation and non-military cooperation together with the more sophisticated needs of Astana may lead to the assumption about the regime which takes part in shaping the behavior and expressing the interests of Kazakhstan in response to Russia. Due to this reason, the theoretical framework outlined by Oran Young will be used for analyzing in this inquiry. His vision of the relationship will be applicable to the understanding of the Ukrainian crisis in the eyes of the Kazakh leadership under the following conditions. First and foremost there should be a recognizable pattern of behavior under the conditions of crisis. Second, the

⁴⁶ Young, “The Politics of International Regime Formation,” 371.

cooperation pattern should fulfill the criteria outlined above and estimate the negotiable potential of the regime.

However, attention should be paid to the respect of Kazakh sovereignty. If the threats are present, and are highly influential, then Kazakhstan finds itself in the world of Walt, Snyder and David, where it has to balance against external, internal and intra-alliance threats. This is why, Realist considerations on alliance should be kept in mind.

Methodology

Application of the Institutional perspective and regime theory conceptualized by Young will proceed in several steps. In order to understand which transformations are taking place inside of this Kazakh-Russian regime and implications of the Ukrainian Crisis I need to contextualize both crisis and reconstruct the following sequence of events in the cooperation framework of Kazakhstan and Russia. For this purpose, I will look at the events taking place at the bilateral and organizational level of EurAsEc (EEU), CSTO and SCO. The reason for selecting these organizations is their importance to the Eurasian concept of the state, voiced by the promoter of Eurasianism, Nursultan Nazarbayev. He sees EurAsEc and SCO as two necessary components of Eurasian politics.⁴⁷ Giving their international reputation and the processes which took place during the past 10 years these organizations and their development can be regarded as reflections the formal and informal principles and norms in Russian-Kazakh relationship. I will look at the developments and negotiations taking place inside of those organizations, demands and interests of Kazakh government. While cooperation within EEU and CSTO may signal convergence and cohesion of the Kazakh-

⁴⁷ Nursultan Nazarbayev, "Lecture of the Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev in Humilev Eurasian National University," *Nazarbayev i Evraziistvo: Sbornik izbrannih statei i vistuplenii glavi gosudarstva*, May 25, 2006, 222. I am replacing CICA by CSTO for two purposes: first, CICA is a Kazakh-led initiative for Asia, although Russia does participate in the summits it does not demonstrate any particular concern over it. Whereas CSTO is a playground for active decision-making, where deep engagement is shared by both Russia and Kazakhstan.

Russian interests, SCO and China represent alternative ways to accommodate Kazakh preferences.

As mentioned in the theoretical part, events in the different regimes may exert influence on the condition of one-another. Especially, when multiple regimes are touching the similar agenda and can all contribute to the satisfaction of the actor's interest.

The period under the revision starts in 2005 and it is justified by several reasons. First, this is a year when last 'color revolution', Uzbekistan's decision to get rid of the American base and join CSTO, and the Russian- Chinese concern over the US policy initiated, as argued by Cooley, 'geopolitical competition'⁴⁸, can be regarded as stimuli for the development of the main security arrangement – CSTO. At the same time, the talks about Customs Union inside EurAsEc became more active, and Kazakh rapprochement with China culminated by signing Strategic Partnership in 2006 took place. It can be seen from the documents of SCO and CSTO, the activity of the organizations has risen.⁴⁹

I will examine the rules and procedures which have affected the actor's mutual responsibilities and/or brought common or personal benefits. I determine the rules and procedures as they include agreements on the expansion of cooperation/integration, amendments of the main principles, agreements to make joint efforts in the form of investments or promotion of certain agenda on the international scale. For this purpose I will use information from the Russian, Kazakh and Western media reporting on the developments inside organizations, speeches and reports issued by their bodies, press-releases of the state-heads' summits. Specific attention will be paid towards ability of Astana to combine, parallel, or alternate the partnership with Russia.

⁴⁸ Alexander Cooley, *Great Games, Local Rules: The New Great Power Contest in Central Asia* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2012), 82–83.

⁴⁹ Cooley notes that SCO has started to publish official documents and statements concerning the US presence in CA. At the same time CSTO drafted its first plan on the Military-Technical cooperation for 2006-2010 period.

3. CSTO: ‘developing’ for global, making local

The norms and principles embodied under organizational pattern stretching from Moscow to Astana have both formal and informal components and they reflect the interplay between legalized responsibilities, actor’s preferences and factual data on cooperation. Taken altogether in the case with CSTO these elements accommodate Kazakh participation in the regime since its formal integrative agenda hardly contradicts Kazakh preferences, and when it does, Russia & CSTO provide guarantees for both personal and integrative bargain vectors being met. In addition, CSTO does not monopolize the role of international security guarantor and Kazakh government is allowed to fulfill its need as it wishes.

The formal normative component of the regime draws representation of a pure integrating security block. Formed in 2003 in a deliberate pursuit to maintain security cooperation, it has slowly emerged from the agreement under CIS framework into an organization with clear legal basis, headquarters, coordination of mutual efforts, and self-standing general-secretariat. The structure of CSTO organization makes clear that interaction happens on many levels. The summits of the heads of the states are followed by the activity of Secretariat-general. The main principle of organization stated in the treaty is collective combat against external threats.⁵⁰ Among achievable objectives, the parties engage into cooperation on immigration, combating drug-trafficking, cyber terrorism, coordination of the rescue service. Tactical exercises take place every year, as well as rotating presidency moves from one president to another. Presumably viewed as an organization which simulates NATO,⁵¹ Common Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) was rarely (perceived) as an

⁵⁰ “Charter of the Collective Security Treaty Organization,” *Organizatsia Dogovora o Kollektivnoi Bezopasnosti*, September 7, 2002, http://www.odkb-csto.org/documents/detail.php?ELEMENT_ID=124.

⁵¹ “Russia Using CSTO to Counterbalance NATO,” *The Jamestown Foundation*, accessed May 15, 2015, http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5Bwords%5D=8fd5893941d69d0be3f378576261ae3e&tx_ttnews%5Bany_of_the_words%5D=McDermott&tx_ttnews%5Bpointer%5D=16&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=32556&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=7&cHash=48cdaf2baa361e92bb19b72b4332e280.

institution designed for the actors which by their nature will inform a different structure and mechanisms.

On the informal level, the attention paid to the CSTO is substantively distinct. Although from the very beginning Kazakhstan has expressed its willingness in the collective defense and the support of Russia, its degree of commitment to the project of regional security regime is very pragmatic. In Kazakh Military Doctrine of 2007 the role of CSTO is mentioned in the context of broadening the cooperation, planning and preparation for carrying out the tasks ensuring collective security.⁵² New document of 2011 contains fewer references to CSTO; among priority directions it stresses the improvement of the legal bases of collective military build-ups and creation of the air defense system.⁵³ Such modest demands and the placement of CSTO in the line with many other regional initiatives (including NATO and SCO) shows that Astana is keen to emphasize the multi-vectoralism, and does not compromise it even being a party to Russian-dominated security treaty. Conditions when Kazakh forces may be used on the international level are not described, except of the peacekeeping. Document also stresses the importance of country's rely on its own force in combating the threats, and the option of asking assistance is left for the case when neither the interior troops, nor the army succeed in overcoming the crisis.

In contrast, Russian Military Doctrine, signed by Putin in 2010 and insignificantly supplemented in 2014⁵⁴, names the Eastern expansion of NATO a security concern and restates such key clauses as the development of the organization's capacity, the case of attack on any party to the agreement, contribution to the peacekeeping and rapid reaction force contingent of CSTO, and consolidation of the efforts in the enhancement of the capacity and

⁵² *Military Doctrine of the Republic of Kazakhtan*, 2007, <http://www.nomad.su/?a=5-200704120432>.

⁵³ *Military Doctrine of the Republic of Kazakhstan*, 2011, <http://www.centrasia.ru/cnt2.php?st=1321351920>.

⁵⁴ New Military Doctrine published in 2014 is very similar to one of 2010, with additional points added in relation to the Ukrainian Crisis. For more details please look *Russian Federation Military Doctrine*, 2014, <http://static.kremlin.ru/media/events/files/41d527556bec8deb3530.pdf>.

means of collective defense.⁵⁵ Therefore, formulating Kazakh's interest in the security regime, it can be said that its position may be called as highly state-centric in contrast to Russian collectivism aspirations. Its interest in the military cooperation both by the extent and structure serves for the preservation of sovereign status quo and does not give any crucial attention to CSTO as a basis of all-national defense.

The strength of the regime is in making both interests meet. The reaction of Kazakhstan to the developments under CSTO and its initiatives shows how, bearing in mind its highly personalized interests, it has been allowed to operate in substantively flexible environment of security block and to avoid interference in its internal affairs as well as to create tension with other actors and organizations and to bargain successfully over desired objectives. Justification for this dynamics can be found in several occasions: establishing contacts between CSTO and NATO concerning Afghanistan, renewal and further suspension of Uzbekistan membership (2006 and 2012), amendments to the principles of organization by enlarging the scope of combatted threats, and its immediate result in deciding over Osh Crisis and the events in Zhanaozen.

Security regime of CSTO has been flexible enough to meet the multi-vector policy of Kazakh government by expanding non-traditional objectives and regularizing the existing ones. Agreements in the early 2000s regularized collective military training under the framework of organization and have provided prospects for the future developments, which were either supported or even initiated by Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan has supported the initiative to create peacekeeping forces for the humanitarian action by signing all documentation and holding first peacekeeping exercises on its territory.⁵⁶ During informal Astana summit in December 2008 (Borovoye) Nazarbayev was first to voice the idea of creating Collective Rapid Reaction Force and from since then, its active promoter. Unlike

⁵⁵ *Russian Federation Military Doctrine*, 2010, <http://kremlin.ru/supplement/461>.

⁵⁶ Joshua Kucera, "CSTO Holds First-Ever Peacekeeping Exercises," *EurasiaNet*, October 8, 2012, <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/66023>.

Belarus and Uzbekistan which used KSOR⁵⁷ for their own agenda,⁵⁸ Kazakhs signed all documentation.

Positioning itself as security block CSTO did not make Kazakhstan to choose the side. When the second biggest and wealthiest CA country Uzbekistan upon accession to CSTO in 2007 started to create problems and then left organization in 2012, Kazakh government had no need in compromising the spheres of interest. Maintaining its quasi-isolationist and bilateral preference in the international arena, Uzbekistan blocked all significant initiatives. Tashkent did not take part in collective actions and opposed development of inter-governmental mechanisms with OSCE and EurAsEc.⁵⁹ The expected outcome of the ‘security alliance’ is that the country-members will come up with the joint statement. The position towards Uzbek membership was expressed by the closest Russian allies in CSTO – Belarus⁶⁰ and Tajikistan, but not Kazakhstan. Bearing in mind that Kazakhstan-Uzbek cooperation did not work out properly since independence or closure of CASCO,⁶¹ it was clearly out of multi-vector preferences to confront the neighbor. In fact, during the same time, Kazakh leadership managed to improve the bilateral relationship with Uzbekistan. Uzbek side supported Astana OSCE summit, and, in turn, Nazarbayev made official visit to Tashkent in 2010⁶² which culminated by the strategic partnership signed in 2013.⁶³ Thus, this security regime does not influence bilateral relations and establishment of another cooperation framework with Uzbekistan.

⁵⁷ KSOR – Collective Rapid Reaction Force (Kollektyvnie Sili Bistrogo Reagirovania)

⁵⁸ The former used its signature under the document in the gas dispute with Russia, while the latter objected many provisions, which diminished the progress to zero.

⁵⁹ Interfax, “Uzbekistan Demonstrated Special Position on Key Issues in Recent Years - CSTO Secretariat,” *Military News Agency*, July 2, 2012, 1.

⁶⁰ Joshua Kucera, “Lukashenko To Karimov: Are You With Us or Against Us?,” *EurasiaNet*, October 28, 2011, <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/64404>.

⁶¹ “Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan: Competitors, Strategic Partners or Eternal Friends?,” accessed May 7, 2015, <http://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles/item/12786-uzbekistan-and-kazakhstan-competitors-strategic-partners-or-eternal-friends>.

⁶² “Nazarbayev Labors to Mend Fences with Tashkent,” *The Jamestown Foundation*, accessed May 7, 2015, http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5Bpointer%5D=400&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=36207&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=228&cHash=4870a08cc8cff4a16097ba0343255645.

⁶³ “Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan Ink Strategic Partnership Treaty,” *UzDaily.com*, accessed May 7, 2015, <http://www.uzdaily.com/articles-id-23537.htm>.

In the similar way, Kazakhstan has not been deprived from the cooperation with NATO on Afghanistan and peacekeeping, whereas CSTO failed to establish organizational relationship on this agenda. The attempts to become a regional representative in dealing with Afghanistan were started in 2004 with multiple proposals from the General-Secretary of CSTO to NATO.⁶⁴ On their part, NATO has constantly rejected the possibility of cooperation in order not to undermine its bilateral approach to each state of CSTO.⁶⁵ Meanwhile, starting in the same period, Kazakhstan has greatly expanded the cooperation under the Partnership for Peace plan and has concluded additional agreements with NATO touching combatting terrorism, military reform, environment, nuclear non-proliferation, and conducted several military exercises.⁶⁶

On the other hand, when the agenda, introduced in the regime, was contradicting the key positions of Nazarbayev's foreign policy and personal interests, it has received enough guarantees and clarifications on the substance so, that Astana stayed satisfied and supportive with further integration. Particular attention was paid to the documentation signed in Moscow 2010 which has enlarged the scope of the combatted objectives to the internal threats. It is believed to be a response towards organization's inability to act decisively during the ethnic clashes in the Southern Kyrgyzstan and overthrow of Kyrgyzstan's former president Kurmanbek Bakiyev.⁶⁷ For Nazarbayev, as the closest strongest neighbor of the conflict zone, both crisis and changes in charter represented a challenge, since it did not fit the scope of Kazakh interests. Together with the General Secretary of CSTO Bordyuzha, Nazarbayev rejected any option of using KSOR or any type of military intervention into the territory of its

⁶⁴ "CSTO Wants to Cooperate with NATO / Sputnik International," accessed June 2, 2015, <http://sputniknews.com/analysis/20050915/41407777.html>.

⁶⁵ Cooley, *Great Games, Local Rules*, 56.

⁶⁶ "NATO's Relations with Kazakhstan," *NATO*, accessed June 2, 2015, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49598.htm.

⁶⁷ Richard Weitz, "Why Is the CSTO Absent in the Kyrgyz Crisis?," *CACI Analyst*, June 9, 2010, <http://old.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/5344>.

Southern neighbor,⁶⁸ and stressed the requirement of consent and legal basis during the Summit in December 2010.⁶⁹ The next year, when the attention of CSTO was focused on the Arab Spring,⁷⁰ Kazakh leadership faced an internal crisis with the riots of Zhanaozen. It has been obvious that neither CSTO, nor Nazarbayev will consider deployment of the collective forces. The same position was announced by General Secretary and by Lavrov, stating that it is the internal affair of the state.⁷¹ Further on, Bordyuzha, as a General Secretary, has numerously emphasized that CSTO's capabilities will not be used without the consent of the state. Thus, the objectives of the formal integration of the regime and its development in the response to the external factor were met together with fulfilling the personal interest of the actor.

In such situation, it is hard to find the instances of bargaining in the regime, but even when they are taking place, CSTO and Russia still comply with the pragmatism and multi-vector policy of Kazakh colleagues. The current Kazakh interest in creation of common air defense system under CSTO did not result in country's deprivation of the control over its airspace. Discussion of the content and structure of joint air defense which have started from 2007 and was finalized by agreement in 2011 reveals several bargaining instances, in which Kazakhstan have extracted additional benefits. Initially, when the prospects of progress were obscure Astana planned to acquire 10 S-300 surface-to-air missile systems from Russia for its

⁶⁸ Nazarbayev in Roger McDermott, "The Kazakhstan-Russia Axis: Shaping CSTO Transformation" (Foreign Military Studies Office), 7, accessed August 5, 2015, http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/Collaboration/international/McDermott/CSTO_Transformation-final.pdf.

⁶⁹ "CSTO Forces Can Be Used within Organization Only in Case of Member States' Appeal - N.Nazarbayev," December 10, 2010, <http://www.kazinform.kz/eng/article/2330911>.

⁷⁰ Roger McDermott, "CSTO Moves Into The Information Age," *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*, September 4, 2011, sec. Commentary, http://www.rferl.org/content/commentary_csto_moves_into_information_age/24317363.html.

⁷¹ Interfax, "Bordyuzha Sees No Need to Apply CSTO Mechanisms in Kazakhstan (Part 2)," *Russia & FSU General News*, December 20, 2011, 1–1; "CSTO Cannot Help Its Members without Their Request - Lavrov," *Www.timesca.com*, accessed May 13, 2015, <http://www.timesca.com/news/1711-csto-cannot-help-its-members-without-their-request-lavrov>.

own use.⁷² After a year, it was announced that Moscow will deliver several S-300 to Astana free of charge.⁷³ Agreements of 2013-2014 between the ministries of defense once more restated development of joint air defense and contribution of 5 divisions of S-300 and share of the testing ground in Balkhash.⁷⁴ Later, the dynamics in relation with Moscow has slowed down, but Kazakh Parliament still ratified the agreement, and within 8 days Minister of Defense Saparov announced purchase of GM 400 radars from French-American Company.⁷⁵ In April 2015, the contract for delivery of new aircrafts from Irkutsk to Kazakh Air Defense was accomplished.⁷⁶ Hence, the joint air defense project has progressed and Kazakhstan was able to model it according to its own preference. CSTO has not expressed any particular discontent with the actions of Astana. Unlike in NATO, the regulations concerning weapon and military equipment do not require deliberate compliance with single standards. Of course, the absence of single standards might have negative consequences, but for Kazakhstan it did appear to be an opportunity both to progress with actual cohesion of the security regime and to preserve substantial degree of autonomy.

The norms and principles embodied under organizational pattern stretching from Moscow to Astana have both formal and informal components and they reflect the interplay between the legal, preferential and factual aspects of cooperation. So, for instance, the main norm of the security cooperation with Russia is to regard the development of the vector of response to all kinds of threats, both domestic and external to the cases of extreme

⁷² "Kazakhstan will buy from Russia 10 batteries of air defense system S-300," accessed May 13, 2015, <http://www.arms-expo.ru/news/cooperation/kazakhstan-priobretet-u-rossii-10-divizionov-zrk-s-30019-02-2009-12-22-00/>.

⁷³ "Kazakhstan will receive S-300 for free," accessed May 13, 2015, <http://lenta.ru/news/2010/12/08/s3001/>.

⁷⁴ "Russia and Kazakhstan agreed on common air defense," accessed May 13, 2015, <http://lenta.ru/news/2013/01/30/pvo/>; Joshua Kucera, "Russia To Give Kazakhstan Air Defense Systems, Use Of Missile Range," *EurasiaNet*, January 31, 2014, <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/67998>.

⁷⁵ "ThalesRaytheonSystems Ground Master 400 Radars Selected to Strengthen Kazakhstan's Air Defense Capability," June 23, 2014, <https://www.thalesgroup.com/en/worldwide/defence/press-release/thalesraytheonstems-ground-master-400-radars-selected-strengthen>; "Kazakh Parliament has ratified the agreement on the common air defense system with Russia," *Tengrinews.kz*, accessed May 13, 2015, http://tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan_news/parlament-kazahstana-ratifikiroval-soglashenie-sozdani-rf-255320/.

⁷⁶ "Kazakhstan received Russian fighters SU-30SM," *IJA REGNUM*, accessed May 13, 2015, <http://www.regnum.ru/news/polit/1916754.html>.

emergency, and to focus on introduction of the low-profile objectives. Formally, Kazakhstan does integrate its security mechanisms under CSTO and takes active part in all of the organizations' activities and developments. From 2003 Kazakhstan has not abstained or opposed any amendment to the shared security agenda, neither to the combat against external threats, nor to the introduction of peacekeeping component. It has actively participated in all training activities, being a host-state multiple times, as well as an active promoter of changes and together with Belarus and Russia, one of the most active agenda dictators. However, looking the portfolio of initiatives proposed and strongly backed by Astana lead to suggestion that the security regime of CSTO is of relatively complementary importance towards Kazakh security policy. Astana seeks integration at the basic level, sharing the combat and tactics experience, coordinating the emergency planning activities,⁷⁷ uniting the air defense, etc.

Second principle concerns the fulfillment by Russia the role of the imposer of the regime. Kazakhstan seeks accord and mutual assistance with Russia as long as it fulfills its dominating role and respects the independence of low portfolio of security, but not fails or misuses their partnership or infringes its status. As implied by the variety of formal documents and statements of Kazakh leadership, it does not contest the disparity of power between itself and the Kremlin. On the opposite, it acknowledges Russia as the dominant actor in their cooperation framework and, at the same time, keeps in mind limits, difficulties and failures connected with such role. The case of joint air defense showed both the limits of what Russia can give and what Kazakhstan can allow to itself. As a major partner in technical-military aspect Russia did manage to provide several S 300 systems for the use by Kazakhs, but not in the amount which was expected. At the same time, Kazakhs have to preserve their sovereign status-quo and to diversify its defense mechanisms through buying radars from the third party. In the similar way one may consider Uzbekistan's short history of

⁷⁷ "Nursultan Nazarbayev proposed the countries of CSTO to coordinate the reaction in the state of emergency," *Tengrinews.kz*, accessed June 2, 2015, http://tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan_news/nursultan-nazarbaev-predlozil-stranam-odkb-sovmestno-225430/.

renewing its CSTO membership. Russia failed to perform the function of imposition while inclusion of Uzbek could definitely increase the potential of the organization, but it has not affected Kazakh rapprochement with Tashkent in any way. The failed attempt to establish a working inter-organizational contact on Afghanistan in 2004 between CSTO and NATO is another example: upon its failure Kazakhstan presented new plan for the cooperation with the Atlantic block.

4. Eurasian Integration: transforming and alternating

Different dynamics is shown in the economic spectrum of the regime, which is represented by EurAsEc and SCO. From 2005 onwards the dynamics of relationship in the Russian-Kazakh-Chinese underlines difficulties which are expected and then faced by Kazakhstan as a result of deeper integration with Russia. Albeit, Kazakh leadership is able and allowed to find a better position in its cooperation with Russia engaging into bargaining and adopting the practices of regime, and at the same time stabilizing its efforts and independence with Chinese vector.

Within cooperation framework, Astana demonstrated three approaches: first, it maintains and supports by expanding cooperation in the different areas and making efforts to contain the Russian influence, second, it uses the common rules and counterweights Russian imposition, as well as it gets additional opportunities to benefit from the sanctions regime imposed on its powerful neighbor. In order to understand all this dynamics it is necessary to divide the examined period into several negotiation stages all marked by specific events: from 2005 to 2010 encompassing Georgian and Financial Crises and approaching to the Customs Union, and from 2010 onwards dealing with the negative impact of CU and countering sanctions and impacts of Ukrainian Crisis.

2005 - 2010: Integrating under the Veil of Uncertainty and under Crisis

By 2005 the regional cooperation of Russia with its Southern neighbors has started to obtain the hierarchical structure and it has been slowly becoming clear where it leads. Kazakh government became an enthusiastic promoter of the emerging regime, but it did think about its own advantages. From 2000 CIS has been followed by Eurasian Economic Community, which divided the post-Soviet states into more willing and less willing for integration and further expansion of cooperation with Russia. If previously Nazarbayev could have some

doubts concerning the chance of progress⁷⁸, in 2005 they disappeared.⁷⁹ Russia was speeding up the equalization of the customs duties and decided to merge OCAC⁸⁰ with EurAsEc,⁸¹ thus, the factual customs union was expected to start functioning in 2006 according to the plan of 2003.⁸² Kazakh leader and government were enthusiastic about these developments since they have diminished bureaucracy in cooperation and were aimed at receiving economic benefits. Besides potential perspectives, Kazakhstan and Russia agreed to set up investment bank with \$1.5 billion.⁸³ In the words of Young, all of these actions can be named as integrative bargaining, since they have pushed forward the idea of common economic space.

Although the progress was clear and the agreements achieved were beneficial for Kazakh government, the future and the consequences of these long-term objectives were certainly not clear. Acting under the ‘veil of uncertainty’ made leadership to seek for the mechanisms of productive bargaining which could have fulfilled the personal benefits if integration fails. Such option was found in the face of expanding regime of cooperation with Beijing. Next month after Summit of EurAsEc, declaration on Strategic partnership with China was signed, and a year later it was developed into an agreement.⁸⁴ 2006 document also emphasized the importance of Shanghai Cooperation Organization as an area for the enhancement of good-neighbor relations. During this time SCO has also started its active involvement into the region. From 2005 to 2007 SCO signed memoranda of understanding

⁷⁸ De facto the Customs Union once already existed before these events in 1998, but it proved to be a paper-organization

⁷⁹ “Countries of EurAsEc are moving to the Customs Union,” *EspA33C*, June 23, 2005, <http://evrazes.com/news/view/162>.

⁸⁰ “EurAsEc and OCAC decided to unite,” *Lenta.ru*, September 7, 2005, <http://lenta.ru/news/2005/10/06/unite/>.

⁸¹ “Customs tariffs of Belarus, Russia and Kazakhstan will be equalized,” May 20, 2005, sec. Customs, <http://www.transbusiness.ru/cgi-bin/pub/news/1?c=viewNews&news=1593>.

⁸² “Priority Guidelines for the Development of EurAsEc in 2003-2006 and following years,” February 9, 2004, <http://evrazes.com/docs/view/30>.

⁸³ “Interstate Bank will be created under the Structure of EurAsEc to invest effectively into the projects realized by the member-states,” *Official Site of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan*, June 23, 2005, akorda.kz.

⁸⁴ Eugene B. Rumer, Dmitrii Trenin, and Huasheng Zhao, *Central Asia: Views from Washington, Moscow, and Beijing* (M.E. Sharpe, 2007), 172.

with all major regional organizations.⁸⁵ At the same time Kazakhs negotiated one of the biggest deals on selling PetroKazakhstan to CNPC.⁸⁶ Two month afterwards, Russians responded by cutting the chance to transport Kazakh oil to Lithuania.⁸⁷ Such exchange of actions was clearly intended to underline that despite mutual strive for integrative bargaining both sides will make sure that they have alternatives to each other in allocating their main economic asset. The next step was made in 2006 when Kazakhstan decided to ship part of its oil to the West via Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline.⁸⁸ Year after, Nazarbayev also managed to negotiate on surpassing the trade misbalance and to strengthen possibilities of other economic sectors on the Chinese market.⁸⁹

The negative impact of Financial Crisis has been strengthened by both Georgian conflict and the prospects of integration. The year was marked by the creation of the Customs Union Commission, which sent a message to all Russian partners, that Customs Union is a project of near future. At the same time, CA leaders had a statement of Chinese Premier about Beijing's aspirations for the free trade zone. In addition, Astana was concerned with its own assets accounting more than billion USD, which were under the threat in Georgia. Coupled with intensifying economic crisis which have greatly affected Russia, Kazakh leadership should have put even more efforts in the productive bargaining and to find a good niche for their country before the next round of integrating into CU regime.

Receiving guarantees from Gazprom on the market price for the gas in March, it has still moved forward. The Atyrau-Alashankou oil pipeline was finished in 2009. In the same year China lent \$10 bln. through SCO for purchasing 50% MangistauMunaiGaz and 11%

⁸⁵ CIS Executive Committee (12 April 2005), the Secretariats of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (21 April 2005), the EurAsEC (8 May 2006), the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (5 October 2007)

⁸⁶ "CNPC Acquires PetroKazakhstan Inc.," *The Economic Times*, September 27, 2005, <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/1276658.cms>.

⁸⁷ "Transneft did not let Kazakh oil to be transported to Lithuania," *Газета "Коммерсантъ"*, November 18, 2005.

⁸⁸ "BTC: Kazakhstan Finally Commits to the Pipeline," *EurasiaNet*, June 18, 2006, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/business/articles/eav061906.shtml>.

⁸⁹ "China-Kazakhstan Relations Grow Stronger," October 15, 2007, China Daily edition, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/cndy/2007-10/15/content_6173531.htm.

Kazmunaigaz shares and to Development Bank of Kazakhstan to combat the Financial Crisis.⁹⁰ Meanwhile in June EurAsEc established anti-crisis fund worth more than \$8,5 bln, to which Kazakhstan was the second biggest contributor and until now, and which was never used to back up Kazakh economy.

2010- onwards: Customs Union, New Crisis and start of the shift

The agreement on Customs Union of EurAsEc was stated to come into force on January 1st 2010,⁹¹ and the common custom border started to work on July 1st next year.⁹² Russian step in expanding the regime of economic cooperation together with firmly motivated economic and political concerns did raise serious doubts about the benefits for Kazakhstan.⁹³ The whole project looked suspicious due to the fact that except of the common customs and tariffs on import no rules and procedures were explained. Therefore, it cannot be said that the issue arose neither today, nor when Kazakhstan had refused to sign the agreement, transforming EurAsEc into EEU in 2012.

These doubts proved to be valid and deliberate mismanagement of the regime cohesion, small attention to the equity of member-states and linkages of the regime to geopolitics on the part of Russia cemented Nazarbayev's behavior of simultaneous integration and stronger bargaining for the independent benefits of Kazakhstan. On the background of the increase in the percentage of trade between the countries, the access to the market with more than 150 million consumers had bitterer taste when Kazakhstani producers faced with problems at the domestic level being uncompetitive to those of Russia and Belarus. The export of the raw

⁹⁰ "China Moves for Kazakh Oil," *Forbes*, accessed May 17, 2015, <http://www.forbes.com/2009/10/02/oil-kazakhstan-china-markets-equities-energy.html>; Cooley, *Great Games, Local Rules*, 92.

⁹¹ Rufiya Ospanova, "In Minsk, Nazarbayev Voices Benefits, Drawbacks of Customs Union," *Eurasia & World. The Astana Times*, October 29, 2013, <http://www.astanatimes.com/2013/10/in-minsk-nazarbayev-voices-benefits-drawbacks-of-customs-union/>.

⁹² "Russian-Kazakh-Belarusian Customs Union Comes Into Effect," *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*, July 5, 2010, sec. News, http://www.rferl.org/content/Eurasian_Summit_Opens_In_Astana/2091161.html.

⁹³ "Customs Union with Russia and Belarus Raises Doubts in Kazakhstan," *The Jamestown Foundation*, accessed May 15, 2015, [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=35810&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=7&cHash=e7ae6a3b12](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=35810&tx_ttnews[backPid]=7&cHash=e7ae6a3b12).

materials was outweighed by finished products coming from the co-members.⁹⁴ The rapid growth and extreme fall of unemployment did not take place, and it became clear that the progress will be possible in a rather longer term. Rising custom's fee, the major difficulty according to the World Bank,⁹⁵ and the absence of the unity as single trade block also led to the complications in the accession to WTO, which was accomplished independently by Russia in 2012.⁹⁶ Moreover, for several years non-tariff barriers had been an obstacle for integration, since Russia used them for both economic and geopolitical means.⁹⁷ These developments were not neglected by Nazarbayev. The concerns were gathered and embodied two years later in 2013. As seen from the interview of the Minister of Eurasian Commission for Competition and Anti-monopoly regulation (nominated by Kazakhstan) the idea that Kazakhstan has to act in order to stay competitive has been knowledge on the level of Eurasian supreme bodies.⁹⁸ In 3 months Nazarbayev held his speech in Minsk, directing the way of criticism on both common market and the actions of other member-states. He has not hesitated to criticize actions of both Belarus and Russia, the provisions of the Custom's Union code and politicization of the Eurasian Commission. He denied any need to create superstructures and coordinate actions on the higher level and argued that after creation of Eurasian Economic Union EurAsEc should be eliminated as unnecessary.

⁹⁴ "New vision of Eurasian integration in Kazakhstan," *DW.DE*, September 5, 2013, <http://www.dw.de/%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B2%D1%8B%D0%B9-%D0%B2%D0%B7%D0%B3%D0%BB%D1%8F%D0%B4-%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D0%B5%D0%B2%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B7%D0%B8%D0%B9%D1%81%D0%BA%D1%83%D1%8E-%D0%B8%D0%BD%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%B3%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%86%D0%B8%D1%8E-%D0%B2-%D0%BA%D0%B0%D0%B7%D0%B0%D1%85%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B5/a-17068028>.

⁹⁵ "Kazakhstan in the Customs Union: Losses or Gains?," April 18, 2012, World Bank edition, sec. Новости, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2012/04/18/kazakhstan-in-the-customs-union-losses-or-gains>.

⁹⁶ "Kazakhstan's WTO Accession, a Long Winding Road It May Be but Hopes Remain Strong," *AzerNews*, accessed May 17, 2015, <http://www.azernews.az/analysis/78278.html>.

⁹⁷ "The Eurasian Customs Union among Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan: Can It Succeed Where Its Predecessor Failed?," *FREE*, accessed May 16, 2015, <http://freepolicybriefs.org/2012/11/05/the-urasian-customs-union-among-russia-belarus-and-kazakhstan-can-it-succeed-where-its-predecessor-failed/>.

⁹⁸ "Kazakhstan extremely needs toughening of norms, otherwise it loses", - Interview of Nurlan Aldabergenov, Minister for Competition and Anti-monopoly Regulation., accessed May 16, 2015, <http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/nae/news/Pages/25-07-2013-1.aspx>.

At this stage, the characteristic of imposition has strongly shaped the Customs Union. Nazarbayev tried to bring it back to the direction of negotiations and asked for the joint investment and set up the deadline for resolving all internal disputes by May, 2014. He was heard and the share of Kazakhstan in their flows on the Eurasian space increased. So, for instance, Kazakhstan's investment portfolio in Eurasian Development Bank activities increased from 36% in 2012 to 40% by the end on 2014, whereas Russian has fallen down from 50% to 34,8% respectively.⁹⁹ In addition to these projects mainly focused on energy, in 2014 Russia agreed to construct nuclear power plant in the town of Kurchatov.¹⁰⁰ The amount of agreements on the interregional forum held once a year has increased. So, in November 2013 Rosneft and KazMunaiGaz had concluded preliminary agreement on the transportation of oil from Russia via Kazakhstan to China.¹⁰¹ The agreement was ratified by Kazakh Parliament next year, fixing the prices higher than mentioned in initial document.¹⁰²

This was the clearest episode of regime bargaining where Astana has successfully defended its position against the dominant actor, and the hegemon has agreed on the conditions and has started to appeal for the help of its smaller partner. Nevertheless, Kazakh government did not give up practice of acting for its own economic development. The concern over the impact of sanctions and support of Putin were numerously repeated, especially during the OSCE parliamentary Summit in Geneva and during the Nazarbayev's meeting with the French President Hollande.¹⁰³ Leaving NTB for its own reasons,¹⁰⁴ cheaper

⁹⁹ The numbers are represented in the quarterly reports in "Facts and Figures," *Eurasian Development Bank*, accessed November 5, 2015, <http://www.eabr.org/e/about/figures-facts/>.

¹⁰⁰ "Russia, Kazakhstan Sign Nuclear Cooperation Deal," *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*, September 30, 2014, sec. Kazakhstan, <http://www.rferl.org/content/nuclear-cooperation-russia-kazakhstan-oskemen-semipalatinsk-test/26613323.html>.

¹⁰¹ Editorial Board of the Official Website of the President of Russia, "Interregional Cooperation Forum of Russian and Kazakhstan," *Президент России*, accessed May 17, 2015, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/19597>.

¹⁰² "Kazakhstan Parliament Ratifies Agreement on Russian Oil Transportation to China via Kazakhstan. Laws, Initiatives," *Tengrinews.kz*, accessed May 17, 2015, http://en.tengrinews.kz/laws_initiatives/Kazakhstan-Parliament-ratifies-agreement-on-Russian-oil-254454/.

¹⁰³ "Nazarbayev: 'One should not underestimate the might of Russia,'" accessed May 21, 2015, <http://tengrinews.kz/tv/novosti/politika/2883/>; "K. Tokayev declared the position of Kazakhstan on Ukraine,"

ruble and stagnating economy of Russia, and decreasing oil price made Kazakh producers so vulnerable,¹⁰⁵ that it has to be involved into the active use of intra-market restrictions.¹⁰⁶ Besides this, Kazakhs and Belarus did not join the countersanctions and banning of European imports initiated by Russia.¹⁰⁷ In November 2014 Nazarbayev addressed to the nation outlining the policy of infrastructural upgrade and development and diversification of economic sectors.¹⁰⁸ This move should have even further strengthened the self-relying status of Kazakhstan under any cooperation framework.

The Chinese vector was started to be used again and the way how Moscow should re-attract the attention from the benefits being proposed is unclear. In December on the Summit of the Council of the Heads of the Governments, Chinese Premier announced new package of deals worth \$14 billion for Kazakhstan.¹⁰⁹ Besides that, Kazakhstan will participate in the New Silkroad Economic Belt initiative launched by Beijing in relation to Central Asian states, which is aimed at development of the infrastructure and communication around the region. Its total amount is 40 bill \$ and it has no alternatives.¹¹⁰ Keeping in mind the

24KZ, October 4, 2014, <http://24.kz/ru/novosti2/politika/item/28584-k-tokaev-izlozhl-pozitsiyu-kazakhstana-po-situatsii-v-ukraine>.

¹⁰⁴ "Union with Barriers," *Gazeta.Ru*, accessed May 17, 2015, <http://www.gazeta.ru/business/2015/03/17/6602773.shtml>.

¹⁰⁵ "Kazakh businessmen call for restriction on trade with EurAsEc," accessed May 17, 2015, http://lprime.ru/state_regulation/20141226/798941763.html.

¹⁰⁶ "Trade War Mounts Between Kazakhstan and Russia | Business," *The Moscow Times*, accessed May 17, 2015, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/business/article/trade-war-mounts-between-kazakhstan-and-russia/519042.html>.

¹⁰⁷ "Customs Union on the Background of the Russian Food Embargo," *DW.DE*, August 20, 2014, <http://www.dw.de/%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%BC%D0%BE%D0%B6%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%BD%D1%8B%D0%B9-%D1%81%D0%BE%D1%8E%D0%B7-%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D1%84%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%B5-%D1%80%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%81%D0%B8%D0%B9%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%B3%D0%BE-%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%BE%D0%BB%D1%8C%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B2%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B3%D0%BE-%D1%8D%D0%BC%D0%B1%D0%B0%D1%80%D0%B3%D0%BE/a-17864567>.

¹⁰⁸ "Kazakhstan's Reform and Development Play," *Silk Road Reporters*, accessed May 30, 2015, <http://www.silkroadreporters.com/2014/11/15/kazakhstans-reform-development-play/>.

¹⁰⁹ "China's Silk Road in the Spotlight as Xi Heads to Kazakhstan," *The Diplomat*, accessed May 30, 2015, <http://thediplomat.com/2015/05/chinas-silk-road-in-the-spotlight-as-xi-heads-to-kazakhstan/>.

¹¹⁰ "China Edging Russia out of Central Asia," *The Diplomat*, accessed May 30, 2015, <http://thediplomat.com/2014/11/china-edging-russia-out-of-central-asia/>.

difficulties faced now by the Russian economy, the Kremlin should now think of a very good deal to offer to Nazarbayev.

Principles & Rules

Although the dynamics of economic dimension of Kazakh-Russian relationship is different from CSTO, the principles which lie behind are very similar. First, Kazakh government, as an actor of developing regime, contributes to its cohesion and creation of the common ground, but it does always find a better position for itself before integration round starts. Starting from 2005 Kazakhstan both opens up its economy for closer cooperation with Russia and at the same time introduces the changes which bring solely personal benefits. Such course of actions is observable until 2010 when, almost each year significant progress was made in establishing closer relations with China. When the agreement on CU had been signed in 2007, the Financial Crisis and Georgian conflict showed Nazarbayev that Kazakh state should be prepared. For this purpose he used all kinds of means, among which the Chinese participation was the most significant one. Such actions are essentially a way to extract the advantages and shape the cooperation with Russia. Being in a better position in the regime where the power difference and challenging international position of a bigger partner are present is crucial.

The imposition here also plays important role: Nazarbayev expects Russian dominance to balance integration and problem-solution efforts. Kazakh president wants Putin and the Kremlin to use their position of hegemon and to settle the disputes and to resolve the difficulties arising from integration. When this course of actions is absent or incomplete, as happened with low capacity to provide investments or to eliminate NTB, then, Astana finds other ways to fulfill its interests and it attracts the attention of another actor – China. By introducing the interests of Chinese businesses and state in the main sectors of its domestic economy and re-directing the resources it shows that it has better opportunities if Moscow

does not pay attention to the problems of integration and does not compensates the losses. It is revealed by the course of events which took place in 2008 during the time of economic crisis, and 2014 sanctions regime and the fall of the oil price.

5. Regime's 'central elements' and Ukrainian Crisis: can they be 'pushed further'?

So, taking into consideration all of the following dynamics inside of the regime, how will it be affected by the current Ukrainian Crisis? Is it capable to transform during the time of hardships, changes in the distribution of power, and collapses of other regimes? My answer is positive. The regime of multidimensional cooperation between Russia and Kazakhstan is capable to transform and to preserve the adherence of the Kazakh leadership to the commonly shared objectives in the light of the Ukrainian Crisis. The flexibility and simplicity of the regime, the shifts of power, and diminishing capability to impose the agenda by Russia will likely transform and increase the negotiating aspect in the mutual arrangements, and will highly contribute to the establishment of the Kazakh status quo. In order to justify this argument, it is necessary to evaluate the regime according to the criteria mentioned in the beginning of the research.

First of all, multidimensional regime of Russia and Kazakhstan is an imposed regime with an element of negotiation. Nevertheless, it does not mean that it is totally undesired by Kazakhstan. The imposition mostly touches the mechanisms, the vectors and speed of integration, and the specific agenda, including the support on the international arena. Developments under CSTO have showed that the Kremlin is free to lobby the policies which would never be raised up by its smaller neighbors, including Kazakhstan. Its actions on the international arena are fully supported by Nazarbayev, whereas the actions themselves carry nothing good for the Kazakh interests. The complains of the Kazakh president were only partially fulfilled in EurAsEc, but the major problem of the intra-community barriers remained at place.

The rules of the bargaining inside the Russian-led regime are difficult to be estimated since the core members, including Kazakhstan, tend to practice unanimity and, probably, settle the issues before the meetings. The balance between integrative and productive bargaining is following: Nazarbayev rejects the political integration and assures the Kazakh position, while Putin does not hurry with the elimination of the internal barriers. Overall, bargaining for the cohesion and integration of the regime is observable, but what is more observable is the productive bargaining and reluctance of Russia to resolve the core-issues. The nature of Kazakhstan multi-vector policy includes avoidance of direct confrontation. Still, opposition to sign the Eurasian Economic Union agreement in 2012 showed that Russia in some cases may have demonstrated the respect for the principle of equity in institutional bargaining and Kazakhstan was capable of deterring highly unlikely agenda from coming into force. What is more important is that the following year was marked by signing the Treaty on Good-Neighborliness and Alliance in the 21st Century. It means that the concerns of Nazarbayev were addressed at the highest bilateral level, and the next round of discussions on the Economic Union took place in 2014 with the signature of the agreement.

The problem with integrative bargaining is best expressed by the amount of formal and informal exemptions from the common rules on the cooperation. During the active phase of integration started in 2010, their number was progressively diminishing, but there were no significant attempts to eliminate them completely on the part of Russia. Thus, the Kazakh attempts to negotiate for their own benefit with both Russia and China, first, is a rational choice, and despite separated attempts of protest, Russia seems to understand such strategy. Keeping in mind that Nazarbayev does not hurry with vertical integration and opposes to political component, it can be counted as a situation of integrative parity.

Inter-party bargaining is almost non-existent, except of the Interregional Forum of Cooperation, which takes place every year. There are no indicators, which can prove that

there is a joint transnational lobby acting for a common interest behind either EurAsEc or EEU. The issues are addressed on the political level by the politicians. The sole organ remotely resembling transnational connectivity of the Kazakh and Russian economies is the Eurasian Business Forum existed in EurAsEc. The amount of its initiatives proposed to the supreme bodies of EurAsEc was minimal; it did not succeed to act as a unified business group and shrank its activity to holding common discussions and conducting seminars. On the other hand, the separated business communities will probably serve further to ensure the advantages of the Kazakh state within the regime, and their voice can be used as an excuse for enforcing the measures of additional control.

Drawing of the linkages exists, but on the very high level. As noted above, Nazarbayev deliberately links the further support for the integration in exchange of providing substantial opportunity for Kazakhstan to meet its needs and demands acting individually. Astana takes part in deeper security integration if it satisfies its demands and does not restricts its multi-vectorialism, continues economic cooperation if it is not connected with political issues and does not limit engagement with other actors. Multi-vectorialism in exchange of closer ties is the major linkage.

Under the framework of cooperation, Kazakhstan is able to set agenda. It can be both the agenda for the bargaining, as well as the topics of the personal preferences of Kazakhstan and a tool for making its international image. For instance, all participants to the regime, not only Russia, have expressed the support for the Kazakh Presidency in CSTO and OSCE. The Kazakh initiatives on nuclear proliferation and the Astana summit of 2010 have found a wide support. Kazakhstan may bargain to get specific products like joint investments or common air defense systems, but its demands are faced by tough position of Moscow. However, it appears to be unrestricted to get these products from the third states. As for support of the other partners in CSTO and EurAsEc, Nazarbayev does not participate in the internal

coalitions and siding with anyone. It occurs despite similarities of the Kazakh position on the NTB with Belarus, for instance. Nor Kazakh president has actively proposed to include someone else from his own preference. The only such proposal was made, when he voiced the criticism towards the Customs Union and asked for offering its membership to Turkey.¹¹¹

What does Ukrainian Crisis mean for it?

Paradoxically, but it means that the regime has all chances to overcome the difficulties. Nevertheless, it might be transformed radically, if the Russian dominance becomes too weak and is not able to enforce the current rules of the regime and perform the role of the imposer. The cooperation regime between Russia and Kazakhstan may seem to be relatively weak and incapable to transform itself. Persistent unanimity and block of negotiations with one single voice of Kazakhstan for two years, caution in handling the vertical integration, absence of direct transnational business linkages, and small space for connecting the issues creates an impression of doomed to failure. Nevertheless, the conclusion shall be the opposite: keeping in mind the principles guiding such regime, it can appear extremely stable. The connections, which link the parties, are extremely durable, because they are minimal. There are options for expanding the cooperation, conducting the trade wars, seeking for the alternative sources of investment and support. Without full consent of Putin, Kazakhstan can still match its demands with the help of the third countries.

Faced by the Ukrainian Crisis, such stable and minimalistic arrangement is highly accommodative towards both interests of the small actors to pursue their independent interests, and for the dominant ones to find support for the political agenda on the international arena at almost no costs for the domestic situation of the former. The Russian hegemony appears to be unwilling to resolve the internal disputes voluntarily, but it does not

¹¹¹ “Kazakhstan’s President Suggests Granting Turkey Admission into the Customs Union. Politics,” *Tengrinews.kz*, accessed June 1, 2015, http://en.tengrinews.kz/politics_sub/Kazakhstans-President-suggests-granting-Turkey-admission-23559/.

in general deprive Kazakhstan from acting on its own and finding alternatives. Thus, the political support of Putin's actions in no way means joining the confrontation with the West. Moreover, rising image of stability, opportunities, and openness for the investments are making Kazakhstan more attractive candidate for the investments. Not only the European investors are encouraged to contribute to the development of this sole prosperous post-Soviet country rich with resources, but also Russian companies, which find the normative climate more attractive, are invited to do so.¹¹²

Nevertheless, keeping in mind the hardships of the Russian economic crisis and given these principles and rules, the Kazakh-Russian multidimensional regime will have to transform. From the very beginning, Kazakhstan has strongly relied on the Russian role as a hegemon providing power and resources for the better cohesion of the regime. Such situation has been consolidated in the principles, which were outlined above and all of which are strongly based on the power disparity between the actors. Therefore, the Russian leadership will have to consider that it might not be able to handle the issues of bilateral and multilateral relationship in the same way as they did before. Neglecting the concerns of the regime participants and mutual limitations, it will be hard to be maintained at the same level. Hence, the attention paid to the claims of other actors should increase, thus, decreasing the imposition and, finally, altering the regime itself.

In fact, it has been transforming from 2008 onwards in the field of economic cooperation, where Kazakhstan was ultimately struggling for obtaining the status-quo, but had always stayed a core-partner. The major dilemma of a balance between productive and institutional bargaining for Nazarbayev is how much 'Chinese' vector he should introduce in the main economic sectors, which are affected by the Eurasian regime. Before that, Kazakhstan has conducted cooperation with both Russia and China in parallel,

¹¹²“Kazakhstan Benefits From Russia's Misfortune | Opinion,” *The Moscow Times*, accessed May 17, 2015, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/opinion/article/kazakhstan-benefits-from-russia-s-misfortune/511291.html>.

simultaneously increasing the amount of investments and widening the spectrum. In 2008, the situation started to change, while Russia was not capable of performing its function of imposer. Nevertheless, it does not mean that Astana ‘drifts’ – the fact that economic difficulties of 2008 coincide with the Georgian Crisis underline that Astana still performs its partnership functions. Before the Customs Union came into force in 2010, the Chinese managed to conclude several important deals with Kazakhstan. Then, the Chinese vector has been used from 2013 onwards after the disadvantages from the Customs Union and the Ukrainian crisis were understood. If the efforts on the part of China are considered, then, the Kazakh-Chinese cooperation will continue with the same dynamics, no matter the course of actions taken by the Kremlin. Consequently, it will be the Russian leadership, which will have to catch up with accommodation of the interests, and the transformation may become apparent.

In conclusion, it does all depend on the intensity and severity of the Economic Crisis and its impact on the Russian role as a hegemon. The changes will definitely not lead towards equality of the actors and negotiated type of order marked out by Young, nor will they bring the complete Russian attention towards the interest of the Kazakh government and others. Yet, Putin will have to sacrifice more resources for maintaining the status of the ‘Russian-led’ regime, or to revise substantially the Russian position on the issues concerning his Kazakh colleague.

Conclusion

The regime of cooperation stretching from Moscow to Astana and beyond has chances for the transformation and overcoming the current crisis. It has both formal and informal principles and rules which reflect the interplay between legalized responsibilities, actor's preferences and factual data on cooperation. The formal normative component of the CSTO regime draws representation of a pure integrating security block. On the informal level, the attention paid to the CSTO is substantively distinct. Although from the very beginning Kazakhstan has expressed its willingness in the collective defense and the support of Russia, its degree of commitment to the project of regional security regime is very pragmatic. It prioritizes its independence and self-reliance, and trades further and deeper integration only in the case of Russia's respect of these principles. The strength of the Russian regime is in making both these vectors meet.

The reaction of Kazakhstan to the developments under CSTO and its initiatives shows how, bearing in mind its highly personalized interests, it has been allowed to operate in substantively flexible environment of security block and to avoid interference in its internal affairs, as well as the tension with other actors and organizations, and to bargain successfully over desired objectives. Kazakhstan was not made to officially criticize the position of Uzbekistan during its rapprochement to the CSTO, nor did it break its cooperation with NATO. Security regime of CSTO has been flexible enough to meet the multi-vector policy of Kazakh government by expanding non-traditional objectives and regularizing the existing ones like collective military training, humanitarian actions, and coordination of the rescue services. On the other hand, when the agenda enlarging the scope of combatted threats and providing opportunity for CSTO to intervene in the domestic affairs was contradicting the key positions of Nazarbayev's foreign policy, Astana received enough guarantees and

clarifications on the substance so, that it stayed satisfied and supportive with further integration. In such situation, it is hard to find the instances of bargaining in the regime, but even when they are taking place, CSTO and Russia still comply with the pragmatism and multi-vector policy of Kazakh colleagues. As implied by the variety of formal documents and statements of Kazakh leadership, it does not contest the disparity of power between itself and the Kremlin. On the opposite, it acknowledges Russia as the dominant actor in their cooperation framework and, at the same time, keeps in mind limits, difficulties and failures connected with such role. The case of joint air defense showed both the limits of what Russia can give and what Kazakhstan can allow to itself.

In the dynamics of Eurasian-SCO cooperation from 2005 onwards, the relationship in the Russian-Kazakh-Chinese underlines difficulties which are expected and then faced by Kazakhstan as a result of deeper integration with Russia. While formally maintaining the support and assistance and expanding cooperation in the different areas, informally Kazakhstan makes efforts to contain the Russian influence by using the common rules and counterweighting Russian imposition, as well as by getting additional opportunities from the sanctions regime imposed on its Northern neighbor. Acting under the 'veil of uncertainty' made leadership to seek for the mechanisms of productive bargaining which could have fulfilled the personal benefits if integration fails. Such mechanisms were found in the introduction of the Chinese investments to the major economic sectors which have been provided onwards till now.

The Financial and Georgian Crises have fixed understanding of prioritizing state interests through appealing to China and then going further with Eurasian integration. Russian step in expanding the regime of economic cooperation in 2010 by CU together with firmly motivated economic and political concerns did raise serious doubts about the benefits for Kazakhstan. The integration was mismanaged by the Kremlin and Kazakh president

quickly reminded the participants of the Kazakh interest in their common regime. He has voiced all demands, including elimination of the NTB and excessive structures like EurAsEc, making joint investments. At this stage, the characteristic of imposition has strongly shaped the Customs Union and Nazarbayev tried to bring it back to the direction of negotiations and asked for the joint investment and set up the deadline for resolving all internal disputes. This was the clearest episode of regime bargaining where Astana has successfully defended its position against the dominant actor, and the hegemon has agreed on the conditions and has started to appeal for the help of its smaller partner. Nevertheless, Kazakh government did not give up practice of acting for its own economic development. Russia was unwilling to manage all of the issue brought up by Nazarbayev. Aggravating economic conditions, fall of the oil price, Russian ban of the European imports assured Astana in its policy of prioritizing its objectives. The Chinese vector was started to be used again and the amount of the assets put on the table by Beijing makes the opportunities of Russia to re-attract the attention is unclear.

Although the dynamics of economic dimension of Kazakh-Russian relationship is different from CSTO, the principles which lie behind are very similar. First, Kazakh government, as an actor of developing regime, contributes to its cohesion and creation of the common ground, but it does always find a better position for itself before integration round starts. The imposition here also plays important role: Nazarbayev expects Russian dominance to balance integration and problem-solution efforts. Kazakh president wants Putin and the Kremlin to use their position of hegemon and to settle the disputes and to resolve the difficulties arising from integration. When this course of actions is absent or incomplete, as happened with low capacity to provide investments or to eliminate NTB, then, Astana finds other ways to fulfill its interests and it attracts the attention of another actor – China.

Keeping all these in mind, the cooperation regime between Russia and Kazakhstan may seem to be relatively weak and incapable to transform itself. Persistent unanimity and block of negotiations with one single voice of Kazakhstan for two years, emphasis put on the productive bargaining, caution in handling the vertical integration, absence of direct transnational business linkages, and small space for connecting the issues creates an impression of doomed to failure. Yet, the principles guiding such regime are minimalistic; therefore the stakes are low, and the chances for the regime to survive and overcome the crisis are high.

Nevertheless, keeping in mind the hardships of the Russian economic crisis and given these principles and rules, the Kazakh-Russian multidimensional regime will have to transform. Neglecting the concerns of the regime participants and mutual limitations, it will be hard to be maintained at the same level. Hence, the attention paid to the claims of other actors should increase, thus, decreasing the imposition and, finally, altering the regime itself.

As for the prospects for the future research, the attention should be paid towards the relationship of Russia with other post-Soviet states also taking part in this multidimensional regime. After all, Kazakhstan and Belarus are not the sole partners of Russia in their organizational arrangements, and, definitely, not the most demanding and heavily-relying on the Russian dominance and resources. Inclusion of their behavior and personalized interests into the picture of regime will give more coherent and detailed picture of the Russia's opportunities to guide and control the cooperation in the wake of Ukrainian Crisis. If coupled with Russian-Chinese framework, further research can provide more implications on the future of the relationship not only in Central Asia, but also on the whole Eurasian space.

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