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Title: New regionalism: Western European experience and its implications for Russian regionalism.

In spite of the fact that the swing of the pendulum shifted towards defederalization in the Russian Federation during Putin's presidency, it seems to be pre-mature to say farewell to the regionalism debate. Considering the growing interdependence as a recent trend of the world politics and EU-Russia demand for cooperation, one has to assume that the logical result of spillover effect should be the gradual convergence of values and norms encompassing all the interested actors to be involved. In this regard, it can be stated that new regionalism approach, based on functional cooperation, economic rationale and horizontal linkages between state and non-state actors, will gradually outplace the old approach of Westphalian system based on the primacy of the national state powers as the only actors defining the rules of the game in international relations. However, this change is a gradual and conflictual process, since the proponents of the state-centered approach regard their liberal counterparts, such as regions, NGOs, civil society groups, as a threat to their security interests. The result of the battle is neither predictable, nor universal for all countries and regions. Rather, the final outcome will always depend on the existing levels of interdependence and the possibilities of functional cooperation as well as shared or divided identities and the nature of the states and regimes. The contemporary theories of international relations and comparative regionalism are rarely applied explicitly when discussing Russian regions. On the contrary, the discussions about the unique way of Russia and the following assumption about the impossibility of any comparison are now getting more vociferous in the national political discourse. Against this background, the article pursues the aim to explore the Western approaches to regionalism and to analyze how Russian regionalism experience can fit into existing paradigm and what are the obstacles to this integration.

First, we will examine the approaches to regionalism, existing in the contemporary scholarly debate. Secondly, we will demonstrate that 'new regionalism' is not a unanimously accepted paradigm but one among competing others, mainly 'old regionalism' based on the strong sub-nationalism appeals of the 'non-state nations' to historical roots.

Thirdly, we will try to explore what are the obstacles and opportunity structures for Russia to accept and implement new regionalism approach.

Theoretical approaches to regionalism

There are number of ways to approach and explain the progress of contemporary regionalism.

One of the dominating theories in international relations which completely deny the role of regions as any other sub-national actors is realism. According to structural neo-realists, the primary factor influencing policy outcome is international system structure, by which Waltz understands the juxtaposition of actors and their respective capabilities (Dougherty, Pfaltzgraff 2001: 82) In the centre of this interaction are states, which in Waltz's definition, are 'unitary actors who, at minimum, seek their own preservation and, at maximum, strive for universal domination'. In line with the old realists theorizing, neo-realists believe in 'power politics' as a method of promoting nation state interests and make emphasis on balance of powers, indivisibility of sovereignty and the issues of political and military security (hard security approach), or what is termed as 'high politics'. The change in international relations takes place only in response to changing external constraints, not domestic changes. 'The internal attributes of state are given by assumption rather than treated as variables'. (Evans, Jacobson, Putnam 1993: 5) Within this approach foreign policy is perceived 'as being based on the concept of national interest which is deemed to represent the whole society and not to be a mere compromise between different parties' (Frankel 1970: 39). From this perspective, since the mode of interaction is hierarchical, there is no place for sub-national actors (Dougherty J., Pfaltzgraff 2001: 82). By excluding sub-national actors from the analysis, realist and neo-realist theorists conclude that non central governments (NCG) internationalization is either irrelevant to the conduct of foreign policy, or a potentially dangerous intrusion on the prerogatives of the national government, or both. Kenneth Waltz considers nation-states as the final, decisive actors, whether their actions be voting in the United States Security Council, or putting disagreeable non-state actors in jail at home (Waltz 1979). Kissinger's statement about 'foreign policy that stops at the water edge', or 'foreign policy begins at the edge of the internal problems' has become already a truism (Kissinger 1966: 503).

The logic of denial of regional actorness has been expanded and developed in the centre-regional concept. In the frame of organization theory Rokkan and Urwin were the first British scholars who introduced the centre-periphery concept to characterize different patterns of centre-regional interaction. In this model centre is defined as 'privileged locations within a territory where key military/administrative, economic and cultural resource-holders most frequently meet' (Rokkan: 1982).

By contrast, a periphery is 'dependent, controlling at best only its own resources and more exposed to fluctuations in long-distance markets; is isolated from all other regions except the central one; and contributes little to the total flow of communication within the territory, with a marginal culture that is fragmented and parochial, yet not fully dominant across the politically defined territory'. (Rhodes 1982: 5) Yves Meny and Vincent Wright elaborate on this point, stating that the idea of the periphery includes not only distance in spatial terms but also 'distance in economic, cultural, social, ethnic, political, or even psychological terms...' (Wright 1985: 1) In this centre-periphery model the presence of strong centre and weak periphery implies the confrontational relationships and the possibility of revolt. As Gottman points out, 'The emphasis on confrontation is central to centre-periphery model. There is no periphery unless the spatial figure considered has a centre, or central sector; inversely, once a centre is determined, there is to be a periphery around it.... The essential interdependence does not prevent, of course, the confrontation once politics is introduced into the spatial pattern'. (Gottman 1980: 20)

The idea of dominance of the centre over periphery has been covered by the 'internal colonialism' concept of Hechter (Hechter, 1985), which implies the deliberate repression of peripheral aspirations by a dominant center. The result is "perpetual dependency" and subsequent material exploitation of the periphery. Uneven economic development is seen as the sole motivator behind peripheral demands.

Thomas Nairn (1981) points the blame at economic considerations as well. For Nairn, it is the uneven development of capitalism that explains regional mobilization. Both Hechter and Nairn use regionalism in the United Kingdom to develop their explanation. Among another examples which we can add to the validity of his hypothesis can be the cases of Quebec and Flanders where the rise of nationalist movements in 1960-s coincided with demands for improvement of their peripheral position within Canada and Belgium respectively. However, what was true for one historic period was rejected in the recent times. Contrary to the arguments of Hechter and Nairn, Quebec, Flanders, Catalonia as well as the cases of Scotland and Wales has demonstrated the limit of economic approaches. At present time, all these regions are well-developed economically and are far removed from "perpetual dependency" and "material exploitation", although the sub-nationalism discourse has not yet disappeared. Instead, it became even more vociferous. It seems that desire for control of economic interests is one motivation behind regional movements, but that desire is present in developed as well as underdeveloped regions.

Contrary to 'internal colonialism' explanation, Urwin, for instance, argues that the most pronounced demands for regional autonomy come from those regions with a developed "economic weight and performance" that could more adequately support independence and rival

the “political resources” of the center (Hechter 1985: 163). Economic considerations naturally play a role in regional conflict, but other factors appear to be involved when regionalism becomes politicized.

Among other factors, leading to peripheral protest movement, Rokkan and Urwin distinguish three factors: 1) the level of the inherited structure of the territorial communication (federal versus Unitarian structures); 2) the level of agencies of mobilization (elite structure); 3) the level of mass citizenry (territorial- cultural opposition, conflict between competitive standards for nation) (Rokkan, Urwin 1987: 101).

The probability of territorial conflict is dependent on the territorial power distribution and the presence of regional distinct identity.

According to Rokkan, there could be four distinct models:

- 1) territorial space predominant (strong centre, weak regions, no regional distinct identity);
- 2) territorial space dominant, but with strong membership space characteristics (the presence of only one national identity, although some limited forms of membership identity are possible);
- 3) Membership space dominant, but with strong territorial space characteristics (dominance of different identities which are competing among each other for the right to be recognized as ‘centres’). In this model it is not relevant to talk about centre and peripheries, but it is more appropriate to describe territorial political mobilization in this context in terms of regional tensions and conflicts;
- 4) Membership space predominant (recognition of different centers and identities which excludes the possibility of conflicts; however, conflicts could also arise due to external pressures through some kind of identification of the covenant members with differing neighboring states). (Rokkan 1982: 9-11)

According to these patterns of centre-regional relations, the emergence of distinctive regional identity is regarded as an infringement of the territorial integrity and therefore, as a zero-sum game. This hierarchical approach to centre-regional relations when sub-nationalism claims became more vociferous has been called as ‘old regionalism’. According to Jorgen Gren, old regionalism was based on a top-down approach and to a large extent marked by a social and cultural agenda. In the 70-s many of regional claims emerged as being more based on a "right to roots" or a cultural identity framework than on economic development needs. Indeed, Michael Keating identifies some of the regionalisation influences at the time as cultural demands stemming from social movements within the regions or the demands for regional autonomy from "historic nations" (Keating, Jones 1985: 3)

In “new” regionalism that is characteristic for the European Union economic issues started to play a dominating role. As Jorgen Gren defines, “New regionalism. is a response to new economic realities when the globalisation of market and continental economic as well as political integration supplanted the old order of separated national economies and policy-making. This enhanced the need for more localised thinking and the ability to anchor convincingly national and supra-national policy at a regional level and in smaller units. New regionalism is characterised by regions which are behaving as new, dynamic political and economic actors with demands which do not necessarily correspond with those of the national authority and which are not necessarily confined within the national boundaries” (Gren 1999: 22) Unlike the ‘old regionalism’, characterized for being conservative, resistant to change, dominated by politics of identity and separatist sentiments, new regionalism is considered to be modern, outward-looking which pursues autonomy of the region by peaceful ways (such as decentralization, regionalization and federalism) without destabilizing the state (Schmitt – Egner 2002: 188) This new regionalism is also considered to be as a form of ‘democratic maturation’ (Scharpf 1993) and ‘adaptation to the new conditions of modernity’ (Beaufays 1985).

The important implication of the regional mobilization has become the decline of the nation-state sovereignty. As Andrew Linklater notes, “What has declined in recent years is the level of consensus about the adequacy of sovereign states and the principles of international relations which have prevailed during the Westphalian era” (Linklater 1998, 8). The decline of sovereignty occurs, since transnational networks introducing a ‘multi-centric’ paradigm undermine the power of the state both internally and externally (Keohane and Nye 1972, 1977; Rosenau 1990; Ohmae 1995).

For many scholars ‘the end of sovereignty’ also heralded ‘the end of territoriality’ (Badie 1995) as a principle of social and political organization and even ‘the end of democracy’ (Guehenno, 1993), given the fact that social and political life dissolves into networks based on functional logic and on appearance of multiple cultural identities. With the rise of new economic regions many observers have started to talk about the restructuring of political space. Following neo-functionalists, Ohmae (1995) believes that a world we live in is a world of regional states, whose ‘primary linkages tend to be with the global economy rather than with their host nations’ (Ohmae, 2004: 80). Unlike nation-states, regions are ‘natural economic zones’ which ‘follow real flows of human activity and representing ‘no threat to the political borders of any nation’. (Ohmae 1995: 78) From geo-economic perspective, new spatial systems of production are emerging, which have been characterized as regional complexes with their own internal dynamics and connected to others on a global scale (Scott 1996, 2004). Economic inter-

dependence and creating of multiple functional spaces have also resulted in the dispersion of power among multiple centers of power. This phenomenon has been called multi-level governance which describes a shift from hierarchical modes of regulation towards negotiated modes of decision-making, where horizontal linkages between public and private and territorial tiers become prevailing. (Hooghe and Marks, 2001)

An important feature of new regionalism approach is that it explains change in the region (regionalization) and the new criteria of legitimacy ('logic of appropriateness') both by exogenous and endogenous factors.

Exogenous change at the EU level.

Among exogenous factors are globalization, European integration, or as they are called in the regionalist literature, 'opportunity structures' at global and continental levels (Keating, 1999). In the case of EU, the regionalization is possible through the 'membership conditionality' when the EU institutions condition admission of other members directly by their progress report in domestic adaptation of EU directives (Kelley, 2004: 428.) Due to the supranational institutions, in particular the European Commission and its policy of structural funds, new concepts such as partnership, subsidiarity and multi-level governance models regarding regional actors as 'second-level' players have been validated (Kohler-Koch 1996: 359-80). As Loughlin explains, the effect of Europeanisation has been the creation of 'a Europe with the regions', according to which the subnational authorities became a part of a multi-level type of governance (Loughlin, 2001: 25). Keating and Hooghe argue in this sense that Europeanisation and regionalisation both lead to a re-organisation and desegregation of state functions (Keating Hooghe 1996: 242).

This mechanism through which the change at regional level has occurred is driven by rationalist institutionalist assumption according to which actors are defined as calculating utility-maximisers. From this view, states respond to the incentives and sanctions imposed by international institutions in order to maximise their "payoffs" (Checkel 2001, 553-588).

On the other hand, another mechanism consists of a broad framework of socialisation processes such as "social influence" or "persuasion" or "social learning"— the so-called "normative pressures" (Kelley 2004: 425-457; Checkel 2001). "The defining feature is that external actors do not link any concrete incentives to behaviour but rely solely on the use of norms to either persuade, shame, or praise actors into changing their policies" (Kelley 2004, 428).

This mechanism is usually associated with regime theories. According to R. Keohane, international regimes include four components: principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures, where the linkage of the first three components gives the regime legitimacy. While

recognizing the limits of the international regime impact on domestic society, where sovereignty and self-help principles are very deep-rooted, Keohane believes that international regimes can change domestic policy, since the self-interest itself is not constant, but changing with time (Genest 2004: 171). The idea of social learning and importance of communication are the key concepts of the theories of EU integration. According to Karl Deutsch, any integration starts with an increasing level of social interaction and communication. It leads democratic governments to the formation of security community, in which no state or region poses a threat to any other (Deutsch, 1953). The crucial factor of his model is social interaction, whereas institutions and political predictions remain secondary. As Obydenkova evaluates, this model can be perfectly applied to the present EU- Russian relations, characterized by 'intensive communication, which involves trade and investment projects, cultural cooperation, in spite of the lack of formal institutional arrangements'. (Obydenkova, 2006: 592)

Endogenous change at the state level

Among endogenous factors through which a change can occur Loughlin outlines 'the institutional structure' and 'the state tradition' (Loughlin 2001: 1-33). According to classification of Loughlin, the features, defining the state tradition, are legal basis for the state, state-society relations, form of political organization, basis of policy style, form of decentralization, dominant approach to discipline of public administration. Traditionally, as Loughlin states, there is a distinction between two extreme traditions, Anglo-Saxon (UK, USA, Canada (not Quebec)) and Napoleonic (France, Spain (before 1978) Portugal, Quebec, Belgium (before 1988)). While the Anglo-Saxon tradition is characterized by the principle of non-centralization and tolerating of linguistic or cultural differences, the Napoleonic one is, on contrary, more notable for its adherence to centralization and repressive attitude to differences what is expressed through antagonistic state-society relations and regionalized unitary state. The concept 'nation-state' dating to the French revolution, denotes that 'nations ought to have states' and nation and state can be used interchangeably. In fact, the centralizing principle of French tradition is explained by the fact that state was thought to create a nation ('nation as demos'). In Anglo-Saxon tradition, there is no legal basis for the state, state-society relations are characterized to be pluralistic, the form of organization is union state, or limited federalism. As Loughlin points out, in Anglo-Saxon state tradition there is ambiguity over the concepts of nation and state, which adheres more to the pre-modern arrangement of the multi-nation state; the recent process of devolving of powers in UK can be demonstrative to their historical state tradition. Between two extremes there is also a third state tradition - a German one (Germany, Austria, Netherlands Spain (after 1978), and Belgium (after 1988). A typical trait for it is that since historically a state was very

weak and unconsolidated for a long time, formation of the nation predated state-building. As a result the concept of nation is understood as a community of people sharing common linguistic culture, *kulturnation*, or nation as ethnos. This type is characterized by legal basis for the state, organicist type of state-society relations and federalist form of political organization. Some authors (Loughlin, 2001, who follows Dyson (1980), Hesse and Sharpe) also add the fourth type - Scandinavian tradition which is characterized by legal basis for the state by an organicist type of state-society relations and a decentralised unitary type of state organization.

As far as a conflictual dimension of these three traditions is concerned (conflict over state sovereignty or national identity), it can be assumed that the most conflictual is the French type due to the strict interpretation of idea, leaving too narrow room of manoeuvring for the sub-national actors involved. On contrary, the German type is assumed to be the least conflictual, since it is based on federalism as a type of political organization, which is aimed at accommodation of diversities and providing a large room of maneuvering for its subnational entities.

Endogenous change at the regional level.

Besides aforementioned exogenous and endogenous factors, change can be also equally pushed from the region itself (change from below). The pace and character of the change can depend on the type of region.

Being a *unit of territory, system of action, political arena and actor* (Keating 1998), a region can take advantage of their *governing capacity* (Keating 1998a), or *regional power*¹ (Bourne, 2003), to promote its regional interests, which could potentially be conflictual towards interests of the government of the centre, or other regions and put their own standards of legitimacy. 'Regional lobbying simultaneously fosters territorial politics, by enhancing the territorial dimension of interest representation, and suppresses its expression in the form autonomy. This creates permanent tensions in the politics of regions'.

Although it is difficult to distinguish functional and cultural motives of regional mobilization, we can agree with Parks and Elcock who stated that 'regions can no longer sell their functional needs without having some sort of cultural justification for seeking autonomy for the territorial entity they represent.' (Parks, Elcock 2000: 97) These cultural demands are not omnipresent in all regions and may vary in scope and scale. Depending on the type of the regions (economic, historical/ethnic, administrative, political), according to Keating's classification, regions can develop their own projects, ranging from merely functional demands towards autonomy and

¹ By regional capacity Bourne implies 'region's ability to influence decisions in its favour, or its ability to control or escape the control of political actors at other territorial levels'. (Bourne, 598)

separatism. In another classification of Schmitt-Egner, regions are differentiated in relation to the actors dominating arena, where cultural and political elites are the most influential in identity regions (I), political and bureaucratic agents are especially prominent in administrative regions (II), and economic interests holding sway in structural regions (Schmitt-Egner, 2002: 186). Type of the region defines regional influence: 'identity regions are apt to enjoy relatively greater internal dominance than would more artificial and functional regions' (Schmitt-Egner, 2002: 186). Analyzing these two classifications, we can conclude that political regions and identity regions employed by Keating and Schmitt-Egner denote in fact the same type: regions which represent not only autonomous institution systems, but political spaces, one of the fundamental elements of which is a sentiment of identity.

As empirical evidence shows (for example, Four Motors of the Regions), the most prosperous economically regions are that ones which succeeded in employing the political resource of image-building, or as it is more frequently called regional identity.

Although many scholars are still hesitant to assert its conflictogenic character, many of them agree with its powerful role, since regional identity includes values, beliefs and norms which can make region different from the nation-state (Keating 1998; 2001).

Regional identity includes three elements explaining its relationship to political action: 1) cognitive (the process of awareness by people of such thing as a region, its differences from others – e.g. scenery and landscape, cuisine, language, historical legacy, political disposition, or economic structures); 2) affective (how people feel about the region and the degree to which it provides a framework for common identity and solidarity, possibly in competition with other forms of solidarity such as class and nation); 3) instrumental (region is used as a basis for mobilization and collective action in pursuit of social, economic and political goal (Keating 1998 a: 86).

Among three dimensions, the most important element which can entail political consequences is instrumental. As Keating explains, the political significance of regional identity (to what extent it will be conflictual toward that one of national state) will depend on whether this identity is used as a framework for mobilization and collective action in pursuit of social, economic and political goals' (Keating 1998a: 86), notably in voting and referendums. 'A further stage', as Keating continues, 'is reached with the demand for regional autonomy – leading to politicization of identity. These represent successive steps in political regionalism, since the second (politicization of identity) is not possible without the first (identity becomes important in elections), nor the third (demand for autonomy) without the second'. (Keating 1998a: 88)

However, as Keating admits, regional identity is not necessarily exclusive, but can easily coexist with multiple identities. In the context of EU integration, he shares an optimistic belief that it is in the interests of the regions itself to create multiple identities, in order to be flexible to the demands of globalization and be dynamic force for economic and social change. Contrary to the neorealist position, regarding all power relation as zero-sum, Keating is convinced that 'it is possible for two levels of government to increase their powers simultaneously, as they enhance the capacity to address social and economic problems'. (Keating 1998a: 86)

That identities are not a zero-sum game has been shown by the scholars of the European Integration (cf. for example Duchesne/Frognier 1995, Martinotti/Steffanizzi 1995)

However, if we apply a multi-factor regional analysis, we can reveal that regions and regional identity are highly contextual and changeable over time and it is probably too simplistic to agree with neo-liberalist positive-sum thinking. Since the regions are both actions spaces and actors at the same time (Keating, 1998; Schmitt-Egner, 2002), we have to look at the opportunity structures inside, its diverse actors and internal dynamic. According to the classification of Hoppe, one can judge about conflictual potential of the region, depending on the following elements of regional identity (Hoppe 2003: 12):

- 1) historical, political, cultural, geographic and economic markers or symbols of national identity;
- 2) vision of the nation;
- 3) centre-periphery relationship between the region and central government;
- 4) socio-economic structures;
- 5) Party structure and ideology.

While applying these criteria to political regions, or 'nonstate nations' with minority nationalist aspirations of some European states, we can easily observe that the impact of these structures on the conflictogenic potential of regionalism is the highest. The cases of the Scottish National Party, Italian Lega Nord, Welsh Plaid Cymry, Flemish Vlaams Belang, the Basque ETA can be considered as examples of old regionalism where the claims of these parties for the self-government are directed against the state. As we can explain, the mobilizing potential of the party leaders in this type of regions is significant due to the institutional and financial resources and distinct regional identity. With regards to Europe, they see it not only as a source of material support for economic development but also as a framework for the international projection of the region and a source of support for minority culture and languages.

The recent terror attacks of the Basque nationalists in Spain as well as a growing popularity of the Flemish nationalists leading to constitutional crisis in Belgium prove that the 'old

regionalism' understood as a call for historic roots has not become outdated in the era of globalization. As a result, many nation-states regard regionalism and globalization as a threat to the sovereignty and therefore make all efforts to limit further integration. Starting from Charles de Gaulle and Margaret Thatcher who stimulated nationalist feelings by attacking Brussels and up to the recent days, when the referendums on signing Constitution Treaty in Europe failed due to the negative voting of France and the Netherlands, new regionalism ideas still remain a very debatable issue. While the functional logic becomes increasingly important in transnational relations, one should not forget about the autonomous role of politics in translating functional pressures into behavior and actions.

In other words, a concept of the region for us has not only an institutional, but also normative dimension, where region is perceived both as historically given and a constructed project. In this understanding, not only state traditions and institutional structures matter, but regional nationalist ideology projected through region identity which can impact the political behavior of the region and thus create new basis of regional legitimacy.

II. Implications of the New regionalism for Russian regionalism

In the first part of the article it has been shown that new regionalism approach based on economic rationale, globalization and EU integration as driving forces, can not be used as a panacea to explain the complexity of the all regional processes. While admitting that in the case of European regions, EU can be considered as a decisive factor in mobilizing regionalism, the impact of this trend in the non-EU regions seems to be not so obvious. As it has been explained, Europeanization is possible mainly through the mechanism of 'member conditionality'. Since Russian is not on the accession waiting list even in the long-term perspective, this mechanism is not applicable. The second mechanism through which change can happen could be 'normative pressures', or persuasion – the tools of the soft power approach. An example of normative pressure can be Cooperation and Partnership Agreement, signed in March 1992. Introducing into the agreement the key concepts as "cooperation", "partnership", "involvement" as well as emphasizing 'common values' such as respect for human right, the rule of law and the market economy can be considered as the 'normative pressure' which EU employed to integrate Russia and its regions into Europe.

However, it can be stated that similarly to 'membership conditionality', normative pressures are not efficient with the equally strong partner, endowed with different normative system and

pursuing its own self-interests in international arena. During Putin's presidency terms all the political discourse of the foreign policy continuously emphasized Russian special role in multi-polar world and its right for building its own model of democracy, being no more a 'junior partner' of EU, but a model-setter itself. As Head of the International Department of the All-Russian political Party "Rodina" Demourin stated in the report about the results of EU-Russia cooperation (Report on the Conference "Agenda 2007: Regional Dimensions of the EU's Policy in the Context of the Neighbourhood Strategy" (St. Petersburg, 28-29.10.2005, in: www.brcinfo.ru/files/download/Report_Agenda_2007.doc):

'Russia must carefully fulfill the duties taken but at the same time to keep sovereignty and define the ways of its development on the basis of its own interests, values, and traditions. The Partnership with the EU should be built on a pragmatic basis. Russia shall accept norms and rules existing in the EU only in case if they are acknowledged efficient and corresponding to the interests of Russian development. There is no sense in harmonizing the Russian legislation with that of the EU as the latter is constantly transforming and Russia has not had and will not have any chances to participate in the European lawmaking'.

Growing economic potential of Russia as well as favorable high world prices for oil has enforced western counterparts to listen respectfully to the getting increasingly important normative power. As Marc Franco, Head of the European Commission Delegation to Russia emphasized, 'We (EU) can no longer be so naïve to believe that if we stand on the roof with the mouthpiece and preach what is the standard of democracy, Russia would follow us. Instead, we should try to find common points of interests and gradually try to teach and learn from each other.' (From the meeting at KU Leuven, Institute for International and European Policy, 26 October, 2007)

At the same time, one can not deny the growing impact of globalization pressures. Being a dynamically growing economic power, development of functional cooperation with global economic powers as well as their sub-national units is always declared by Russian high authorities as one of the first priorities. In the numerous speeches of the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, regions were strongly encouraged to develop their external relations with their European partners. Committee of the Regions as well as the Congress of Local and regional authorities of the Council of Europe have been recognized as the opportunity structures for development of inter-regional cooperation.

One of the frequently cited of the 'positive' regionalism from the viewpoint of the Centre is Northern dimension. The regions of the North West Russia (Kaliningrad, Karelia, Leningraskaya and Muramnskaya oblasti) are considered to be a special case, since their pro-active regional initiatives have been economically beneficial being deprived at the same time of any

secessionist incentives. At the same time their history of cooperation with the EU regions have showed the possibility of EU normative pressure on Russia through positive interdependence and multilateral institutionalism. Due to its technical and low-politics approach, ND can be considered as an attempt to build new system of security, based on mutual benefit and multilateral cooperation.

However, in spite of the few rare examples of the successful stories of inter-regional cooperation, there are a number of obstacles in employing this positive experience by all the Russian regions. These obstacles to change can be classified according to endogenous and exogenous levels.

Endogenous change:

- No traditions of regionalism ‘from below’. During soviet period, the political system was centralized so that it completely excluded any possibility for regions to perform as independent players not only in international relations but even in developing inter-regional networks. A simple example of this hyper-centralization was that ‘80 percent of all roads served hierarchical relation, leaving areas counted as ‘peripheral’ without proper transport connections The vertical order of space was manifested also on the regional borders where (horizontal) transport routes were usually interrupted’ (Pynnoniemi 2002:67) After the collapse of the USSR, the empowerment regions happened not due to the well-thought strategies (which could have been called as cognitive element of regional identity, according to definition of Keating) but because of the weakness of the political system. As Hiski Haukulu explains the difference between western and Russian regionalisms, ‘Whereas the Western regionalism entails spontaneous grass-root level networking (i.e. integration), the Russian regionalism is both a consequence of the disintegration of the previous political system and a response to the weaknesses and outright failures of the present one.’ (Haukala 2002: 127) Not surprisingly, being a result of the weakness of the political system, but not a consequence of long historical traditions, it was so easy for Putin’s government to launch defederalization reforms, or strengthening of the ‘vertical of power’.
- No traditions of regionalism ‘from above’. If we apply Loughlin’s classification to Russia, we will face the difficulty in fitting it into one specific. Rather, it combines the elements of different traditions. On the one hand, it is similar to Anglo-Saxon with regards to the idea of multi-national state (this is proclaimed as the first statements in its Constitution) and civic national identity, where

belonging to the state is expressed by term *rossiyanin*, implying the membership of all linguistic/cultural communities inhabiting on the territory, rather than *russskiy* which denoted only one ethnic community. However, with regards to the strong role of the state and executive power and antagonistic state-society relation it can be referred to the French type. Russia does not definitely have a dual type, but tends to be more of cooperative type since federal, regional and local levels of government are interdependent, or better to say hierarchically dependent on the higher levels. It can be classified as ‘involuntary’ cooperation, where the rules of the games determine compulsory subordination. Definitely, in case of Russia, it is not relevant to talk about the decline of the nation-state and obsolescence of sovereignty. Rather, the principles of realism, such as power politics, indivisibility of nation-state interest, vertical stratification of the society and hierarchy in foreign policy are the key concepts, which are practically not impacted by globalization and new regionalism trends.

- Official position of the state, according to which regionalism from below (‘regionalization’) was associated with the likelihood of secessionist conflicts. In this regard, the recent cases of political instability in Western democracies caused by sub-national claims of the regions (Flanders, the Basque country), are often referred to by Russian authorities as the prove to their position that concessions to ethnic regionalist claims could be undermining for the stability and democracy of the state. From this standpoint, regions are regarded only as instruments or channels to fulfill the general foreign policy goals, not as independent actors. As Lavrov argued: ‘As soon as our experience in inter-regional and cross-border cooperation is growing, we are more convinced that the coordinating role of MFA does not hamper but facilitates the further development of this cooperation. We are not going to restrict the regional initiatives but would like their external economic relations to be maximally efficient for the regions and at the same time be in line with the general strategy of the federal centre, the government of the Russian Federation.’ (Stenogramma 2007, www.mid.ru)
- lack of the understanding of the core principles of new regionalism, such as subsidiarity and partnership. The necessity of coordinating all regional external initiatives with the federal centre has resulted in the bureaucratization, overlapping of federal and regional functions and slowing down of the pace of regionalization in the long run. Recognizing this problem, a Minister of regional

development D.Kozak suggests, 'It's necessary to delegate the maximal competences to the regions, while the centre should be only given those competences which require centralized control.' Among necessary reforms to combat unitary federalism and increase efficiency of the regional development he suggests 1) increase regional responsibility by removing of all federal bodies in the regions, except subsidiaries of internal affairs and military ministries 2) redistribute federal grants in such a way that the priority would be given not to the poorest but to the most efficient regions; 3) reform of the tax system to stimulate the growth of the wealthiest regions. (//Expert online, 26 October 2007. Kozak is against of unitary federalism)

Exogenous change:

- Weak institutionalization of inter-regional and cross-border cooperation. The current state of EU-Russia regional cooperation can be characterized by the development of informal rather than formal institutional networks. As it was stated in the Report on the Conference "Agenda 2007: Regional Dimensions of the EU's Policy in the Context of the Neighbourhood Strategy" (St. Petersburg, 28-29.10.2005), many agreements between Russia and the EU, such as the Kaliningrad transit, the energy dialogue, and a number of other programs are implemented outside the institutional frames of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement.
- Normative gap. The incompatibility of political and economic systems, underdeveloped low-level interaction accompanied with reminiscences from the Cold War make cooperation highly problematic. Whether the organizing principle of the EU is multi-level governance, involving active engagement of different state and non-state actors, the lack of societal players as well as weakness of civil society still remains a dominating feature of Russia. As Sergey Soutyrin (Head of the Chair of World Economy of the Economic Faculty of St. Petersburg State University) points out, 'Although the EU and Russia do not treat each other as opponents at the international arena the sides lack mutual understanding of the term "strategic partnership" that is currently used for official defining the nature of relations. In practice such partnership is often substituted with tough competition in specific economic issues. Political and economical systems of Russia and most EU states are currently not very compatible. Russian economical and partially social reforms were initially carried out under great influence of the so-called Anglo-Saxon model and did not orient upon dominating in the EU continental standards of "social state". In spite of the fact that the influence of continental and European patterns gradually increases this tendency is not prevailing in developing the Russian

legislation one of the reasons of which is unclear perspectives of the relations with the European Union.’ (Report 2005). What is frequently emphasized as a solution to overcome this gap is to intensify low-level cooperation, between Russian and EU SMEs as well as education and research centres.

- Asymmetric cooperation. All joint projects, such as TACIS and the Northern Dimension have been financed exclusively by the EU. What can be suggested considering the frequently proclaimed intention to build peer-to peer relations is to have 50/50 percent financing of all future joint regional projects considering mutual benefits and in collaboration with research and expert community.

Conclusion

As it was demonstrated in the article, the new regionalism approach based on functional logic and transnational relations beyond borders which circumvent nation-states is still a very debatable approach both in Western Europe and Russia. In spite of the decline of the nation-state as well as obsolescence of realism theory shared by many scholars in the Western research community, the political logic based on the nation-state interests is still relevant both within and outside European context. The very process of international economic integration as well as outbursts of ethnic regionalism unleashes countervailing pressures that favour national autonomy. This nationalist countermobilization is directed to limit the pace of integration in order to protect the very basic survival needs of the nation-state. This trend is not universal, but greatly depends on the ‘state tradition’, ‘institutional structures’ of the state as well as a ‘governing capacity’ of its regions. It was not in the purpose of the article to analyze comparatively the impact of EU on regionalization of the EU states and the attitude of the nation-states towards Europeanization pressures. Instead, the article suggested the analytical framework based on endogenous and exogenous mechanisms of change which was aimed to show that depending on the opportunity structures (both internal and external) the outcome can vary cross-nationally and cross-temporally. This analytical framework can be also applied to the non-EU country, such as Russian Federation. Being not on the accession list to EU and therefore not subjected to ‘conditionality pressures’, Russia and EU consider each other officially as strategic partners, involved in multilateral cooperation and positive interdependence. Based on the ‘regime theories’, it was assumed that increasing communication should result into gradual convergence of normative systems. However, if this statement could have been true for hierarchical partnership, when one of the partner could have been willing to learn (like it was partly true

during the times of Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Kozurev), nowadays such a scenario is unlikely to develop. Instead, emphasis on equal partnership does not imply readiness to follow other's normative system. In fact, equal partnership means that self-interests are the first priority which two parties are opting for. As a result, in the presence of normative gap and lack of knowledge and willingness to follow other's rules of the game, the pace of cooperation (even including low-level regional cooperation) should not be expected to be so quick, even in spite of all the declarations of good intentions from two participants.

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