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EU, EAEU AND OBOR: COMPETITION OF COOPERATION?

The relevance of the study is related to the identification of theoretical basis and assessing of capabilities for China, EU and EAEU for economic cooperation within the framework of the One Belt and One Road (OBOR) initiative, because these projects are not only complementary, but also contradictory and compete with each other.

The theoretical basis of this study is not only the traditional theories of integration, but also the latest, which emerged after the 2000s, such as social constructivism, strategic trade theory, new economic geography, regional-building theory, **global, competitive, insidious, conflicting, contending, critical, mega-, overlapping regionalism**. These concepts explain the rivalry between the leading countries of the region for the inclusion of other countries in their competing pan-continental and mega-regional integration projects, which triggers duplication, excessive regionalism and conflicts.

On the one hand, these projects contradict each other because spring from different motives. The EU's goal was to prevent military conflicts in Europe and to unite their economies in order to raise the welfare. The EAEU was created with the aim of reintegrating the countries of the former USSA and increasing Russia's geopolitical and geoeconomic influence. OBOR serves a variety of purposes for China, including encouraging economic development in the west of the country and linking China to Europe by land as well as sea [1]. But on the other hand, China, the EU and the EAEU can develop cooperation to prevent conflict, to harmonize and increase the effect of three alternative integration projects. China is one of the main economic partners of the EU and the EAEU. Of course, as in any economic cooperation, there are pros and cons.

In its OBOR infrastructure project, China makes extensive use of cross-regional and mega-regional integration initiatives to liberalize and facilitate trade and investment procedures with the countries participating in the project, which will contribute to the expanding the participation of the EAEU and the EU in the GVCs, the center of which is China [2]: RCEP, APTA, SCO, as well as FTAs with ASEAN, Chile, Georgia, Costa-Rica, Singapore, New Zealand, Pakistan, Maldives, Republic of Korea, FTAs under negotiations with GCC, Sri-Lanka, Moldova, Panama, Cambodia, FTAs under consideration with Fiji, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Bangladesh, Mongolia.

However, so far the tense relations between the EU and Russia, sanctions and the lack of direct cooperation and integration between the EU and the EAEU are the main reasons for the absence of a third important link of the China-EU-EAEU triangle. At the same time, the EU and the EAEU, Russia and Europe have common ground and common interests that need to be used for economic development.

References

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