ABSTRACT

of the dissertation submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
in the specialty 6D020200 – International Relations
by Yermukhambet44 Konuspayev
on the topic: "Theory and Practice of Eurasian Integration in the Foreign Policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan"

General Information about the Dissertation. This dissertation is devoted to one of the most widely discussed and studied phenomena in the context of the transformational processes of the contemporary world system — regionalization and regionalism. Integration processes across the globe have become one of the key driving forces of global development. Today, international integration represents the most effective form of interaction among leading actors in the evolving global political system.

The dissertation explores the role of Kazakhstan, which, since gaining independence, has proclaimed Eurasianism as one of the fundamental principles of its domestic and foreign policy. The study examines Kazakhstan's participation in the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), identifies the role of the EAEU in Kazakhstan's foreign policy and in its interaction with other integration associations, and analyzes the role, position, and extent of Kazakhstan's involvement in the development of Eurasian integration.

Relevance of the Research Topic

The beginning of the second decade of the 21st century has been marked by increased dynamism in the implementation of integration-oriented projects across various regions of the world. The relevance of this research stems from the fact that the early 21st century is witnessing a qualitative transformation of the international relations system. The traditional state-centric model of international relations, based on the principle of state sovereignty and the concept of the balance of power, is being replaced by a fundamentally new reality: global, multi-level system of interaction.

The Eurasian integration space can be regarded as a unique "research platform," offering a vivid example of the interplay between integration and disintegration processes. The global nature and high level of interdependence of the modern world system define the novelty of this phenomenon, thereby highlighting the need for the development of theoretical approaches to understanding ongoing systemic transformations.

Hence, the conceptual frameworks of "new regionalism" and transnationalism determine the relevance of issues related to contemporary regionalism in the context of globalization. This necessitates the formulation and development of new theoretical and methodological approaches for its study.

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calls for critical reflection and the development of new theoretical and methodological approaches to their study.

Among major integration blocs such as the European Union, ASEAN, APEC, NAFTA, and MERCOSUR, the Eurasian Union project stands out as an ambitious initiative aimed at fostering economic, cultural, and political integration among the states of the post-Soviet space.

The object of this dissertation research is Eurasian integration within the foreign policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The subject of the research is the formation and development of Eurasian integration, the economic dimension of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), and the interaction between the EAEU and other integration associations.

The aim of this dissertation is to conduct a comprehensive study of the theoretical aspects of Eurasian integration and their practical implementation in the context of Kazakhstan's foreign policy, as well as to analyze its impact on national security, economic development, and the country's diplomatic standing in international politics.

In accordance with the stated aim, the dissertation addresses the following **research objectives:**

- analyze the theoretical and methodological approaches to Eurasian integration based on the review of relevant theories and concepts of international relations; To examine the formation and development of Eurasian integration and analyze its main stages;
- explore the economic dimension of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and the key challenges of integration;
- identify the role of the EAEU in Kazakhstan's foreign policy and its interaction with other integration groupings;
- determine the role, position, and level of involvement of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the development of Eurasian integration.

The theoretical and methodological framework of the research is based on scholarly approaches developed by both Kazakhstani and international schools of thought. In analyzing, the issues addressed in the dissertation, a combination of classical theories - including realism, neorealism, liberalism, neoliberalism, and constructivism - was employed, alongside integration theories, such as theories of economic integration, neo-institutionalism, functionalism, the intergovernmental approach, and the theory of dependent integration. Additionally, the research draws on the theory of international organizations, the theory of multi-level diplomacy, and balance of power theory, among others.

The theory of economic integration provides a framework for understanding the economic, political, and social motivations and consequences of Kazakhstan's integration into the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), as well as the interaction between its foreign policy and integration processes within the Union.

The concept of regional integration in the context of the EAEU allows for the examination of a wide range of issues related to economic, political, and energy cooperation among member states, as well as the impact of integration processes

on energy security, economic efficiency, and the geopolitical position of the participating countries.

The theories of realism, liberalism, and constructivism offer explanations for various aspects of interstate interaction, including energy policy, regional integration, and soft power, all of which are essential for analyzing Kazakhstan's foreign policy strategy within the framework of the EAEU.

Emphasis is placed on the theory of multi-level diplomacy, which is applied to analyze how Kazakhstan balances its interests within the EAEU while simultaneously building relations with external partners, including China, the United States, and the European Union.

The methodological foundation of the research is based on systemic and comparative approaches, which enable a comprehensive analysis of the specifics of integration processes development, considering external factors and conditions influencing their dynamics.

In particular, the use of a systemic approach allows for an in-depth examination of the characteristics of the formation and functioning of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) at the current stage, within the context of the socio-economic prerequisites of its establishment, the process of harmonizing the national interests of member states, the analysis of Kazakhstan's interaction with other EAEU member countries, together with the identification of key trends and challenges related to integration processes.

The comparative approach ensures the reliability of the present study regarding the EAEU's potential for integrative expansion by comparing the characteristics of potential candidate states for accession to the Union.

The study employs the historical-genetic method and the method of comparative analysis. The use of the historical-genetic method allows tracing the evolution of Eurasian integration, including the key stages of the formation and development of the EAEU. This approach helps to identify critical moments that influenced Kazakhstan's foreign policy in the context of international integration and global changes.

The method of comparative analysis is applied to juxtapose Kazakhstan's foreign policy within the framework of the EAEU with other integration processes.

The study employed methods of analysis, modeling, forecasting, and case study examination. The use of modeling enables the construction of a conceptual framework for the integration structure of the union and the identification of its key parameters. Forecasting serves as a tool for developing medium- and long-term scenarios for the development of the EAEU in specific areas of integration interaction.

The application of the case study method involves analyzing the actual circumstances of bilateral disagreements between member states, as well as considering political events that influence the dynamics of the integration processes.

Furthermore, the study employs the methods of analysis, synthesis, analogy, and scenario modeling.

The following principles of scientific research were applied: objectivity, historicism, and comprehensive problem analysis. Objectivity allows the examination of historical processes development based on objective regularities at the studied historical stage, relying on factual evidence and considering each event and phenomenon in their complexity and contradictions.

The principle of historicism allows for consideration of where, when, and for what reasons (political, ideological, economic, social) the phenomenon emerged.

The main propositions of the dissertation submitted for defense are as follows:

1. The revival of the idea of Eurasianism is driven by objective factors related to the necessity of unification processes in the post-Soviet space following the disintegration of the USSR.

2. The concept of the Eurasian Union, proposed by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, N.A. Nazarbayev, is not a direct continuation of the classical Eurasianist theory, as in the 1990s it acquired a practical dimension and was implemented in the form of the establishment of the Eurasian Economic Community.

3. In the current context of global political and economic development, the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) acts as a competitive integration association.

4. The process of institutionalizing integration cooperation within the framework of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) is viewed as both necessary and feasible across several areas of collaboration.

5. For the effective functioning of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), there is an objective need both to expand the competencies of existing governing institutions and to establish new integration structures. This implies carrying out a comprehensive process of institutionalization, which includes transferring additional areas of cooperation into the integration framework.

6. The Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) possesses potential for both sectoral and geographical expansion of integration. Sectoral development involves identifying areas of activity with the greatest integration potential, while geographical expansion refers to the possibility of admitting new member states. Such expansion should be accompanied by comprehensive studies conducted both by the integration bodies and by the states seeking to join the Union.

The scientific novelty of the research lies in the fact that Eurasianism is interpreted not only as one of the new ideas of a historical-cultural, political, or social nature but also as a concept and model of a fundamentally new type.

The scientific novelty of this study lies in the examination of N.A. Nazarbayev’s initiative to establish the Eurasian Union through the lens of international relations. This concept not only represents a development of traditional Eurasianism but also constitutes a fundamentally new integration project, justified by the necessity of uniting the states of the Eurasian space. Its uniqueness stems from relying on a shared historical heritage and the sustained cooperation among the countries and peoples of the region across political, economic, and social spheres.

The theoretical significance of the work lies in the possibility of utilizing the presented analytical material in future scholarly research dedicated to international integration.

Furthermore, the theoretical and practical aspects of the functioning of the EAEU member states identified in this study can serve as a basis for the development of academic courses and teaching materials in related disciplines.

The practical significance of this study lies in the potential application of the theoretical and practical findings in the formulation of comprehensive foreign policy decisions by state authorities, including the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, as well as the relevant institutions of other EAEU member states.

The conclusions drawn and patterns identified in the research can contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of forecasting and medium-term planning of foreign policy activities, and the implementation of integration projects within the framework of the Eurasian Economic Union.

The thesis was validated at the International Relations and World Economy Chair of the Al-Farabi Kazakh National University.

Publications of the Doctoral Candidate:

The main research findings have been presented by the author at scientific conferences held at both the faculty and university levels. Additionally, the key points of the study were discussed during roundtable meetings dedicated to issues of Eurasian integration.

The candidate has published 12 scientific articles, including 6 articles in journals recommended by the Committee for Control in Education and Science (CCES), 3 articles in the proceedings of international conferences, 1 article in an English-language journal, 1 article in proceedings of the roundtable, and 1 article in the journal indexed in Scopus database.

The structure of the dissertation is determined by the logic of achieving the stated aim and research objectives and consists of an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion, and a list of references.