INTEGRATION TENDENCIES UNDER THE CONDITIONS OF GLOBALIZATION TRANSFORMATIONS

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At the turn of the XX—XXI centuries, transformation of the world economic system is determined by a complex of processes, among which globalization occurred as the basic trend of the world economy, despite the contradictory comprehension of its imperatives and consequences in the world economic space.

The current process of globalization is the result of increasing trends in polarization of the world architecture in terms of economic power and empowerment. This phase of the functional configuration of the world space causes the emergence of global problems and conflicts, predetermining the need for the economies of the world to cooperate closer and more openly on the design of the most effective mechanism for economic synthesis. Thus, the main line of today's interaction of national economies at the global level is integration which is creating internal sources for economic growth and development.

In the context of the above, the authors consider that integration trends in the global community have been caused by the ongoing globalization trends. The specifics of such changes are presented on the example of the Asia-Pacific region. At the same time, the main directions of Russian geopolitics and its role in the formation of integration associations in the Asia-Pacific region are shown.

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Introduction

The concept of "globalization" became one of the key concepts in economic science only in the mid-1990s when there was a whole series of monographs on this issue, including a huge number of scientific papers on certain aspects and directions of globalization processes' development (most of them were written on financial markets, international relations, culture, migration processes and ecology) (Kiryanova et al., 2007).

Many authors closely associate the concept of globalization with such concepts as "integration" and "internationalization", which mean strengthening of the relationships between any country and society in a variety of areas: economy, politics, military, culture etc. These concepts also involve the improvement of communications, development of transport network and electronic communication systems, rapid growth of the exchange in goods, services and technologies, more active migration of population etc. (Kulik, 2015).

As noted by Russian scientists, strengthening of integration processes challenges contemporary states to find a balance of interests between protection of their own producers, national sovereignty, their own mentality and development of economic and social relations with partner countries. In addition, the emerging geopolitical conditions determine the need to not only find new partners for integration, but also develop disintegration processes in those relations that have lost their relevance. The growing influence of economic factors also leads to the fact that states actively form trade and customs unions, which allow them develop international trade relations, taking into account their own specialization and competitive advantages (Kurbanov, 2009).

In the latest literature, international economic integration usually refers to a high degree of internationalization based on the development of deep sustainable relationships and division of labor between national economies, which leads to a gradual merging of reproductive structures in a number of countries.

Globalization today is merely an instrument for national peculiarities' liquidation. This means globalization does not make the world more equal – it simply makes it less diverse! And universalization as the final stage of globalization is seen here as the means to establish some sort of "global sameness" through the spread of common production standards initiated by the world leaders in industrial production (and these would be corporations, of course, which later would get the maximum advantages from this universalization) (Rubinskaya & Arkhipov, 2017).

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Despite the widespread use of the concept "globalization" in scientific and practice-oriented research studies, the definition of the essence of this concept is accompanied by a range of contradictions that arise due to a rather ambiguous approach to the causes and historical frameworks of this phenomenon, interpretations of globalization factors and uncertainty in the prospects of the evolutionary turn.

INTEGRATION TENDENCIES UNDER THE CONDITIONS

Plurality and complexity of the definitions provided for "globalization" are caused by the multifunctional nature of this process which is covering today the entire population of our planet.

Some works on this problem indicated that "the modern stage of globalization of society has shown interface of human practice with ontologically heterogeneous levels of reality (micro -, macro-, mega-) and has created opportunities for construction of alternative cognitive and axiological evolutionary strategies" (Starostin, 2018).

Thus, scientific and applied analysis of systematization of international economic relations research objectively draws us to a detailed analysis of the term "integration" which has been formed back in the early 20th century.

Theorization of the research problems around the concept of "integration" requires, in our opinion, a meaningful assessment of the existing developments, using which will become a platform for the author's empirical conclusions.

As the world historical experience and practice shows, integration processes are complex and usually take quite a lot of time. Decades are needed to build political, economic and other forms of relations between countries and regions. Over the past half a century, the concept "integration" has become integral part of the political and economic life in most countries of the world.

Giovanni Sartori in his works wrote that "integration" is a certain final state, process, function, implemented by relevant agents (for example, states, parties, interest groups etc.). At the same time, Sartori also noted that in the political systems of the West such term as "integration" is not applied to any kind of "connection" and not to all types of "merger" (Sartori, 2003).

The famous French economist R. Aron in his works pointed out that if the movement of goods, capital and people between a certain number of economic units can be carried out as freely as within each of these units, these different units are United.... The single economic space created by full liberalization of the movement of goods and production factors between integrating countries allows for an increase in the number of competing firms and the use of multiple economies of scale (Aron, 1992).

Attempts to define the concept "integration" accurately are reflected in various research studies, both domestic and international, political and economic. For example, back in the 1980s, V. G. Baranovsky pointed out that "political integration between countries is the formation of a certain integral complex at the level of their political systems – just as economic integration is a process that is carried out at the level of economic systems of several states" (Baranovsky, 1983).

Working in this area, Russian researchers connect the concepts of integration and globalization. For example, V. G. Baranovsky draws our attention to the fact that "in the theoretical study of integration it is absolutely necessary to take into account its relationship with other phenomena of international life" (Baranovsky, 1983).

Theoretical and empirical studies of scientists from the Institute of Latin America show that "development of integration in the West is caused by the fact that the states of the region considered integration as an additional way to accelerate the process of structural reforms in the era of highly competitive globalization, as the way to greater participation in the world economy, stimulating investment and economic growth" (Lavut A. A., 2004).

Using the results of theoretical research mentioned above, we will define the concept of "integration" as a conditionally radical redistribution of economic, political and other relations within the contemporary world order.

Results

Beginning of the 21st century is characterized by intensification of deep transformations of the world order, which determines the nature of the two interrelated processes.

One of them is relocation of the center of global economic activity to the Asia-Pacific region (APR) against the backdrop of the growing problems of the United Europe's economy. In fact, these circumstances are already quite pronounced - more than 50% of the world's population and GDP are already produced in the APR countries. The region is also home to quite powerful and rapidly growing military capabilities. Scientists and politicians believe that integration projects in the APR countries will determine the nature and the specifics of the dynamics of the global economy, as it stems from the analysis of the results of the global financial and economic crisis of 2008-2009 and the subsequent stagnation of 2010–2013.

The second priority aspect of the described processes is "shifting political, economic and military contradictions of the most influential subjects of world politics – the US and China – also to the Asia-Pacific region, against the background of the attempts by other states and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to use the potential of multilateral diplomacy so that to prevent their uncontrolled escalation" (MGIMO-University Report, 2012).

The Asia-Pacific region (APR) at this new stage in the development of global relations has began to play a fundamentally different role in the world politics. Scientists, researchers, politicians, economists publish various forecasts about the promising trends in the Asia-Pacific region (what processes and scenario will occur in the region, what countries have distinguished themselves by extremely high rates of economic growth since the second half of the 20th century and will play leading roles in East and South-East Asia in the near future etc.)

The current situation is characterized by quite intensive processes of various integrations in the region. Some Asia-Pacific countries conclude bilateral agreements in various areas of international cooperation with several partners.

The Asia-Pacific region is characterized by the most dynamic economic growth globally. This region includes the most rapidly developing economies in the world – India and China. Geographically, India is a country of South Asia, but at the same time it is also an active participant of various institutional structures in the Asia-Pacific region. In addition, the Asia-Pacific region includes other countries with transforming models of economic development, focused on the growth of production and of domestic demand in Asia.

Under the already achieved level of globalization, effectiveness of integration processes in different macroregions has distinctive features. They are most pronounced in South-East and East Asia, where "classical regionalism" observed within ASEAN is combined with "new regionalism" (ASEAN+3 and ASEAN+6 formats). Analysis of these tendencies shows that the basis for integration projects in this region are the production chains formed by transnational corporations from the Republic of Korea, China and Japan.

INTEGRATION TENDENCIES UNDER THE CONDITIONS

Organizational and economic conditions created by the institutional structures of the APR ensure trade liberalization and stimulate the implementation of business operations of TNCs, primarily Japanese ones. The most integrated subregion at the present stage of development is surely East Asia.

Intensification of Asian regionalism process is due to the influence of objective factors of globalization. Initially, this process proceeded without clearly defined goals and objectives, in addition, on some issues, reaching a compromise between all participants seemed unlikely. These circumstances allow us to conclude that the political imperative that ensures close cooperation in East Asia is the intention to improve the nature of relations, strengthen mutually beneficial cooperation, and achieve long-term peace, stability of reproductive and progressive development in the region. At the same time, creation of a rationally structured regional organization seems to be taking a back seat, at least for now.

According to the analytical data of the Secretariat of the World Trade Organization (WTO), at the beginning of the XX century, more than 200 regional trade agreements of an integration nature were registered in the world community, the largest and most active of which are the European Union (EU), the North American free trade zone (NAFTA) and the Asia-Pacific Economic Community (APEC).

The researchers note another feature of Asia-Pacific integration, which is associated with the so-called "spaghetti plate" effect, which is the cooperation of Asia-Pacific countries that is based on a large number of agreements that do not comply with each other in terms of basic rules and regulations, thus ultimately increasing business costs. The imbalance of interests is associated with different temporary schemes of customs liberalization, requirements to standards, different rules of the country of goods' origin, the list of exceptions, different anti-dumping procedures. These circumstances cause some decrease in the interest of business structures in using the potential of the formed free trade zones.

To sum up, it is important to note that the APR is characterized by the specificity of the ongoing integration flows, which is manifested in the following:

- predominance of integration agreements at the sub-regional level;
- greater intensity of subregional integration as compared to regional one;
- highly dynamic development of integration processes;
- the growing role of integration agreements in strengthening and development of foreign trade relations;
- predominance of bilateral regional trade agreements over multilateral ones.

Discussion

Our analysis of the specifics of cooperation between the Asia-Pacific and Eurasian countries demonstrates that some countries not only indirectly but also directly affect the trends and intensity of integration processes in the region. This statement applies not only to the United States and Canada, the global influence of which is rather obvious, but also to Australia, Indonesia and the Philippines. The influence of these countries is growing due to the fact that some APR countries actually lead and thus determine the specifics of the work of influential international organizations, both global (UN, WB, IMF etc.) and regional (ASEAN, SCO, APEC) ones.

In relation to Russia's integration problems specifically we can state that there are Russian foreign policy concepts involved here -- the Eurasian integration and development of

the relations within the Asia-Pacific region. These two concepts are developing separately and are not politically or economically interrelated. In addition, actual implementation of these concepts is characterized by a whole range of trends and factors, among which advanced development of Russia water regions and faster development of transport and other infrastructure are vitally important.

Over the past 25 years, Russia has accumulated a lot of problems related to trade and economic activities in the Asia-Pacific region.

Dynkin A. writes in this regard: "The constraints for Russian exports to the East include the deployment of export infrastructure of the fuel and energy complex of Russia in European direction, as well as increasing competition with Asian countries in the ferrous metallurgy, production of mineral fertilizers and other basic industries. We should not forget about political barriers: in particular, the unsettled territorial issue in relations with the technological leader – Japan – prevents breakthroughs in bilateral relations" (Dynkin A., 2011).

An important direction of the conceptual supplement of the above study is to consider the specifics of Russia's participation in the integration processes in the Asia-Pacific region, which is important to link with the implementation of regional development programs of the state, including the program of development of the Eastern regions of Russia ("Strategy of socioeconomic development of the Far East and the Baikal region until 2025"), as well as the concept of regional development of neighboring countries, especially all the programs of the regions of the North-East of China ("Plan for the revival of the North-East of China") to coordinate efforts to address the challenges of economic, organizational and infrastructural development.

Empirical evidence shows that Russia's policy towards Eurasia as well as towards Asia-Pacific countries goes far beyond regional foreign policy of the country, which suggests significant changes in the ratio of world forces: intensification of the relations between China and the United States; the need for advanced development of the Eastern regions of Russia. The policy covers an area much wider than just Russia's foreign policy towards Asia-Pacific countries or bilateral relations with them, since it also includes Russia's domestic, military and demographic policies. Accordingly, such political organization requires further development of especially effective strategies.

It is also worth taking into account the fact that this region has recently become the highest priority for the United States, as evidenced by rapid development of the TRANS-Pacific partnership (TPP), pushing the Transatlantic partnership (TAP) on many criteria. These circumstances confirm the necessity to develop a new geopolitical strategy for Russia as well.

Conclusion

Important summary messages on the results of theoretical and practical analysis of the stated problems can be formulated as follows.

Firstly, the multifaceted nature of integration assumes that research in this field should be transdisciplinary, at the intersection of political and economic science. It is important to analyze the phenomenon of integration in the light of several concepts, considering it as a process and/or as a result of development.

INTEGRATION TENDENCIES UNDER THE CONDITIONS

Secondly, the concept of integration is a fairly new term as compared to the phenomenon itself.

Thirdly, in Russian political and economic science, the concept of integration is often associated with the concept of globalization.

Detailed studies on this problem, both theoretical and practical ones, showed that globalization is the highest degree of convergence of national economic systems, manifested in the complete loss of various levels of economic independence and weakening of the nation state functions.

Thus, some American scientists deny that the process of integration has at least some relation to "forced imposed uniformity". Moreover, they argue that development and promotion of integration requires a pluralistic society, which in turn is generated by it. And in order to reach the maximum level of unity and cohesion with the minimum use of coercion, an integrating agent is required.

The largest economies of the world find integration to be the strategic tool of geopolitical and organizational and economic domination. At the same time, developing countries rely on integration as an opportunity to strengthen their presence in the world.

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