

Competing Regional Orders in the Shared Neighborhood: The EU, Russia, and the Norm Contestation in the Post-Soviet Space¹

Kazushige Kobayashi

Visiting Research Fellow, Russian International Affairs Council

Honjo International Foundation Doctoral Scholar, Graduate Institute of International and
Development Studies, Geneva, Switzerland

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ABSTRACT

The paper investigates the dynamics of interaction and counteraction between competing conceptions of regional orders advanced by the EU and Russia in the shared neighborhood by employing qualitative textual analysis method and comparative research design. What happens when a region is exposed to both liberal and non-liberal influences, and more importantly, when these normative projects are competing with each other for primacy? This has been the case of the post-Soviet space, where tensions have emerged from the collision between the liberal and statist visions of regional orders promoted by Brussels and Moscow, respectively. Since the early 2000s, Brussels has promoted the liberal regional order through various institutional initiatives in the post-Soviet space. At the same time, Moscow has also strategically advanced the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) as an alternative institutional project to support, legitimize, and consolidate the statist regional order in its neighborhood. The study demonstrates that the emergence of competing region-building projects has produced a sense of hostility between the EU and Russia, while regional states have learned to play both sides to maximize their freedom of action. As a consequence, the post-Soviet space has become ever more polarized and it is increasingly difficult to speak of the singular regional order. Challenging the rational institutionalist perspective (which primarily sees institutional initiatives as a source of cooperation and stability), the paper concludes that the development of multiple regional integration initiatives may actually induce more conflicts when there is no coordination among and between the normative projects with opposing political visions.

KEYWORDS

Russia; Eurasian Economic Union; European Union; Institutions; Norm Contestation; Regional Orders; Foreign Policy; Statism; Liberalism; Case Study

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1. Introduction

Four decades ago, Ernest Haas warned that deepened regional integration may lead to a world comprised of fewer and fewer “blocs” competing for prominence, thereby fueling conflicts and obstructing peace (Haas 1970). The 2014 Ukrainian crisis, which emerged essentially as a result of the membership competition between the European Union (EU) and the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), indicated that Haas’s nightmare may already have come true. As European integration initiatives have edged ever closer to the domain of the Eurasian integration project advanced by Moscow, the post-Soviet “common neighborhood” has emerged as a field of intense competition between the two unions, each espousing rival ideas about how to order regional politics (Mezhevich 2013; Bolgova 2013).² Several authors have described this regional ‘great game’ as “norm competition” (Popescu and Willson 2009: 48), as a “battle of ideas” (Averre 2009: 1695), as “normative conflict” (ibid: 1702), as a “competition of integration” (Der Spiegel 2014), as a “clash of integration processes” (Casier 2007), and as a “clash of values” (Lukin 2014). However, contemporary International Relations (IR) scholarship remains short of effective analytical frameworks to address this important phenomenon.

For one, there is a “cooperation bias” in the IR literature concerning regional integration and international organizations, which almost exclusively focuses on the benign side of institutional mechanisms. While a plurality of scholars maintain that regional integration is more likely to lead to peace *within* integrated blocs (e.g. Mattli 1999), the opposite may be true for relationships *between* different unions (Kobayashi 2016). If each “integration bloc” has its own ideational perspective to be advanced at the expense of values championed by a rival bloc in a shared region, there emerges zero-sum competition for norm promotion (Florini 1996). Indeed, this is a point often missed by rational institutionalists, who have tended to see institutions predominantly as devices for international cooperation (e.g. Keohane 1989; Keohane and Martin 1995). By the logic of cooperation, the more institutional initiatives a region is equipped with, the more stable it becomes. The case of the post-Soviet neighborhood offers a strikingly puzzling outlook in this regard: with deeper and wider involvement of European and Eurasian institutional initiatives, the region has become ever more conflict-prone, with the Ukrainian crisis being just a tip of iceberg.

Another issue is the prevalence of normative universalism, where the EU (and the Greater West in general) is often recognized as the world’s sole reservoir of “appropriate” international values (Sjursen 2006). Within this paradigm, the post-Soviet space becomes an ideological “frontier” waiting to be filled with “universal” European norms, while post-communist Russia is seen as a predominantly non-ideological regional hegemon purely driven by its power aspirations and the logic of *realpolitik*. Indeed, while research programs on norms and values gained a solid ground in European studies over the last two decades (e.g. Diez 2005; Hyde-Price 2008), “virtually no thorough research focusing on Russian norms in its policy towards the EU has been carried out” (Kratochvíl 2008: 399). But the argument that Russia has

² Throughout this study, the qualifier “normative” indicates *matters related to norms*. Norms are understood as “shared understandings and values that shape the preferences and identities of state and nonstate actors that legitimize behavior, either explicitly or implicitly” (Badescu and Weiss 2010: 358).

no normative vision to offer is increasingly at odds with the emerging reality on the ground. A recent cross-regional Gallup survey (2015) revealed that, even though the international image of Russia was devastated by the Ukrainian crisis, regional support for Russia's leadership remains surprisingly high for citizens in many of the former Soviet republics: public support ratings for Russian leadership is 93 per cent in Tajikistan, 79 per cent in Kyrgyzstan, 72 per cent in both Kazakhstan and Armenia, 66 per cent in Uzbekistan, and 62 per cent in Belarus. As Omelicheva (2015) suggests, the non-liberal, statist normative vision of regional governance offered by Moscow is increasingly popular in its immediate neighborhood (Cooley 2015; Omelicheva 2015). Research on the interaction between democratization and "autocratization" may have mushroomed in recent years (see below), but prevailing frameworks that hinge on the dichotomous narrative of "democracy against autocracy" largely fail to capture the complex normative dynamics evolving in the region.

This study aims to address these shortcomings by proposing a holistic approach to decipher and comparatively analyze the contending normative visions offered by the EU and by Russia – and, more importantly, trace how they have evolved over time. In other words, I focus on institutional initiatives in the post-Soviet space as a carrier and promoter of normative orders advocated by Moscow and Brussels. How do EU and Russian perspectives on regional normative order interact and counteract each other in the post-Soviet space, and how does this interaction shape the overall evolution of regional normative order in the shared neighborhood? Guided by this question, I seek to: (1) problematize existing research that hinges on the simplistic dichotomy of democracy/autocracy or liberalism/illiberalism; (2) propose and test the viability of a holistic, matrix-based approach to study norm promotion; and (3) sensitize our disciplinary understanding of the evolution of normative order in a space characterized by the presence of competing ideas and approaches to the organization of regional politics. With these aims, this paper combines small-N, comparative, and chronological case studies and qualitative content analysis to compare and contrast the values, ideas, and principles advocated by these two regional projects. My unit of analysis is normative order (and not the EU and the EEU *per se*) deliberately communicated by these institutional initiatives. My central argument is that the regional normative orders advanced by Moscow and Brussels have evolved over time, with each side learning from the other while also taking into account the specificity of regional contexts and the agency of regional states.

Following this brief introduction, the paper consists of three additional sections. The next section briefly reviews contemporary IR literature on norm promotion and identifies conceptual and methodological deficits. To remedy these shortcomings, this section develops a holistic, matrix-based approach to analyze the evolving constellation of norms. Equipped with this tool, the third section presents case studies illustrating Russian and European normative visions for the post-Soviet space during 1999-2016, divided into four case periods (1999-2003, 2004-08, 2009-13, 2014-2016). The final section presents conclusions.

2. The Matrix Approach to Normative Orders

Research on norms and norm promotion has shown exponential growth since the end of the Cold War.³ In the 1990s, IR scholars endeavored to investigate the conditions under which international norms such as democracy, human rights, and economic liberalism (the free market) successfully proliferated across the world, particularly inspired by the dramatic transformation of post-communist countries (e.g. Huntington 1991; Ruggie 1993; Finnemore and Sikkink 1998). In the early 2000s, Acharya (2004) further advanced this research program by highlighting the mechanism of localization, which considered the agency of local actors seriously. Reflecting these global trends, research on norm promotion in the post-Soviet space has gradually moved away from an initial focus on the role of international actors promoting democratization and liberalization (e.g. Schimmelfennig 2000; Zielonka and Pravda 2001; Schraeder 2003), to insulation strategies taken by regional powers (most notably Russia) to counteract liberal political movements (Gershman and Allen 2006; Ambrosio 2007, 2016; Jackson 2010; Saari 2014),⁴ and finally to the recent recognition of alternative, “authoritarian”, or “illiberal” values and norms promoted by regional actors (Ambrosio 2008, 2009, 2010; Melnykovska, Plamper and Schweickert 2012; Risse and Babayan 2015; Shevtsova 2015; Obydenkova and Libman 2015).⁵

While these studies have certainly enriched our knowledge on the matter, a plurality of existing studies tend to rely on binary approaches that either trace the presence/absence of norms, or grossly simplify reality by pitting a particular ideal type of normative vision against another, such as democratization vs “autocratization”. As Stephen Holmes emphasizes, “the ideological polarity between democracy and authoritarianism, inherited from the Cold War, obscures more than it reveals” (Holmes 2010, quoted by Krastev 2011). In this sense, the idealized division between democratization and autocratization, which I term as the democracy/autocracy thesis in this paper, has been more constraining than enabling when it comes to sensitizing our understanding on how different sets of norms compete with each other and, more importantly, how they evolve over time by learning from each other.

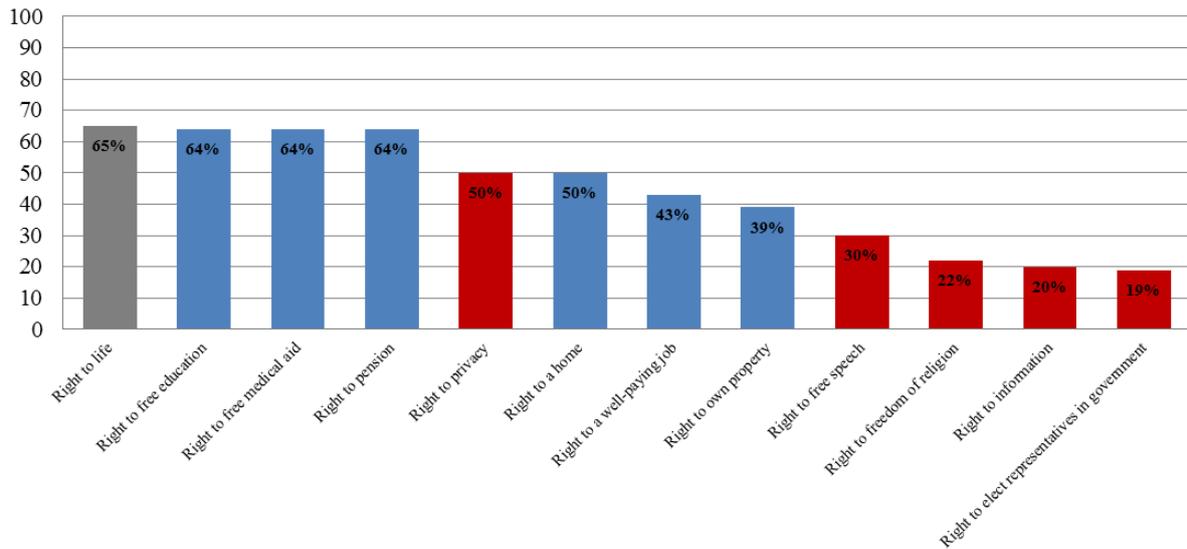
The deficit of the binary approach becomes clearer when we look more deeply into the complex normative preference of regional elites and citizens. For instance, several scholars argued that the norm of “human rights” finds weak resonance among the Russian population, solidifying the basis upon which the statist normative order is sustained (Ambrosio 2009, 2016; Shevtsova 2015). A recent poll presented by the independent Levada Center, however, demonstrates that, while the Russian public certainly tends to dismiss the centrality of *political* rights, their insistence on *economic* rights is remarkably high (Moscow Times 2014, see Figure 2.1.).

³ For comprehensive reviews on IR studies on norms, see e.g. Cortell and Davis (2000) and Acharya (2004).

⁴ On this debate, see the special issue of *Contemporary Politics* (Volume 16, Issue 1, 2010), entitled: “Promoting democracy – promoting autocracy? International politics and national political regimes”.

⁵ See also the special issue of *Democratization* (Volume 22, No. 3, 2015), entitled: “Democracy Promotion and the Challenges of Illiberal Regional Powers”.

Figure 2-1. Russian Perceptions on Human Rights



Note: N=1600. The survey asked what rights were important to the respondents and multiple responses were permitted. Numbers shown in the left axis is the percentage of respondents who answered affirmatively to the importance of each right. The survey was conducted by the Levada Center and was reported by the Moscow Times. The poll was conducted among 1,600 adults in 46 regions and 134 cities, with its margin of error not exceeding 3.4 percent. The blue bars represent economic rights and red bars political rights, while the “right to life” is colored grey since it is considered one of fundamental freedoms.

As such, a key feature of the statist normative order (often seen to be promoted by the Kremlin) may not be the total absence of human rights norms, but instead the (assumed) *superiority* of economic rights over political rights. This example illustrates that the variety of human rights norms embraced by different normative orders may be better differentiated by the *simultaneous* presence/absence of each variant and the interrelationships of *subordination* among them. Hence, I argue that *relative strength* or *ranking* of norms embedded in a particular normative order plays a critical role in determining its overall constellation.

Building on these insights, this study understands normative order as *a system of norms* involving: (a) the range of appropriate state behaviors specified by each norm (*content*); (b) relative strength among these norms (*ranking*); and (c) the overarching logic specifying interrelationships among them (*constellation*). Together, the system constitutes what Forst termed as “the space of reasons, or the normative space of freedom and action,” which is “based on a certain understanding of its purpose, aims, and rules” (Forst 2015: 119). In this sense, my working definition of normative order mirrors his definition of “normative order as an order of justification”, where an organic constellation of norms as *a holistic system* defines the realm of appropriate state behaviors backed by particular sets of justifications.

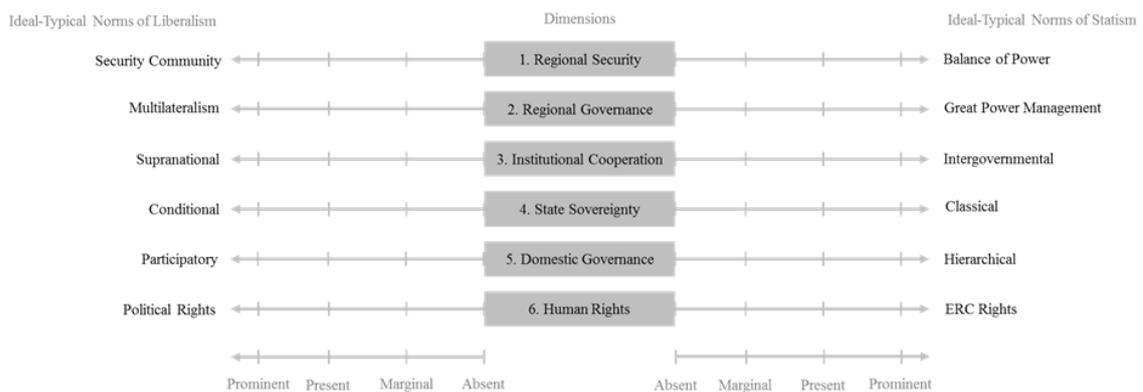
Informed by various existing European and Eurasian area studies focusing on the role of norms in the region, this paper selects – by the logic of abduction based on pre-conceptions, theoretical insights from prior research, and an overview of the relevant literature – twelve normative elements in six dimensions which organically make up different types of normative orders. Table 2-1. below offers a concise overview of the selected norms (see Annex 1. for a more detailed operational conceptualization).

Table 2-1. Elements of Normative Orders

Six dimensions	Liberal norms	Statist norms
1. Foundation of regional security [<i>Regional Security</i>]	The logic of security community-building, coordination, universalist worldview [<i>Security Community</i>]	The logic of balance of power, competition, pluralist worldview [<i>Balance of Power</i>]
2. Mechanisms of regional governance [<i>Regional Governance</i>]	Multilateral cooperation, coalition-building, equitable participation, legalization [<i>Multilateralism</i>]	The primacy of great power responsibility and leadership [<i>Great Power Management</i>]
3. Orientation of regional institutional cooperation [<i>Institutional Cooperation</i>]	Supranational institution-building, shared governing authority [<i>Supranational</i>]	Intergovernmental cooperation, coordinated but autonomous policy-making [<i>Intergovernmental</i>]
4. Relevance of state sovereignty [<i>State Sovereignty</i>]	Conditional sovereignty, sovereign inequality (some regimes are more legitimate than others), the permissibility of intrusion into domestic affairs [<i>Conditional</i>]	Classical sovereignty, sovereign equality (all regimes are equal), non-interference [<i>Classical</i>]
5. Models of domestic order and governance [<i>Domestic Governance</i>]	Bottom-up and participatory models, decentralized and horizontal governance, political and economic liberalization [<i>Participatory Governance</i>]	Top-down and hierarchical models, centralized and vertical governance, stabilization [<i>Hierarchical Governance</i>]
6. Relevance of human rights [<i>Human Rights</i>]	Political rights, civil liberties, individual freedom [<i>Political Rights</i>]	Economic, social and cultural (ESC) rights, the right to development, societal preservation [<i>ERC Rights</i>]

As I have emphasized, the methodological framework offered by this study allows multiple norms to be present within each normative dimension. In line with this, the study assumes four degrees to differentiate the absence/presence of norms: *absent*, *marginal*, *present*, and *prominent* (see Annex.2 for the detailed guideline on qualitative coding). The framework presented above leads to the construction of the *norms matrix* –an analytical tool to identify content, ranking, and constellation of different normative orders (Table 2-2.). Intuitively, the matrix may be understood as a tool which deciphers “DNAs” of regional normative orders (see Florini 1996 for a similar view).

Table 2-2. Norms Matrix



While this abductively-selected list of key normative elements may not be exhaustive (and is certainly not intended to be so), many important concepts in contemporary IR scholarship can be captured as a *combination* of these elements. This is what I term a *composite norm*, or norms made up by several elements. Democracy is a good example here. What is generally understood as the “norm of liberal democracy” is actually a composite norm encompassing several elements, such as political rights and

participatory governance.⁶ As I have emphasized, most normative orders embrace multiple, overlapping, and sometimes even contradictory normative elements within their systems⁷; however, the lack of absolute precision and/or coherence also leaves a room for flexibility and adaptation, which facilitates the transformation of these orders in the long-run (Percy 2007; Panke and Petersohn 2015).

As Florini (1996) skillfully compared the evolution of international norms to the process of genetic mutation, this study assumes that the variety of normative orders originates from the *combination* of different normative elements. Each set of normative dimensions presented above entails

$${}^6C_2 = \frac{6*5}{2*1} = 15 \text{ (patterns)}$$

with which the matrix as a whole is able to describe

$$15^6 \approx 11.4 \text{ million (types)}$$

of normative orders. Theoretically speaking, nearly twelve million combinations of norms are equally plausible; however, I hypothesize that, due to historical contingency and relative stability of normative orders, the variation we observe over time would be much smaller.⁸

Empowered by this innovative methodology, I seek to explain how and to what extent Russia's and the EU's ideas for regional normative order in the post-Soviet neighborhood have interacted and counteracted each other from 1999 to 2016. To reiterate, my central argument is that the regional normative orders advanced by Moscow and Brussels have evolved over time, with each side learning from the other as well as taking into account the specificity of regional contexts and the agency of regional states. If this is the case, we expect to observe a process of mutual adaptation – that Russia's vision for the post-Soviet space becomes more “liberal” over time, while that of the EU becomes more “statist” in some ways, in order to compete with each other and to attract a wider support from relevant states. An alternative explanation is the democracy-autocracy thesis – that Russia consistently seeks to advocate “non-liberal” norms and the EU seeks to advance “liberal” norms in the shared neighborhood, which assumes the timeless singularity of normative order pursued by each side, with minimal opportunity for mutual adaptation.

In order to probe the plausibility of my explanation, this study employs the research design of structured, focused comparison (e.g. George and Bennett 2005; Bennett and Elman 2007) over time – which merges features of small-N qualitative studies (Bennett 1997; Mahoney 2000; George and Bennett 2005; Brady and Collier 2010) with Bartolini's method of chronological comparative case study (Bartolini 1993). The research design thus seeks to combine examination of synchronic variation in normative orders proposed by Moscow and Brussels, with chronological variation over time⁹. In doing so, I focus on institutional initiatives in the post-Soviet space as a carrier and promoter of normative orders advocated by

⁶ Indeed, Youngs (2015) maintains that democracy entails seven principles – electoral, liberal, majoritarian, consensual, participatory, deliberative, and egalitarian. The norm on political rights in this study captures liberal and egalitarian principles in his study. The rest can be seen in light of the norm of participatory governance.

⁷ As Sjursen maintains: “Different universal norms may collide in a concrete situation or a particular context...in a given context we often face several universalizable norms that have conflicting content and that would point us in different directions.” (Sjursen 2006: 243).

⁸ Human DNAs have similar traits. Theoretically speaking, there are trillion of different ways in which genetic elements make up a whole human DNA. In reality, we observe that the variation is clustered around a very limited number of “prototypes”.

⁹ See Tannenwald 1999 for a similar research design.

Moscow and Brussels. This is not to deny the possibility of normative orders promoted by bilateral diplomacy, trade and aid, and cultural exchange, among others; but institutional initiatives form a more stable basis for norm promotion because they: (a) shape and define an overall milieu within which interstate interactions take place; (b) offers a structured opportunity for sustained interaction which is also likely to increase the chance of (less intentional) norm diffusion; and (c) invoke certain sense of obligation among subscribers to endorse and follow norms embodied by such initiatives.¹⁰ On the side of the EU, I mainly focus on the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCAs); European Neighborhood Policy (ENP); Eastern Partnership (EaP); Deep and Comprehensive Association Agreements (DCAAs); and to a lesser extent the EU membership (for the Baltics). On the side of Eurasia, I focus on the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC); the Eurasian Customs Union (ECU); and the EEU (see Annex.3 for the subscription of regional states to these initiatives). My unit of analysis is normative order (and not the EU and the EEU *per se*) deliberately communicated by these institutional initiatives *within* the post-Soviet space. It is entirely plausible that, for instance, the EU pursues a different vision for Western Europe, the Middle East or elsewhere, but such questions remain outside of the scope of this paper.¹¹

Informed by the insights provided by previous research offering a similar design of chronological case study (Thorun 2008; Clunan 2009; Tsygankov 2013; Molchanov 2015), this study establishes four analytical “case periods” summarized by the table below. The case periods also fairly mirrors the development of institutional initiatives listed above.

Table 2-3. Hypothesized Case Periods, 1999- 2017

Periods	Years	Characteristics
I	1999-2003	The PCAs emerged in the late 1990s. The Kosovo conflict and NATO’s eastward enlargement took place against Russian opposition. The EurAsEC economic integration was launched.
II	2004-2008	The NATO-EU double enlargement took place in 2004 and the EU launched the ENP as an attempt to institutionalize its relationship with former Soviet states. The EurAsEC showed further developments but without any breakthrough.
III	2009-2013	The EaP was launched with more forthcoming institutional initiatives such as the DCAAs. With the birth of the ECU, regional institutionalization became a top-priority for Russian foreign policy and more decision-making power was delegated to the new and old institutional frameworks with a greater voice allowed for regional states.
IV	2014-2017	EU’s DCAAs emerged as a final cement to institutionalize European engagement in the former Soviet states. Russia redoubled its efforts to strengthen regional institutions and the EEU was created.

With the tool of norms matrix, this paper employs a method of qualitative content analysis (see e.g. Kracauer 1952; Kohlbacher 2006) to deconstruct the key texts and practices embodying normative orders. Here, it must be emphasized that the normative elements described above entail a low degree of “dependability” (see Elo et al. 2014) in the sense of nomothetic coding techniques. This is because the overall meaning of each element is determined *in reference to* the organic constellation of a normative order *as a whole*. This point is eloquently elaborated by two prominent norm scholars:

¹⁰ See, among others, how institutions transform state preferences (e.g. Checkel 2005; Bondanella 2007) and how institutions promote particular values and norms (e.g. Ruggie 1993; Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; Manners 2002; Kelly 2004; Bohlken 2015). This is not to neglect the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), but my point is solely that institutional initiatives largely shape a social milieu where activities of non-state actors take place.

¹¹ For an overview of the literature stimulating the importance of geography in the promotion of norms, see Ambrosio (2010: 384).

...values do not count much in isolation from the normative framework in which they are embedded. Rather, they assume meaning, give sense to the political identity of the members of the community, and finally influence policy *on the basis of how they stand in relation to other values and principles of the normative framework in which they are embedded*. Most frequently, what differentiates political communities is not a list of values, but the relationship that a political community constructs among these values, their hierarchical order, and their peculiar translation into guiding principles. (Lucarelli and Manners 2006: 215, emphasis added)

In line with this argument, the normative elements introduced above do not fully constitute a pre-defined “category,” since my unit of analysis is the overall constellation of norms, within which normative elements each *acquire* their meanings.

This is why this study privileges a more open-ended, interpretative, and holistic approach to textual analysis (see Pouliot 2010). In line with his call for a “subjective” methodology which seeks “disciplined subjectivity”, this study aims at minimizing the possibility of esoteric speculation ungrounded in empirical observations by introducing the tool of norms matrix which enhances procedural transparency, while my own interpretations of the original texts are also constantly compared to those offered by contemporary area studies on the region. The remainder of this paper tests the feasibility of the methodology outlined above in the form of chronological case study design.

3. Case Studies, 1999-2016

Case Period I (1999-2003): Modalities of European and Russian Engagement in the Post-Soviet Space

The EU’s engagement with the former Soviet states in the early 1990s was primarily guided by the universalist worldview of Fukuyama (1992). However, it must be noted that his “end of history” thesis was more about the universality of liberal democratic ideas and had much less to do with the *active promotion* of these values. In this sense, liberalism was believed to prevail sooner or later *with or without* active promotion.¹² Although the norms of political rights and participatory governance were often invoked, they were often subordinated to the norm of great power management: for instance, European policymakers actively supported the preservation of Russian leadership in the format of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), which was largely portrayed as a central mechanism to stabilize the regional “disintegration” process. This “concession” was granted partly because Brussels was more concerned with its immediate neighborhood (i.e. Central Europe and the Balkans), but also because efforts to forcefully project liberal norms often met with opposition from the new-born post-Soviet states that argued Brussels was now attempting to replace Soviet-era Moscow by attempting to “teach” them what to do (Sperling 2003: 18). As a result, political liberalization and the construction of regional peace – under the logic of security community – was envisioned to be achieved primarily based on voluntary compliance and the logic of conditionality was only weakly present (Börzel and Lebanidze 2007).

¹² Indeed, Fukuyama (2006) harshly criticized the zealous democracy and human rights promotion as counterproductive measures in achieving global liberalization.

Mirroring these trends, the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCAs) came into effect in the late 1990s, emphasizing the superiority of “political dialogue” as an avenue for change (EC 2010). For instance, the PCAs signed with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan had no clear mention of democracy and political rights;¹³ instead, they proclaimed that the prime purpose was “to strengthen the links ... on trade and commercial and economic cooperation (EC 1999).”¹⁴ Indeed, the EU’s Technical Assistance to the CIS (TACIS), which formed the backbone of the PCAs, was “technical” because the program almost exclusively focused on assistance to facilitate the transition to free market economy. Political liberalization was assumed to grow naturally from the spread of economic liberalism. Consequently, the normative order pursued by Brussels at this time was largely focused on the stabilization of the increasingly troubled region and equally valued political and ESC rights.

At the turn of the twenty-first century, a series of game-changing events took place, including the first NATO enlargement to the former Warsaw pact countries on March 1999, followed by the NATO-Yugoslav war in the same year. On the other side of the Atlantic, the 9/11 terrorist attacks led to America’s punitive war against the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. While these events significantly affected Russian-Western relations, the EU’s normative vision for the post-Soviet space exhibited a remarkable continuity during 1999-2003. Perhaps the EU’s active support for NATO’s invasion of Yugoslavia signified Europe’s graduation from the norm of great power management. It is also true that the apparent “success” in Kosovo reinforced the impression among European officials that a discourse on the *acceleration* of liberal trends was emerging (Mankoff 2012; Tsygankov 2013). However, Brussels exerted significant efforts to assure post-Soviet Russian leadership that Kosovo was a truly extraordinary case, and European respect for state sovereignty in the shared neighborhood remained unchanged (Gow 1997; Pouliot 2010).

All in all, the EU’s normative vision for the post-Soviet space during this time was noticeably less “liberal” compared to the subsequent era. The commitment to classical sovereignty was firm and the discourse of conditional sovereignty – that national elites shall not use sovereignty as an excuse for domestic repression – was remarkably absent. Equally important, European institutional initiatives such as the PCAs at this time emphasized the stabilization of the region, demonstrating an unwillingness to forcefully insist on the primacy of participatory governance. In essence, European democratization efforts at the time were largely divorced from the technique of political pressuring and the (positive and negative) sanctions of conditionality. These efforts were at the time more grounded in technical advising and consensual dialogue that fully respected the inviolability of sovereignty.

In the early 1990s, the Russian elites placed a great emphasis on “remaking” Russia as a full-fledged member of the European society of states (Tsygankov 2004). However, Moscow’s commitment to this security community-building project was entirely founded on an assumption that each member had a final say in the community’s decision-making. This did not mean that Russia’s opinion would always

¹³ As Fischer (2012: 34) points out, “PCAs are mixed agreements focused on the regulation of economic cooperation, trade and EU technical assistance to economic and, to a lesser extent, political reform.”

¹⁴ Note that the analysis of the PCA texts is kept minimal for this subsection since they are short documents (less than 1,000 words in English). But this modality of agreement itself also manifests the weak presence of highly legalized cooperation frameworks.

prevail over others, but it was at least assumed that when Moscow's vital interest was at stake, its voice would be counted. This belief swiftly evaporated when the NATO-Yugoslav war broke out.

At its core, the Eurasian integration project emerged in the early 2000s was primarily driven by the balancing logic that a Eurasian alternative would restrain, or at least check, EU ambitions in the post-Soviet space. The Treaty on the Establishment of the Eurasian Economic Community made no reference to the EU, but it stressed "the need to coordinate approaches to integration into the world economy and the international trading system (EurAsEC 2001)". Indeed, the WTO was most frequently mentioned in the text, where the EurAsEC was portrayed as a strategic instrument to align the voice of member states in order to maximize their collective bargaining power (see also Ultanbaev 2003: 109). In this sense, the EurAsEC was envisioned to be a stepping-stone to integrate the post-Soviet states into the global economy with a greater voice and autonomy vis-à-vis the West.

The analysis of the early EurAsEC texts reveals that the project embodied several important normative components: a strong preference for intergovernmentalism, the recognition of Russia's great power leadership, and the absence of (political) human rights discourse. To begin with, the principle of intergovernmentalism was a key driving force behind the integration process, which reinforced the salience of other related norms, namely, classical sovereignty and hierarchical governance. These norms were codified by the EurAsEC treaty which created five major organs:

- 1) **Interstate Council:** The supreme decision-making body gathering heads of states and heads of governments (decisions adopted by consensus);
- 2) **Integration Committee** (Moscow, Russia and Almaty, Kazakhstan): The main regulative body comprised of deputy heads of government (decisions adopted by two-thirds majority), equipped with the Secretariat (Secretary-General and two Deputy Secretary-Generals);
- 3) **Community Court** (Minsk, Belarus): The judicial body comprised of no more than two representatives from each member state (yet the court did not come into effect until 2012);
- 4) **Inter-Parliamentary Assembly** (Saint Petersburg, Russia): The coordination body to align national legislations;
- 5) **Commission of Permanent Representatives:** The advisory body comprised of Permanent Representatives appointed by heads of states.

While the Integration Committee was tasked to manage the daily activities of the integration project, Article 13 (2) specified that any disputed decision shall be referred to the Interstate Council. At the end of the day, sensitive matters were envisioned to be resolved by diplomacy. Galina Islamova, Deputy Head of the Central Economic Cooperation Board of the Integration Committee (appointed by Kazakhstan), criticized the design that there was no specification for the "powers voluntarily transferred to the EurAsEC" –which was stated in the preamble of the treaty– while the implementation of EurAsEC decisions were entirely dependent on national legislations of each member state (Islamova 2001).

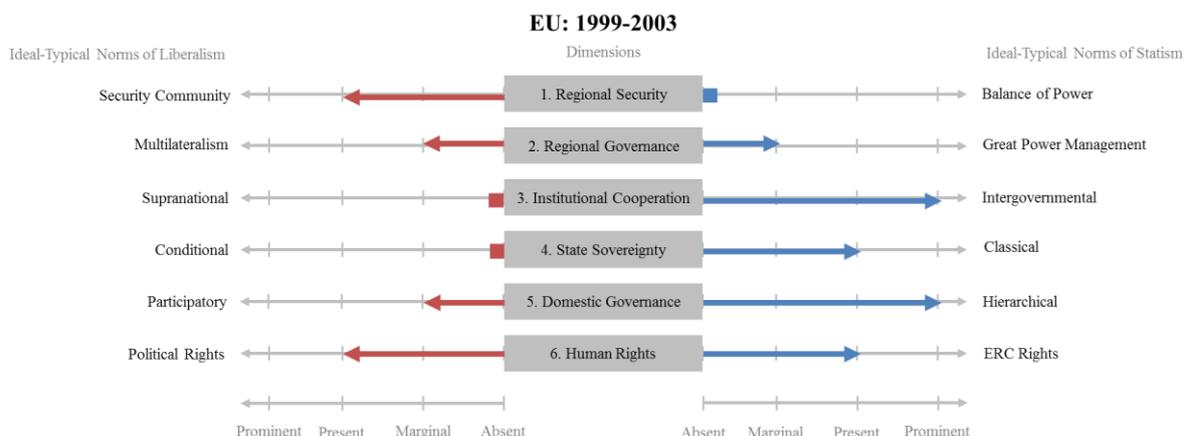
Since the initial design of EurAsEC entailed little support for supranational and multinational legalization, Russia's great power leadership emerged as a central mechanism for administering the project. In practice, Article 15 (2) codified that 40 per cent of the community budget was to be contributed

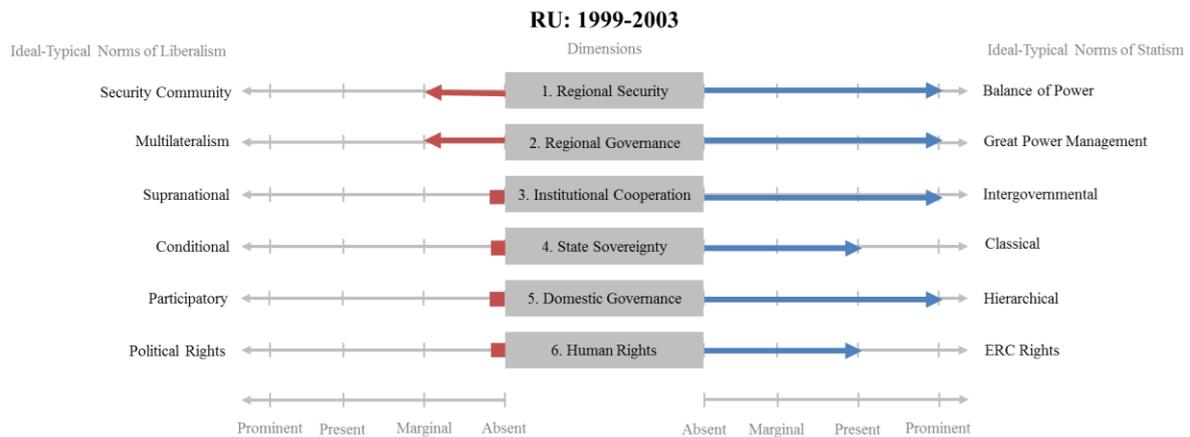
by Russia, while other five members covered the rest (Belarus 15 per cent; Kazakhstan 15 per cent; Kyrgyzstan 7.5 per cent; Tajikistan 7.5 per cent; and Uzbekistan 15 per cent). In turn, the decision-making procedure (Article 13) specified that Russia retained 40 votes (Belarus 15 votes; Kazakhstan 15 votes; Kyrgyzstan 7.5 votes; Tajikistan 7.5 votes; and Uzbekistan 15 votes). While the decisions at the Interstate Council were to be adopted by consensus, Russia was the only country which could veto at the Integration Committee and the Commission of Permanent Representatives, which explicitly institutionalized the norm of great power management.

The EurAsEC embodied almost no liberal norms. This did not mean that Russia and other participating states rejected these norms outright; instead, they were subordinated the statist alternatives. For instance, the Joint Statement released by the participating heads of state emphasized that “the number of concrete joint steps in the humanitarian field” would be taken to “better meet the needs of the citizens of our countries in the area of education, culture, health and welfare, and social rights”, while the initiative was heavily based on a vision of “integration from above” that no reference was made to participatory mechanisms of governance. Regional development to be accelerated by Eurasian regional integration was thus primarily understood as a process of stabilizing and modernizing the national economy of member states and improving ESC rights.

In essence, the EurAsEC project attempted to communicate a thesis that economic liberalism was achievable without far-fetched liberal political reforms, advancing and legitimizing an archetypical statist normative order that has almost no “liberal” component. Yet the region was relatively stable during this time, with no noticeable indication of norm contestation between Moscow and Brussels. This may be partly explained by the fact that, while the Russian vision for the neighborhood was that of a hardcore statist, its European counterpart was arguably more “statist” in the sense that it acknowledged the necessity (if not desirability) of hierarchical governance and classical sovereignty, pragmatically downplaying the prerogatives of liberal norms (see Table 3-1. below for comparison). While European policymakers increasingly saw Russia’s claim for great power leadership as an illegitimate obsession, there was at least a tacit understanding between the two camps that statist norms play an important role in the stabilization of the region and in the development of a peaceful regional order.

Table 3-1. Matrix for EU/ Russian Normative Visions, 1999-2003





Case Period II (2004-2008): Modalities of European and Russian Engagement in the Post-Soviet Space

The year 2004 ushered a new era of European engagement in the former Soviet space, marked by the “double enlargement” of the EU and NATO and the launch of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP). These developments largely symbolized a shift in European approach to what Fukuyama (2006) termed an “activist foreign policy”. In this regard, the EC (2003: 5) stated that “enlargement has unarguably been the Union’s most successful foreign policy instrument”. The successful internalization of European norms, willingly pursued by the new EU members, taught Brussels that conditionality and other institutional initiatives could be used as an instrument to induce deeper political change across the neighborhood.

As shown above, Russian and European normative visions for the post-Soviet space during 1999-2003 were largely aligned in the sense that the imperative of stabilization served as a common denominator. Against this background, the ENP brought a sea-change by explicitly framing legalization as a means for projecting and institutionalizing European values across the region, while extending the logic of conditionality to those states without the/with no prospect of immediate membership. The new initiative stepped up the language of liberalization and stressed that “Democracy, pluralism, respect for human rights, civil liberties, the rule of law and core labour standards are all essential prerequisites for political stability, as well as for peaceful and sustained social and economic development” (EC 2003: 7). In this sense, “stability” in the European worldview began to diverge substantially from the statist idea of stability put forth by the Russian side. In practice, this collision of ideas became evident in European and Russian responses to the “color revolutions” in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan; where the former legitimized these revolutionary changes as a step towards regional transformation, while the latter denounced them as a symptom of regional destabilization (Ambrosio 2007; Horvath 2011).

While the Central Asian states were absent from the ENP framework, the EU developed a “Strategy for a New Partnership” for the region mirroring the language of the ENP, where the promotion of European values has become an important cornerstone: “In this respect, the Strategy *should distinguish the EU from those international actors who are focused exclusively on stability and the status quo in the region...*The EU must, therefore, set itself clearly apart from those that place stability above progressive change in the region” (Melvin 2007: 2, emphasis added). Here, “those that place stability above

progressive change in the region” presumably refer to the statist-minded Russia, as the author acknowledged that “The Union also faces significant *competition for influence* from countries ready to commit greater resources to the region with little in the way of conditionality for their assistance in terms of political and human rights policies” (Melvin 2007: 3, emphasis added).

While the EU’s vision for the post-Soviet space showed an important shift towards a more activist stance, Brussels was cautious not to antagonize Moscow and repeatedly emphasized the importance of building a regional security community devoid of fault-lines: “Union’s determination to avoid drawing new dividing lines in Europe and to promote stability and prosperity within and beyond the new borders of the Union (EC 2003: 3-4).” Furthermore, attempting to avoid the criticism of the imposition of European values, the EU policymakers stressed the “joint ownership” of the ENP: “Development and reform in our partner countries is primarily in their own interest, and it is their *sovereign responsibility* (EC 2006: 4, emphasis added)”. In this sense, the European normative vision at the time still operated within the framework of classical sovereignty and recognized intergovernmentalism as a central mechanism for greater regional institutionalization. The importance of participatory governance (and particularly the role of liberal civil society actors) was highlighted (EC 2006: 6-7), but traditional diplomatic dialogue was still seen as a chief means to advance political liberalization.

Brussels’s increasing reliance on conditionality, however, resulted in a “bilateralization” of the EU’s engagement in the region (see also Gänzle 2009) that ignores regional multilateral dynamics. For instance, the ENP remained completely silent on *intraregional* collaboration with the existing regional institutions including the EuAsEC. The ignorance of the EurAsEC as a regional partner implied that the European vision largely rejected the idea of “great union concert” proposed by the Kremlin – the idea that the EU and the EurAsEC shall govern the common neighborhood in tandem (Popescu and Willson 2009).

In sum, the increasingly activist EU’s engagement in the region at this time – assuming that the EU was the only game in town – heightened its commitment to the promotion of political liberalization, and more importantly, explicitly proclaimed popular demands for greater participatory governance and political rights take precedence over regional stabilization. This was the essence of a new normative order communicated by the EU, which applauded, legitimized, and “normalized” the revolutionary demise of the statist regimes in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan.

Russia’s approach to the region from 2004 to 2008 was primarily marked by the continuation of the trends observed in the previous period. While the EurAsEC was largely ignored by Brussels, Moscow stepped up its efforts to present the framework as an institutional focal point in the region. The EurAsEC’s “Concept on the International Activities of the Eurasian Economic Community”, for instance, proclaimed that its major aim was “to develop and effectively promote a coordinated position [among its member states] on the major issues of world development” and also “improving the efficiency of the interaction of the Community’s institutions with relevant international and regional organizations” (EurAsEC 2007). Unlike its European counterpart which avoided direct mention of Russia, the document also made extensive reference to the EU:

The EurAsEC regards the European Union as one of its main partners, whose activities largely coincide with the objectives of the Community. Based on the understanding that the nature of their relationship will have a drastic impact on the situation in the Eurasian space, the Community will seek to develop structures of intensive, sustained and long-term cooperation with the European Union on *equal footing*, both at the level of institutions as well as of its individual members (ibid, emphasis is mine).

Despite the cooperative language embodied in the document, these references need to be placed within a wider context where the EurAsEC was hoped to become a counterweight to the EU. The primacy of balance became even more pronounced in a strategy paper “Priority Directions of Development for the EurAsEC during 2003-2006 and Subsequent Years,” which argued that EurAsEC should “provide the common defense against *possible economic damage from third countries*” and “strengthen the resilience against *the overall economic threats*, in particular in regard to the exacerbation of international competition...” (EurAsEC 2004, emphasis is mine). Since the paper was published before the advent of the global financial crisis, “possible economic damage” largely referred to the EU’s attempt to bring post-Soviet states closer to the European economic arena while ignoring the role of the EurAsEC.¹⁵

As Russia was “increasingly willing to put forth a competing political and normative agenda that has the potential to blunt the Union’s value-laden approach in its periphery” (2008: 37), the Kremlin consolidated the “Moscow-centered system” (Trenin 2006: 87) underpinned by the norms of great power management, intergovernmentalism, classical sovereignty, and above all, balance of power. As the EU capitalized on its asymmetry of power vis-à-vis its regional partners, a multitude of regional specialists observed that Russian foreign policy at the time also showed a notable preference for bilateralism.¹⁶ By and large, deep regional institutionalization at the time was limited since Moscow disliked supranational arrangements, while the post-Soviet elites also feared that any supranational framework would grow into a new Moscow-based super-authority of a Soviet kind. In this sense, the interests of EurAsEC members were aligned to champion the centrality of intergovernmentalism. This also meant that Russia lacked effective means to influence those regional states stood outside of the EurAsEC (e.g. Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia). For these states, Russia repeatedly returned to non-institutional measures including food embargos, “energy weapons,” and ultimately, the use of force in the case of Georgia.

While the case of the Russian-Georgian conflict goes beyond the analytical scope of this paper, this can be seen as a test to check the practice of the normative order advocated by Moscow, particularly that of non-interference. While a multitude of reasons could be offered to explain Moscow’s policy at the time, the Russian leadership showed a fair degree of commitment to classical sovereignty by not taking over Tbilisi, and more importantly, by not disposing the Saakashvili regime and by allowing him to continue his “anti-Russian” foreign policy –this was remarkable given the fact that the EU report at the time had

¹⁵ For instance, Prime Minister Yanukovych of Ukraine at the time signed the EurAsEC’s agreement creating a Single Economic Space (SES) and justified this initiative as a stepping stone to increase Kiev’s leverage over EU policymakers and to integrate Ukraine into Europe on its own terms (i.e. more financial aid and less conditionality) (Krushelnycky 2004).

¹⁶ For instance, Kay (2003: 132) maintained that “Since becoming president, Vladimir Putin has increasingly prioritised Russia’s bilateral relations with CIS members over multilateral action. In the words of Willerton and Cockerham, “Russia and other FSU states have relied primarily on bilateral arrangements with one another to advance their agendas (Willerton and Cockerham: 187).

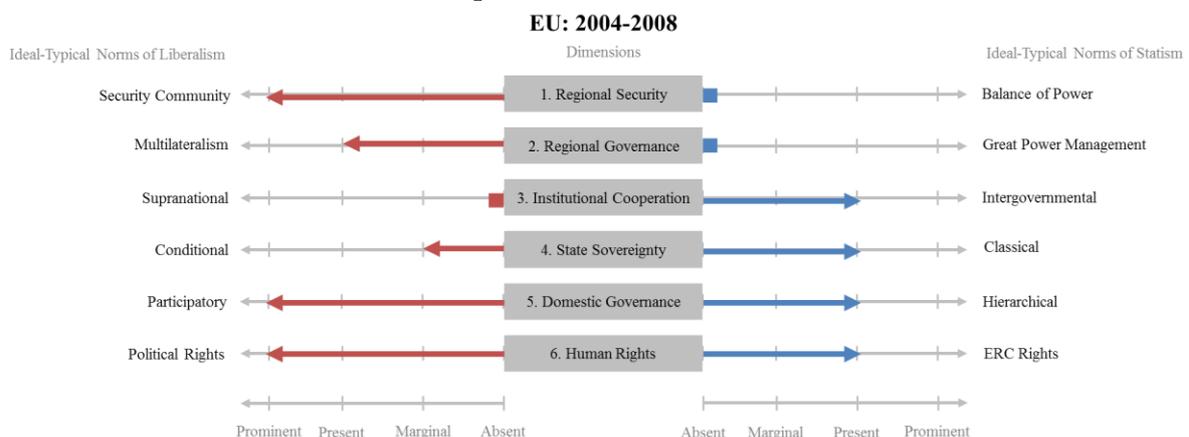
already confirmed that Saakashvili was the one who ordered pre-emptive strikes on Russian peacekeepers in the break-away region (Mankoff 2012). As two observers noted:

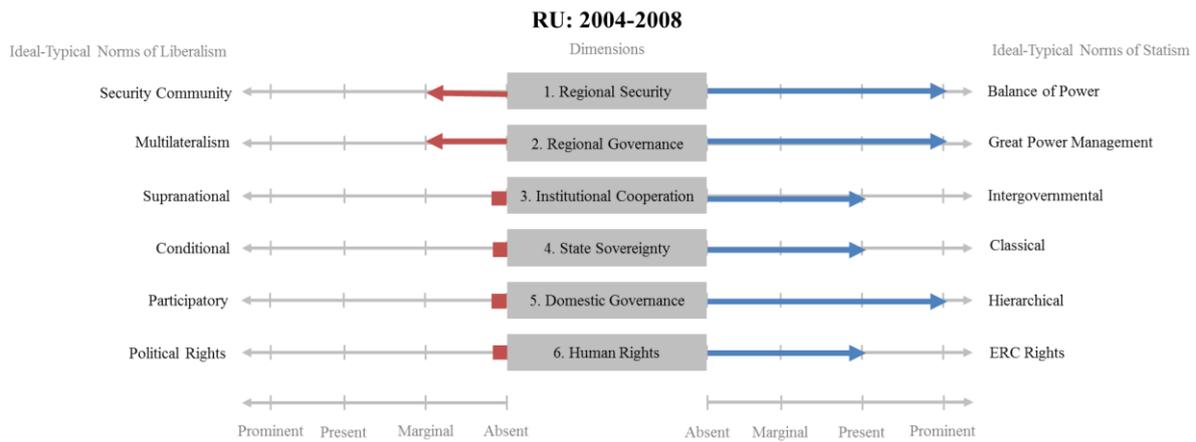
A regime truly committed to expansion would have behaved quite differently... In Georgia, a revisionist Russia would have annexed Abkhazia and South Ossetia long ago, before Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili embarked on his military buildup after taking power in 2004. To many in the West, Russia's 2008 invasion of Georgia seemed to prove the Kremlin's land hunger. But Kremlin leaders bent on expansion would surely have ordered troops all the way to Tbilisi to depose Saakashvili and install a more congenial government. At the least, Russian forces would have taken control of the oil and gas pipelines that cross Georgia. In fact, they left those pipelines alone and quickly withdrew to the mountains. (Treisman and Shliefer 2011: 129)

While research design of this paper does not permit the causal claim that the norms embodied by the regional institutional initiatives constrained the Kremlin's foreign policy option, Russia's swift withdrawal devoid of the imposition of a regime change stood in a stark contrast to the Western intervention operations elsewhere (Yugoslavia and Libya, and for American cases Afghanistan and Iraq) which primarily aimed at disposing the national leadership altogether. In other words, if Russia was purely driven by the hunger for power, the survival of the Saakashvili regime would have been highly unlikely, especially considering since the Russian troops had already reached to a point less than 50km from the Georgian presidential office, as well as the exceptionally turbulent international context where the attention of major Western powers was fixed on the global economic unraveling after the 2008 Great Recession.

From the perspective of the statist normative order, Russian action during this period confirms, rather than contradicts, the statist regional order characterized by the prerogative to preserve regional stability. To put differently, defending the statist regional order appears to have been more important for Russia than overthrowing the anti-Russian Georgian regime by force. It is in this sense that this period saw a rapidly widening gulf between the liberal regional order promoted by Brussels (in which regime stability is a secondary concern) and the statist regional order championed by Russia (see Table 3-2. below for comparison).

Table 3-2. Matrix for European and Russian Normative Vision, 2004-2008





Case Period III (2009-2013): Modalities of European and Russian Engagement in the Post-Soviet Space

Despite the high hopes around the ENP, liberalism in the post-Soviet space largely stagnated since the mid-2000s (Averre 2009; Delcour 2009). Ukraine after the Orange Revolution quickly fell into a political crisis where internal factions within the pro-European camp fought with each other; as a result, the 2010 presidential election (which was declared free and fair both by EU and NATO) brought back Viktor Yanukovich – the very figure who was discredited in the 2004 Ukrainian presidential election. Likewise, Mikhail Saakashvili, the son of the Rose Revolution, increasingly reverted to “the rule of terror” by imprisoning opposition leaders, silencing street protestors by force, and personalizing national wealth (Sumbadze 2009). Having come to power in the 2005 Tulip Revolution, Kyrgyz president Kurmanbek Bakiyev proclaimed as early as 2006 that Western individualism finds no resonance in his country (Omelicheva 2015). Over these regional trends, the 2009 EC communiqué expressed a grave concern that “the pace of reforms has slowed particularly in democratic reforms and human rights standards” (EC 2009a: 2).

The Eastern Partnership (EaP) was partly born out of this frustration over the decline of liberalism in the region since the initiation of the ENP (Bolgova 2013; Axyonova 2014; Cadier 2014). While the EaP was advanced as a complementary framework to strengthen the existing instruments of ENP (EC 2008: 2), the initiative was also distinctive in many aspects. First, the EaP’s ultimate objective was to induce the *structural approximation* of the EU legislation and standards. In this sense, the supranational norm became salient in the EU’s approach to post-Soviet regional institutionalization during this period. For this purpose, the Deep and Comprehensive Association Agreements (DCAAs) were invented as a key instrument to institutionalize “the principles of conditionality and differentiation” (EC 2009b: 5) based on “mutual commitments to the rule of law, good governance, respect for human rights, respect for and protection of minorities, and the principles of the market economy and sustainable development” (EC 2008: 3). Moreover, the document also elevated the norm of participatory governance by creating a new EaP Civil Society Forum to promote interactions and dialogues between liberal civil society actors and state authorities.

Although the EaP emphasized the “joint ownership” of the initiative, it was essentially “an imbalanced partnership, where the partner countries are supposed to carry out reforms, while the EU unilaterally decides whether and what kind of reward to grant them” (March 2011: 11). The initiative also strengthened its political component by demonstrating a “wish to deepen where appropriate political association and increase political and security policy convergence and effectiveness in the field of foreign policy” (EC 2013: 9). In this regard, the EaP was a pioneering arrangement which advanced the EU’s normative aims by economic means (Cadier and Light 2015). The new initiative also outlined the creation of a Neighbourhood Economic Community (EC 2008: 10); however, it still remained completely silent on the role of existing regional institutions including the EurAsEC. In this sense, “The EU has proved so far unable to design a coherent vision of its eastern neighbourhood as far as it fails to take into account the role played by Russia in the region (Delcour 2009: 515).” Instead, Brussels advanced a Euro-centric vision that the EaP would bring together “other EU institutions, international organisations (such as the OSCE and CoE), International Financial Institutions, parliaments, business representatives, local authorities, and a wide range of stakeholders in the fields covered by the thematic platforms” (EC 2008: 12). The Prague Declaration also called for closer involvement of the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EC 2009b: 10). By strategically ignoring the viability of the Eurasian alternative, European policymakers implicitly rejected Moscow’s proposal for the shared management of the post-Soviet space by the two unions.

Nevertheless, the EaP was pragmatic and more “flexible” in the sense that it abandoned the ENP’s value-laden, “EU-does-not-talk-to-dictators” approach and fully integrated Belarus (which was excluded from the ENP over human rights concerns) into its institutional framework. This was a sea-change, particularly considering that fact that Belarus in 2009 was much more illiberal than the time of the ENP’s launch. Indeed, the Belarussian participation was suspended in the 2011 Warsaw EaP Summit for its further deterioration of human rights record. But Belarus was oddly readmitted in the 2013 Vilnius Summit, although marginal improvements were observed in terms of political rights and participatory governance. In a stark contrast to the Warsaw Declaration, the Vilnius Declaration refrained from criticizing the Belarussian government and stated that “The Summit participants note that the EU remains engaged in a European Dialogue on Modernisation with Belarussian society and that exchanges are ongoing between the EU and the Belarussian government with a view to determining the best future form of cooperation on modernisation issues” (EC 2013:15).

It is plausible to argue that this change was partly driven by the dynamics of norms contestation. The initial ENP designers expected that Belarus, once excluded from the European integration process, would ultimately embrace European norms in search for wider economic opportunities. What happened was the complete opposite: furious at Europe’s “exclusive” integration policy, Minsk stepped up its support for Russia-led Eurasian integration and drifted further away from the liberal ideals. In this sense, the presence of the Eurasian alternative may have structurally “forced” Brussels to accept Minsk as a partner on equal footing. The case of Belarus demonstrated that the mechanism of conditionality is effective only when there is no alternative. In sum, the European approach at the time was marked by a

normative ambiguity: Brussels learned to compromise some of its core values in order to retain and advance its own vision in the region.

At the same time, “a pivotal change in integration patterns (Dragneva and Wolczuk 2012: 5)” emerged in Russia’s approach to the post-Soviet institutionalization in the late 2000s. Established in 2010, the Eurasian Custom Union (ECU) became the first post-Soviet regional institution giving equal voice to all participating members.¹⁷ In this sense, the norm of great power management codified in the EurAsEC’s institutional DNA was rapidly replaced by that of legalization and multilateralism. Previously, Russia was the only EurAsEC member with the privileged right to veto at the institution’s daily decision-making body, the Integration Committee. By contrast, the new voting procedure of the ECU’s Eurasian Economic Commission adhered to the one-country-one-vote principle, permitting a possibility of Russia being outvoted. Several authors contended that this change was rather declarative (Jarábik and Marin 2014; Dragneva and Wolczuk 2014), but in the eyes of Moscow, the EurAsEC was valuable precisely because it explicitly institutionalized Russia’s great power leadership; similar to America’s permanent NATO commandership, the special status conferred to Moscow entailed both symbolic as well as normative values which served to reaffirm Russia’s leading position in the region.

While the objectives of European initiatives have increasingly shifted to the supranational “approximation” of EU norms and legal standards in the post-Soviet space, Russia’s attachment to great power management waned considerably and supranationalism emerged as a new principle in the making of the ECU and its subsequent transformation into the EEU. As discussed earlier, post-Soviet leaders have been adamantly against any form of supranational integration, since this may easily lead to the revival of Soviet-style centralized regional governance commanded by Moscow. At the same time, Russia was equally concerned that a supranational structure may lead to the creation of a “transfer union” where Moscow would be expected to commit a disproportionate amount of resources. This alignment of interests made intergovernmentalism the prominent organizing principle of the EurAsEC. Breaking this tradition, the *Declaration on Eurasian Economic Integration* expressed that the ECU’s key objective is “the improvement and development of supranational institutions” (Eurasian Economic Commission 2011). Indeed, this was the first time the word “supranational” appeared in the Eurasian official documents. Although the intergovernmental ways of managing integration process was still in place, the document asserted a collective aspiration to go further on the supranational path, even envisioning “the development of cooperation in the sphere of foreign policy issues of mutual interest”.¹⁸

Despite these sea-changes, the Declaration continued to value the statist vision on domestic governance where regional integration was primarily portrayed as a means to enhance ESC rights of post-Soviet citizens. In line with this, the Declaration clarified a major objective was to improve “welfare and quality of life, sustainable socio-economic development, comprehensive modernization, and strengthening of national competitiveness in the global economy” (ibid). Nevertheless, the once-marginalized norm on

¹⁷ On 27 November 2009, Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan approved a customs code and a single customs tariff for creating the ECU. The code came into effect on 1 July 2010 and the tariff on 1 January of the same year.

¹⁸ The treaty of 1995 as well as of 1999 guaranteed the creation of a custom union yet mechanisms for realizing the plan was largely absent. Indeed, Kazakh president Nazarbayev criticized this series of perpetual inaction and stressed the need to “move from ‘a decade of talk’ to the ‘Decade of Action’ (Nazarbayev 2012).”

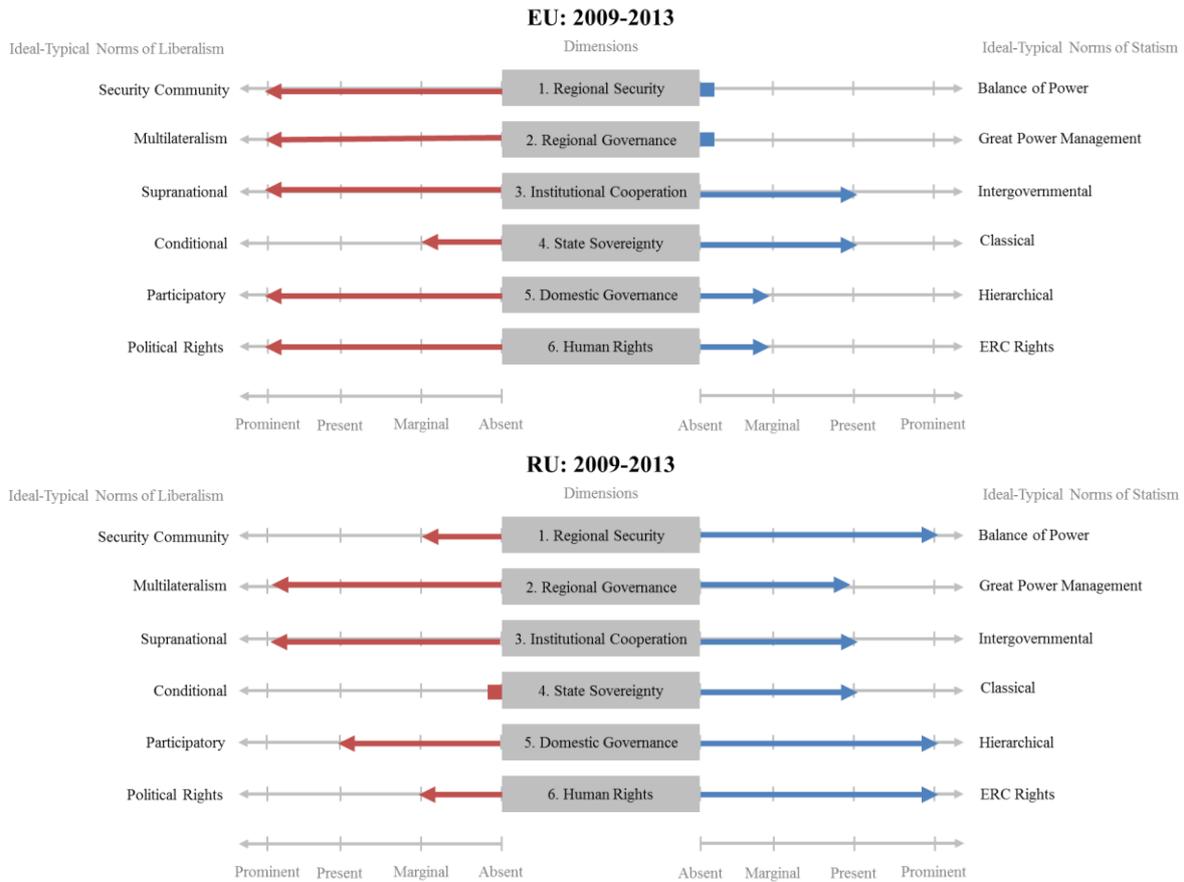
participatory governance was now minimally recognized in the text, which stressed the need to involve “business communities” and “people-to-people contacts” (ibid). In this sense, what used to be seen as a top-down process propelled by the sovereign governments now has been gradually opened up towards a more inclusive form of regional and domestic governance.

With the newly-emerging integration framework, Vladimir Putin’s 2011 op-ed published by *Izvestiya* stressed the compatibility between the European and Eurasian integration projects, and even went so far as to argue that “new dynamic markets governed by unified standards and regulations for goods and services” are “in most cases consistent with European standards” (Putin 2011). This view was echoed by the Belarussian Foreign Ministry, which further articulated that the ECU “was launched as a first step towards forming a broader single market inspired by the European Union, with the objective of forming an alliance between former Soviet states (Belarussian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2015)”. In this regard, Putin emphasized that “none of this [project] entails any kind of revival of the Soviet Union” while proclaiming that “It would be naïve to try to revive or emulate something that has been consigned to history”.

This cooperative language, however, did not mean that the gulf between the two unions was closing. Overall, Putin’s vision was still based on the balance of power – the “accession to the Eurasian Union will also help countries integrate into Europe sooner and from a *stronger position*” (Putin 2011, emphasis is mine). In this sense, it becomes clearer that the mission of the ECU/EEU project was to form a united Eurasian front, “a powerful supranational association capable of becoming one of the poles in the modern world” (Putin 2011). Likewise, Krastev (2011: 86) insightfully observed that “Putin’s hypothesis” was after all not the gradual convergence of the two unions, but that “Europe will accept a more powerful Russia as a guarantor of stability, even at the cost of a European retreat from its values and ambitions”.

As many observers noted, the rise of the ECU was primarily driven by Russia’s aspiration to counter the growing European influence in the region represented by the EaP (March 2011; Mezhevich 2013; Cadier 2014). As such, the notable shift in the integration approach from intergovernmentalism to supranationalism may be partly attributed to the fact that, in order to compete with the EU’s supranational initiatives, Moscow was *compelled* to offer an alternative deal that embraces some part of the EU values. This phenomenon of competitive adaptation – a process in which an actor adapts some of its normative preferences for the sake of competition – appears to lie at the heart of the partial convergence observed in certain normative elements, including the norms of supranationalism and participatory governance (see Table 3-3. below for comparison).

Table 3-3. Matrix for European and Russian Normative Vision, 2009-2013



Case Period IV (2014-2017): Modalities of European and Russian Engagement in the Post-Soviet Space

At the end of 2013, a sense of political crisis was plaguing in Brussels well before the onset of the Ukrainian crisis. After a series of prolonged negotiations, preliminary DCAAs were concluded with Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine, and prepared to be signed at the Vilnius EaP Summit held in November 2013. That month, however, the EU was caught unprepared by Ukraine’s rejection of the final agreement and Armenia’s abrupt “U-turn” from the EU to seek official membership in the forthcoming EEU (Rettman 2013; Popadiuk 2013).¹⁹ At this moment, the EU faced a fundamental choice of whether or not to accept Russia’s “vision for co-management of the region. With an eye to securing concessions from both sides, then Ukrainian Prime Minister Mykola Azarov proposed a tripartite Russia-Ukraine-EU association where Ukraine (and by implication other regional states) would be able to avoid choosing sides (Popadiuk 2013). While Moscow was overwhelmingly supportive of this proposal, the EU “unambiguously refused to support this idea” by declaring that “We see no role for third countries in this process” (Rekeda 2015).

Once the EU’s fundamental confidence in its own normative vision had prevailed, Ukraine emerged as a field of intense norms contestation. At the time, Ukrainian domestic opinion was highly polarized: 36 per cent of the population longed for a closer integration with Russia while 41 per cent

¹⁹ Armenia’s National Assembly voted 103-7 on 4 December, 2014 to join the EEU (Standish 2015).

advocated for a “European choice” in February 2014 (IRI 2015). This lack of national consensus meant that the EU had to make a strong push in support of pro-Europeanism, in which the EaP instruments played a crucial role. For instance, the EaP’s European Endowment for Democracy (EED) provided the Euromaidan movement with 150,000 EUR of direct finance between November 2013 and March 2014 (Mainichi Shinbun 2014). In an exclusive interview with the major Japanese newspaper, EED’s Executive Director Jerzy Pomianowski admitted that “It is difficult to act as the EU, but as an NGO [the EED] it is easier to support the opposition forces standing up against the semi-dictatorship of Yanukovych” (Mainichi Shinbun 2014). In this sense, the Euromaidan revolt actualized Moscow’s fears that the EaP would be eventually used as an instrument to forcefully push for liberalization in the region at the expense of Moscow’s interests.

For the purpose of space, this study does not engage in a detailed analysis of causes and consequences of the Ukrainian crisis; however, the worldviews expressed by the EU documents published in 2015 –the EaP Riga Summit’s *Joint Declaration* and the *Council Conclusions on the EU Strategy for Central Asia*– reveal that the conflict has affected the EU’s vision for the region in several important ways. Both of these texts exhibit the continuity of the vision and stress the primacy of democracy, the rule of law, human rights, fundamental freedoms and socio-economic development (EC 2015: 1; European Council 2015: 2). They also reaffirm the principle of “shared ownership, responsibility, differentiation and mutual accountability” (EC 2015: 1), which is “aimed at fostering the stable, secure and sustainable development of the region” (European Council 2015: 2). Nevertheless, despite the acceleration of supranational arrangements like DCAAs, the EU has noticeably elevated the norm of classical sovereignty, where, for instance, the EaP participating states are now named as “*sovereign, independent* partners” (EC 2015: 3, emphasis is mine). The Riga Declaration went so far as to affirm that “the sovereign right of each partner freely to choose the level of ambition and the goals to which it aspires in its relations with the European Union (EC 2015: 2) where “sovereign partners” are allowed to “decide on how they want to proceed in their relations” (ibid).

As a result, the accusations concerning Belarus’s “dubious” human rights records was completely dropped, and instead, Minsk is now applauded for being an effective mediator in the Ukrainian conflict. An even more interesting case was the EU’s ratification of the PCA with Turkmenistan, which had been blocked since the late 1990s over gross political rights concerns. Despite no visible improvement on the side of Ashgabat, the document further called for an immediate upgrading of the EU’s Liaison Office into a full-fledged EU Delegation in Turkmenistan (EC 2015: 3). These moves imply that the EU’s insistence to the norm of conditional sovereignty, political rights, and participatory governance has somehow lessened.

While the Eurasian integration project has increasingly moved away from the reliance on Russia’s leadership and embraced a more multilateral approach, the EU’s strategic ignorance of the Eurasian alternative became even more noticeable. The Riga Declaration stressed “the importance of ensuring coherence between various relevant regional initiatives and networks” (EC 2015: 6) yet with no reference was made to the EEU. Perhaps the clearest manifestation of this trend can be seen in the EU’s renewed

policy for Central Asia, which acknowledges the need to “promote dialogue with the relevant regional and international organisations” (European Council 2015: 8) by which they meant the OSCE, the Council of Europe, the UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia, and other UN agencies. The document even expressed an interest in capitalizing on the “possibilities arising from ‘silk road’ initiatives” (ibid: 8) proposed by China, but remained strikingly silent on the prospect for the collaboration with the EEU, which was already joined by two of the Central Asian republics (Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan) with the likely admission of Tajikistan. We can grasp the oddness of this policy by imagining a hypothetical case where Brussels develops a “Western partnership” with Canada and Mexico but chooses to be completely silent on the role of NAFTA. Indeed, the EU’s recent conclusion of an Enhanced PCA with Kazakhstan, and not with the EEU, adds yet more evidence in this regard. The strategic adaptation of the European normative vision in this period suggests that, partly driven by the competitive normative dynamics, Brussels is ready to be flexible with regard to some of its core values. At the same time, “continuity in change” is still observed when it comes to the EU’s blunt ignorance of the EEU as a constructive regional partner, even though the Eurasian integration project has increasingly embraced multilateral, legalized format of managing regional relations.

Since 2014, much ink has been spilled on Russia’s policy in Ukraine. A plurality of European observers were quick to proclaim the return of “Russian imperialism” (e.g. McNabb 2015). Yet, if this was the case, the question would be why Russia did *not* take over the *whole* Ukraine, and not why it took back Crimea. Indeed, while Yanukovich was still recognized as a legitimate president (who had sat on the negotiation table with the EU), Moscow could have persuaded him to issue an “invitation for intervention” for Russia. Such action could have been defended by the abundant presence of precedents where regional and extra-regional powers intervened in states of their interest to uphold regime stability in recent decades (e.g. Saudi Arabia and South Africa in neighboring states, as well as France in Francophone Africa). In essence, if Moscow were guided by a truly imperial vision, it would not have missed the golden opportunity to embark on a wider scale intervention in Ukraine, especially since the feasibility of such an option was high.²⁰

By the same token, Hett et al. (2015) argues that Russia’s reaction was guided by its great power prerogatives. Indeed, several analysts noted that Russia’s prime objective has been retaining its sphere of influence over Ukraine (e.g. Stratfor 2015; Shevtsova 2015). While the attachment to great power status has been a hallmark of contemporary Russian foreign policy (Clunan 2009), however, the developments of multilateral ECU/EEU project suggest that Moscow is ready to move beyond the great power format (Dragneva and Wolczuk 2012: 7). Indeed, the Kremlin’s enthusiastic support for the EU-Ukraine-Russia trilateral association proposal indicates that its prime objective was to avoid being *excluded* from the post-Soviet region, rather than establishing an exclusive sphere of influence. Hence, what the Crimea crisis symbolized was perhaps not Russia’s radical departure from its previously communicated normative vision,

²⁰ Stratfor (2015) estimated that Russia needed around 91,000-135,000 troops and 11-14 days to completely occupy the whole Eastern half of Ukraine and to march into Kiev. If the operation was simply to take over Kiev, this could be done with only a few thousand troops and within a few days.

but instead its continued commitment to the supremacy of the statist regional order in which liberal democratic revolutions find no legitimate place.

Immediately after the Crimean crisis, many in the West predicted that Russia's decision to "annex" the peninsula has put a final bullet into the already-crumbling Eurasian project (Michel 2014; Barbashin 2015). Quite contrary, my analysis of the EEU treaty below suggests that the crisis, and particularly the Western attempts to isolate Russia, might have accelerated the further institutionalization of the EEU by lowering the once-dominant voice of Moscow. In essence, "the Crimea-Ukraine crisis strengthened Belarus's and Kazakhstan's position in the EEU negotiations" (Sivickiy 2015: 7). Occasionally, Russia has tried to inject political aspirations into the EEU such as border protection, common citizenship, and the coordination of foreign and security policies. Minsk and Astana together blocked all of these attempts and removed related clauses from the treaty (ibid: 15), and more surprisingly, Moscow largely gave in to these requests. An even more interesting case was the accession of Kyrgyzstan, where Bishkek even managed to make a list of unilateral "demands."²¹ As Popescu (2014: 22) rightly points out, it is significant that "a state as small as Kyrgyzstan is advancing such conditions for joining a club". Since Moscow is desperately in need of support from its neighbors, Russia has become increasingly willing to downplay the centrality of great power management; as a result, the principles of multilateralism and sovereign equality have become a salient driver of the EEU project.

Reflecting these dynamics, the 680-page EEU Treaty represents a most legalized pact ever negotiated in the post-Soviet neighborhood, establishing three institutions with supranationally binding decision-making power:

- 1) **Supreme Eurasian Economic Council:** The supreme decision-making body comprised by the heads of states and governments (decisions adopted by consensus);
- 2) **Eurasian Economic Commission** (Moscow, Russia): The supranational regulative body comprised of the *Intergovernmental Council* (represented by one deputy head of government from each member, decisions adopted by consensus) and the *Board* (headed by the Chairman and represented by three delegates from each member, decisions adopted by consensus), equipped with the Secretariat encompassing 23 departments staffed by over 1,000 employees;
- 3) **EEU Court** (Minsk, Belarus): The judicial body whose rulings are final, immediately effective, and supranationally binding.

While the creation of these institutions was already envisioned by the ECU framework, the EEU Treaty clearly promoted further ascendance of multilateralism and supranationalism. With the strong insistence of Kazakhstan and Belarus, the principle of unanimity and "equal representation of the Parties" (Article 9) prevailed in all decision-making bodies even though Russia contributes most of the union's budget (see also Nicu Popescu 2014: 11). The Treaty also represents a full-fledged commitment to the international

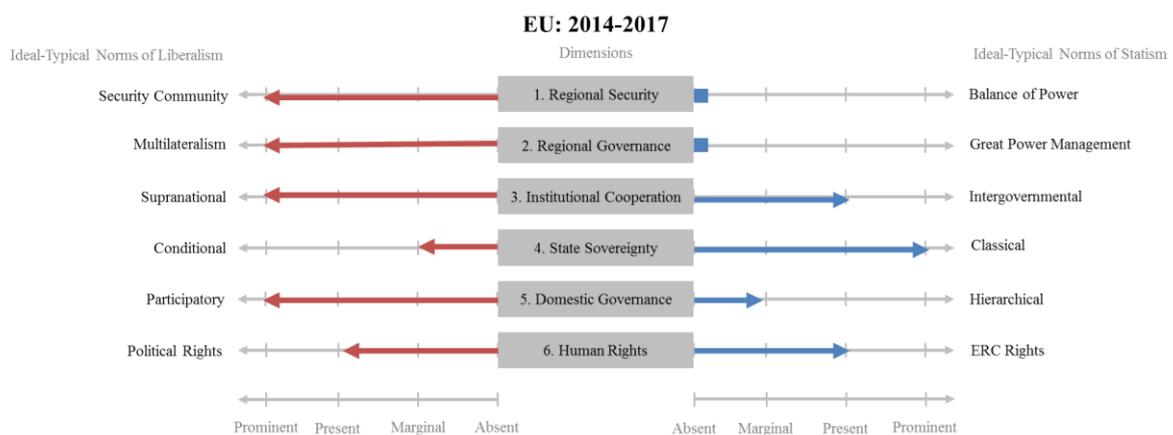
²¹ These included "financial support for the creation of labour-intensive industries (to compensate people who might lose their incomes if there is a drastic reduction of re-export opportunities from China); facilitations in the field of migration; and exemptions from the application of the EEU tariff levels for the import of equipment and machinery from countries such as Turkey or China" (Popescu 2014: 22).

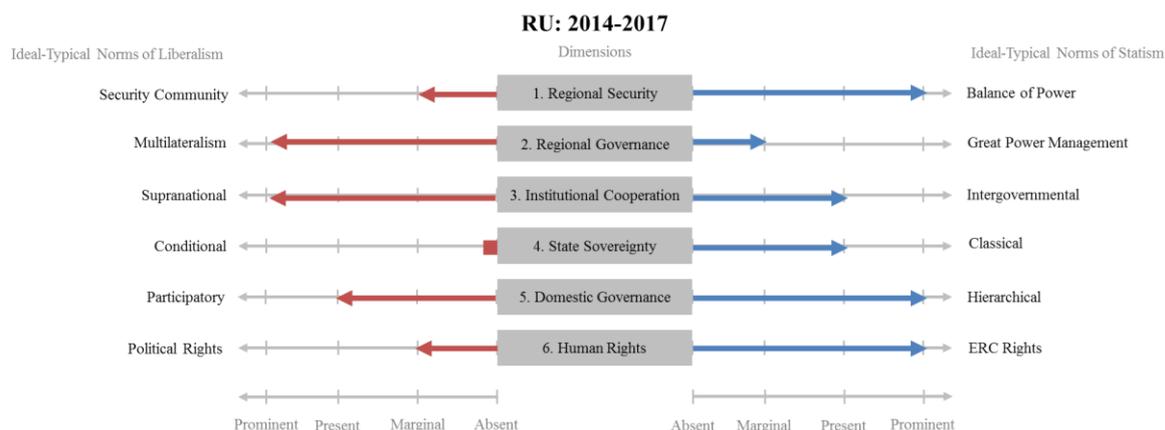
rule of law, where the compliance with the WTO regime became obligatory even for non-WTO EEU members.

Yet perhaps the most innovative aspect of the Treaty is the salience placed on supranationalism, where it is declared that “In case of conflict between international treaties within the Union and this Treaty, this Treaty shall prevail” (Article 6.3). While the executive function retained by the Supreme Council indicates the survival of intergovernmentalism, the Union is now conferred a wider and deeper competence to oversee foreign economic relations of its member states (Article 12.14 and 12.15), as well as to coordinate macroeconomic and monetary policies (Sections XIII and XIV, respectively). Unlike the EurAsEC’s Integration Committee (whose competence was vaguely defined), the Commission is tasked to pursue a single foreign trade policy with a clearer mandate specified by its Annex (see also Weisberg 2014). These arrangements demonstrate that, although intergovernmental ways of managing integration process is still present, the overall vision is learning towards a greater supranationalism.

In terms of values, the Treaty’s preamble stresses “the principle of the sovereign equality of states, the need for unconditional respect for the rule of constitutional rights and freedoms of men and nationals” as well as the “respect for specific features of the political structures of the Member States” (EEU 2015: 5). With this continuity of the statist vision, the document also highlights the need to champion “balanced development” (ibid: 1) and even the “resistance to external influences” (ibid: 60). However, unlike previous agreements, the Treaty spares an entire section (XII) on consumer protection and also incorporates a new clause on transparency measures (Article 69), which allows the union’s stakeholders, including civil society actors, to review and comment on the forthcoming regulations. While the effective implementation of this process is yet to be seen, the Treaty presents an important shift towards the gradual embracement of participatory governance mechanisms, and more importantly, the strategic embracement of some of the liberal norms (see Table 3-4. below for comparison).

Table 3-4. Matrix for European and Russian Normative Vision, 2014-2017





4. Conclusion

Due to the space constraints, this paper lacks in-depth analysis of each case period and a more detailed process-tracing is needed to fully reconstruct the liberal and statist regional orders and how they have evolved over time, preferably incorporating a wider set of original texts. My research design also does not allow for the formulation and testing of probabilistic causal claims. However, the overall trend is clear: Norm promotion is rarely a monolithic enterprise and regional normative dynamics are characterized by norms contestation involving complex processes of mutual adaptation.

As for the EU, its normative vision for the region was much less ambitious in the earlier period (see Annex.3 for overall comparison). It embraced a more activist stance only after the “color revolutions” in Georgia and Ukraine, only to then downplay the centrality of the “human -rights-first” approach in later years. This clearly demonstrates the limits of democracy/autocracy thesis, which largely assumes that a predefined set of liberal norms are promoted by the EU in the post-Soviet space. On the Russian side, we are struck by the adaptation of its normative vision from that of archetypical statism (in the early 2000s) to the gradual (although strategic) embracement of the selected liberal norms, such as multilateralism, supranationalism, and participatory governance (see Annex.4 for overall comparison). In this sense, Moscow has not strictly pursued the path of “autocratization” in the region, which would likely to entail outright rejection of the liberal norms in the region. Quite contrary, Russia has indeed *legitimized* the viability of the European model by treating it as a reference point for Eurasian regional integration, and more importantly, by gradually adopting some of its key norms. Overall, Moscow’s objective seems to be the prevention of liberal hegemony in the region: what Russia primarily seeks is not to exclude liberal normative influence in the region but rather to *avoid being outplayed* by it by preserving a balance of statist and liberal normative orders. Precisely because normative orders cannot be single-handedly imposed from above, the agency of regional states play a crucial role in determining whose normative vision gains primacy. In this sense, perhaps the biggest winners of the deepening normative competition in the neighborhood are the regional elites who have learned how to effectively advance their voices and enlarge policy autonomy by playing both sides and preventing the emergence of a monopolistic normative

framework. This points to the need of future research on how norms contestation enables and/or constrains foreign policy choices of regional states.

While European policymakers often claim that Brussels does not seek to establish an exclusive sphere of liberal influence, the EU has done precisely that by refusing to acknowledge the legitimacy of the alternative statist normative order and strategically ignoring existing Eurasian regional integration. The EU's ignorance of the EEU has become increasingly problematic, particularly considering the reality that European policymakers are willing to collaborate with Turkmenistan and China, whose political values are arguably much less liberal than those of Russia and the EEU members. Bluntly put, the EU's vision for the post-Soviet space seems to be that of a closed, exclusive liberal normative order where no alternative norms are accepted. Indeed, the EU has at times emphasized its "commitment to pluralism", but this is largely "managed pluralism" where that diversity is accepted *as long as* it is confined to the premises of liberalism. On the contrary, Russia – or at least the EEU – seems to offer a more plural and inclusive normative regional order built on a basis of balance between liberal and statist norms.

While norm scholars have increasingly paid attention to the process by which norm-takers localize ideas promoted by major actors, norm-makers themselves also seem to adapt their visions by considering regional context, the agency of regional states, and competing norms offered by counteracting forces. What drives this process of adjustment, adaptation and even mutual learning on the side of norm promoters? While this paper does not offer a conclusive answer in this regard, my analysis suggests that the dynamics of competition among norm entrepreneurs incentivize them to learn from each other, in order to appeal to a widest set of regional states. The EU's acknowledgement of several statist norms and the EEU's gradual adoption of selected liberal norms may not indicate the waned commitment to the liberal and statist normative order, respectively. Instead, this seems to be a result of intensified norms contestation – the EEU needed to embrace some of the EU norms to *compete against it*. Indeed, this dynamics of competitive socialization is almost completely overlooked by contemporary (predominantly liberal) norms scholars. In the late nineteenth century, Japan actively internalized Western norms so as to compete against it. In recent years, Latin American integration led by Brazil marshalled political rights norms in order to avoid Western interference with the pretext of human rights violation (Kai 2016). In a similar vein, China is increasingly sponsoring multilateral, inclusive, and highly legalized regional institutional initiatives in order to fight back the encroachment of liberal hegemony in the Asia-Pacific region. These observations indicate that the emerging international struggle for legitimacy is not a fight between liberalism and anti-liberalism, but a complex process of contestation marked by mutual adaptation and competitive socialization.

In light of these developments, the matrix methodology developed by this study appears to be particularly advantageous because it enables scholars to capture a more nuanced understanding of norms promoted in the region, as well as the complex, interactive, and contested process of evolving regional normative order - which is often omitted by the scholars seeing regional affairs through the dichotomous prism of the democracy-autocracy thesis. The matrix approach opens up a new avenue for future research. First among these would be to check the coherence, compatibility, and consistency between normative visions promoted by different institutional initiatives operating in a shared geographical terrain as well as

their variation and transformation over time. The matrix can be also used to trace and reconstruct the evolution of normative order over time within single polity. Overall, the matrix approach offers a methodological innovation with which contemporary research on norm promotion can move on from the dichotomous approach heavily reliant on reductionist ideal-type conceptions tending to lack contextual depth and variation.

Annex. 1 Operational Conceptualization of Norms in Six Dimensions

● **1. Regional Security:** Regional security may be accomplished by the maintenance of the *balance of power* and/or the making of a *security community* underpinned by shared values and identities. The logic of peace by balance comes from the fundamental distrust in power;²² the renowned international lawyer Oppenheim once noted that the international balance of power (i.e. the situation where no major state has preponderance of power to impose its worldview over others) is prerequisite for the healthy working of international law (Oppenheim 1905). This point was concurred by Clark (2003: 86): “What all this seems to suggest is that a physical balance of power is necessary, but not sufficient, for a secure and stable order. What it needs, in addition, is a “moral balance” which, given what is said elsewhere, presumably can express itself only through agreement and consensus.” In contrast, the logic of security community stems from the faith, trust and confidence in particular type of normative order. Peace is ultimately achieved through the expansion of the “common house”, and the enforcement of community values as well as disciplining and socializing of those who stand “outside” of the community. Hence, the former tends to embrace a perspective of pluralism while the latter tend to promote universalism.²³

● **2. Regional Governance:** The (regional) international system may be governed by the norm of *great power management* in which pivotal states are expected and obliged to assume leadership (the “rule of power” in the words of Burley 1993: 144), and/or by the making of a rule-based, constitutional type of international normative order based on the norm of *multilateralism* and legalization (the multilateral rule of law). Multilateralism refers to a particular format of diplomatic engagement which coordinates and manages relations among three or more states (Ruggie, 1993:11), where it essentially calls for “the nondiscriminatory application of the agreed principles of conduct” under which “all the relevant actors are expected to play by the same set of rules” (Sjursen 2006a: 245–246). A few conceptual notes need to be made here. First, “the multilateral rule of law” by itself is not devoid of power. For instance, the International Criminal Court (ICC) represents a highest degree of legalization/multilateralism efforts in world affairs. However, the African Union (AU) in recent years advanced a vocal criticism for the court and proclaimed that it is no longer “a court for all”,²⁴ as the majority of the tried cases come from Africa. Nor the multilateral framework is always morally superior to the rule of power. For instance, the OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) satisfies the criteria for multilateralism but the forum often prioritize in the interests of “cartel members” over the common interest of the international community. It must be also emphasized that the rule of power and law may be mixed in practice. For instance, the UN Charter embodies the norm of great power management in the sense that the five (unelected) permanent members of the UNSC are conferred special responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, while the charter also exhibits the collective will to manage international relations by the multilateral rule of law.²⁵

● **3. Institutional Cooperation:** The *intergovernmental* norm prioritizes in respecting the sovereign autonomy of each state participating in the process of institutionalization, while the *supranational* approach (also termed “post-sovereign

²² The logic is also present in the American constitution with its government managed by the check and balance system.

²³ The universal liberal order-builders often invoke the value of pluralism, but this is essentially a “managed pluralism” within the framework of liberalism. In other words, the variation *within* the liberal framework is allowed and encouraged, but the deviation from it is not permitted. On this point, Clark contends: “It has recently been suggested that international society's concept of order is itself based on a fundamental ambivalence, since it espouses the values of both 'toleration' and of 'civilisation'. By this is meant that it has been pluralistic towards its core members, and tolerant of difference between them, while at the same time seeking to impart civilisation to those outside (Clark 2003: 93).”

²⁴ The term was borrowed from the speech of Ethiopian Foreign Minister Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus speaking on behalf of the African Union (AU) at the 14th session of the Assembly of States Parties. In line with this warning, South Africa's ruling party expressed its intention to withdraw from the court (Deutsche Welle 2015).

²⁵ Another example is the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which is based on the principle of nuclear power concert but also presents an attempt to ensure a more constitutional form of global nuclear management.

governance” by Scholte 1997; Holton 1998; Lucarelli 2006; Krastev 2011) endeavours to create supranational authorities with extensively delegated competence to manage the institutionalization process. In reality, a majority of regional institutionalization processes evolves in the combination of the two norms, and even in the most “supranationalized” institution such as the EU, a fair degree of intergovernmentalism remains. Hence the norm on institutionalization simply sets the priority, or which of the two directions is more appropriate for the development of regional institutions.

● **4. State Sovereignty:** While there are different conceptualizations of state sovereignty, this study follows Hurrell’s (2006) approach and differentiates the *classical* Westphalian notion from the emerging post-Westphalian variant. The notion of sovereignty embodied in the UN Charter, the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties²⁶ and the Helsinki Final Accord can be referred as classical sovereignty, where non-interference in internal affairs and unconditional sovereign equality are noted as fundamental principles. Sovereign equality is unconditional: all states shall be treated equally, regardless of their power positions and the nature of internal regimes, as long as they are internationally recognized to be a sovereign. The post-Westphalian vision on *conditional* sovereignty advocates that sovereignty may be compromised in exceptional cases for a higher purpose, be it the protection of human lives (the Responsibility to Protect doctrine) or the defence of socialism (the Brezhnev doctrine). Under this notion, sovereign equality exists only among those states which adhere to the set standard of norms, and those who fail to comply with the standard are not to be recognized as fully sovereign.

● **5. Domestic Governance:** Norms on governance specify the appropriate model for providing basic public goods (security, welfare, and so on) in each polity. The top-down approach of *hierarchical governance*, focuses on the centralization of state power which at times can (and indeed is delegated to) exercise unrestrained authority over the matters in domestic affairs. In this approach, the state –which has been defended by the great sacrifice of its ancestors and succeeded from generation to generation by the tireless efforts of the nationals – is of paramount importance for the maintenance of order and stability. The bottom-up approach of *participatory governance* prioritizes in transparency, information disclosure, and the inclusive participation of citizens in the policy-making processes. This approach emphasizes the the participatory control of the state power embedded in a system of check and balance that is meant to diffuse state authority and thus ensure the rule of law. In the former approach, the national economy is often managed by *state capitalism* (or the planned economy in the extreme case; see Bremmer 2010), while the latter places a greater emphasis on the genuine free market mechanisms which constitutes *economic liberalism*.

● **6. Human Rights:** The Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR) broadly categorized human rights into two groups: *economic, social, and cultural (ERC) rights* and *political rights*. The former generally covers the right to a better livelihood such as rights to housing, education, work, health, culture, and social security, while the latter places emphasis on freedom of speech, association, the participation in domestic politics, and so forth. In an ideal world, these rights are complementary and indivisible; however, in reality, the official discourse of states may prioritize in guaranteeing ERC rights (e.g. USSR, Russia, China, and Cuba), in political rights (e.g. the United States), or in both (e.g. European social democracies and Japan). The norms on human rights are generally absent in absolute monarchies and colonized spaces, where citizens are predominantly seen as “servants” thus not entitled to extensive rights.

²⁶ The Article 2 VII specifies the prohibition of any external interference in the domestic affairs of a state, regardless of the means.

Annex. 2 Guideline on the Differentiation of Norms

While this study does not follow the logic of nomothetic quantitative coding, following qualitative guideline was used to ensure the comparability, consistency, and procedural transparency in textual analysis.

<i>Degrees</i>	<i>Standards of Differentiation</i>	<i>Observable Implications</i>
Absent	The reference to and the practice of a norm is not observed and/or the norm is rejected.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reference to a norm is absent in discourse. • The relevance of a norm is denied in discourse and practice. • Most fundamental norms may be naturalized and thus become taken for granted – this means that the simple physical (i.e. discursive) absence of a norm should not be automatically equated with its irrelevance and the contextual implications of texts need to be properly taken into account.
Marginal	The reference to and the practice of a norm is marginally observed and adherence is regarded as desirable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reference to a norm is observed in discourse and/or in practice. • No formal/informal mechanisms exist to guarantee the adherence to a norm.
Present	The reference to and the practice of a norm is generally observed and adherence is regarded as necessary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reference to a norm is generally observed in discourse and in practice. • Formal/informal mechanisms exist to guarantee the adherence to a norm, but the implementation of these mechanisms is limited and/or incomplete.
Prominent	The reference to and the practice of a norm is almost always observed and adherence is regarded as categorically imperative.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reference to a norm is almost always observed in discourse and in practice. • Formal/informal mechanisms exist to guarantee the adherence to a norm, and the implementation of these mechanisms is generally observed.

Practical Example:

In order to further bolster procedural transparency of my textual analysis, the table below takes the example of the norm of supranationalism (Dimension 3: Institutional Cooperation) and describes how this paper differentiated the degree of the norm's presence/absence in practice.

<i>Degrees</i>	<i>Actual Examples</i>
Absent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyzed texts entail no reference to supranational institutional cooperation. • A discourse rejecting the relevance of supranationalism is observed, implying that supranational institutional cooperation is not an appropriate way of managing regional international relations.
Marginal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An aspiration to engage in supranational institutional cooperation is expressed in discourse but no concrete plan is put forth. • Supranationalism is mentioned in discourse as one of many ways to foster regional cooperation and a desirable goal, but no formal/informal mechanisms are discussed to guarantee the adherence to a norm.
Present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supranational integration is stated as a major objective in analyzed texts and a supranational commission is established to monitor the progress, but with very limited and modest capacity.
Prominent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supranational integration is stated as a most important objective in analyzed texts and a supranational commission is established to monitor the progress, with the full capacity to set regulations and implement them independently. • The words “supranational” or “supranationalism” do not appear anywhere in analyzed texts but an international agreement which binds the concerned parties to internalize supranational legal frameworks (e.g. EU <i>acquis communautaire</i>) was signed with fully-implemented monitoring and enforcement mechanisms.

Annex. 3 Subscription of Regional States to European/Eurasian Institutional Initiatives

The value of 1 (shaded) indicates the state is subscribed to the listed initiative and 0 for otherwise.

Armenia																										
Analytical Periods	(Earlier period; for reference purpose only)								I					II					III					IV		
Years	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
EU Membership	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EU PCA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
EU ENP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
EU EP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
EU DCAA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EEU Membership	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
EurAsEC Membership	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ECU Membership	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Azerbaijan																										
Analytical Periods	(Earlier period; for reference purpose only)								I					II					III					IV		
Years	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
EU Membership	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EU PCA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
EU ENP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
EU EP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
EU DCAA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EEU Membership	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EurAsEC Membership	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ECU Membership	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

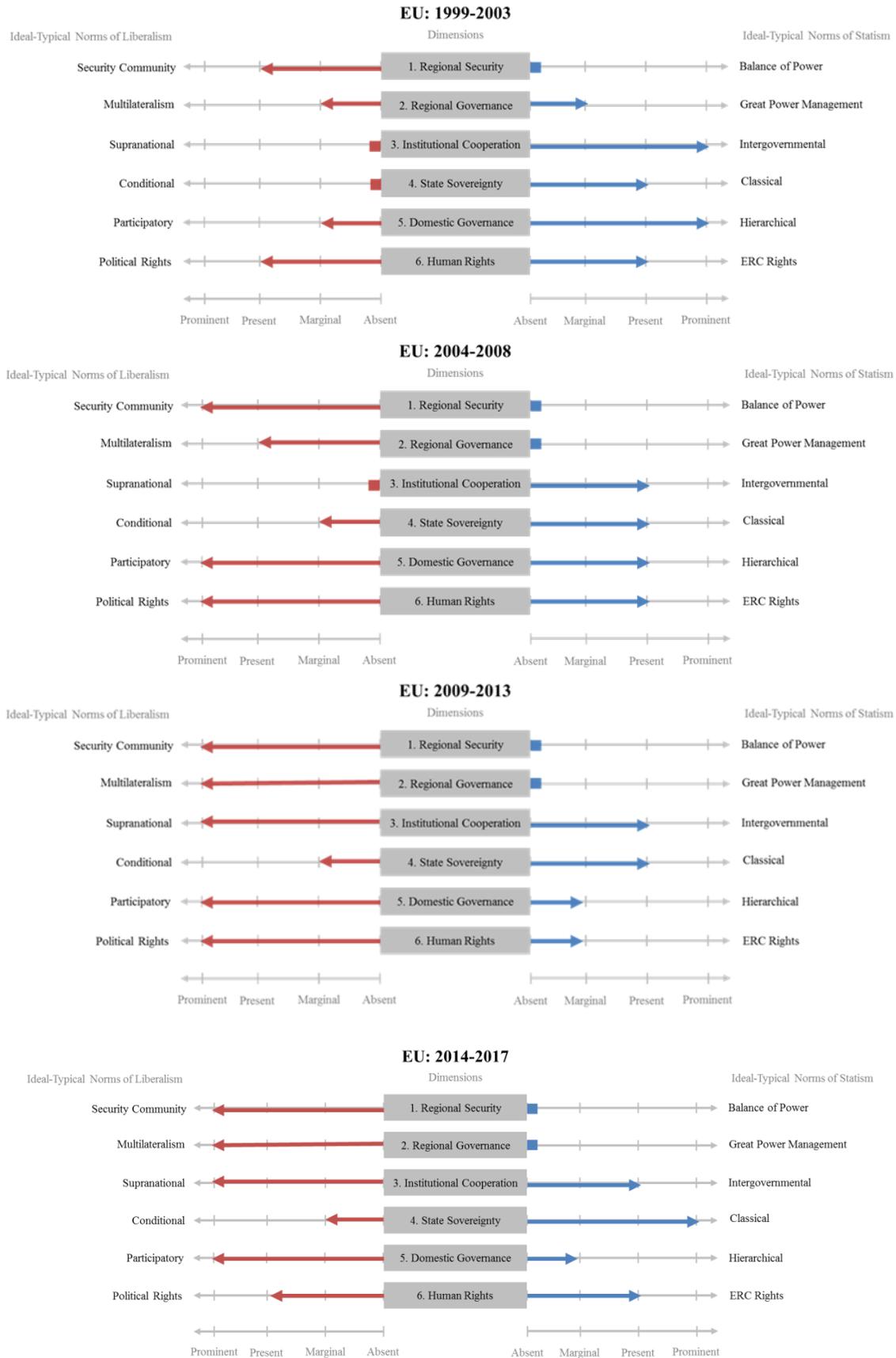
Georgia																										
Analytical Periods	(Earlier period; for reference purpose only)								I					II					III					IV		
Years	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
EU Membership	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EU PCA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
EU ENP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
EU EP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
EU DCAA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
EEU Membership	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EurAsEC Membership	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ECU Membership	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Belarus																										
Analytical Periods	(Earlier period; for reference purpose only)								I					II					III					IV		
Years	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
EU Membership	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EU PCA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EU ENP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EU EP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
EU DCAA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EEU Membership	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
EurAsEC Membership	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
ECU Membership	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0

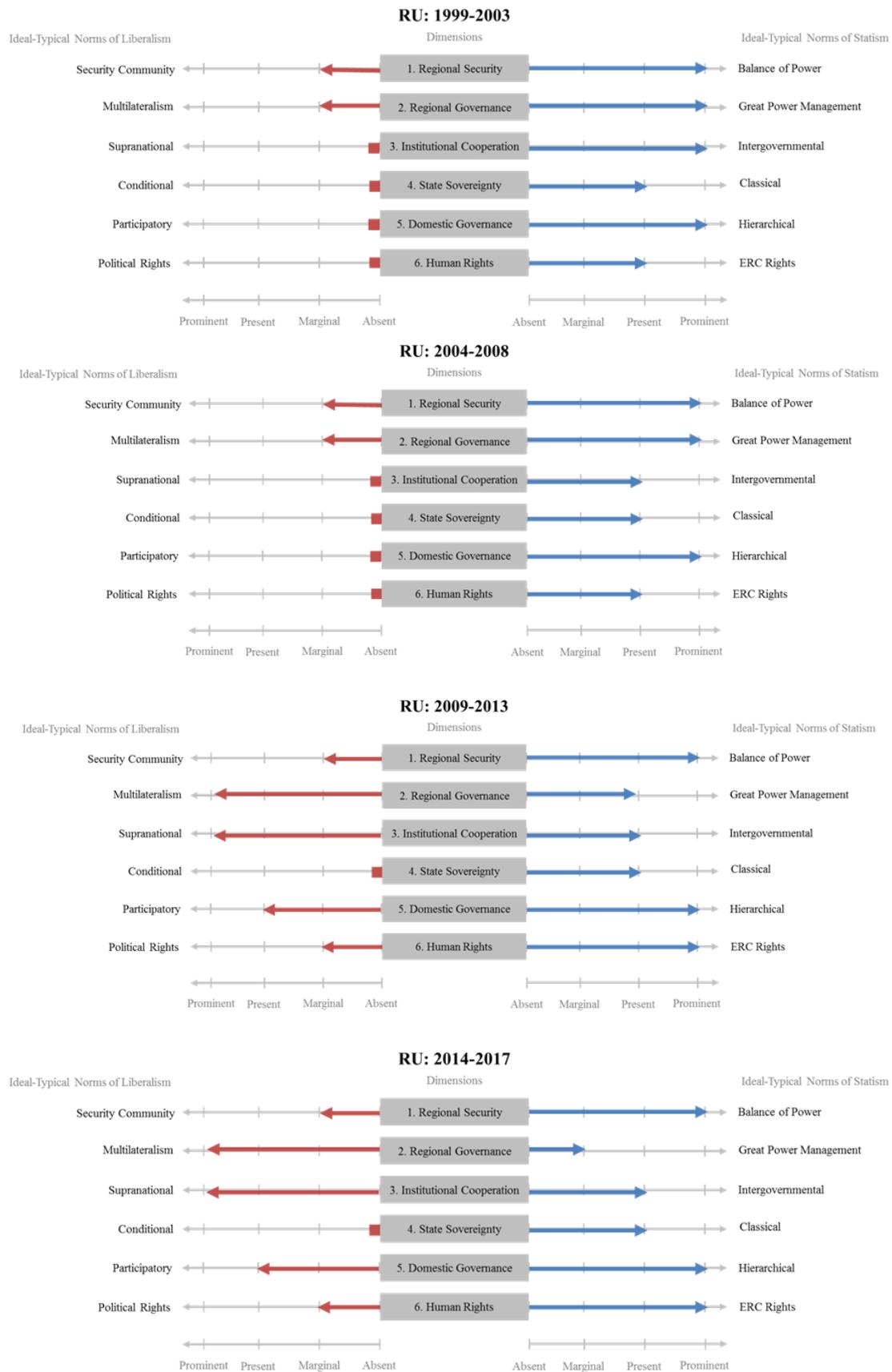
Moldova																										
Analytical Periods	(Earlier period; for reference purpose only)								I					II					III					IV		
Years	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
EU Membership	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EU PCA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
EU ENP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
EU EP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
EU DCAA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
EEU Membership	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EurAsEC Membership	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ECU Membership	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Ukraine																										
Analytical Periods	(Earlier period; for reference purpose only)								I					II					III					IV		
Years	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
EU Membership	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EU PCA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
EU ENP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
EU EP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
EU DCAA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
EEU Membership	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EurAsEC Membership	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ECU Membership	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Annex. 4 The Evolution of EU's Normative Vision for the Post-Soviet Space



Annex. 5 The Evolution of Russia's Normative Vision for the Post-Soviet Space



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