

Katharina Hoffman

Regional Organisations in the Post-Soviet Space: Domestic Origins of Cooperation Dynamics

Supervisors: [Kataryna Wolczuk](https://schools/government-society/departments/political-science-international-studies/staff/profiles/wolczuk-kataryna.aspx) ([/schools/government-society/departments/political-science-international-studies/staff/profiles/wolczuk-kataryna.aspx](https://schools/government-society/departments/political-science-international-studies/staff/profiles/wolczuk-kataryna.aspx)) . [Derek Averde](https://schools/government-society/departments/political-science-international-studies/staff/profiles/averre-derek.aspx) ([/schools/government-society/departments/political-science-international-studies/staff/profiles/averre-derek.aspx](https://schools/government-society/departments/political-science-international-studies/staff/profiles/averre-derek.aspx))

In the last decades regional organisations spread from the Western hemisphere and are by now an element of regional and international relations in nearly all parts of the world. While regional organisations are widely depicted as integration instruments, only very few regional organisations appear to follow the in-depth integration model of the European Union.

The more than ten regional organisations that emerged in the post-Soviet space in the period 1991-2011 comply with this picture. Apart from Turkmenistan all former Soviet republics are member in at least two regional organisations in the post-Soviet space. None of these organisations managed to assume significant governance functions in the region. Trade and strategies of coping with new security challenges are addressed in most regional organisations. However, multilateral agreements that remain on paper or do not consider long-term cooperation suggest that substantial achievements fail to materialize.

What is, hence, the interest of the former Soviet republics in active membership in organisations like CIS, GUAM, EurAsEC or CSTO? What values does participation in regional cooperation addressing trade and new security challenges have for the newly independent states? What concepts of regional organisations and multilateral cooperation drive their policy? How do these concepts relate to national security perceptions and foreign policymaking practices of the political elites in the former Soviet republics?

With a qualitative analysis of Azerbaijan's and Ukraine's participation in trade and human and drug trafficking cooperation in CIS and GUAM my PhD thesis aims shedding light to these questions. Based on expert interviews with state officials from Azerbaijan and Ukraine and on participant observation in different GUAM working groups I intend to spell out cooperation rationalities, specific approaches to multilateralism, cooperation and foreign policymaking practices that drive the regional cooperation under study. Both narratives from the expert interviews, primary economic and secondary data allow for tracing back the origins of this specific approach to multilateral regional cooperation to the different national security perceptions of political and economic actors in Azerbaijan and Ukraine.

My PhD hence intends to improve the empirical knowledge on cooperation dynamics in GUAM and CIS, to contribute to a better grasp of function of regional organisations in the post-Soviet space and their means of cooperation and finally hopes to contribute to the comparative regionalism debate on development and function of RO in the world and their potential to assume global governance functions.

Profile

In 2008 I received a Magister Degree from Freie Universität Berlin in East European Studies with special training in political sciences and international relations, sociology and Romanian literature. My studies included a one year stay at the Moscow State Institute for International Relations. Having spent a year in Romania for a voluntary social service my interest had been initially on transformation processes in Romania. With the training in international relations I got more and more interested in the former Soviet republics and the relations between them. Thanks to a side job as tour guide for educational journeys to Eastern Europe I have been able to visit Moldova, Ukraine and the Caucasus countries on a regular basis since 2006. After graduation I worked for six months as Research Assistant at the German Institute for International Affairs/SWP. In March 2009 the ESRC CEELLBAS Award gave me the opportunity to do my PhD at the Centre for Russian and Eastern European Studies at Birmingham University. During my PhD studies I widened my think tank experience by a six month stay at the Norwegian Institute for International Affairs/NUPI.

Qualifications

- Magistra Artium in East European Studies, Sociology and Romanian Literature

Research interests

- International Relations
- Regional Cooperation in Post-Soviet Space
- Ukrainian Foreign Policy and Domestic Policy
- Azerbaijani Foreign and Domestic Policy
- Nagorno-Karabakh and Transnistria Conflicts

Professional memberships

- German Association for East European Studies – DGO e.V.

Teaching responsibilities

- Teaching Assistant for the lecture 'IR Theory' at Institute for East European Studies, Freie Universität Berlin (2007)

Language Skills

- German (native)
- Russian (fluent)
- Romanian (fluent)
- Ukrainian (basic)

Conference papers

Presentation given at Graduate Centre for Europe Annual Conference 'Europe: A Continent of Paradoxes', 16-18 April 2009: Grasping Regional Organisations in the Post-Soviet Space.

Presentation given at NUPI : Ukraine under Yanukovich –Moderate Foreign Policy Changes or 'Blue' Revolution from Above?, April 2010
ETH Zurich, Conference: Regional Organisations and Security: Conceptions and Practices', paper: The Collective Security Treaty Organisation – A Multilateral Response to New Security Challenges?, June 2011

Publications

Book Review: Zhenis Kembayev, Legal Aspects of the Regional Integration Processes in the Post-Soviet Area. Europe-Asia Studies (forthcoming).

Katharina Hoffmann (2011): Azerbaijan's Regional Policy: The Eurasian and European Dimensions in: ADA Biweekly , Vol. IV, No 14.

Katharina Hoffmann (2010): The EU in Central Asia – Successful Good Governance Promotion? In: Third World Quarterly, Special Issue, 31(1) 10.

Katharina Hoffmann (2007): 'Regionale Integration im postsowjetischen Raum? Kooperationsverhalten der Neuen Unabhängigen Staaten' [Regional Integration in the Post-Soviet Space? – Cooperation Behavior of the Newly Independent States] in: Arbeitspapiere, 85, Forschungsstelle Osteuropa, Bremen.

Contact

Email: kbh899@bham.ac.uk (<mailto:kbh899@bham.ac.uk>)

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