

Shifting Paradigms in EU-Russian Relations: Must Europe Accept the 'Competing Regionalisms' Model?

Workshop: The EU and Russia: Where Now?
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Outline

- Concept of strategic paradigms (drawing on Kuhn, Hall)
- Why the paradigm shift (Russia-initiated)
- What the new paradigm could look like
- EU reactions (briefly)
- Alternative paradigms

Previous paradigm: EU and Russian approaches to a Greater European/integrated European space

	Pre 2013 EU	Pre -2013 Russia	Rhetorical agreement?	Disagreements/irritants
Trade	Peace through trade Market-enabling competition	(+ role for strategic industries)	Yes	Technical issues
Energy	Interdependence,	Interdependence	Yes	Technical issues Russia's use of energy as political tool
Regulatory norms	Approximation to EU norms	Approximation sometimes accepted	Partial	Technical issues, e.g., visas
Post-communist borders	Inviolable	Inviolable	Yes	Exceptions (Kosovo, Georgia)
Political values	EUropean values	Pluralistic view of European values	Partial	EU mutes values, Russian charges of EU hypocrisy
Security	Transatlantic security community + Russia	New European security architecture	Declining	Over NATO, missile defense, US actions
Neighbourhood	Sovereignty for neighboring countries; EU and Russian interests compatible	Russian privileged sphere of influence	No	Muted

Drivers of Russian paradigm change

Perceived policy failure

- a) Failure to achieve equal status with EU/US
- b) Failure of policy in near abroad

→ **Experimentation:** Customs Union and Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). With Ukraine via CIS FTA. Partial emulation of EU.

Purpose (contested): Correct and revive the old paradigm

Failure of the experiment:

- a) Perceived dismissal of the EAEU by the West
- b) Perception that EU was forcing a choice
- a) Continuing hope but lack of success with Ukraine

The pre-crisis and emerging paradigms compared

	New paradigm (from Russia) Competing Regionalisms	Old paradigm (EU/Russia) (Greater/common Europe)
Underlying principle	Uncertainty about the viability of a common European space	Agreement on idea of common space, contestation over the details
Trade	Mutually exclusive and competing integration schemes	Peace through trade and investment; market-enabling competition
Energy	Diversification, reduced interdependence	Interdependence
Regulatory norms	Competing regulatory norms	Regulatory approximation by choice
Political values	Distinct European/Eurasian values	Common European values (details & implementation contested)
Post-communist borders	Selective inviolability	Inviolable (some exceptions)
Security	Broad securitization of relationship; military buildup; brinkmanship	Contested security communities, but common security interests
Neighbourhood	Either/or choice for neighbours; competing spheres of influence	Not addressed / no agreement

Who would you call enemies of Russia?

(Levada Centre,

<https://www.levada.ru/2018/01/10/vragi-rossii/>, open-ended question, multiple responses permitted)

	Mar 1999	Aug. 2008	Oct 2012	Dec 2017
% saying Russia has enemies	65%	68%	63%	66%
Of those:				
USA	22%	52%	56%	68%
Europe/EU/West/ individual EU countries				14%
Germany				6%
Poland and former socialist countries (Hungary, Czech, etc.)		5%	3%	8%
Former Soviet republics (e.g., Baltic, Georgia, etc; leaders of former Soviet republics	9%	27%	14%	10%
Ukraine				28%
China		8%	11%	2%

Indicators of paradigm change

- Incommensurability of narratives (Kuhn)
- Contested facts and their interpretation
- 'No neutral observation language' (Franklin, 1984, p. 57)
- Absence of mediators

EU Reaction

- Resistance to abandoning old paradigm (legitimacy reasons, lack of unity, dislike of new paradigm)
- Confusion and uncertainty; search for explanations in old concepts (New Cold War, USSR revival, return to containment)
- Attempt to pursue 'normal politics' (sanctions, Minsk II, 5 principles)
- Lack of strategic vision

Note: Interactive effect of paradigm change on the EU -- EU/West being forced to a competitive model?

EU Options

- Muddling through (deny paradigm shift, incremental responses)
- Accept new paradigm (what would this mean?)
 - Possible variant: Great power bargain: incremental acceptance of Russian regional dominance (through neglect?) EU - Russia economic rapprochement
- New Greater/Integrated Europe concept: realize equal partnership; exchange recognition of EAEU for neighbourhood sovereignty

Problems: Change agents, EU unity, security issue

Alternative paradigms

	Previous pre-crisis (shared) paradigm	Proposed: Revised Greater/common Europe
Underlying principle	Agreement on idea of common space, contestation over the details	Reengagement based on equal partnership principle + respect of neighbour sovereignty + peace through trade
Trade	Peace through trade and investment; market-enabling competition	Peace through trade and investment; market-enabling competition
Energy	Interdependence	Interdependence
Regulatory norms	Regulatory approximation by choice	Mutual recognition principle
Political values	Common European values (details & implementation contested) Regulatory approximation by choice	Tolerance of diverse values
Post-comm borders	Inviolable (some exceptions)	Inviolable
Neighbourhood	Not addressed/no agreement	Sovereignty for neighboring countries Acceptance of dual FTAs Overlapping concentric circles of influence/affiliation Possible trilateral discussions; dialogue
PROBLEM : Security	Contested security communities, some common security interests	Integrated European security community