

Description for general public

The project focuses on two attempts to construct a regional international order: the New Silk Road promoted by China and the Eurasian Economic Union put forward by Russia. The two initiatives have a mixed, political-economic, nature. They envision economic cooperation and aim at increasing China and Russia's influence in their respective neighbourhoods.

The goal of the project is to study to what extent Chinese and Russian initiatives are shaped by localized ideas and political traditions, and to what extent are they influenced by the international norms of cooperation and regionalism, promoted mostly by the Western states.

Three major aspects of the initiatives will be analysed in the project. First, the visions of international order, i.e. the ways in which Chinese and Russian ruling elites imagine a regional international order, how they understand the concepts of 'region' and 'regionalism'. Institutional designs of the two initiatives are the second component – the project will study legal and institutional frameworks, international treaties, and institutions constructed within the two regional orders in-the-making. Finally, the project will analyse practical economic and political cooperation, implemented by China and Russia within the New Silk Road and the Eurasian Economic Union with three states: Kazakhstan, Armenia, and Belarus.

Two major reasons support the choice of this research topic. China and Russia's regional-order projects are important not only for these two states and their neighbours, but also for the global international order. The ways in which China and Russia shape their neighbourhoods will influence their relations with the West and with each other. At the same time, we still lack knowledge on how localised political ideas and international norms shape international politics at the regional level. Most to-date research has focused on the European Union which was established and functioned under very specific circumstances. There are few studies which would explore non-Western attempts of building regional orders, especially initiated and pursued by illiberal great powers.