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**Anarchy and the Barriers to Community:
Regional Cooperation in the Post-Cold War Era -
The Shanghai Cooperation Organization**

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Abstract

According to realism, the anarchic international system is the reason why states rely on self-help to achieve national security and enhance state interests. Cooperation between states is limited in scope and often temporary in nature since states are distrustful of each other. For realists, the notion of community is therefore confined to territorial states, the belief being that there is little possibility of an establishment of community beyond state borders. This thesis examines the dynamics behind post-Cold War regional security cooperation over non-traditional threats. In doing so, it engages in the discussion of the pluralistic security community concept in relation to institutionalized regional security cooperation since those who support the post-Cold War security community concept argue that a socialization process, which facilitates transnational community-building, occurs, when a group of states cooperate to overcome a commonly perceived threat or enemy.

Using the Central Asian regional security organization, the *Shanghai Cooperation Organization*, as a case study and in tracing its evolutionary process, we find that the constructivist framework is able to offer a better explanation for the cooperation taking place among the SCO member states compared to rationalist explanations since it takes into account ideational factors in its explanatory framework. By focusing on how states can overcome the barriers created by anarchy through socialization rather than the barriers themselves, constructivism allows us to see that structural transformation from anarchy to community is possible. The case study highlights as well the continued relevance of rationalist approaches since SCO member states also emphasise economic interdependence and national security as a basis for cooperation. The SCO case also offers insight into the concept of illiberal security communities and suggests that more research should be carried out in examining the domestic factors that affect security community-building among illiberal states.

Key Words: Regional Cooperation, Anarchy, Security Community, Central Asia, Russia, China, Regional Security Organization, the Shanghai Forum, the Shanghai Five, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CACO	- Central Asian Cooperation Organization
CAEC	- Central Asian Economic Community
CICA	- Conference on Interactions and Confidence-Building Measures
CIS	- Confederation of Independent States
EAEC	- Eurasia Economic Community
ETIM	- East Turkistan Islamic Movement
EU	- European Union
GUUAM	- <i>Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Moldova</i> Group
NATO	- North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NMD	- National Missile Defence
NPT	- Non-Proliferation Treaty
OSCE	- Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
RATS	- Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure
SCO	- Shanghai Cooperation Organization
UN	- United Nations
US	- United States
IMU	- Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan

1. INTRODUCTION

Realist scholars hold the view that states base their decisions on selfish and raw power. States rely on self-help and are primarily engaged in power politics in an anarchic world structure. They argue that there is no overarching government to implement rules. Consequently “no central authority imposes limits on the pursuit of sovereign interest”.¹ While states may have shared interests, cooperation is inhibited because of barriers imposed by anarchy.

Self-help, however does not rule out seeking assistance from others. The emphasis of a self-help system is on development of national capabilities and, where applicable, on collective self-defence arrangements. According to such realist thinking, states can form alliances and alignments as ways of enhancing national power, and spreading costs. It can be a response to an imbalance of power, or as a balance against threats. Alliances are however viewed as temporary arrangements because states, distrustful of each other, base their calculation of national interests and distribution of power.² Thus the notion of “community” is, according to such realist thinking, bounded by the territorial state; the belief is that there is little possibility of a community beyond state borders.

However, the concept of a transnational community is increasingly entering into the international relations lexicon as a basis for understanding the interaction between states. Since the end of the Cold War in 1991, some scholars have argued that “community exists at the international level, that security politics is profoundly shaped by it, and that those states dwelling within an international community might develop a pacific disposition.”³ They draw on sociological theory to emphasise the centrality of identity in the construction of group identity, described as a community. This is especially applicable in the regional context. As in the study of nationalism,

¹ Kenneth A. Oye, “The Conditions for Cooperation in World Politics,” in Robert J. Art & Robert Jervis (eds) *International Politics: Enduring Concepts and Contemporary Issues*, 4th Ed. (New York: Harper Collins, 1996) p 81.

² John J. Mearsheimer, “A Realist Reply,” *International Security*, Vol 20 No 1 (Summer 1995) p 83.

³ Emanuel Adler & Michael Barnett, “Security Communities in Theoretical Perspective,” in Emanuel Adler, & Michael Barnett (eds), *Security Communities*, (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998) p 3.

identity determines the boundaries of the region: a sense of “we-ness” demarcates insiders from outsiders and expresses a shared notion of collective future.

The concept of community in international relations is in fact not new, it was initially made prominent by Karl Deutsch who provided its first full theoretical and empirical treatment in 1957.⁴ According to Deutsch, a successful security community is defined as a group of states that have become integrated to the point that there is “real assurance that the members of that community will not fight each other physically, but will settle their disputes in some other ways.”⁵ It also implies that there is a fundamental, unambiguous and long-term convergence of interest in the avoidance of military conflict.

There are two types of security communities: the *amalgamated* security community with the merger of sovereign states into a single unit and the *pluralistic* security community where member states maintain their sovereignty. Deutsch observed a pluralistic security community whenever states become integrated to the point that they have a sense of community, which in turn, creates the assurance that they will settle their differences without resorting to military conflict. Deutsch claimed that states within a security community had developed beyond a stable order, in fact, they have developed a stable peace.⁶ Implicit in the notion of security communities is the idea that states can overcome the security dilemmas assumed by traditional international relations scholars. It therefore represents a direct challenge to the models of security studies politics that have dominated international discourse for the past several decades.⁷

⁴ Karl W. Deutsch, Sidney A. Burrell, Robert A. Kann *et al*, *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area: International Organization in the Light of Historical Experience* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957); see also Karl W. Deutsch, *The Analysis of International Relations* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1968) Pp 158-202.

⁵ Adler & Barnett (1998) p 6.

⁶ Adler & Barnett (1998) p 3.

⁷ However, why hasn't there been more robust research of the concept in the mainstream international relations discourse until the 1990s? There are three reasons for this. Firstly, the Cold War set in at the end of World War II and any talk of a community of states seemed hopelessly romantic and vividly out of touch against the realities of that period. Against the backdrop of tense confrontation of the time, Cold War international relations politics was driven by survival and the threat of nuclear war was very real. During this era, radical ideas such as an amalgamated security community were over overshadowed by other integrationist approaches, such as neo-functionalism at the regional level, as the European integration process gradually emerged. On the other hand, the idea of pluralistic security communities to be formed by sovereign states was perceived to have failed due to the shortcomings of the United Nations (UN), which was seen as the only possibly organization to form such community at

Deutsch's observations for a security community seems particularly relevant when the Cold War ended because of the changes in global politics and development in the field of international relations theory. With the end of the Cold War, policy makers have been offering various statements on and blueprints for engineering a more stable and peaceful international order. What is interesting in such declarations is that statesmen and politicians refer to the importance of social forces and values nearly identical to those remarked upon by Deutsch - the development of shared understandings, transnational values and transaction flows to encourage community building and to conceptualize the possibility of peace.⁸

These policy-makers do so by marrying the concept of security to that of community. Security thus becomes the condition and quality of such planned communities. In this way, the concept of security and power is being reassessed. Whereas security traditionally refers to military security, states are now identifying "new", non-traditional security issues that evolve around criminal, economic, environmental and social welfare concerns that require transnational cooperation.⁹ The threat perception of the political elites is thus shifting from military threats by others within the community towards non-traditional ones that threaten them all.¹⁰ Scholars are also beginning to examine similar reflections of shared understandings, transnational values and transaction flows in the field of theory as they begin to realize the limited practicality of the realist-based model. This is generating more discussion on the sociological theorizing and the social character of global politics.¹¹

a global level. The second reason is due to the dominance of the realist paradigm in explaining the Cold War international relations. The rigid stance of the realists against the concept of such community, seen as being unrealistic both in theory and practice pushed this concept to the periphery, away from the general theoretical debates in the international relations discourse. The third reason, argued by Adler and Barnett is related to the weakness of the concept developed by Deutsch. They stated that "Deutsch's conceptualization of security communities contained various theoretical, conceptual, and methodological problems that undoubtedly scared off future applications." Adler & Barnett (1998) Pp 8-9.

⁸ Adler & Barnett (1998) p 4.

⁹ For an example, see Svante E. Cornell, "The Growing Threat of Transnational Crime," *The South Caucasus: A Challenge for the EU*, *Chaillot Papers No 65*, Dov Lynch (ed), (European Union Institute for Security Studies, December 2003) Pp 23-39. www.iss-eu.org/public/content/chaile.html Last accessed 25 May 2004.

¹⁰ Adler & Barnett (1998) p 4.

¹¹ Adler & Barnett (1998) Pp 4-5.

It is in this context that Adler, Barnett and associates revived Deutsch's concept of security communities in their book entitled *Security Communities*. Their aim is to isolate the conditions under which the development of a community produces dependable expectations of peaceful change.¹² They focus on pluralistic security communities¹³ because this form is theoretically and empirically closest to the developments that is currently unfolding in international politics and international relations theory.¹⁴ However, they move beyond its original Deutschian functionalist focus on such things as transaction flows towards more cognitive and evolutionary elements such as learning, stable expectations, shared practices, or identification of common self-images.¹⁵ They believe that, a socialization process occurs when a group of states cooperate to overcome a commonly perceived threat or enemy; in the post-Cold War environment, this usually refers to non-military, transnational threats. This leads to the creation of a collective identity and ultimately, may lead to a sense of community with a shared sense of "we-ness" among the cooperating states and pacific relations among them. An amalgamated security community is formed when such conditions are met.¹⁶

2. RESEARCH DESIGN

2.1 Aim

In this thesis, I am interested in finding out how the various theories of cooperation can assist us in the understanding of regional security cooperation in the post-Cold War environment. My interest in regional security cooperation stems from the understanding that international relations will take on a more regionalized character in the post-Cold War era. This is because states that are most threatened by these "new" (non-military) security threats are those geographically close to the source of the threat.¹⁷ In *An Agenda for Peace*, United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali also highlighted the importance of regional arrangements and

¹² Adler & Barnett (1998) p 37.

¹³ All future references of the phrase "security communities" in this thesis refer to *pluralistic security communities*. Any mention of *amalgamated security community* will be specified as such.

¹⁴ Adler & Barnett (1998) p 5.

¹⁵ Keith Krause, "Critical Theory and Security Studies: The Research Programme of 'Critical Security Studies'," *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol 33 No 3 (1998) p 315.

¹⁶ Adler & Barnett (1998) p 39.

¹⁷ I will come to these "new" threats in the next section.

organizations, suggesting that they can render “great service if their activities are undertaken in a manner consistent with the Purpose and Principles of the Charter.”¹⁸ Furthermore, geographical clustering appears to be a sufficiently strong feature of the international system to be worth examining on its own right.

Thus an examination of security cooperation across the regional level is warranted on the basis that it would give it a broader relevancy and appeal to both theorists and policy-makers. In assessing the theories, I hope to gain a better understanding of regional cooperation in the post-Cold War context; whether anarchy in the international structure prevents the development of a community that could have dependable expectations of peaceful change. My research question is as follows:

How can we explain the dynamics behind the post-Cold War regional security cooperation?

2.2 Scope/Limitations

The notion of regional security cooperation implies cooperation among a group of geographically bounded states in dealing with security threats. I will focus on institutionalized cooperation expressed through regional security organizations. Institutionalization by and large implies that the level of cooperation has reached a point of maturity and effectiveness; compared to informal and ad hoc cooperation strategies, institutionalization also entails a higher level of commitment by the members of the organization. Adler and Barnett in their discussion of the security community concept also recognize the importance of institutions noting that they

“contain norms and provide mechanisms that make states accountable to each other; institutionalize immediate (if not diffuse) reciprocity; identify common

¹⁸ Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace*, (New York: United Nations, 1992, p 36. The importance of regional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security and their relationship to the UN is actually emphasised in Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. It states that nothing in the charter precludes regional arrangements or agencies from dealing with matters that are appropriate for regional action, provided that they are “consistent with the Purpose and Principles of the United Nations.” In fact, it instructs that member-states entering into such an arrangement shall make every effort to achieve the pacific settlement of local disputes through such regional arrangements before referring them to the Security Council and, further, that the Security Council shall encourage the development of the pacific settlement of local disputes through regional arrangements, either on the initiative of the states concerned or by reference from the Security Council.

*interests (or even identities) among a selected population; and produce charters and agendas, and convene meetings and seminars, that reflect the attempt to create a binding set of interests and a collective future. “Third-parties” can become region-builders”*¹⁹

Institutions, according to this view, are sites where states socialize and reconstitute their interests. Regional security organizations are therefore closer to the amalgamated security community ideal and thus more relevant to this discussion.

2.3 Assumptions

2.3.1 State as the Referent of Security

This study examines the role of regional security organizations established by states to advance their security interest in the post-Cold War era. It follows that the underlying assumption of the thesis is the survival of the state to which all policy-decisions can ultimately be traced. States are the principal form of political organization and the principal actor in the domestic and international realm. Therefore their perception and behaviour are the most relevant in this context. It also follows from this argument that the state is the referent of security for this thesis.

I am aware of the argument that the state is increasingly becoming obsolete as its capacity to discharge its primary function of identity, physical security, material welfare, and habitable environment is being eroded. However, I believe that it is unlikely that its position as the basis for international political organization will be replaced in the foreseeable future. Even among the European Union (EU) member states, where integration is most advanced and where states have to share authority with other regional, local, and non-governmental actors, the state continues to be resilient. At the opposite end of the spectrum, societies in collapsing, failed or rehabilitating states consistently appeal to the international community to help in the peacekeeping and peace building process to strengthen the institutions of the state. This shows the continued relevance of the state as the dominant form of political organization in international relations. Besides, there is as yet also no political

¹⁹ Adler & Barnett (1998) p 52.

alternative to the state. According to Robert Jackson and Carl Roseberg²⁰, there is strong world cultural support for the principle and practice of sovereign statehood.²¹

Although I take the state as the referent of security in this thesis, it does not mean that I acknowledge the view that the state is and should be the *only* referent point in the discussion of security. I accept the argument that the state can be an oppressor and a producer of insecurity to non-state individuals or group actors. However, such security concerns fall outside the scope of this thesis.

2.3.2 Rethinking Security in the Post-Cold War Context

I accept the argument that there is a need to rethink the concept of security after the end of the Cold War as the traditional understanding of security no longer suffices. The realist conception of security has been challenged on two grounds. First, the incapacity of the traditional theories to anticipate and fully account for the sudden end of the Cold War rivalry led to questions about the basic assumptions made of the international system which had directed academic inquiry for most of the Cold War period; that a narrow, state-centred and militarily focused definition of security was sufficient in mapping out international relations.²²

Second, the state-centric understanding of international relations has also been challenged by the accelerated transnational political, economic, social and cultural interaction process known as globalization. Such interdependence presents a challenge to the realist conception of thinking. This is because the idea of state-centricity which underpins traditional security studies, and the dominance of the idea of “national security” as an attainable and indispensable goal for the achievement of security, could not be sustained in the face of expanding global interdependence on the one hand and the formation of new non-state political entities. This interdependence of security therefore challenges the idea of states’ ability in providing for their own security singularly.

²⁰ Muthiah Alagappa, “Rethinking Security: A Critical Review and Appraisal of the Debate,” in Muthiah Alagappa (ed), *Asian Security Practice – Material & Ideational Influences* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1998) p 32.

²¹ For a discussion of the relevance and effectiveness of the state, see Alagappa (1998) p 29-34.

²² Bill McSweeney, *Security, Identity and Interests: A Sociology of International Relations* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999) p 3.

Indeed, the challenges faced by individual states over the past decade has exposed the limitations of the states in the face of complex forces within it and of threats which are transnational in nature. The threats to state security after the Cold War - in military, economic, environmental, religious and cultural forms - are actually not conceptually new. It is the inadequacy of the range of responses to such threats that highlights the limitation of our traditional conception of security.²³ States now have to deal with asymmetric threats. The end of the Cold War has put non-traditional issues beside the long-standing fear of nuclear war and preparation for large-scale conventional war. As a result, scholars and policymakers have increasingly adopted regional cooperation strategies as a means of dealing with these emerging threats.²⁴ “*New*” security and *non-traditional security* are used interchangeably to refer to non-military and asymmetrical security concerns. Vice versa, “*old*” security and *traditional security* both refer to military security.

²³ McSweeney (1999) p 4.

²⁴ However, the level of success of such a regional approach varies. It depends on the willingness and ability of the parties involved in implementing the strategies adopted.

3. THEORY: ANARCHY AND THE BARRIERS TO COMMUNITY

This thesis aims to examine the dynamics behind post-Cold War regional security cooperation. Thus, it is necessary to critically review and appraise the key features of the debate over cooperation. This is to allow for the understanding of the security community concept in relation to regional security organizations since those who support the post-Cold War security community concept argue that a socialization process occurs when a group of states cooperate to overcome a commonly perceived threat or enemy. They argue that this leads to the creation of a collective identity and may ultimately lead to a sense of community among the cooperating states and pacific relations among them.

The concept of community has to be defined before we begin the discussion of theory as this concept will appear repeatedly during the discussion. Community is defined by three factors (1) shared identities, values and meanings; (2) members have many-sided and direct interactions; (3) there is a reciprocal relationship that expresses some form of long term interest and even altruism. All three contribute to the feeling of we-ness among its members. Different communities have different mechanisms to handle and regulate conflict within the group. What distinguishes a security community from other forms of communities is that its members entertain dependable expectations of peaceful change.²⁵ With the development of the entrenched sense of “we-ness” within such a transnational community, the security dilemma is abolished and an amalgamated security community is formed when such conditions are met. This is in direct contrast to the traditional power-based theories which assert that autonomous actors seek to survive anarchy based on self-help and can never overcome the security dilemma of the international system, let alone develop a sense of “we-ness”.

I now move to discuss the contributions of the theories. Theories of cooperation can be divided into three different theoretical fields. (1) Power-based theories; (2) Interest based theories and (3) Knowledge-based theories. Briefly, power-based theorists believe that states exist in an anarchical system and are fundamentally driven by power, that conflict is endemic to the international system and can never be ruled out.

²⁵ Adler & Barnett (1998) p 30-31.

War can only be avoided when a stable distribution of power that maintains the status quo is attained. Thus the notion of “community” is, according to such traditional thinking, bounded by the territorial state. Interest-based theorists on the other hand believe that the international system can be transformed to reduce the possibility of war and conflict. A peaceful international system can be achieved through economic interdependence, the emergence of international norms, rules and institutions to regulate inter-state relations and foster cooperation, and finally, through the spread of democracies. The knowledge-based approach to the study of international relations differs from power-based and interest-based theories. Knowledge-based theorists sought to demonstrate that their sociological approach leads to new and meaningful interpretations of international politics. Whereas threats to security are taken for granted in previously mentioned mainstream approaches, knowledge-based theorists focus on how threat perceptions and the object of security are socially constructed and the anarchical structure of the international system is mutable. They therefore challenge the rigidity of the agent-structure framework of the international system.

3.1 Power-Based Theories

According to the power-based theories, the international system is characterised by anarchy. There is no overarching government to implement rules, Consequently “no central authority imposes limits on the pursuit of sovereign interest”.²⁶ While states may have shared interests, cooperation is inhibited through the barriers imposed by anarchy. States are therefore in a permanent state of insecurity and must be prepared to do whatever they can to survive in this hostile self-help environment.

Power-based theorists, or realists as they are also known, consider power as being fundamental in international relations and it should be exercised to the state’s advantage. This would imply that the most powerful actor in the region would always seek to control any regional cooperation development. Their involvement would inhibit the growth of a regional cooperative framework in two ways. Firstly, a powerful actor would only enter into a regional cooperation framework if it maintains the power status quo or improves its position. Secondly, as witnessed during the Cold

²⁶ Oye (1996) p 81.

War, the superpowers would intervene directly to suppress the indigenous security dynamics.

Realists would argue that most regional cooperation would have a slim chance of survival due to the self-help mentality of the actors involved. One of the central features underlying this argument is the question of which features of anarchy makes regional cooperation difficult to achieve. Accepting that states are rational actors, we should note from the realist perspective, behaviour of states can be understood 'rationally' as the pursuit of power defined as interest. Thus cooperation is taking place in a self-help world where the primary goal is survival. States then maintain a continued awareness of their position in this system. This brings us to the first potential problem inhibiting cooperation – relative gains. With no controlling authority “each side not only considers its individual gain but also how well it does compared to the other side”.²⁷ This logic works on the assumption that a state must ultimately be able to protect its own interests and therefore work on a zero-sum logic. Absolute gains are not as important as maintaining one's position in relation to those around you.²⁸

Such positional concern is associated with the problem of uncertainty and the lack of trust surrounding states. Jervis highlights this in relation to the security dilemma. The *security dilemma* describes “a situation in which war can occur between two or more participants where none of those involved desires such an outcome.”²⁹ This concept is concerned with explaining a deteriorating relationship between status quo powers. The primary element of the security dilemma is uncertainty and its essence, tragedy. This is because inter-state war can breakout as a result of fear and distrust even when none of them possess malign expansionist, antagonistic or aggressive intentions on their neighbours. It is therefore, as Charles Glacier notes, “the key to understanding how in an anarchic international system, states with fundamentally compatible goals still end up in competition and war.”³⁰ The security dilemma results because of a failed attempt by states to attain balance-of-power in the international system. Robert

²⁷ John J. Mearsheimer, “The False Promise of International Institutions,” *International Security*, Vol 19 No 3 (Winter 1994/95) p 12.

²⁸ Mearsheimer (1994/5) p 12-13.

²⁹ Alan Collins, “State Induced Dilemma – Maintaining the Tragedy,” *Cooperation and Conflict* Vol 39 No 1 (2004) p 28.

³⁰ Quoted in Collins (2004) p 29.

Jervis's spiral model in international politics helps explain how the security dilemma, driven by uncertainty leads to war.³¹ The spiral model emphasizes that the anarchic nature of the international system compels statesmen to provide for their own security. However, a problem arises since a state has to be stronger than those around it in order to be able to defend itself. Being stronger also means that they are able to carry out aggression. Others in response, sensing insecurity against the stronger party will correspondingly increase their own arms capabilities, thus undermining the security gains of the first state.³² In attempting to create a secure environment, states have in reverse, created a cycle of insecurity. Since it is the anarchic nature of the international system, this generates a system-induced security dilemma. Coupled with an inability to predict the actions of others, the issue of relative gains becomes important, "the greater the military advantage one state has over other states, the more secure it is... this inexorably leads to a world of constant security competition."³³ Accordingly, there can be no expectation of peaceful change.

Stemming from such competition and providing a further barrier to cooperation is the problem of cheating. Again, this links back to the necessity of ensuring survival. The existence of anarchy can be viewed as providing incentives to defect, as what may be beneficial to the collective system may not directly correlate with the individual advantages for self-seeking rational actors.³⁴ As a result of the fragile nature of cooperation, there is reluctance among states to join organizations due to the high cost involved even if there are greater benefits in initiating cooperation.

Self-help, however does not rule out seeking assistance from others. States can form alliances and alignments as ways of enhancing national power and spreading costs. It can be a response to an imbalance of power, or as a balance against threats. Alliances

³¹ Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976)

³² Jervis (1976) Pp 64-65.

³³ Mearsheimer (1994/1995) Pp 11-12.

³⁴ The example of the tragedy of the commons can be used to illustrate this. The open grazing of the commons allowed each actor to gain individual benefits while the cost of overgrazing is shared by the collective. Thus, individually rational behaviour leads to a collectively suboptimal outcome. The example of commons can be used in relation to current problems such as fishing. It demonstrates that actors can have a shared interest in subjecting themselves to restraint. This restraint however is only desirable to the extent that all actors are bound by it. However, the incentive to cheat comes from the desire to maximise power. An example of cartel cheating is OPEC. It only works if its member states do not decide to cheat by increasing the supply of oil and pushing down its price.

are however viewed as temporary arrangements because they are based on calculation of national interests and distribution of power, realists do not consider them “institutions” in the mode of liberal institutionalism.³⁵ However, a concert of power reflecting the balance of power, is largely consistent with realist theory.³⁶ Collective security on the other hand, is considered flawed and untenable as a national security strategy since the management of power, with emphasis on across-the-board application of norms and rules may entail the subordination of national interests to that of the community, something inconceivable for realists.³⁷ To sum up, the emphasis of a self-help system is the development of national capabilities and, where applicable, on collective self-defence arrangements. This is because states, distrustful of each other formulate their security in zero-sum and distributional terms. States are therefore unable to develop the shared sense of “we-ness” so necessary for the flourishing of a security community.

However, the realist assumption of the state as the centre of international relations and the disregard of sub-national and sub-system actors (regional organizations) is problematic since such an approach is unable to explain the changes in state behaviour. This refers to the levels-of-analysis approach. This approach helps to orient our questions and suggests the most appropriate type of evidence to explore. For example, focusing on particular individuals to explain events may be appropriate under some conditions; when political institutions are unstable, nascent, in crisis or collapsed, leaders are able to provide powerful influences.³⁸ The levels-of-analysis is the most important drawback in the study of regional cooperation.³⁹ The overemphasis on the state without taking into consideration the growing importance of sub-system (or regional) cooperation could in fact threaten the relevance of realist

³⁵ Mearsheimer (1995) p 83.

³⁶ Mearsheimer (1994/1995)

³⁷ Mearsheimer (1994/1995) Pp 36-37.

³⁸ For instance, Swanström has shown how the interaction between the system, states and regional actors is essential to account for the change among units, the system and regional actors. He examined how China’s foreign policy towards Southeast Asia starting from 1949 evolved as a result of changes at the individual, institutional and international levels. Niklas Swanström, *Foreign Devils, Dictatorship, or Institutional Control: China’s Foreign Policy Towards Southeast Asia*, Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Report No. 57 (Uppsala, 2001). See also Quansheng Zhao, *Interpreting Chinese Foreign Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996). Swanström’s is a refinement of Zhao’s levels-of-analysis approach on Chinese Foreign Policy.

³⁹ Niklas Swanström, *Regional Cooperation and Conflict Management: Lessons from the Pacific Rim*, Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Report No. 64 (Uppsala, 2002) p 29.

theory in explaining regional cooperation as a means of addressing post-Cold War security threats.

The interpretation of the consequences of anarchy has also been of debate in international relations theory. Some interest-based theorists for example agree that anarchy is important but argue that realists tend to exaggerate its effects on state behaviour. Similarly, knowledge-based theorists accept that anarchy is the characteristic condition of the international system, but argue that it means nothing without context.⁴⁰ For example, an anarchy of friends is quite different from an anarchy of enemies, but both are possible. Critical theorists also criticise the way power-based theories accept the international system as “permanent”, “normal” or “given” political fixtures which they argue are changeable. Such acceptance has had the effect of excluding arguments for alternative forms of political community which are more sensitive to changing social identities and the political boundaries.⁴¹

3.2 Interest-Based Theories

The liberal approach has taken a prominent role in the interest-based tradition in explaining cooperation. They believe that the international system can be transformed to reduce the possibility of war and conflict. A peaceful international system can be achieved through economic interdependence, the emergence of international norms, rules and institutions to regulate inter-state relations and foster cooperation, and finally, through the spread of democracy. Liberal theories have been influential in the past decade and have come to represent the mainstream approach in analyzing international institutions, challenging the neorealist claims that cooperation is difficult to achieve and sustain and that institutions matter only on the margins. It accepts the key premises of power-based theories’ explanation about the nature of international actors and their social environment to develop a theory which differs from realist logic in that it attributes international institutions a significant role in international

⁴⁰ Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy is What States Make Of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics,” *International Organization*, Vol 46 No 2 (1992) Pp 391-425.

⁴¹ Scott Burchill, “Liberalism”, in Scott Burchill, Richard Devetak, Andrew Linklater et al (eds), *Theories of International Relations*, 2nd Edition (New York: Palgrave, 2001a) p 93.

politics. In doing so, the intention is not for the destruction of realism as a theoretical perspective, but a “critique and modification.”⁴²

Power-based theorists have argued that the incentive to cheat comes from the desire to maximise power. However, interest-based theorists use game theory to analyse how incentives to cooperate can develop in given situations. Essential to this is the point that actors are rational in choosing the best strategy for their circumstances. The example of game theory illustrates how anarchy potentially results in actors being worse off than is possible through cooperation. The example of the stag hunt can be used to demonstrate this. A group of hunters surround a stag, if one sees a rabbit and defects from the hunt, the stag will be lost. Thus, one actor gains the incentive of defection yet it is not his preferential outcome, he would rather eat the stag. However, it is only in the actors’ interest to continue cooperating if he is sure that everyone will do the same, so the “temptation to defect to protect against the defection of others is balanced by the strong universal preference for stag over rabbit.”⁴³

Unlike power-based theories which emphasise the dangers of interdependence in undermining state sovereignty and autonomy, liberals such as Rosecrance also believed that growing trade and economic interdependence will minimize the negative effects of anarchy and gradually transform the nature of international politics and international relations whereby the world is increasingly dominated by “trading states” as opposed to “military states”.⁴⁴ This is also known as commercial liberalism. This means that the age of the independent self-sufficient state is over and that the complex layers of interdependency ensure that states cannot act aggressively without risking economic penalties imposed by trading partners and other members of the international community.⁴⁵

According to interest-based theorists, there is a demand for institutions as interdependence increases. Institutions function in three ways: first, they are constitutive since they can help define interests, second, they can affect state

⁴² Robert Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984) p 14.

⁴³ Oye (1996) p 84.

⁴⁴ Richard Rosecrance, *The Rise of the Trading State: Commerce and Conquest in the Modern World* (New York: Basic Books, 1986)

⁴⁵ Burchill (2001a) p 40.

behaviour through the use of incentives, rules and conventions and third, they can facilitate peaceful change by altering conceptions of self-interest, reducing uncertainty, and stabilizing expectations.⁴⁶ The European Union is the best example of economic integration which gave rise to closer economic and political cooperation among countries in a region that has been plagued with a history of violent interstate conflicts. Keohane and Nye argue that states can significantly broaden their conceptions of self-interest in order to widen the scope for cooperation via memberships of international institutions. Such participation entails the compliance with the institution's rules where members would begin to think as a group instead of purely on narrow grounds of state interest and this would dilute the meaning and appeal of state sovereignty.⁴⁷ This suggests that the international system is more normatively regulated than realists would have us believe, a position further developed by the English School of rationalists.

The English School generally focused on the importance of the state and accepts the anarchical condition of the international system. However, some who follow the English School have been making references to "islands" of international society that achieve the status of "mature anarchy" or "zones of peace" due to their high interaction capacity and dense networks of common rules and institutions; ideas which are close to the security community concept. For them anarchy is mitigated by how a society of states might "upgrade" its norms from the recognition of each other's right to survival, to the normative prohibition against and the empirical decline of war.⁴⁸ For example, Barry Buzan in *People, States and Fear* (1991) argues that the security dilemma can be resolved by a mature anarchy, referring to a system which is highly ordered, stable and tame.⁴⁹ In such a system, "states would enjoy a great deal of security derived both from their own inner strength and maturity, and from the

⁴⁶ Attributed to Robert Keohane in Alagappa (1998) p 53.

⁴⁷ Robert Keohane & Joseph S. Nye, *Power and Interdependence* (Boston: Little Brown, 1977)

⁴⁸ Adler & Barnett (1998) p 11-12.

⁴⁹ Jervis believes that the security dilemma can only be ameliorated but not abolished because of the anarchic international structure. Robert Jervis, "Security Regimes," *International Organization*, Vol 36 No 2 (Spring 1982) Pp. 357-378; see also Robert Jervis, "Realism, Neoliberalism, and Cooperation," *International Security*, Vol 24, No. 1 (Summer 1999) Pp 42-63. Interestingly, although a realist, Morgenthau had also suggested that the anarchic structure of the international system could be overcome. He reminded us in the preface of his third edition (1965) of *Politics Among Nations* (first published in 1948) that he believed in "the need to merge [the nation-state] into a supranational organization of functional nature." Michael P. Sullivan, *Theories of International Relations: Transition vs. Persistence* (New York: Palgrave, 2001) Pp 135-136. Morgenthau therefore believes in the idea of an amalgamated security community concept.

strength of the institutionalised norms regulating relations among them.”⁵⁰ In this way, their approach seems to be close to knowledge-based theories. However, their commitment to how self-interested actors construct institutions to enhance cooperation prevents them from accepting that a community could be formed through shared identities rather than through pre-given interest and binding contracts alone, or how interstate and transnational interactions can alter state identities and interests to develop a sense of “we-feeling” inherent in a security community.⁵¹

A section of the liberal tradition is heavily skewed towards liberal democracies when discussing inter-state cooperation. The democratic peace theory states that democracies share a form of government that prevents war between them since they perceive each other as non-threatening and are part of the same normative community. The root of this idea is commonly credited to an essay entitled *Perpetual Peace* written by Immanuel Kant in 1795. Kant believed that liberal democratic states would have a special set of pacific relations because of their shared norms, understandings and worldview.⁵² The “democratic culture and norms model” suggests that democratic societies are inherently adverse to military conflict especially so since such conflicts produce casualties. It is also argued that the norms of peaceful conflict resolution that have evolved within democratic political cultures are extended to relations between democratic states. Democratic institutions put in place the checks and balances and the dispersion of power that preclude democratic leaders from taking unilateral military action and imposing the burden of conflict on the citizens who must bear the cost of the war. Furthermore, the role of the free press in ensuring open debate also means more deliberation in the decision to go to war. Accordingly, when democracies become involved in disputes with each other, they resolve their differences through norms of bounded competition rather than through force.⁵³

⁵⁰ Barry Buzan, *People, States, & Fear – An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*, 2nd Ed (New York: Harvester-Wheatsheaf, 1991)

⁵¹ Adler & Barnett (1998) p 11.

⁵² Its revival began when Michael Doyle’s essays on Kant in the early 1980s was followed by a worldwide outbreak of democracy. Other notable academics belonging this school of thought include Bruce Russett and RJ Rummel. See Michael Doyle, “Kant, Liberal Legacies and Foreign Affairs,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* Vol 12 No 3&4 (1983) and Bruce M. Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post Cold War World* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press) 1993.

⁵³ Jack S. Levy, “Theories of Interstate and Intra-state War: A Levels-of-Analysis Approach,” in Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson & Pamela Aall (eds) *Turbulent Peace: The Challenges of Managing International Conflict* (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2001) p 13.

Another point to note is that the democratic peace proposition is narrower than the concept of community as laid out by Adler and Barnett. The concept of community is one of *compatible* or *common values* while democratic peace theory stresses *common liberal-democratic values and institutions* instead. The democratic peace position therefore, according to Möller, “disregards the point that from a theoretical point of view, expectations of peaceful change are not necessarily dependent on an organization of states and societies along liberal-democratic lines.”⁵⁴ Security communities, are not confined to states and societies with the western liberal-democratic values; peaceful change can emerge among states and societies as long as participants agree on one fundamental thing: mutual conflicts must and can be resolved without recourse to the use of force.⁵⁵ In fairness, one can regard the democratic peace position to mean that liberal-democratic values *promote* security community building but it does not claim to *define* such values as being a necessary feature of security communities.⁵⁶ The question then is what other factors can help in the creation of non-liberal democratic security communities?

3.3 Knowledge-Based Theories

The two theories discussed so far have sought to apply the rationalist approach to international relations but reached radically different conclusions about the potential for international cooperation. Since the end of the Cold War, this debate has been enlivened by constructivism. Constructivism and all other non-rational theories will be included in the term “knowledge-based theories” Of these different theories, Constructivism will be the focus as it is considered to be the “middle way” between rationalist based mainstream theories and radical interpretive critical theories. While rationalist theories have been criticised for their neglect of domestic and discursive explanations in international relations and with their shortcomings in explaining change, critical theories have been criticized because of their heavy reliance on discursive side of international politics and a lack of research programme with empirical records. Constructivism seizes the “middle ground” between the opposing

⁵⁴ Frank Möller, “Capitalizing on Difference: A Security Community or/as a Western Project,” *Security Dialogue*, Vol 34 No 3 (2003) p 320.

⁵⁵ Möller (2003) Pp 219-320.

⁵⁶ The distinction between *defining* and *promoting* is made by Mouritzen in: Hans Mouritzen, “Peace for the Wrong Reason? Towards a European Security Community: A Rejoinder to Möller,” *Security Dialogue*, Vol 34 No 3 (2003) p 330.

camps. As Adler explains, Constructivism is interested in understanding how the material, subjective and intersubjective worlds interact in the construction of reality; rather than focusing exclusively on how structures constitute agent's identities and interests, it also seeks to explain how individual agents socially construct these structures in the first place.⁵⁷

Constructivism is a distinctive approach to international relations that emphasizes the social, or inter-subjective, dimension of international politics. Constructivism focuses on what the mainstream scholarship takes for granted or ignores. It studies the sources and the content of state interests and preferences, which are postulated, and it emphasizes the ideational and social side of international politics, which is ignored by the mainstream scholarship. According to Checkel, what constructivism does is to focus on what both the realists and liberals have ignored, "the content and sources of state interests and the social fabric of the world politics."⁵⁸

The term constructivism was introduced by Onuf and in simple terms refer to "people and society construct, or constitute each other"⁵⁹ It is a structural theory which has three core ontological propositions which its proponents claim illuminate more about world politics than rival rationalist assumptions. First, is that the structure of the international system is social and comprises not just material resources but also shared knowledge and state practices. As Wendt puts it, "material resources only acquire meaning for human action through the structure of shared knowledge in which they are embedded."⁶⁰ Second, constructivists argue that understanding how non-material structures conditions actors' identities is important because identities inform interests and in turn, actions. For them, understanding how actors develop their interests is crucial to explaining a wide range of international political phenomena that

⁵⁷ Emanuel Adler, "Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics," *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol 3 No 3. (1997) Pp 330; see also Jeffrey T. Checkel, "The Constructivist Turn in International Relations," *World Politics*, Vol 50 No 2 (1998) p 327.

Colin Wight also gave another reason why not to unpack the theoretical baggage of the knowledge-based theories, namely that the area between "positivism and post-positivism, rationalism and reflectivism, modernism and post-modernism constitutes an intellectual swamp that only the foolhardy would enter" Quoted from Swanström (2002) p 37.

⁵⁸ Jeffrey T. Checkel, 'Review Essay: The Constructivist Turn in International Relations', *World Politics*, Vol 50, No. 2, January 1998, p. 324.

⁵⁹ Nicholas Greenwood Onuf, *World of Our Making: Rules and Rule in Social Theory and International Relations* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989) p 38.

⁶⁰ Alexander Wendt, "Constructing International Politics," *International Security*, Vol 20 No 1 (Summer 1995) p 73.

rationalists ignore or misunderstand.⁶¹ As Wendt puts it, “Identities are the basis of interests.”⁶² This is in contrast to rationalists who do not give attention to where such preferences come from, only how actors pursue them strategically.

Third, constructivists contend that agents and structures are mutually constituted. Normative and ideational structures may well condition the interests and identities of actors, but those structures would not exist if it were not for the knowledgeable practices of those actors.⁶³ Thus, shared knowledge, often principles and norms, which may be constitutive or regulatory, shape state identities and interests as well as interstate normative structures. The logic of anarchy is in this view, socially constructed and can be transformed, thus, “Anarchy is what states make of it.”⁶⁴ Prospects for survival are thus contingent on the shared understanding among the society of states.⁶⁵

Constructivism therefore challenges the essence of positivism, which insists that the role of science is to observe, represent and manipulate the outside world. Constructivism on the other hand constructs. How then does constructivism view the idea of cooperation? So far, I explained that realists arguing self-help in an anarchical world precludes significant sustained cooperation while liberals argue that knowledge and institutions make it possible. Constructivists believe that the ability to overcome collective action problems depends in part on whether actors’ social identities generate self-interests or collective interests. For constructivists such as Wendt, social identities have both individual and social structural properties, being at once cognitive schemas that enables an actor to determine “who I am/we are” according to his social

⁶¹ Christian Reus-Smit, “Constructivism”, in Scott Burchill, Richard Devetak, Andrew Linklater et al (eds), *Theories of International Relations*, 2nd Ed (New York: Palgrave, 2001) p 217.

⁶² Wendt (1992) p 398.

⁶³ Reus-Smit (2001) p 217; see also Ted Hopf, “The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory,” *International Security*, Vol 23 No 1 (Summer 1998) Pp 172-173.

⁶⁴ Wendt (1992)

⁶⁵ For instance, lines of amity and enmity and the role of force are socially contingent. North Korea and Vietnam, for example are not far different in terms of their power relationship with China, and both have share a border with China Yet, North Korea, tough suspicious of china, does not view it as an enemy. Vietnam however, fears Chinese hegemony and has frequently viewed china as an enemy. Such different attitudes cannot be explained by material capabilities alone and requires an investigation of their histories and inter-subjective understanding to which they give rise to such perceptions. Alagappa (1998) p 61.

environment.⁶⁶ One's identity can only be defined with reference to another's and regarded as "sets of meanings that an actor attributes to itself while taking the perspective of others, that is, as a social object."⁶⁷ Identification is thus a continuum from negative (a foe) to positive (a friend), "from conceiving the other as anathema to the self to conceiving it as an extension of the self."⁶⁸ Social identities thus represent particular conceptions of self in relation to other actors, which in turn, determine interests and shape one's decisions. Negative identification results in the pursuit of egoistical self-interest while positive identification would imply solidaristic loyalties.⁶⁹

Constructivists believe that once cooperation is initiated among a group of egoists, a socialization process takes place and is able to transform egoists into more altruistically-minded actors. They thus arrive at a point of positive identification where the other is seen as a cognitive extension of self, rather than being independent. In the process of acquiring a collective identity, "free-riding by increasing diffuse reciprocity and the willingness to bear costs without selective incentives" occurs.⁷⁰ Thus by treating identity and interests as always in process during interaction, "an evolution of cooperation would then lead to the formation of a community."⁷¹ Hasenclever *et al* describes this account of Wendt's as the *self-stabilization hypothesis of cooperation*.⁷² Implicit in this socialization process is the understanding that changes in belief systems create behavioural change. This can be referred to as learning.⁷³ Learning thus becomes a central theme in the process of socialization and is fundamental for organizations,

"By "learning" I mean the process by which consensual knowledge is used to specify casual relationships in new ways so that the result affects the content of public policy. Learning in and by an international organization implies that

⁶⁶ Alexander Wendt, "Collective Identity Formation and the International State," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol 88 No 2 (June 1994) p 385.

⁶⁷ Wendt (1994) p 385.

⁶⁸ Wendt (1994) p 386.

⁶⁹ Wendt (1994) p386-387.

⁷⁰ Wendt (1994) p 386.

⁷¹ Wendt (1994) p 390.

⁷² Andreas Hasenclever, Peter Mayer & Volker Rittberger, *Theories of International Regimes* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997) p 187.

⁷³ Hasenclever *et al* (1997) p 145.

the organization's members are induced to question earlier beliefs about the appropriateness of ends of action and to think about the selection of new ones."⁷⁴

This means that learning is fundamental to cooperation and the formation of organizations.⁷⁵ Once cooperation gains upward momentum, collective identification also amplifies and compatibility deepens, thus leading to an even further willingness to cooperate. By recognizing that identities and interests can converge⁷⁶ through learning, change of these identities bear out the possibility that structures can be transformed in the long run and thereby re-orientate international practices owing to the disappearances of old interests related to former structures and the emergence of new ones.⁷⁷ Specifically, the shift from negative to positive identification would then result in a shift in threat perception away from partners within the group toward common security issues that threaten all the group members. Such interplay could potentially culminate in structural transformation leading to the establishments of security communities. We can therefore see that constructivism in accepting the possibility of structural transformation is able to explain security communities that are constitutive of collective identities. The relationship between the agent and structure is at the heart of the agent-structure debate between constructivism and other competing mainstream theories in international relations.

A problem with Wendt's approach in attempting to dislodge the realists paradigm is that he adopts the realist approach in his strong emphasis and assumption of the state as a unitary actor and fails to take into account the other levels of analyses such as sub-units (group of individuals) and units (individual) which may also influence the outcome. This focus on state behaviour may thus distort our understanding of how events were formed and attitudes shaped. This is especially the case in liberal-democratic security communities where non-state actors such as the media and non-

⁷⁴ Ernst Haas quoted in Hasenclever *et al* (1997) p 146.

⁷⁵ Socialization can in time build trust and cooperation however it could also create distrust, breakdown in relations and even conflict if the interaction turns out to be negative. This occurs if there is a perceived lack of goodwill or reciprocity from the interaction with the others, or worse, if such interaction is regarded as a form of exploitation. However, the focus of my thesis is on successful cooperation ventures and its potential in facilitating the establishment of collective identity.

⁷⁶ According to Wendt, the convergence of interest and identity may be facilitated through rising interdependence and the transnational convergence of domestic values. Wendt (1994) p 389-390.

⁷⁷ Hasenclever *et al* (1997) p 145.

governmental organizations and lobby groups play a significant role in maintaining a stable peace.

As a theoretical approach, constructivism is hard to employ since it does not predict any particular social structure to govern the behaviour of states. Rather it requires that a given social relationship be examined, articulated and ultimately understood. Only then would it be possible to predict state behaviour. However, such an approach means that it is impossible to conduct hypotheses testing and falsification. The underlying logic of this Popperian proposition is that while we can never prove theories or hypothesis to be ultimately “true”, we can do our best to demonstrate a statement is false.⁷⁸ In doing so, one draws on the assumptions of a theory, for instance, realism, to formulate statements regarding specific cases. This statement is then empirically tested to see whether they correspond. In the case of constructivism, if these predictions prove false, it could be argued that the governing structures were not properly understood or have simply changed. Checkel even argues that constructivism “is not a theory but an approach to social inquiry”⁷⁹ Nevertheless, if constructivism’s utility as a theory remains unclear, it still remains as a productive theoretical framework. The question of “how” and “why” particular social structures and relationships develop among different states is a matter of historical research and analysis. Past interactions between states set the context for the present conception of identities and interests.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Popper, Karl, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, 5th Ed (first published in English in 1959), (London: Routledge, 2002)

⁷⁹ Checkel (1998) p 325.

⁸⁰ Martin Griffiths & Terry O’Callaghan, *International Relations: The Key Concepts* (London: Routledge, 2002) p 52.

4. CASE SELECTION & METHODOLOGY

4.1 Case Selection Criteria

A case will be selected to test the theories just discussed to see which one of them offers the best explanation for cooperation. A crucial point is that such theories of cooperation should be able to explain the cooperation that is taking place over non-traditional security issues between states. I will focus on regional security organizations set up after the end of the Cold War dealing with such threats. We would then be able to see if these “new” post-Cold War security threats do facilitate a higher level of cooperation which could help overcome the barriers of anarchy. Accordingly, my case study should meet the following four criteria:

- (1) It must be a brand new regional security organization set up after the end of the Cold War. Which means that any regional security organization set up before 1991 would be excluded from consideration.
- (2) The organization should be set up by states and for interaction between states, and not an institutional framework between a state and an organization. For example, the NATO-Russia Council would be excluded. This is because we are interested in discussing the dynamics of cooperation between individual states that form an organization and how anarchy acts as a barrier between them.
- (3) This organization should be set up specifically to deal with non-traditional security threats. This is to see if the reconceptualization of security to refer to “new” security threats can help facilitate cooperation.
- (4) The region where the organization is set up should be non-Western since the study of security communities have traditionally centred on the North Atlantic region. This would enable us to discover alternative patterns and dynamics that can contribute to and complicate our knowledge of security communities, an endeavour set out by the editors of *Securities Communities* themselves.⁸¹ This allows us to deflect criticism that the security community concept is a western project for creating a new international order.
- (5) It should be in a region where there has been or is still having a high degree of tension between neighbouring states after the Cold War ended. The idea is to

⁸¹ Adler & Barnett (1998) p 15-16.

test if the new security threats and the process of socialization can help these states mitigate or overcome their security dilemma and whether it has, or could lead to, collective identity formation and eventually a sense of community.

4.2 Selection of Case Study

Case selection is crucial since it is the empirical material for the testing of theories. I used the SIPRI 2003 Yearbook glossary on *Intergovernmental Bodies and International Organizations* as a reference guide to shortlist names for my case study.⁸² The glossary refers to intergovernmental bodies and international organizations that were discussed in the SIPRI 2003 Yearbook. There are three practical reasons for adopting such an approach: firstly, this book has the most up-to-date list of organizations I could find; secondly, the organizations listed are all relevant to international relations since they have political, security and/or economic functions; thirdly, while I acknowledge that this SIPRI source of reference may not be the most complete list of organizations available for the selection of my case study, it is nevertheless suitable for my purpose since the organizations highlighted in the glossary are prominent ones that are internationally recognized. Identifying and selecting a highly obscure regional security organization would also be problematic for me as a researcher as the materials available for research would be limited and hard to come by.

Based on the SIPRI list, a total of sixteen regional organizations formed after the Cold War (since 1991) were identified.⁸³ Out of this total, the list of organizations is

⁸² SIPRI, *SIPRI Yearbook 2003 – Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) Pp xxii/xxxvii (Glossary).

⁸³ The sixteen identified are: African Union (AU) 2001; Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), 2003; Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) 1991; Confidence on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), 1999; Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CASAP), 1993; European Union (EU), 1992; Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) 1996; Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), 1991; Minsk Group, 1992; Organisme Conjoint de Coopération en Matière d'Armement (OCCAR), 1996, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), 1995; Organization of Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), 1992; Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), 2001; Southern African Development Community (SADC), 1992; Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, 1999; Sub-Regional Consultative Commission (SRCC), 1996. SIPRI (2003) Pp xxii/xxxvii (Glossary).

A notable regional organization left out from the SIPRI list is GUUAM, set up in 1997. GUUAM consists of Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Moldova. Its stated purpose is on multilateral

whittled down to just the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Central Asia after I applied all five criteria to the name-roll. The SCO in Central Asia is made up of Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. It fits the criteria in the following ways: Firstly, it is a brand new regional security organization established after the Cold War in 2001. A senior official from SCO-member state China stated that the SCO “explores and exercises a new state-to-state relationship, a new security concept and a new model of regional cooperation.”⁸⁴ Secondly, it is the first organization whose primary purpose was to fight against non-traditional threats. The Shanghai Convention Against Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism was signed in June 2001 on the day of the SCO’s founding, clearly defining terrorism, separatism and extremism for the first time on the international arena. Based on the recognition of the common threats on behalf of the member states, the SCO is designed as an organization for cooperation over security among states. Third, the SCO is a non-Western regional security organization. It thus fulfils criteria number four and is ideal in helping us to discover alternative patterns and dynamics that can contribute and complicate our knowledge of security communities.

Next, the Central Asian region fits the last criteria of having a high degree of tension between neighbouring states. Central Asia is an unpredictable region facing a host of non-traditional security threats while undergoing a period of post-communist transition. More importantly, the traditional threat is also present. Its strategic geographical location, the war on terrorism and its hydrocarbon rich reserve makes this a region of growing interest for the great powers such as the US, the EU, and the immediate neighbours of the Central Asian Republics, Russia and China. Furthermore, the boundaries between China, vis-à-vis the Central Asian Republics and Russia were still being disputed at the end of the Cold War. This presents an element of instability and uncertainty among all parties involved as such disputes could potentially escalate into conflict.

cooperation for promoting stability and strengthening security in Europe on the basis of principles of respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, inviolability of the state frontiers, democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights. As we shall see, inclusion of GUUAM on the list for selection does not alter the outcome in choice of case study as it does not fit the criteria for the case study selection.

⁸⁴ Speech given at the Finnish Defence College by Chinese Ambassador to Finland, H.E. Mr. Zhang Zhijian (2002-) *Shanghai Cooperation Organization*. 02 April 2004. <http://www.chinaembassy-fi.org/eng/63763.html> Last accessed 14 May 2004.

The fact that Russia and China succeeded in institutionalizing, and in some way, fitting their competitive interests in the region is also of great relevance to our research topic especially since the two have had a history of confrontation and conflict. Russia and China are the decisive players in the SCO and can be considered the two tent poles supporting the organization. The deepening of the Sino-Russian ties is one of the most dramatic diplomatic turnarounds in the past decade. Up till then, relations between China and the then-Soviet Union were marked by sharp ups and downs. Thus, there has been a history of ideological, military and political mistrust which has stunted cooperation between the two countries.⁸⁵ Yet, by 2001, the leaders of the two states met, together with the leaders of the four Central Asian republics to reaffirm their partnership and interests on major global issues, to expand economic ties, and to broaden the Central Asian diplomatic forum with the establishment of the SCO. Weeks later, China and Russia also signed the 20-year Good Neighbourly Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation.⁸⁶ This is especially significant since China, which has been opposed to signing any treaty with any major power for the past three decades, has showed a particular interest in signing the treaty with Russia. We can therefore examine the reasons behind the drawing together of Sino-Russian relations in the context of SCO.

Another added bonus in selecting the SCO is that the examination of security communities by Adler and Barnett (1998) left out the Central Asian region, the most likely reason being that there was no functional institutionalized regional security cooperation in Central Asia which was pro-active to speak of at the time of their writing. An examination of Central Asia through the SCO in relation to the security community debate is therefore timely and this thesis could fill this gap.

⁸⁵ In February 1950 the two Communist giants signed a 30-year treaty of friendship, alliance and mutual assistance. By the beginning of the 1960s, they were bitter ideological and political rivals with disputes over portions of the world's longest land border, in the Russian Far East and Central Asia; military clashes occurred over Ussuri river islands in 1969 which led to a sustained Soviet military build-up in Siberia, the Russian Far East and Mongolia. China also established normalized relations with the US in the 1970s as a means of balancing the Soviet threat. The two sides also quarrelled over Russian support in Vietnam and the invasion of Afghanistan.

⁸⁶ *China, Russia Sign Good-Neighborly Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation* (16 July 2001) <http://www.chinese-embassy.no/eng/15203.html> Last accessed 20 May 2004.

In sum, the SCO therefore presents a prime case study for the testing of the theories of cooperation in the post-Cold War context; it is an indigenous regional security cooperation organization that deals with non-traditional security threats.

4.3 Methodology

This thesis will be a process-tracing study which focuses on the qualitative examination of a single case study. Process tracing refers to the careful analytical process of variable interaction and the links between dependent and independent variables.⁸⁷ A qualitative method is adopted for the case study so as to understand the background of actions taken. The qualitative method is also better equipped in tracing causal mechanisms and identifying left-out variables.⁸⁸ The reason why the single case study approach is adopted is because individual case studies from different regions and different time periods can contribute to our understanding of the security community concept through its own unique formation and development process. Each case study with its unique set of problems gives an additional dimension to the concept of security community, thereby enriching our knowledge of the security community-building task. This was the same approach adopted by the editors of *Security Communities*.⁸⁹ A single case study approach would also allow us to undertake in-depth study in order to address the questions on “how” and “why”.⁹⁰ We could then draw better observations that would contribute to the theoretical conceptualising of security communities’ evolution process.

⁸⁷ Tomas Ohlson quoted in Swanström (2002) p 66.

⁸⁸ Andrew Bennett quoted in Swanström (2002) p 66.

⁸⁹ Adler & Barnett (1998) p 15.

⁹⁰ “Why” is concerned with *why* particular decisions resulting in specific courses of actions were made while “how” is concerned with *how* the subjects, objects, and interpretive dispositions were socially constructed such that certain practices were made possible. Attributed to Roxanne Doty in Krause (1998) p 317.

5. CASE STUDY

5.1 Background of Central Asia

Central Asia is geographically composed of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan⁹¹ and Uzbekistan. The collapse of the Soviet Union has resulted in the (re)birth of a number of landlocked countries in the heart of Asia. This region is now entering into a new era that may be characterized as post-colonial. It is emerging as an autonomous region where indigenous actors have a greater say in determining the dynamics of the region and they are eager not to let any power dominate over them as was the case in the past. This development is still in the process of firming. However, the future status of the Central Asian Republics is far from certain. Furthermore, unlike the former Soviet Union republics and Eastern European states which managed to orient themselves more easily towards the West, the five newly created predominantly Muslim republics were disadvantaged from the start by their geographic isolation. While some of the Central Asia states have commercially viable quantities of hydrocarbon deposits for export, their geographical remoteness suggests that the key to their survival and prosperity is dependent on their neighbours. They also have nascent political, economic and social structures which could lead to internal collapse if not remedied. The threat of militant Islamic extremism is of particular concern to the governments.⁹²

Concern over the spread of militant Islamic extremism has also made Central Asia a focus of attention and action from neighbouring powers such as Russia and China who fear that such activities would spill over into their own territory and have a destabilizing effect.⁹³ Furthermore, having dominated Central Asia for over 150 years

⁹¹ Turkmenistan will not be a focus of this thesis for two reasons. Firstly, it is not a member of the SCO; secondly, it has declared its permanent neutrality and had its neutral status formally recognized by the United Nations General Assembly on December 12, 1995. In fact, it has taken the decision to distance and even isolate itself from the other Central Asian Republics. For more see: Murad Esenov, *The Security of the Caspian Sea Region*, Gennady Chufirin (ed) Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. 244-254. This extract is available online as "Turkmenistan And Central Asian Regional Security." <http://www.ca-c.org/dataeng/oxford.shtml> Last accessed 08 May 2004.

⁹² Anoushiravan Ehteshami, "Asian Geostrategic Realities and their Impact on Middle East-Asia Relations," in Hannah Carter & Anoushiravan Ehteshami (eds), *The Middle East's Relations with Asia and Russia*, (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004) Pp 4; see also International Crisis Group, "Central Asia: Fault Lines in the New Security Map," *International Crisis Group Asia Report No. 20* (International Crisis Group, 4 July 2001).

⁹³ Igor Rotar, "The Growing Problem of Uigher Separatism," *China Brief*, Vol IV, Issue 8 (Jamestown Foundation, 15 April 2004) www.jamestown.org/ Last accessed 20 May 2004.

and with deep cultural and commercial ties with the region, Russia considers the region its own backyard. China on the other hand cannot ignore the region since it shares a long common border with the region and because of the region's Islamic militant networks, potential for commerce and China's own expanding demand for energy resources which the Central Asian region possesses. The region, which is emerging as a new source of energy, is thus also providing fresh stimulus for strategic competition among external powers. The invasion of Afghanistan by US forces following the 11 September 2001 attacks on the US has also given the Americans a strategic foothold in the region thereby complicating the political dynamics of the region.

As illustrated thus far, foreign policy goals and strategic considerations compete with commercial ones in formulating and determining the future of Central Asian Republics. For these states, security is understood as:

- (1) Political Survival: Defending the political legitimacy of the rulers since there have been challenges to their ideologies from both international and domestic actors;
- (2) Economic Growth: Attaining a stable and peaceful environment to facilitate economic growth and foreign investment;
- (3) Maintaining State Autonomy: Safeguarding of their political autonomy and state sovereignty. This means the right to manage their international affairs independently and the preservation of territorial integrity.

The quest for security demands regional cooperation among the Central Asian Republics and requires the participation of regional powers such as US, Europe, Russia and/or China to provide political stability, much-needed investment, technology and access to markets. There have in fact been a number of regional initiatives in the former territories of the Soviet Union, since its collapse. Notable ones relevant to Central Asia consists of The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) formed in 1991, the Central Asian Economic Community (CAEC) created in 1994⁹⁴, the Eurasian Economic Community (EAEC) established in 2000, the Conference on Interactions and Confidence-Building Measures (CICA) formed in

⁹⁴ Renamed Central Asian Cooperation Organization (CACO) in 2002

2002 and the Shanghai Forum (or Shanghai Five), formed in 1996 - formally institutionalized as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in 2001. For most part, these organizations have limited influence in regional policy-making.⁹⁵ The exception is the Shanghai Forum and the SCO which has emerged as the most successful and intriguing case with implications for theories of cooperation in the post-Cold War era and the stability of Central Asia.

5.2 The History of the Shanghai Five⁹⁶ (1996-2001)

The origins of the SCO can be traced to the Sino-Soviet/Russian border negotiation during the 1990s. With the break up of the former Soviet Union, three of the four newly independent Central Asian Republics – Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan – also became participants in the border negotiation. Since the mid 1990s, Russia and China have joined efforts to normalize relations and develop regional cooperation mechanisms with their Central Asian neighbours. At a time when Central Asia held low-priority status within the broader foreign policy framework of the Western countries, the leaders of these five states signed the *Agreement on Confidence-building in the Military Field in the Border Area* in Shanghai in 26 April 1996.⁹⁷

Following this, the five states decided that the mutual confidence engendered by the negotiations should serve as the foundation for even closer regional cooperation. This was the main rationale, rather than China or Russia's intention to prevent external

⁹⁵ For an overview of regional cooperation efforts in Central Asia, see Niklas Swanström, "The Prospects for Multilateral Conflict Prevention and Regional Cooperation in Central Asia," *Central Asian Survey*, Vol 23 No 1 (March 2004)

⁹⁶ "Shanghai Five" is not the formal name of the forum. Actually, the forum had no formal name. In April 26, 1996 presidents of five states, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and China, gathered in Shanghai, China, to sign the Agreement on Confidence Building in the Military Field in the Border Area. The five presidents then decided to continue meeting together once a year in the five counties in turn. This summit had been widely reported in the West as the "Shanghai Five" because the location of the summit was Shanghai and the participants of the summit were the presidents of the five participating states." Huasheng Zhao (2004), "Security Building in Central Asia and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization," *Slavic Eurasia's Integration into the World Economy and Community* (Hokkaido: Slavic Research Center, Hokkaido University, 2004) Pp 285-286.

⁹⁷ This agreement confirmed the borderline and agreed on a set of confidence-building measures in the border area. Specifically, all parties promised not to use military force against each other; military exercises in the border region would be restricted in scale, geographical scope and frequency; observers would be invited for such planned exercises; they would inform each other of any major military activities in the areas within 100km from the borders; they would strengthen relations between military forces and border guards along the border areas.

The Text of Russian Federation, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Tajikistan and People's Republic of China on Confidence Building in the Military Field in the Border Area (1996) http://russia.shaps.hawaii.edu/fp/russia/shanghai_19960426.html Last accessed 08 May 2004.

powers from getting into the region, that the original founding members created the *Shanghai Forum*, also known collectively as the *Shanghai Five*⁹⁸ in 1996.⁹⁹ Reaching a common view on building up good neighbourly relations and peaceful cooperation, they enriched the confidence-building process with a component of military force reduction in the border area a year later at their second summit. The outcome was the *Agreement on the Mutual Reduction on Armed Forces in the Border Areas* signed in Moscow in April 1997.¹⁰⁰ The two agreements signed were practical steps in easing the tensions in the region and created a precedent of peaceful settlement of territorial disputes. This process demarcated the borders between China and the three Central Asian Republics and Russia for the first time in history, a significant achievement considering the history of complex relationships between all parties.¹⁰¹ It provided for the further strengthening of the cooperation and for focusing on other pressing issues and serious common problems.

The third summit held in July 1998 in Almaty, Kazakhstan was historic as it added new contents to the security partnership among the Shanghai Five. It noted that “large-scale economic cooperation is of vital significance to the consolidation of the regional peace and stability”, particular in the strategic field “including the construction of oil and gas pipelines and the railway, highway, water and air transport.”¹⁰² Economic cooperation and integration has thus been recognized as a basis for the consolidation and strengthening of the new organization.

Another new area of cooperation was in the combating of non-traditional threats with new emphasis given to the sovereignty, security and social order of the member states. The key primary political threats identified consist of *national splittism*, *ethnic*

⁹⁸ I will use the names the Shanghai Forum and the Shanghai Five interchangeably in this thesis.

⁹⁹ Shiping Tang, “The Future of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization,” *IDSS Perspectives* (The Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, Singapore, October 2002) http://www.ntu.edu.sg/idss/Perspective/research_050223.htm Last accessed 20 May 2004.

¹⁰⁰ The agreement stipulates that China and Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan will reduce their military forces in the border areas to the minimum level compatible with their friendly and good-neighbourly relations, a level that shall not go beyond their defence needs.

The Agreement on Mutual Reduction of Military Forces in the Border Areas (1997) <http://www.fas.org/nuke/control/mrmfba/> Last Accessed 08 May 2004.

¹⁰¹ Antonina Habova, “The Shanghai Cooperation Organization: A New Regional Mechanism For Combating Terrorism, Ethnic Separatism, And Religious Extremism,” in Marin Lessenski (ed) *The War on Terror: Policy Implications* (Sofia: Institute for Regional and International Studies, 2003) p 85.

¹⁰² *Joint Statement of Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan on the Almaty Meeting* (3 July 1998) <http://russia.shaps.hawaii.edu/fp/russia/joint-statement980703.html> Last accessed 08 May 2004.

exclusion and *religious extremism*. Others include international terrorism, organized crimes, arms smuggling. China and Russia both share a common interest in deterring ethno-nationalism and resurgent militant Islamic fundamentalists to maintain political stability in the region against those who wish to establish Islamic theocracy in the region. This position along with recognition and expression of economic cooperation and development in the region naturally complements the interest of the Central Asian governments of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and therefore their support. The common threat and enemies were a strong impetus for designing a cooperative mechanism for maintaining regional security and promoting regional stability and development.¹⁰³

The Almaty Summit also reasserted the norms of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, equality and non-interference in each other's internal affairs; and the solving of disputes and differences among the countries through friendly consultation. This has been the position of China for a long period of time and comes at a time when Russia was still conducting military operations in Chechnya. The Central Asian Republics also consider this as assurance of political autonomy from their giant neighbours and the outside world. This statement can thus be also interpreted as a group expression of common values on the international stage since it was made soon after the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) unilaterally intervened in Kosovo on humanitarian grounds. Following the summit, China and Kazakhstan accelerated their border talks and concluded another border agreement on the basis of the previous one concluded in April 1994. The new border agreement represented a major step forward toward the final resolution of the border problems between the two countries.¹⁰⁴

The fourth Shanghai Forum summit was held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan in August 1999. It took place at a time of deteriorating security situation with increased activities by Islamic militants in the region, particularly in the Batken region of Kyrgyzstan,

¹⁰³ Habova (2003) Pp 85-86.

¹⁰⁴ Qingguo Jia, *The Success of the Shanghai Five: Interests, Norms and Pragmatism* (Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defence University, US, 2001)
<http://www.ndu.edu/inss/symposia/pacific2001/jiafinal.htm> Last accessed 20 May 2004.

Uzbekistan¹⁰⁵ and Chechnya¹⁰⁶ and Dagestan in the Russian Caucasus. Therefore, the consensus at the summit was on reaching an agreement on appropriate joint measures against terrorism, drugs and arms trafficking. It resulted in the decision to set up an anti-terrorist centre at Bishkek.¹⁰⁷ Once again, leaders of the five countries underscored the importance of promoting economic and trade cooperation on the basis of equality and mutual benefits. They expressed willingness to continue to encourage cooperation on a bilateral basis and also to seek ways to promote multilateral cooperation. In the wake of the summit, China and Kyrgyzstan concluded a supplementary border agreement in August on the basis of their 1996 border agreement. With this agreement, they finally settled problems along the approximately 1,000 kilometre long border between them.¹⁰⁸

The fifth summit was held in Dushanbe of Tajikistan, July 5, 2000. In the statement issued following the summit which consists of nineteen points, the five countries declared that the members will work to turn the Shanghai Five into a regional mechanism for the five countries to conduct multi-lateral cooperation in all areas and restated that they hoped that Central Asia would become a region of peace, friendly neighbourhood, stability, and international cooperation on the basis of equality.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ Poonam Mann, "Religious Extremism in Central Asia," *Strategic Analysis*, Vol XXV No 9 (December 2001) http://www.ciaonet.org/olj/sa/sa_dec01map01.html Last accessed 20 May 2004.

¹⁰⁶ One reason why the Chechnya War has been so long and drawn-out is that foreign terrorists and extremists have been providing various types of support to this area, materially, financially and spiritually. Huasheng Zhao (2004) Pp 285-286.

¹⁰⁷ A decision has since been taken in September 2003 to locate the Regional Antiterrorism Structure to Tashkent, Uzbekistan instead. See *Uzbekistan: Foreign Ministers Of Shanghai Cooperation Organization Converge In Tashkent* by Charles Carlson. 05 September 2003. <http://www.rferl.org/features/2003/09/05092003174355.asp> Last accessed 08 May 2004.

¹⁰⁸ Jia (2001).

¹⁰⁹ At the Dushanbe Summit, members expressed their opposition to conflicts, threats and outside intervention that would complicate the region's situation and would do so by deepening their cooperation in politics, diplomacy, economic and trade relations, military matters, military technologies, and other spheres so as to enhance regional security and stability (Point II). They considered that existing consultation between their defence ministers and defence institutions were appropriate for deepening mutual trust and friendly cooperation and conducive to the maintenance of peace and stability in the region. (Point IV) They reaffirmed their determination to combat national separatism, international terrorism, religious extremism, weapons smuggling, drug trafficking, and illicit migration, which constitute the major threats to regional security, peace and development. They will thus formulate a multilateral cooperation guideline, conclude necessary multilateral treaties and agreements, hold regular meetings between officials in charge of law enforcement, border patrol, customs, and security, and jointly conduct anti-terrorist and anti-violent exercises when necessary (Point V). In Point VI, they vowed to defend the goals and principles of the UN Charter but stress that countries have rights to choose the paths of political, economic and social development in the light their respective national conditions. In the same point, they also repeated their intention to adhere to the principles of respect for human rights but voiced their opposition towards international intervention in domestic affairs in the name of humanitarian concerns or protection of human rights. Accordingly,

During this summit, China and Tajikistan successfully also concluded an agreement that permanently settled the remaining problems along their common borders.¹¹⁰

5.3 Assessment of the Shanghai Five

The Shanghai Five appears to have made some impressive achievements. The security dilemma does appear to have been mitigated with the introduction of confidence-building measures and initiating disarmaments in the areas along the member states' borders. As a result, member states' securities have also been enhanced. The success of the Shanghai Five must be understood in context. First, four of the five members in the group – Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan – have been in the process of reconstructing their separate national identities. Second, it was able to resolve the historical border disputes over a period of five years. This must be understood in the context of history whereby the Soviet Union and China had even engaged in a number of bloody border clashes during the late 1960s and early 1970s. The disputed borders were thus perceived as a potential threat to the security of all the concerned countries. For the first time in history, China managed to clearly demarcate the 7,000 kilometre long borders with the other four former Soviet states with the exception of a few small areas along the Sino-Russian border.

5.4 The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (2001-Present)

In 2001, Uzbekistan declared that the values and objective of the Shanghai Five corresponded with its own interest and argued that this grouping could not achieve its

they expressed their support for China's efforts for national reunification with Taiwan and Russia's position on the Chechen question. In Point VIII, they stressed the necessity to defend and strictly observe the 1972 ABM treaty unconditionally and their opposition to the development of Theatre Missile Defence (TMD) including efforts to include Taiwan into the TMD in any form. They voiced their support for the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in Point IX. They expressed deep concern about the political development in Taliban controlled-Afghanistan in Point XI and called the relevant parties involved to start dialogue as soon as possible. Point XIV expressed their intention to promote economic and trade relations between them on the basis of equality and mutual benefits. They promised to enhance cooperation in promoting cultural exchanges, energy exploration, environmental protection, etc. Finally, they agreed to hold annual foreign ministers' meetings and establish a council of national coordinators to facilitate cooperation (Point XV). Point XIX states that the mutual cooperation among the five countries is not targeted against any other country and open in nature. They welcome participation by other countries concerned in their programs and projects at national or other levels.

Dushanbe Statement of the Heads of State of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the People's Republic of China, the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Tajikistan (05 July 2000) http://russia.shaps.hawaii.edu/fp/russia/dushanbe_20000705.html Last accessed 08 May 2004.

¹¹⁰ Jia (2001).

goals without its participation.¹¹¹ During the Shanghai Forum held in Shanghai, China in June 2001, Uzbekistan was formally admitted into the grouping. Uzbekistan, being the youngest member of the organization deserves special mention since it was not part of the cooperation process and had been distant towards regional organizations which Russia is part of.¹¹² Still it identified a common interest with the Shanghai Five and requested to be part of the organization on its own accord. A key incentive for Uzbekistan to join is because of its search for more reliable security. It had relied on the US for its security but the assassination attempt against President Karimov in February 1999 and the sudden invasion of armed militants in the spring and summer of 2000 caused it to reassess its security strategy. It considered the Islamic Movement Uzbekistan (IMU) stationed in foreign countries and the Ferghana Valley region and the Afghan Taliban regime to be its biggest threats and it could not handle these problems by itself. The SCO, with its tenets of anti-terrorism, is useful in this aspect.¹¹³

A Declaration on the Establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization was made.¹¹⁴ The document announced that for the purpose of upgrading the level of cooperation to more effectively seize opportunities and deal with new challenges and threats, the six states had decided to establish the SCO on the basis of the Shanghai Five mechanism. The SCO is the first organization advocating clearly the fight against non-traditional threats. The Shanghai Convention Against Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism was signed on the same day, clearly defining terrorism, separatism and extremism (collectively known as “the three evil forces”) for the first time on the international arena.

¹¹¹ Habova (2003) p 87.

¹¹² Uzbekistan’s foreign policy had in the past been focused primarily at the US and has tried to detach itself from Russia. Its security policy has been oriented towards the US and NATO and it had been unwilling to take part in Russian-oriented regional organizations in Central Asia. At one time, Uzbekistan was a member of the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty but later left. It is also not a member of the Eurasian Economic Community that consists of Russia and other Central Asian Republics. However, it did participate actively in GUUAM, but later withdrew from it.

¹¹³ Huasheng Zhao (2004) p 292.

¹¹⁴ *Declaration on the Establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization* (15 June 2001) http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2003-05/27/content_889169.htm Last accessed 09 May 2004

5.4.1 Sino-Russian 20-Year Treaty of Neighbourliness, Friendship and Cooperation

China and Russia also signed a 20-year Treaty of Neighbourliness, Friendship and Cooperation one month later in July 2001.¹¹⁵ This is a significant development since China opposed to signing treaties with any major power for past three decades, has showed a particular interest in signing the treaty with Russia.¹¹⁶ In the treaty, both Russia and China endorsed each other's unity and territorial integrity and settled most of their border issues and committed themselves to settle the remaining issues peacefully. Meanwhile, they have agreed to maintain the status quo regarding the disputed areas and that goes in Russia's favour as Russia is in possession of these areas. Russia recognized the "one China" principle and voiced opposition against the independence of Taiwan in whatever form. A conflict management mechanism was also put in place, whereby, the two parties will have immediate contact and consultations, should any of the two parties perceive circumstances that may threaten and undermine peace or its security interests. The treaty also commits both parties not to join any alliance or group that harms the other's sovereignty, security and territorial integrity. All the main themes that evolved in the course of development of the Shanghai Five and Sino-Russian relations in the past decade also find expression in the treaty, including the multipolar world and strategic stability. The sides agree to develop cooperation in trade and economic, military-technical, research-technological, power engineering and aviation spheres, etc. Russia and China have therefore also established both mechanisms and means to put their ties on the footing of long-term peace and cooperation and predictability. Both parties are also interested in maintaining their respective strategic autonomy vis-à-vis the dominant US. The treaty states that both sides will strive to enhance the key role of the UN as the most authoritative and most universal international body of sovereign states, in handling international affairs, particularly in the fields of peace and development. Both parties also reiterated their opposition to the US National Missile Defence (NMD) plans, which they said would be a destabilising force and an obstacle to world peace.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ "China, Russia Sign Good-Neighborly Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation," *Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Kingdom of Norway* (16 July 2001)

<http://www.chinese-embassy.no/eng/15203.html> Last accessed 20 May 2004.

¹¹⁶ Jyotsna Bakshi, "Post-Cold War Sino-Russian Relations: An Indian Perspective," *Strategic Analysis*, Vol XXVI No 1 (January-March 2002) http://www.ciaonet.org/olj/sa/sa_jan02baj01.html Last accessed 20 May 2004.

¹¹⁷ China, Russia to sign friendship pact, Vladimir Radyuhin (15 July 2001)

5.4.2 SCO in the Post-September 11 Environment

On September 11 2001, just months after the establishment of the SCO, terrorists - the key suspects being the militant Islamic Al-Qaeda based in Afghanistan - launched attacks in the US. Adjacent to Afghanistan, the five Central Asian Republics have come to play an essential role on the following war on terror. The insertion of US forces into Central Asia for its operations in Afghanistan radically altered the equations of power in this region. The lack of an established security component caused the SCO to fade from view in the immediate aftermath of the September 11 attack. Questions were also raised about the SCO's viability now that the US is taking the lead in anti-terrorist activities in Central Asia.¹¹⁸ As one commentator noted,

“the US deployment in the region achieved more of the SCO goals in five months than the organization had in five years, allowing the member nations to seize on the momentum of significant military successes against the Taliban, al-Qaeda, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, and other terrorist groups that threatened regional security.”¹¹⁹

The relevance and future of the newly formed SCO was thereby affected in two ways: The first change relates to the bilateral relationship of Russia and China with the US. Russia and China share the same concern with the US on the presence of Islamic militants in the region. This is because (1) these groups threaten both Russia and China's control over their respective restive Islamic minorities in Xinjiang and

<http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/2001/07/16/stories/0316000c.htm> Last accessed 20 May 2004. For a detailed writeup on this treaty, see Ariel Cohen, “The Russia-China Friendship and Cooperation Treaty: A Strategic Shift in Eurasia?” *The Heritage Foundation Backgrounder No. 1459*, (The Heritage Foundation, 18 July 2001) www.heritage.org Last accessed 20 May 2004; Sherman Garnett, “Challenges of the Sino-Russian Strategic Partnership,” *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol 24 No 4 (Autumn, 2001) Pp 41-54; Robert H. Donaldson & John A. Donaldson, “The Arms Trade in Russian-Chinese Relations: Identity, Domestic Politics, and Geopolitical Positioning,” *International Studies Quarterly*, No 47 (2003) Pp 709-732.

¹¹⁸ For a sample of such thinking, refer to Stephen Blank, “The Shanghai Cooperation Organization and its Future,” *Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst* (22 May 2002)

http://www.cacianalyst.org/view_article.php?articleid=1150 Last accessed 09 May 2004; Rajan Menon, “The New Great Game in Central Asia,” *Survival*, Vol 45, No 2 (Summer 2003) p 198; This pessimism extends to certain sections of Russia academic circles too. For instance, Koldunov, the Deputy Chairman of the Russian Foreign Policy Association claimed in 2002 that after the September 11 events, the SCO in fact collapsed. Cited from Huasheng Zhao (2004) p 307.

¹¹⁹ Matthew Oresman, “Day of Reckoning for China-Central Asia Group,” *Asia Times Online* (24 May 2003) http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Central_Asia/EE24Ag02.html Last accessed 09 May 2004.

Chechnya respectively; (2) they threaten the governments of Central Asia and the stability Russia and China depend on their strategic Central Asian rear. Russia thus supported the military operation in Afghanistan and felt vindicated for its anti-terrorism stance in Chechnya. China has also been forward looking in America's engagement in Afghanistan as it undermined the Islamic militants in the region. Furthermore, the US decision to put the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) - which China regards as a Xinjiang separatist, terrorist organization - on its list of terrorist organizations boosted its fight against militant separatist factions of Uighers in Xinjiang as legitimate.¹²⁰ However, American intervention in Afghanistan and the military presence has also caused concern since it might dilute its influence in Central Asian Republics and disrupt the development of SCO. More importantly, China and Russia have been reluctant to allow long-term US military presence in the region as they consider US presence a threat to their security.

The second change refers to the altered balance of power in the region with the US gaining a foothold in the region following the war in Afghanistan.¹²¹ US took advantage of offers to station troops and facilities in the Central Asia states to foster closer ties with the various republics. There are now troops in Uzbekistan, an airbase in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and the US administration has also essentially raised its economic assistance and military aid to these states. Moreover, the State Department has also toned down its criticism of the dismal human rights record of its allies in these republics and the Central Asian Republics regimes have been using this new external alliance as cover to strengthen their grip over their respective countries.¹²² The Central Asian Republics have been happy to welcome the US troops on their territories since it is a new opportunity to obtain political and economic aid from the West. The concern is that they may discard SCO and turn to the US for their economic and security needs.

¹²⁰ "China Appreciates US Decision to Put ETIM on Terror List," *People's Daily*, (28 August 2002) http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200208/28/eng20020828_102193.shtml Last accessed 10 May 2004

¹²¹ The US has long had an interest in the region because of the hydrocarbon resources. Up to the events of September 11, Washington lacked "leverage" to directly influence the events or push for US interest in the region. The war against terrorism has provided good opportunity to achieve this goal and expand its interest. Habova (2003) p 96.

¹²² IWPR, "Will US Policy Backfire in Central Asia?" *Institute of War and Peace Reporting Central Asia No 273* (Institute of War and Peace Reporting, 30 March 2004) www.iwpr.net Last accessed 01 Apr 2004.

Despite this setback, China and Russia have been unwilling to let the SCO fade away since both have invested serious political capital in the organization. In fact, the SCO remains relatively cohesive, adapted to the new security environment and entered into an active period of development. The two themes of the SCO – anti-terrorism and economic cooperation – remained as the long-term needs of the region.¹²³ While the Taliban has been disposed, the threat of terrorism, separatism and extremism in the region are far from being eliminated.¹²⁴ Furthermore, it is unlikely that the US would want to get embroiled in conflict management for any inter-state disputes in the region.¹²⁵ In June 2002, the heads of SCO member states met in St Petersburg, Russia and signed the SCO Charter¹²⁶, which further elaborated the SCO purposes and principles, organizational structure, form of operation, cooperation orientation and external relations, marking the actual establishment of this new organization in the sense of international law.

5.4.3 Purpose and Principles of the SCO

According to the SCO Charter and the Declaration on the Establishment of the SCO, the main purposes of SCO are to strengthen mutual trust, friendship and good-neighbourliness between the member States; to encourage effective cooperation between them in the political, trade and economic, scientific and technical, cultural, educational, energy, transport, environmental and other spheres; and to undertake joint efforts for the maintenance of peace, security and stability in the region, and the building of a new, democratic, just and rational international political and economic order.

The basic principles of the SCO are: adherence to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations; respect for each other's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, mutual non-use or

¹²³ Huasheng Zhao (2004); Tang (2002)

¹²⁴ Huasheng Zhao (2004) p 307.

¹²⁵ IISS “The US in Central Asia: Active Partner or Absentee Landlord?” in Adam Ward & James Hackett (ed), *IISS Strategic Comments*, The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), Vol 10 Issue 3 (April 2004) Pp 1-2.

¹²⁶ *Charter for Shanghai Cooperation Organization Adopted at Summit in Russia* (08 June 2002) http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200206/08/eng20020608_97405.shtml Last accessed 09 May 2004. See also the *Declaration by the Heads of the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization* (07 June 2002) (Translated into English 10 June 2002). http://russia.shaps.hawaii.edu/fp/russia/sco_20020610_4.html Last accessed 09 May 2004.

threat of use of force; equality among all member states; settlement of all questions through consultations; non-alignment and no directing against any other country or organization; opening to the outside world and willingness to carry out all forms of dialogues, exchanges and cooperation with other countries and relevant international or regional organizations. The SCO also stands for and acts on a new security concept anchored on mutual trust, disarmament and cooperative security; a new state-to-state relationship with partnership instead of alignment at its core, and a new model of regional cooperation featuring concerted efforts of countries of all sizes and mutually beneficial cooperation.

Notably, they declared that a common norm, known as the *Shanghai Spirit* had developed in the process of the development of the Shanghai Five. According to the declaration, the Shanghai Spirit is characterized by mutual trust, mutual advantage, equality, joint consultations, respect for cultural diversity and the desire for joint development, and is an invaluable asset gained by the countries of the region over the years of cooperation. Members proclaim that it will grow, and in the new century will become the norm in relations among the States members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

5.4.4 SCO Institutions

The SCO institutions consist of two parts: the meeting mechanism and the permanent organs.¹²⁷ Meeting mechanisms are Council of Heads of State, Council of Heads of Government, Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Conference of Heads of Agencies, Council of National Coordinators. The permanent organs consist of the Secretariat which is based in Beijing¹²⁸ and the Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS) based in Tashkent, capital of Uzbekistan which opened in January 2004.

¹²⁷ For details on the institutional set up of the SCO, refer to the People's Republic of China Ministry of Foreign Affairs website: *Shanghai Cooperation Organization*, 07 Jan 2004. <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/topics/sco/t57970.htm> Last accessed 09 May 2004.

¹²⁸ Antoine Blua, "Central Asia: Shanghai Group Opens Secretariat In Beijing Tomorrow," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* (14 Jan 2004) <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2004/01/54da009d-d0ae-48db-b68e-598c0474b23e.html> Last accessed 09 May 2004.

5.4.5 SCO on Combating Terrorism

The foreign ministers of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization member states gathered in Beijing in Jan 2001 to discuss regional security and cooperation and development of the organization. In a veiled reference to America's activities in Afghanistan, it stressed the role of the United Nations in leading all diplomatic and military operations in the international struggle against terrorism. It was stressed that in combating terrorism, the international community should rely on the regional, sub-regional and national organizations.¹²⁹ The countries thus signed the Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism (collectively known by the members as "the three evil forces") in June 2001¹³⁰ and came to an agreement on the establishment of a regional anti-terrorism agency called the Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS), at the St Petersburg Summit a year later in June 2002.¹³¹ This provided the formation of a legal basis for cooperation between the six countries on the crackdown on terrorism, separatism and extremism, says the declaration. This permanent organ of the SCO officially opened in January 2004 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Its main function is to coordinate SCO member activities against terrorism, separatism and extremism.¹³²

China and Kyrgyzstan conducted a bilateral joint anti-terrorism military exercise within the SCO framework in October 2002 with SCO members, Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, participating as observers.¹³³ SCO member states also held a successful multilateral joint anti-terrorism military manoeuvre called Coalition 2003 in August 2003.¹³⁴ This is significant as it is the first time in history that the Chinese armed forces joined in multilateral military exercises. The SCO has also discussed the

¹²⁹ *SCO Vows to Fight Against Terrorism: Statement* (07 Jan 2002)

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2002-01/07/content_228286.htm Last accessed 10 May 2004.

¹³⁰ *Shanghai Convention On Combating Terrorism, Separatism And Extremism* (15 June 2001)

<http://www.in.mid.ru/ns-rasia.nsf/0/4ee37cb1c49a34ab43256cca00284d7c?OpenDocument> Last accessed 09 May 2004.

¹³¹ Refer to the *Declaration by the Heads of the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, St Petersburg* (07 June 2002) (Translated into English 10 June 2002).

http://russia.shaps.hawaii.edu/fp/russia/sco_20020610_4.html Last accessed 09 May 2004

¹³² The existing Director of Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS) is Vyacheslav Kasymov, a former deputy head of the Uzbek intelligence agency.

¹³³ "China and Kyrgyzstan Launch Anti-terrorism Exercises," *China Daily* (11 October 2002)

<http://www.china.org.cn/english/international/45570.htm> Last accessed 09 May 2004.

¹³⁴ "Joint Military Drills Draw Attention Worldwide," *People's Daily*, (14 Dec 2003)

http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200312/14/eng20031214_130392.shtml Last accessed 09 May 2004. See also: "Strengthen Anti-terrorism Cooperation and Protect Regional Security," *PLA Daily* (18 August 2003 <http://english.pladaily.com.cn/special/5army/txt/62.htm> Last accessed 09 May 2004.

setting up of an anti-narcotic drugs cooperative mechanism as soon as possible, and talks on relevant documents are actively under way.¹³⁵

5.4.6 SCO on Economic Cooperation

It has been recognized that the SCO needs a second track for its long-term survival. Speeding up the economic dimension in the form of economic integration is therefore an important way of increasing cohesion of the group.¹³⁶ China's rapid economic growth and proximity with all group members is expected to bring economic vitality to the region. In reverse, China is hoping that the hydrocarbon rich region would be able to satisfy its energy demand.¹³⁷ It is also hoping that China's Western Development Strategy, which aims to speed up economic and social development in the western part of China¹³⁸, could rely on the vast Eurasia market and could be carried out in consequence with the development of the Central Asian region.¹³⁹ Possible economic ideas would include business as energy transportation, commodity distribution, cross-border tourism, information industry and even finance.

Economic cooperation has been mentioned since the third summit held in July 1998 in Almaty, Kazakhstan¹⁴⁰ and has been described as "the material foundation and guarantee for SCO's smooth development."¹⁴¹ However, discussion on regional economic cooperation under the framework of SCO is still in the planning phase

¹³⁵ People's Republic of China Ministry of Foreign Affairs website: *Shanghai Cooperation Organization*, 07 Jan 2004. <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/topics/sco/t57970.htm> Last accessed 09 May 2004.

¹³⁶ "SCO Spirit Takes Shape," *China Daily* (17 Jan 2004)

<http://www.beijingportal.com.cn/7838/2004/01/17/1380@1831024.htm> Last accessed 25 May 2004.

¹³⁷ Xiaojie Xu, "The Oil and Gas Link Between Central Asia and China – a Geopolitical Perspective," *OPEC Review* (March 1999); James P. Dorian, Utkur Tojiev Abbasovich *et al*, "Energy in Central Asia and Northwest China: Major Trends and Opportunities for Regional Cooperation," *Energy Policy* Vol 27 No 5 (1999) Pp 281-297.

¹³⁸ "Premier calls for carrying out the Western Development Strategy," *Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Australia* (22 March 2004) <http://www.chinaembassy.org.au/eng/xw/t80225.htm> Last accessed 20 May 2004.

¹³⁹ Thierry Kellner, "The People's Republic of China and the New Central Asian Ten Years after Independence," in Farian Sabah & Daniel Warner (eds), *The OSCE and the Multiple Challenges of Transition – The Caucasus and Central Asia*, (Hampshire UK: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2004) Pp37-67. For the economic dimension, refer to Pp47-61.

¹⁴⁰ *Joint Statement of Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan on the Almaty Meeting* (3 July 1998) <http://russia.shaps.hawaii.edu/fp/russia/joint-statement980703.html> Last accessed 08 May 2004.

¹⁴¹ People's Republic of China Ministry of Foreign Affairs website: *Shanghai Cooperation Organization*, 07 Jan 2004. <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/topics/sco/t57970.htm> Last accessed 09 May 2004.

although the commercial potential of a common market is sizeable. The Heads of government of the six member states met in Almaty, Kazakhstan on 14 September 2001 to discuss regional economic cooperation. This led to the Memorandum Between the Governments of the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization on the Basic Objectives and Orientation of Regional Economic Cooperation and the Launching of a Process of Trade and Investment Facilitation.¹⁴²

The year 2002 saw the establishment of mechanisms for economic and trade as well as transportation-focused ministerial meetings successively as initial attempts to explore avenues of substantive cooperation in trade, investment, transportation, energy and other areas. The SCO heads of government met in Beijing for a second time on 23 September 2003 and adopted a plan for multilateral economic and trade cooperation of the SCO member states, in which priority areas, main tasks and implementation mechanism of economic-trade cooperation between the six SCO member states were identified.¹⁴³

5.4.7 SCO on External Relations

Analysis has been focused between the individual states and the region thus far, however, attention on the SCO is increasingly shifting towards the global-region context. Following its formation, the SCO has taken the additional step to be recognized internationally as a collective. The 2002 Declaration in St Petersburg reaffirmed that “SCO is neither a bloc nor a closed alliance, is not directed against any individual countries or groups of states and is open for broad cooperation with other states and international associations in accordance with the objectives and principles of the UN Charter and the norms of international law.”¹⁴⁴ The role of SCO is thus expanding from being a framework for institutionalized cooperation between member

¹⁴² People's Republic of China Ministry of Foreign Affairs website: *Shanghai Cooperation Organization*, 07 Jan 2004. <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/topics/sco/t57970.htm> Last accessed 09 May 2004.

¹⁴³ People's Republic of China Ministry of Foreign Affairs website: *Shanghai Cooperation Organization*, 07 Jan 2004. <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/topics/sco/t57970.htm> Last accessed 09 May 2004.

¹⁴⁴ Refer to the *Declaration by the Heads of the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, St Petersburg* (07 June 2002) (Translated into English 10 June 2002). http://russia.shaps.hawaii.edu/fp/russia/sco_20020610_4.html Last accessed 09 May 2004

states to collective engagement in the global political scene.¹⁴⁵ The declaration issued at the St Petersburg summit in 2002, welcomed the creation of a post-Taliban Afghanistan; expressed desire for Asia-Pacific region to be a zone of peace, stability and joint prosperity; urged for closer dialogue and cooperation among the two Koreas the US and Western countries to establish a peaceful Korean Peninsula; called for the easing of tensions between India and Pakistan; expressed concern over the situation in the Middle East, with special reference to the Israel-Palestine conflict and Iraq.¹⁴⁶

This trend is expected to continue as the organization matures. The SCO Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in November 2002 adopted the Interim Scheme of Relations Between the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and Other International Organizations and States, formally initiating SCO external relations. The Scheme provides that other countries and international organizations may be invited to attend as guests the meeting of the SCO Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and diplomatic consultations, and the SCO, likewise, may send representatives to attend activities of other international organizations. To date, SCO representatives have attended several meetings such as the Special Session of the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the UN Security Council in March 2003, the Meeting of the OSCE Partners for Cooperation in Vienna in April, the Fifth High-Level Meeting Between the United Nations and Regional Organizations in New York in July, and the OSCE Conference on Preventing and Combating Terrorism in Lisbon in September 2003.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ The June 2001 Shanghai declaration refers to the possibility of admitting new members on the basis of consensus. Point 7 of the declaration made clear that states that “share the objectives and goals of cooperation within the framework of the organization and the principles set forth in paragraph 6 and also other provisions of this Declaration.” Countries such as Mongolia, Iran, Pakistan and India are all potential candidates but there are no concrete plans to admit new members at this point in time. It is not illogical to consider the US as an observer of the organization since it is in its interest to stabilize the region. The admission of new members, especially Iran, Pakistan, India who have great power aspirations and having the US as an observer could contribute to the stability of the region and the authority of the SCO. On the other hand, it could hamstring the SCO which works on a consensus basis. For the time being, the organization would need to strengthen itself before it would appeal directly to other parties in the surrounding region.

¹⁴⁶ Refer to the *Declaration by the Heads of the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, St Petersburg* (07 June 2002) (Translated into English 10 June 2002).

http://russia.shaps.hawaii.edu/fp/russia/sco_20020610_4.html Last accessed 09 May 2004

¹⁴⁷ People's Republic of China Ministry of Foreign Affairs website: *Shanghai Cooperation Organization*, 07 Jan 2004. <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/topics/sco/t57970.htm> Last accessed 09 May 2004.

5.4.8 Concluding Thoughts on the Shanghai Five and the SCO

The genesis of the SCO is unconventional in the sense that regional cooperation is conceived via a gradualist, functional approach of first identifying and resolving traditional security issues or border demarcation and then expanding the number of issues and common concerns to arrive at the next stage of the development of the Shanghai mechanism, namely, its institutionalization.¹⁴⁸ It is gradual in the sense that the Shanghai Forum first developed from a structure of bilateral nature -with China as the initial focus - to one that is multilateral among all member states. The strategy of dealing with issues which all participants have a common interest in cooperating over also helped bring the member states closer together.

In simple terms, it evolved from a grouping that initially dealt with one question (border demarcation) into one dealing with a broad range of questions which all the participants have a common interest in addressing, and from one with a limited agenda into one with a comprehensive program resulting in the formation of the SCO. Such a development has far-reaching significance for the development of the region as well as the member states. The formation of a SCO regional cooperation organization is therefore indeed commendable. It has been able to provide a regional cooperative framework to address the security threats of the post-Cold War era and contribute to the promotion of peace and stability in the region while enhancing cooperation among the SCO members.

¹⁴⁸ Habova (2003) p 87.

6. ANALYSIS

This thesis sets out to discuss the relevance of the three theories of cooperation and examine if anarchy as a barrier to community can be overcome. To date, the SCO is only three years old, however, its genesis can be traced back to the 90s and while it is premature to claim the grouping as a security community, the process leading to the formation of the SCO and activities taken by the SCO thus far does allow us to make some theoretical observations. In this chapter, I will discuss the theoretical implications of the case study and examine how it helps us understand the potential of cooperation in the post-Cold War order.

6.1 Empirical Conclusions

6.1.1 Rationalist Explanations

The focus of international relations has until the end of the Cold War been dominated by the study of self-help in an anarchic international system. Thus, rational theories have primarily been concerned with the barriers to cooperation, and the degree to which institutions can ameliorate the harsher aspects of anarchy. As Robert Jervis noted, realists had to assume many of the elements of world politics that are in fact problematical in order to provide the framework for analysis - "the actor's values, preferences, beliefs, and definition of self are all exogenous to the model and must be provided before analysis can begin."¹⁴⁹

However, the SCO case study suggests that the realist approach is inadequate in explaining the regional cooperation that took place under the Shanghai Forum and the SCO. Having dominated Central Asia for over 150 years and with deep cultural and commercial ties with the region, Russia considers the region its own backyard. China on the other hand cannot ignore the region since it shares a long common border with the region and because of the region's Islamic militant networks, potential for commerce and China's own expanding demand for energy resources which the Central Asian region possesses. In this way, encounter between Russia and China is inevitable; however, is *confrontation* between the two necessarily inevitable as

¹⁴⁹ Robert Jervis, "Realism, Game Theory, and Cooperation," *World Politics*, Vol 40 No 3 (April 1988) p 319.

realists would have us believe? From the realist perspective, conflict of interest between the two would arise; and from a historical and geopolitical perspective, these two do have potentially conflicting interests. However, the empirical evidence has shown China and Russia collaborating within the Shanghai Forum and subsequently the SCO framework to avoid possible negative competition in Central Asia. Thus, realists are unable to answer satisfactorily why China as an emerging power did not exploit a severely economically and militarily weakened, and politically unstable Russia during the 90s, to increase its relative power and influence in the region and displacing Russia. Besides, if Russia and China are competitors in the region, why did they pool their power collectively with the other Central Asian Republics rather than balance the power of each other through the formation of competing blocs? Furthermore, if the Central Asian Republics had perceived both China and Russia as a threat, they would logically have defected from the SCO and struck up an alliance with the US instead. While the Americans have set up military bases in some of the Central Asian Republics as part of their operation in Afghanistan, empirical evidence from the case study have shown how SCO's institutional mechanisms and activities gathered pace following the meeting in St Petersburg in 2002 indicating that they see their future with the SCO.

Similarly, the interest-based explanation is unable to capture the full dynamics of cooperation among the SCO members. First of all, it is not able to explain why the other attempts to set up a regional cooperation framework were of limited success and effectiveness compared to the Shanghai Five and the SCO. Secondly, if trade and economic interdependence draw states to higher levels of cooperation, Russia, with its traditional commercial ties and energy pipeline linkages¹⁵⁰ with the Central Asian Republics should have a positive relationship with the region. Instead, the trend over the 90s is that the Central Asian Republics have been trying to break the Russian dominance in the region and reassert their political autonomy and economic development independent of Russia. They have also tried to reconstruct new identities independent of Russian disposition. This suggests that material considerations alone are not adequate in explaining the dynamics of regional cooperation among the Shanghai Five and the SCO members.

¹⁵⁰ Energy Map of the World – 2003 Edition *Petroleum Economist* (June 2003)

6.1.2 Constructivist Explanation

How then can we explain the regional cooperation dynamics that have been taking place among the SCO members? The accomplishment of the Shanghai Forum and the subsequent establishment of the SCO can be attributed crucially to three factors all of which support the constructivist approach. Firstly, a change in their social environment resulted in them identifying a common interest in working together; secondly, the gradualist approach the member states adopted allowed them to expand the area of cooperation as they gained trust and confidence in each other; and third, this process of cooperation produced group norms for their international conduct.¹⁵¹

6.1.2.1 Common Interests

A sense of common interest formed the basis for cooperation among the member states.¹⁵² Areas where they share common interests include security, domestic political stability, economic development, and international prestige. The first issue that brought the Shanghai Five together was the common recognition that it was critical to reduce the uncertainty along the border areas after the collapse of the Soviet Union. All parties understood that disputes over territory often inflame nationalist feelings, and escalate into military clashes between sovereign states thereby undermining the stability of the individual states and the region. It was therefore in the interest of all parties involved to resolve this issue quickly. This led to discussions on ways to enhance their border security. Shared interest in this regard thus facilitated the conclusion of *Agreement on Confidence-building in the Military Field in the Border Area* in Shanghai in 1996 and the *Agreement on the Mutual Reduction on Armed Forces in the Border Areas* signed in Moscow in April 1997, both of which were agreements on confidence-building measures and disarmament. This shared interest in resolving the border dispute also meant that member states conducted their border negotiations sincerely.

Concerns over their respective domestic stability also encouraged them to seek for an early resolution of the border problem and develop a stable and peaceful environment along their borders. China was under-going modernization and does not want to be distracted by border disputes with its neighbours. It therefore had a stake in improving

¹⁵¹ Jia (2001).

¹⁵² Jia (2001); Huasheng Zhao (2004)

relations and securing good relations with its neighbours, including members of the SCO. It was also interested in developing good relations with Russia and the Central Asia Republics since they could provide it with the energy supplies it requires for its modernization process. Russia too wanted to secure a stable and peaceful international environment so as to concentrate on addressing their domestic problems as its economic reform faltered. Russia was also under pressure from the West for its mishandling international aid and the war in Chechnya. On top of this, NATO was expanding eastwards. Russia thus needed to develop good relations with China and other neighbouring states to deflect Western pressures and also to concentrate its attention on solving domestic issues. The Shanghai Forum and SCO therefore provided a good vehicle for Russia to attain these objectives.

Kazakstan, Kyrgystan and Tajikistan were also facing domestic difficulties with their weak economies. Furthermore, these countries just became independent and are involved in the state building process. National identity was weak and ethnic diversity a serious challenge to political development. Their situation was made worse by the rise of militant Islamic fundamentalism. Under these circumstances, these countries wanted a stable and peaceful external environment so that they could concentrate on addressing these challenges. They also hoped to obtain support from the organization in this regard. From a long-term perspective, they also expected that China could contribute to their economic success through commercial trade, infrastructure development and the sale of energy. Accordingly, they took the Shanghai Forum seriously and this attitude made possible the achievements of the Shanghai Forum and the establishment of the SCO.

The account thus supports the constructivist claim that social identities represent particular conceptions of self in relation to other actors, which determines interests and shapes one's decision. Agents and structures are mutually constituted. In this case, all parties share a common interest in wanting to avoid developing a negative identity with their neighbours and therefore took the appropriate steps to ensure that such an event would not occur. In this case, they worked actively to make sure issues that may cause friction be dealt with quickly and amicably.

Another base for common interest is the recognition of their common weaknesses in projecting influence as individual actors. At the international level, the Shanghai Five – and later Uzbekistan following its admission into the SCO - had an interest in boosting their international prestige. China wanted to revamp its international image following the Tiananmen Square student protest of 1989. As China's economic growth resumed, many people also began to see China as a potential threat. The Shanghai Forum and the SCO was thus seen as an ideal and practical instrument to reconstruct China's international image as a benign responsible international power instead of a threat to international peace and stability.¹⁵³

Russia also wanted to boost its international image following its economic decline. Continuing economic problems made it increasingly difficult for Russia to maintain its influence among the former Soviet countries and many people in the West began to dismiss Russia as a Third-world country except for its military might. Russia thus used the Shanghai Forum and the SCO as a means to regain some of its international prestige. The Central Asian Republics on their part wanted international recognition and attention so as to gain a higher international profile and to attract international investors to help develop their economy. They also needed international support in their effort to reduce their sole dependence on Russia and to legitimise their struggle against militant Islamic fundamentalism. They thus found that the collective voice offered by the Shanghai Forum and the SCO useful.

Here, we note another example of how agents and structures are mutually constituted with their interest in presenting a positive international identity affecting the states' behaviour. It is also another constructivist example of how identity can be shaped by one's interest.

¹⁵³ Lanxin Xiang in particular argues that China's long term, grand strategy of "peaceful rise" – the search for a safe way to enter the existing world system has the potential to be fulfilled on the Eurasian continent: Lanxin Xiang, "China's Eurasia Experiment," *Survival*, Vol. 46 No 2 (Summer 2004) Pp. 109-122.

Matthew Oresman also argues that Central Asia can be a new arena for the improvement of US-Sino relations as there are a lot of opportunities for cooperation between the two over the new security threats facing the region: Matthew Oresman, "Central Asia as the New Arena in U.S.-Sino Relations," *China Brief*, Vol IV, Issue 9, (Jamestown Foundation, 29 April 2004) www.jamestown.org/

6.1.2.2 Gradualist Approach

The gradualist approach the member states adopted allowed them to expand the area of cooperation as they gained trust and confidence in each other. This gradualist approach is very much an expression of the *self-stabilization hypothesis* of cooperation Hasenclever *et al* have used to describe Wendt's constructivist model for cooperation. At the beginning, the members only focused on one issue - developing confidence-building measures. Then, as they gained their trust in each other and confidence in what they could accomplish, they turned their attention to disarmament along their borders and demarcation negotiations. After addressing the border security issue, they expanded their attention to focus to Islamic fundamentalist threats, which all felt threaten by and economic cooperation, which they all require. Through consultation and coordination, they reached an agreement on an increasing number of issues. They endorsed mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence and this finally culminated in the creation of the SCO as the institutional body for member states to cooperate over the whole range of issues. The process of learning which is fundamental to socialization accounts for how the states gradually expand their areas of cooperation. It is clear that such cooperation indicate a shift in threat perception away from other members of the group to issues which threatens all group members.

6.1.2.3 Development of Shared Norms

The development of shared norms indicates the formation of a group identity. It supports the constructivist claim that once cooperation gains upward momentum, collective identification develops. The first SCO norm is the emphasis on state autonomy over internal affairs. The emphasis by the SCO members in combating *national splittism, ethnic exclusion* and *religious extremism* indicate the challenge these states face from their own population. In combating such non-traditional threats, they are vulnerable to external interference and even military intervention especially since they are all authoritarian, non-liberal regimes in power. This has contributed to their opposition to international intervention and joint emphasis of proper international conduct. The latter refers to mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, equality and non-interference in each other's internal affairs; and the solving of disputes and differences among the countries through friendly consultation. This

was first declared at the third Shanghai Forum summit in 1998 and reiterated as the principles of the SCO. In tandem with these principles, they also support the authority of the UN and the UN Charter.

Furthermore, the binding agreements on issues such as confidence building, disarmament and cooperation infrastructure and economic cooperation; the establishment of a working group to supervise implementation of the agreements and call for the formulation of a multilateral guideline for cooperation; and the increasing contacts between officials from different departments at various levels of their governments, including regular meetings of the defence ministers, of law enforcement officers, and of foreign ministers all indicate a maturing framework for regional cooperation which serves the interests of all the member states. Notably, the process of socialization among the political elite led to the development of the Shanghai Spirit, which is characterized by mutual trust, mutual advantage, equality, joint consultations, respect for cultural diversity and the desire for joint development. This thus has diplomatic value as an internal conflict management mechanism between the member states.

Identity is thus not restricted to one's own state, it can encompass a group of states if a positive identity is developed through the reference of others. In the case of the SCO, there are indications of a collective identity developing as a result of the shared norms which the member states acknowledged. By showing examples of how interaction among state actors can change their self-perception, this thesis supports the constructivist argument that there is a positive correlation between what actors do and what they are.

6.2 Theoretical Implications

6.2.1 Importance of Constructivism for Explaining Regional Cooperation

There is a noticeable relational change of a fundamental nature that took place between the members of the Shanghai Forum and the SCO. This can be traced to the change in the social environment, which in turn led to a reassessment of how the states identify with each other. In other words, the actors' values, preferences, beliefs

and definition of self are not rigid, instead they should be taken as variables if we are to understand the dynamics of international relations. This empirical evidence thus supports the constructivist claim that anarchy is not static. By focusing on how states can overcome the barriers created by anarchy rather than the barriers themselves, constructivism allows us to see that structural transformation is possible. In stressing the intersubjectivity of transnational identity, it exposes the limits of a strictly materialist analysis. In investigating the “how” and the “why”, constructivism gives us a more holistic interpretative account of the nature of cooperation as compared to rationalistic models of explanation.

6.2.2 Continued Relevance of Rationalist Approaches

The thesis has illustrated the usefulness of the constructivist approach in explaining the cooperation that is taking place among SCO members. However, while the socially based constructivist theory has shown how agents and structures are mutually constituted, we cannot ignore the material and rationalist explanations since interest and power also influences the pattern of relationship and the behaviour of the political elites of these countries. The initial basis for cooperation between the Shanghai Five was based on inter-state security concerns over boundaries; this indicates the relevance of rationalist argument on the traditional inter-state security threats in an anarchical international structure. It can be argued thus that the constructivist theory shares the same roots as the realist theories. The difference is that the former regard structure of the international system as fixed, that the barriers of anarchy cannot be overcome while constructivists believe they can be surmounted through the process of learning during socialization. In this way, ideational and material explanations do complement each other. Structural variables can help account for the barriers to transnational community, while inter-subjective ones can explain how the barriers imposed by anarchy can be gradually transcended. Focus is thus shifted from how interaction is played out within the confines of a static anarchical structure to one of how dynamic relationships can overcome this structure.

It has been mentioned that the SCO was set up to combat the new security threats, however, it has also been recognized that the SCO needs a “second track” which

mainly covers economy and trade, for its long-term survival.¹⁵⁴ This is in line with the constructivist explanation of the need for members to have many-sided direct interactions for a community to develop. Speeding up economic cooperation between states is the means to increasing cohesion of the group as it helps facilitate the members' shift from narrow self-interest to collective thinking through enhanced interaction and interdependence. Such a strategy also testifies that material considerations also play an important part (as expressed by commercial liberalism) in entrenching regional cooperation and in helping us understand the events. In fact, the SCO stands out considerably from other earlier variants of regional cooperation in Central Asia as the economically more powerful Russia and China - in relative terms to the Central Asian Republics – can act in combination as the locomotive of development in the region. The weakness of earlier forms of regional cooperation in Central Asia was that they lacked a powerful economy around which the economically weaker states could latch on.¹⁵⁵

Another point to note is that the formation of the collective identity and the establishment of the institutional norms is meant to preserve the distinctiveness and autonomy of the individual states. Common ground was found on the idea of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, equality and non-interference in each other's internal affairs; and the solving of disputes and differences among the countries through friendly consultation. Thus, collective identity formation is meant to supplement the individual states' identity and not to be regarded as a replacement them. Thus we can see how the smaller Central Asian Republics use the SCO framework as a means of ensuring security and autonomy from Russia and China by tying the latter two within the institutional framework. Furthermore, the organization which makes decisions based on consensus allows the Central Asian Republics autonomy by ensuring that the policies the SCO adopts are not dictated by any one state, be it Russia or China. Russia and China similarly use the SCO as a collective expression of their conviction towards state sovereignty and a multipolar world in the

¹⁵⁴ "SCO Spirit Takes Shape," *China Daily* (17 Jan 2004)

<http://www.beijingportal.com.cn/7838/2004/01/17/1380@1831024.htm> Last accessed 25 May 2004.

¹⁵⁵ Greg Austin, "European Union Policy Responses to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization," in Willem van der Geest (ed) *European Institute for Asian Studies (EIAS) Briefing Papers* (Brussels: EIAS, February 2004) <http://www.eias.org/publications/briefing/2002/sco.pdf> Last accessed 20 May 2004.

international scene. All these factors attest to the continued importance of national security as asserted by the realists.

6.2.3 The SCO and the Pluralistic Security Community Concept

As an infant organization still in the process of consolidation and development, the SCO members face more challenges after the inception of this regional security organization. With its formation, people have come to attach greater meaning and expectations to the promotion and maintenance of a formal organization, making the situation even more complicated and difficult than that of a mere conduit of dialogue.¹⁵⁶ The SCO possesses great potential for further development, but some real and underlying restraining factors should be taken into consideration as well, examination of these factors would also reveal lessons for the security community concept.

The establishment of the SCO indicates a nascent advance towards the establishment of a collective identity among the member states. If we accept the constructivist explanation that anarchy as a barrier to community can be overcome through socialization, would a logical conclusion be that it would inevitably lead to the development of a security community? The answer, using SCO as an indication, is no. First of all, in order for the SCO to succeed in forming a security community, we assume that the process of increased interaction both politically and economically would yield positive results. However, if such interactions begin to cause friction, the collective identity building may be undermined and there may be a back slide to negative identification between member states. Non-liberal democratic states - as is the case of SCO members - are more prone to abrupt reversals in policy-making. This is because the socialization of collective identities and the disposition for cooperation is confined mainly among the political elite. There is no feeling of “we-ness” that is being developed in their respective societies. Furthermore, governments in non-liberal democratic states hold almost absolute power in the political decision-making process

¹⁵⁶ Huasheng Zhao (2004) p 296; An example of high expectation and regard is from Austin who argues that “*No regional grouping, except perhaps the North American Free Trade (NAFTA) and the EU, dispose of such great potential as a regional grouping bringing together Russia and China...the SCO may well come to represent within a relatively short time a fundamental block in the international order.*” Austin (2004) Pp3-4.

and dissenting views tend to be eliminated rather than accepted as input into decision-making.

Thus, the structure of non-democratic communities are more fragile compared to liberal-democratic security communities since the latter have other pillars of support from the citizens and media if their government attempts to defect from the community or worst, initiate military conflict with the other members; the latter model is therefore more resilient. In other words liberal democratic systems have domestic structures that mitigate the chances of abrupt policy shifts which may undermine the community building process. While such liberal-democratic values which foster stability is not the defining feature of security communities, the existence of such values can certainly contribute strongly towards the community-building process.

Critics can turn the argument around to say that nationalistic domestic constituents may resist the creation of a transnational identity. If a sense of “we-ness” fails to develop between societies and the majority of the citizens still regard their community in nationalistic terms, then the security community is harder to create, as it would be met with domestic resistance. This is certainly correct, in shifting our focus from the structure (anarchy) to relationships, we identify another variable that acts as a potential barrier to community and that is the conception of sovereignty among the political elite and the grassroots. State nationalism is therefore an impediment against the formation of a transnational identity. Identity is thus the impediment that restricts cooperation. Such an observation is of particular relevance to the SCO case study and reveals the enormity of the community-building task ahead for the member states and the challenge in establishing a pan-level transnational identity.

This thesis has focused primarily on systemic variables by examining how the interaction between state elites can lead to the development of transnational identities. This is useful for the purpose of my research in examining the link between the agent and the structure. However, a levels-of-analysis approach with the deeper examination of the domestic politics within the states could give us a clearer picture on the formation of security communities. The notion of Russia and China developing a common sense of “we-ness” within their grassroots level is difficult to envisage.

Russia, which geographically spans from Europe into Asia may not be able to adopt “one common identity”. Similarly, in China, the level of common identification among the population is fragmented, between the rural and the urban population and between the population in Western China and those in the coastal areas in the East.¹⁵⁷ Another obstacle is that the two countries pride themselves as two distinctive “civilisations” thereby making the formation of a new transnational identity even more problematic since the citizens are likely to resist any transnational identification they think may overshadow their nationalistic identity.

More emphasise should therefore be given to geographical factors in the analysis of security communities as it raises questions about the possible limitations of transnational identification. This is not to claim that geography *determines*, but that it *affects* the security community building process in geographically large states such as Russia and China. We may ask a provocative question here: can a non-liberal system of government dominated by the political elite carry forward the security community project better than a liberal one in geographically expansive states where attempts to develop a sense of community may be met with resistance of certain far-flung regions/provinces within such respective countries?

¹⁵⁷ On the subject of identity, it is also unlikely that the Central Asian citizens, having gained their independence from the Soviet Union and being still in the nascent process of national identity formation would be able or willing to embrace a regional identity based on the SCO so quickly.

7. CONCLUSION

Realists scholars have put limits to cooperation between states. They point to the anarchic international system where there is no overarching government to implement rules and guarantee the safety of states as the primary reason why states have to rely on self-help as a means of achieving national security and enhancing state interest. According to such thinking, cooperation between states is limited in scope and often temporary in nature since states are always distrustful of each other. For realists thus, the notion of “community” is bounded by the territorial state; the belief is that there is little possibility of a community beyond state borders.

However, the concept of a transnational community is increasingly entering into the international relations lexicon as a basis for understanding interaction between states in the post-Cold War era. Such a conception has been facilitated by the growing recognition that security in an increasingly globalised and interdependent world can no longer be attained as non-traditional threats which are typically transnational in nature are posing increasing challenges to states and the only way to overcome such challenges is through cooperation. Furthermore, the failure of realism in anticipating and fully accounting for the sudden end of the Cold War rivalry has also led to questions regarding the validity of realist theory and its relevance in the post-Cold War era.

This thesis examined the dynamics behind the formation of post-Cold War regional security organizations dealing with non-traditional threats. In doing so, it has also allowed for the discussion of the security community concept in relation to institutionalized regional security cooperation since those who support the post-Cold War security community concept argue that a socialization process occurs when a group of states cooperate to overcome a commonly perceived threat or enemy. They argue that this leads to the creation of a collective identity and may ultimately lead to a sense of community (or “we-ness”) within the cooperating states and pacific relations among them.

Theories of cooperation can be divided into three different theoretical fields: (1) Power-based theories; (2) Interest based theories and (3) Knowledge-based theories.

Using the SCO as a case study and in tracing its evolutionary process via the Shanghai Forum, we find that the rationalist explanations from power and interest-based theories are not able to fully account for the cooperation that is taking place between Russia, China and the Central Asian Republics. The empirical evidence has shown China and Russia collaborating with the Shanghai Forum and the SCO framework to avoid negative competition in Central Asia. Similarly, the interest-based explanation is not able to explain satisfactorily why other regional cooperation initiatives were of limited effectiveness and success compared to the Shanghai Forum and the SCO. For instance, why is it that the Central Asian Republics with traditional historical and economic ties to Russia have been attempting to break Russia's dominance in the region and to allow China to put a foot in the region via the SCO? These factors suggest that material considerations alone are not adequate in explaining the dynamics of regional cooperation among the SCO member states.

In comparison to the rationalist theories, the knowledge-based, mainly constructivist account is able to offer a better explanation since it takes into account ideational factors in its explanatory framework. The change in their social environment resulting in them identifying a common interest in working together, the gradualist approach in widening areas of cooperation and the subsequent development of group norms for their international conduct all contributed to the development of a positive common identity among the member states which allows for closer cooperation between the SCO member states.

This is evidenced from their gradual emphasise from traditional to non-traditional security cooperation. Security concerns which were initially directed at each other has gradually being replace by another set of security issues which threatens them all. There is a noticeable relational change of a fundamental nature that took place between the members of the Shanghai Forum and the SCO. This can be traced to the change in the social environment, which in turn led to a reassessment of how the states identify with each other.

Empirical evidence thus supports the constructivist claim that anarchy is not static. By focusing on how states can overcome the barriers created by anarchy rather than the barriers themselves, constructivism allows us to see that structural transformation is

possible. In stressing the intersubjectivity of transnational identity, it exposes the limits of a strictly materialist analysis. In investigating the “how” and the “why”, constructivism gives us a more holistic interpretative account of the nature of cooperation as compared to rationalistic models of explanation.

However, the case study has also highlighted the continued relevance of rationalist approaches. The anarchical international structure is still an important consideration for states. The difference is that the former regard structure of the international system as fixed, that the barriers of anarchy cannot be overcome while constructivists believe it can be surmounted through the process of learning during socialization. The economic emphasis of the SCO also highlights the importance of material considerations which helps facilitate the socialization process. The formation of collective identity and the establishment of norms among SCO members is meant to preserve their distinct national identity and autonomy which again further shows the continued importance of national security as attested by the realists.

As an infant organization, the SCO faces challenges that offer insights into security community building among illiberal states. Firstly, being primarily a project among the political elite, the SCO grouping is fragile as the community-building project can be easily undermined by abrupt reversals among the political elite. Without a citizenry or open society to support a community-building enterprise, the project is less resilient compared to community building projects in liberal democratic countries as the former is only based on one pillar of support. Thus, one may argue that while liberal democratic values is not the defining feature of security communities, it certainly contributes strongly to the community-building process.

Secondly, it is also acknowledged that that domestic resistance could also reverse the community-building project and this is particularly problematic for geographically expansive states such as Russia and China since it is difficult to build create a shared sense of community based on a common identity. In sum, more research should be carried out in examining the domestic factors that affect security community-building among illiberal states.

To end on a positive note, there are some important lessons in conflict management and regional cooperation that can be drawn from the SCO experience. Its achievements should not be underestimated. It has managed to create a basis for establishing a firm foundation for cooperation between formerly antagonistic countries – Russia and China - in a relatively short period of time, establish diplomatic norms within member states and initiated a promising Central Asian regional identity, at least among the political elite. This process is especially relevant to those with border disputes: first, all parties share the willingness to resolve the border dispute so that dialogue could be initiated; secondly, security can be enhanced through confidence-building measures and border disarmament; upon arrival at this point of agreement, the momentum of socialization generated through the interaction between the political and military officials from all sides should continue and gradually expand negotiation and cooperation into other contentious issues. From an empirical perspective, the SCO thus offers its own accomplishment as inspiration for defusing tension in the Korean peninsula region, over the Kashmir issue between India-Pakistan and the Golan Heights between Israel and Syria.

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APPENDIX A - MAP OF CENTRAL ASIA

Members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.



[Political Map of Central Asia, 2003](#)

[Courtesy of the Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection](#)

Last accessed 25 May 2004