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ASIAN NATIONS (2001-2022)**

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**СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВО В РЕГИОНАЛЬНОЙ БЕЗОПАСНОСТИ МЕЖДУ
ШАНХАЙСКОЙ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЕЙ СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВА И
АССОЦИАЦИЕЙ СТРАН ЮГО-ВОСТОЧНОЙ АЗИИ (2001-2022 гг.)**

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на соискание ученой степени
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INTRODUCTION

The relevance of this dissertation is defined by the increasing contribution and influence of regional organizations in ensuring peace and security, and their role in building a multipolar world. Strategic coordination between the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which have created a network of dialogue partners and observers among the largest and most influential countries in the world, is critically important for addressing common regional security challenges.

Additionally, understanding the approaches of regional international organizations to security challenges such as terrorism, drug trafficking, and human trafficking is pertinent. This understanding illuminates alternative paradigms for building regional cooperation, focusing on the concepts of sovereignty, non-interference, and inclusivity, and proposing new methodologies for resolving geopolitical issues.

The interaction between regional organizations like the SCO and ASEAN has significant impacts and substantial consequences for global political processes, opening new perspectives in the study of regionalism and international relations, which undoubtedly highlights the relevance of this research.

Security cooperation between the SCO and ASEAN provides a deeper understanding of collective strategies to address regional security challenges in the Global South. It also reveals potential models for enhancing cooperation between regional organizations in different parts of the world beyond Eurasia and Southeast Asia. The emergence of alternative models of international security cooperation diversifies the strategic options available to countries in the Global South, allowing them to maintain the integrity of their political systems and strategic autonomy amidst growing competition among great powers.

Furthermore, the study of security cooperation between the SCO and ASEAN allows for the expansion of the level and scope of current high-level ties between the

secretariats, moving towards more specific areas of security. Such an increase in forms of interaction will enable both organizations to undertake concrete actions and steps, leading to more targeted and coordinated solutions to regional security problems.

Interaction between the SCO and ASEAN can open opportunities for functional cooperation, such as information exchange, the transfer of best practices, and training programs. This cooperation can significantly enhance the operational capabilities of member states. It also creates a foundation for a more integrated and effective approach to regional security issues.

The study of interaction between ASEAN and the SCO, and the development of non-Western models of integration and cooperation, expands the scientific discourse on regional cooperation and can offer practical steps and structures for future interaction.

Literature Review. The author examined scientific material written in English and Russian. The historiographical review is categorized into five primary divisions according to the specific aspects of the topic.

The *first group of sources* consists of general studies on regionalism, focusing on its history, forms, drivers, and dynamics. This section of the literature focuses on authors who have addressed the complexities of regionalism as a phenomenon in international relations. Their works collectively emphasize the evolving nature of regionalism, its interaction with global dynamics, and its multi-dimensional aspects. These authors include G. Barbieri¹, P. Katzenstein², A.P. Rana³, T. Risse⁴, A. Jetschke

¹ *Barbieri G.* Regionalism, globalism, and complexity: a stimulus towards global IR? // *Third World Thematics: A TWQ Journal*. 2019. Vol. 4. № 6. Pp. 424–441.

² *Katzenstein P.* Regionalism in Comparative Perspective // *Cooperation and Conflict*. 1996. Vol. 31. № 2. Pp. 123–159.

³ *Rana A.P.* Regionalism as an Approach to International Order: a Conceptual Overview // *International Studies*. 1979. Vol. 18. № 4. Pp. 491–535.

⁴ *Risse T.* The Diffusion of Regionalism // *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Regionalism* / eds. T.A. Börzel, T. Risse: Oxford University Press, 2016. Pp. 87–108.

and T. Lenz⁵, K. Lahteenmaki and J. Kakonen⁶, J. Selleslaghs and L. Van Langenhove⁷, E. Best and T. Christiansen⁸, K. Graham and T. Feliciano⁹, A. Hurrell¹⁰, E. Stadtmuller¹¹, and F. Mellado¹².

L. Fawcett¹³ highlights the significance of regionalism in international relations, tracing its development back to global movements. She examines the evolving function of regional institutions concerning global power transitions, especially with the rise of new powers. She posits that regionalism has become a significant aspect of international relations, with a global presence and a role as part of a hybrid multilateral system rather than a replacement for states or global institutions.

Building on Fawcett’s points, A. Acharya¹⁴ emphasizes the importance of social constructivism and critical theoretical approaches in understanding regionalism in the global context. He advocates for a comprehensive interpretation of regionalism, considering non-state entities, informal associations, and the influence of globalization.

⁵ *Jetschke A., Lenz T.* Does regionalism diffuse? A new research agenda for the study of regional organizations // *Journal of European Public Policy*. 2013. Vol. 20. № 4. Pp. 626–637.

⁶ *Lahteenmaki K., Kakonen J.* Regionalization and its Impact on the Theory of International Relations // *Globalism and the New Regionalism* / eds. B. Hettne, A. Inotai, O. Sunkel. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1999. Pp. 203–227.

⁷ *Selleslaghs J., Van Langenhove L.* The Rise of Regions: Introduction to Regional Integration & Organisations // *The Changing Global Order* / eds. M. Hosli, J. Selleslaghs. Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2019. Pp. 147–162.

⁸ *Best E., Christiansen T.* Regionalism in international affairs // *The Globalization of World Politics* / eds. J. Baylis, S. Smith, P. Owens: Oxford University Press, 2023. Vol. Pp. 355–373.

⁹ *Graham K., Feliciano T.* Complexities of Regionalism // *Regional security and global governance: A Proposal for a ‘Regional-Global Security Mechanism’ in Light of the UN High-Level Panel’s Report*: Egmont Institute, 2005. Pp. 14–16.

¹⁰ *Hurrell A.* The Regional Dimension in International Relations Theory // *Global Politics of Regionalism: Theory and Practice* / eds. M. Farrell, L. Van Langenhove, B. Hettne: Pluto Press, 2005. Pp. 38–53.

¹¹ *Stadtmuller E.* Regional Dimensions of Security // *Global Politics of Regionalism: Theory and Practice* / eds. M. Farrell, L. Van Langenhove, B. Hettne: Pluto Press, 2005. Pp. 104–109.

¹² *Mellado F.* Post-Cold War Regionalism as Explained in International Relations: A Critical Essay // *Rivista Di Studi Politici Internazionali*. 2011. Vol. 78. № 4. Pp. 579–589.

¹³ *Fawcett L.* The History and Concept of Regionalism [Electronic resource]. URL: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2193746 (date accessed: 21.09.2023).

¹⁴ *Acharya A.* Comparative Regionalism: A Field Whose Time has Come? // *The International Spectator*. 2012. Vol. 47. № 1. Pp. 3–15.

This is crucial for understanding the regional security collaboration between the SCO and ASEAN.

Contextualizing the impact of regional organizations and their institutional mechanisms, M. Beeson's book "Regionalism and Globalization in East Asia: Politics, Security and Economic Development"¹⁵ discusses the progress and challenges of East Asian regional institutionalization, highlighting the ASEAN+3 initiative as a critical regional institution. Beeson provides a comprehensive account of ASEAN's origins and institutional features, emphasizing its emphasis on both internal and regional security. Additionally, Beeson explores ASEAN's unique approach, the 'ASEAN Way,' which involves consensus-building and non-interference.

The *second group* is represented by studies on regional security organizations, focusing on their types, organizational structure, and functions. This literature section examines authors who have discussed the significance of regional organizations in advancing regional security cooperation. Their commonality lies in their focus on how these organizations influence regional security dynamics and the broader implications of their activities and structures. These authors include M. Legrenzi and F. Lawson¹⁶, S.N. MacFarlane and T.G. Weiss¹⁷, M. Legrenzi and F. Lawson¹⁸, D. Amable¹⁹,

¹⁵ *Beeson M.* Regionalism and Globalization in East Asia: Politics, Security and Economic Development: Red Globe, 2014. Pp. 204-221.

¹⁶ *Legrenzi M., Lawson F.* Regional Security Complexes and Organizations // *The Oxford Handbook of International Security* / eds. A. Gheciu, W. Wohlforth. Oxford, England, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2018. Pp. 859-874.

¹⁷ *MacFarlane S. N., Weiss T.G.* Regional Organizations and Regional Security // *Security Studies*. 1992. Vol. 2. № 1. Pp. 6-37.

¹⁸ *Legrenzi M., Lawson F.* Regional Security Complexes and Organizations // *The Oxford Handbook of International Security* / eds. A. Gheciu, W. Wohlforth. Oxford, England, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2018. Pp. 859-874.

¹⁹ *Amable D.S.* Theorizing the Emergence of Security Regions: An Adaptation for the Regional Security Complex Theory // *Global Studies Quarterly*. 2022. Vol. 2. № 4. Pp. 1-10.

H. Dorussen and E. Kirchner²⁰; S. Aleksovski et al.²¹; A. Valenciano and A. Arugay²², A. Bailes and A. Cottey²³, Y.Z. Haftel and S. C. Hofmann²⁴, R. Kelly²⁵, D. Frazier and R. Stewart-Ingersoll²⁶, and A. Pennisi di Floristella²⁷.

A. Ba's²⁸ research is crucial for understanding the intricacies of Asia's regional security institutions. She analyzes the organizational frameworks, operational roles, and consequences of regional security organizations in Asia, including the SCO and ASEAN. Ba's comparative analysis elucidates these organizations' distinctive characteristics and impact on security cooperation.

In line with Ba's work, C. Chung's article "The Role of Asia-Pacific Organizations in Preserving Regional Security"²⁹ provides valuable insights into regional security dynamics in Asia. Chung argues that regional security groupings are vital for enhancing security and promoting states' welfare through cooperation and coordination. He examines the efficiency and organization of the SCO and ASEAN,

²⁰ *Dorussen H., Kirchner E.J.* Better a good neighbor than a distant friend: the scope and impact of regional security organizations // *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*. 2013. Vol. 14. № 1. Pp. 117–146.

²¹ *Aleksovski S., Bakreski O., Avramovska B.* Collective Security – The Role of International Organizations – Implications in International Security Order // *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*. 2014. Pp. 274-282.

²² *Valenciano A.K. B., Arugay A.A.* Regional Security Organizations // *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Global Security Studies*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022. Pp. 1–8.

²³ *Bailes A.J.K., Cottey A.* Regional security cooperation in the early 21st century // *SIPRI Yearbook 2006 Armaments, Disarmament, and International Security: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute*, 2006. Pp. 195–223.

²⁴ *Haftel Y.Z., Hofmann S.C.* Institutional authority and security cooperation within regional economic organizations // *Journal of Peace Research*. 2017. Vol. 54. № 4. Pp. 484–498.

²⁵ *Kelly R.E.* Security Theory in the “New Regionalism” // *International Studies Review*. 2007. Vol. 9. № 2. Pp. 197–229.

²⁶ *Frazier D., Stewart-Ingersoll R.* Regional powers and security: A framework for understanding order within regional security complexes // *European Journal of International Relations*. 2010. Vol. 16. № 4. Pp. 731–753.

²⁷ *Pennisi di Floristella A.* Are non-traditional security challenges leading regional organizations towards greater convergence? // *Asia Europe Journal*. 2012. Vol. 11. № 1. Pp. 21–38.

²⁸ Ba A. Asia's Regional Security Institutions // *The Oxford Handbook of the International Relations of Asia* / eds. S. Pekkanen, J. Ravenhill, R. Foot: Oxford University Press, 2014. Pp. 667–689.

²⁹ *Chung C.* The role of Asia–Pacific organizations in maintaining regional security // *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*. 2008. T. 20. № 2. C. 169–185.

highlighting that the SCO exhibits more effectiveness and a more well-organized framework than ASEAN.

However, Asian regionalism has its pitfalls. In the article "The Dark Side of Regionalism: How Regional Organizations Authoritarian Regimes to Boost Survival,³⁰" M. J. Debre discusses how autocratic states use regional organization membership to strengthen their regime security against internal and external challenges. She identifies four key survival strategies of authoritarian regimes: legitimation, repression, co-optation, and international appeasement.

The *third group* of Russian historiographies is represented by studies on the role of the SCO in regional security, focusing on Russia's interactions with China, Central Asia, and ASEAN countries. This section of the literature study focuses on the contributions of Russian scientists who have examined many aspects of international relations, such as security, economic cooperation, and elements of soft power. The researchers' works comprehensively analyze the possibilities and difficulties in the economic connections between Russia and ASEAN. They attribute the intricacies to internal geopolitical changes and external influences such as sanctions. These authors include S.V. Sevastyanov³¹, V. Sumsky³², A.V. Lukin³³, E.V. Koldunova³⁴,

³⁰ *Debre M.J.* The dark side of regionalism: how regional organizations help authoritarian regimes to boost survival // Democratization. 2020. Vol. 28. № 2. Pp. 394–413.

³¹ *Севастьянов С.В.* Дуализм интеграционных проектов как определяющая черта формирующегося региона Восточной Азии и перспективы российского участия // Территория новых возможностей. 2009. Т. 2. № 2. С. 22–31.

³² *Sumsky V.* Modernization of Russia, East Asia Politics, and the ASEAN Factor // International Affairs. 2010. Pp. 18–22.

³³ *Lukin A.* Russia to Reinforce the Asian Vector [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://eng.globalaffairs.ru/articles/russia-to-reinforce-the-asian-vector/> (date accessed: 26.08.2023).

³⁴ *Е.В. Колдунова* Азиатский мультилатерализм: проверка на прочность [Электронный ресурс]. URL: <https://asean.mgimo.ru/opinions/koldunova-asian-multilateralism-riac-08-22> (дата обращения: 26.11.2023).

S. Karaganov³⁵, A. Bukh³⁶, E.S. Martynova³⁷, M. Konarovksy³⁸, O. Khlopov³⁹, I. Troninskaya and T. Tarakanova⁴⁰, M. Starchak⁴¹, and A. Kopturov⁴².

Highlighting the role of Russia as a significant player in Eurasia, V.I. Yurtaev⁴³ analyzes the diverse goals of Eurasian countries, including Christian doctrines, dedication to the Ummah in the Islamic community, Russia's unique messianic views, and China's willingness to take responsibility for world advancement. In addition, he emphasizes the significance of geopolitical and cultural identities in Eurasian integration, namely Iran's goal of establishing a trilateral alliance with China and Russia.

In bringing institutional context to Yurtaev's work, A. Rozanov⁴⁴ notes that the SCO manifests a pluralistic security community in Eurasia, which relies on multilateral negotiation mechanisms to maintain military, political, and economic stability. He

³⁵ *Karaganov C.C.* Востока на Запад, или Большая Евразия [Электронный ресурс]. URL: <https://globalaffairs.ru/articles/s-vostoka-na-zapad-ili-bolshaya-evraziya/> (дата обращения: 30.08.2023).

³⁶ *Bukh A.* Russia's Image and Soft Power Resources in Southeast Asia: Perceptions among Young Elites in Laos, Thailand and Vietnam // *Contemporary Southeast Asia*. 2016. Vol. 38. № 3. Pp. 445-475.

³⁷ *Martynova E.S.* Strengthening of Cooperation Between Russia and ASEAN: Rhetoric or Reality? // *Asian Politics & Policy*. 2014. Vol. 6. № 3. Pp. 397–412.

³⁸ *Konarovksy M.* Russia and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization: Some Elements of Strategy // *International Organisations Research Journal*. 2016. Vol. 11. № 4. Pp. 149–161.

³⁹ *Khlopov O.* The role of Russia and China in the Shanghai cooperation organization in the light of the institutional balance theory // *National Security and Strategic Planning*. 2022. Vol. 3. № 39. Pp. 34–42.

⁴⁰ *Troninskaya I., Tarakanova T.* The Shanghai Cooperation Organization activity for the Purpose of Regional Security // 4th International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on Social Sciences and Arts SGEM2017, Modern Science. 2017.

⁴¹ *Старчак М.* Шанхайская организация сотрудничества: возможности для России // *Центральная Азия и Кавказ*. 2011. Vol 14. № 2. Pp. 149-159.

⁴² *Коптуров А.М.* Шанхайская организация сотрудничества: противоречия в XXI веке / А.М. Коптуров / *Экономическая наука и практика: материалы VII Международной научной конференции Краснодар, февраль 2019 г.* Краснодар: Новация, 2019. С. 13-15.

⁴³ *Юртаев В.И.* К вопросу о роли России в формировании идеологии евразийской интеграции // *Большая Евразия: развитие, безопасность, сотрудничество*. 2020. Т. 3. № 1. С. 268–270.

⁴⁴ *Rozanov A.* The issue of security in the SCO // *The Shanghai Cooperation Organization and Central Asia's Security Challenges* / ed. A. Rozanov: Geneva Center for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2013. Pp. 37-49.

mentions Eurasia's geopolitically diverse character, with the contradictions between regional states precluding the establishment of a centralized security architecture characterized by formal military and political alliances.

Further, S.G. Luzyanin and E.I. Safronova⁴⁵ discuss the growing influence of the SCO, particularly China and Russia's contributions to the organization's elevation. They mention that the SCO has expanded its observer institution and created a group of dialogue partners, including ASEAN, amplifying its global influence. However, they note that the SCO's regional foundation remains dominant, and there are challenges in the security sphere, particularly in Central Asia. They explore integrating bilateral projects into multilateral cooperation and the congruence and divergence of trade-economic interests between China and other SCO countries.

In comparing the SCO and ASEAN's approaches to maintaining regional security, E.A. Kanaev⁴⁶ provides a comprehensive understanding of ASEAN's strategies and approaches to security cooperation within the broader context of Greater Eurasia. This analysis allows for a comparative study of ASEAN and other Eurasian integration efforts, enabling a deeper understanding of how ASEAN's strategies and approaches differ from or align with those of the SCO and other regional entities.

In connection to the SCO and ASEAN being part of the Greater Eurasia concept, N.V. Fedorov⁴⁷ delves into the strategic enhancement of the SCO interactions within the Greater Eurasian Partnership, highlighting ASEAN's pivotal role. He emphasizes the nascent but promising cooperation between the SCO and ASEAN, recognizing ASEAN's rapid economic development and strategic position in regional integration efforts. His discussion acknowledges the challenges in deepening this cooperation, particularly the necessity for extensive agreements and the currently modest levels of

⁴⁵ *Лузянин С., Сафронова Е.* Роль Китая и России в «возвышении» ШОС. Проблемы и возможности // Региональная Политика. М.: МГИМО–Университет, 2015. С. 81–85.

⁴⁶ *Канаев Е.* Sources of ASEAN's Success and Emergence of Greater Eurasia // International Trends / Mezhdunarodnye protsessy. 2017. Vol. 15. № 3(50). Pp. 81–89.

⁴⁷ *Федоров Н. В.* Взаимодействие с АСЕАН в рамках Большого Евразийского партнерства // Юго-Восточная Азия: актуальные проблемы развития. 2020. Том 3. № 3 (48). Сс. 40–49.

economic exchange between the EAEU and ASEAN. He frames Russia's strategic orientation towards Asia and its policy diversification as crucial motivations for seeking stronger SCO-ASEAN ties. Further, he illustrates ASEAN's strategy of broadening its international engagements, indicating a mutual interest in expanding SCO-ASEAN cooperation within the broader Eurasian context.

Further, E.A. Kanaev and E.A. Vaseneva⁴⁸ explore the potential and challenges of enhancing business cooperation between the SCO and ASEAN through their respective business councils. They discuss the prospects of synergizing efforts between the ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ASEAN BAC) and the SCO Business Council (SCO BC), emphasizing the possibility of significant progress only if these efforts align with China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). They note that with the formal establishment of dialogue mechanisms since 2005, business collaboration between ASEAN and SCO remains limited, constrained by a lack of substantial regionalization and practical business engagement. They argue that meaningful cooperation between ASEAN BAC and SCO BC is unlikely without China's influence and control, facilitated through the BRI framework. They conclude that regional business cooperation is contingent upon aligning with larger geopolitical projects, with the BRI being the most viable facilitator of ASEAN-SCO business interactions.

The *fourth group* is devoted to authors and scholars exploring how the SCO and ASEAN approach regional security challenges. These scholars employ a multidisciplinary methodology, integrating political science, international relations theory, and regional studies, to thoroughly understand how the SCO and ASEAN address regional security concerns. These authors include B. He⁴⁹, D.M. Jones and N.

⁴⁸ Kanaev E.A., Vaseneva E.A. Business Cooperation between ASEAN and SCO: The Institutional Dimension. Yugo-Vostochnaya Aziya: aktual'nyye problemy razvitiya. 2021. Tom. 2. № 2 (51). Pp. 79–91

⁴⁹ He B. Contested Ideas of Regionalism in Asia. New York, United States of America: Routledge, 2016. Pp. 133-155.

Jenne⁵⁰, R. Buendia⁵¹, R. Sukma⁵², J.A. Hessbruegge⁵³, R. Stubbs⁵⁴, D. Kerr⁵⁵, H. Psikolitikta et al.⁵⁶, R. Khalafyan⁵⁷, J. Haacke and P. Williams⁵⁸, A. Aksu⁵⁹, and G. Battams-Scott⁶⁰.

P. Guang⁶¹ analyzes the SCO's role in regional security. The SCO focuses on collaboration in trade, transportation, environmental preservation, and cultural cooperation, which is crucial for understanding the SCO's role in Asia's security framework. The SCO is a promising framework for addressing territorial conflicts, and its centralized security approach contrasts with ASEAN's decentralized and dialogue-based strategy. Guang's research also examines the impact of global powers like China and Russia within the SCO.

⁵⁰ *Jones D.M., Jenne N.* Weak states' regionalism: ASEAN and the limits of security cooperation in Pacific Asia // *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*. 2015. Vol. 16. № 2. Pp. 209–240.

⁵¹ *Buendia R.* ASEAN 'Cohesiveness and Responsiveness' and Peace and Stability in Southeast Asia [Electronic resource] URL: <https://www.e-ir.info/2020/07/21/can-asean-cohesiveness-and-responsiveness-secure-peace-and-stability-in-southeast-asia/>. (date accessed: 30.08.2023).

⁵² *Sukma R.* ASEAN And Regional Security In East Asia. Singapore, Singapore: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2009. https://www.kas.de/documents/252038/253252/Panorama_2-2010_SecurityPolitics_Sukma.pdf/f403d654-428e-0632-1daa-4cdb12de4765 (date accessed: 30.08.2023).

⁵³ *Hessbruegge J.* The Shanghai Cooperation Organization: A Holy Alliance For Central Asia? // *Al Nakhlah*. 2014. Pp. 1–9.

⁵⁴ *Stubbs R.* ASEAN's leadership in East Asian region-building: strength in weakness // *The Pacific Review*. 2014. Vol. 27. № 4. Pp. 523–541.

⁵⁵ *Kerr D.* Central Asian and Russian perspectives on China's strategic emergence // *International Affairs*. 2010. Vol. 86. № 1. Pp. 127–152.

⁵⁶ *Psikolitikta H.* et al. ASEAN Intelligence Cooperation Qua Regional Constellation Preventive: An Enigma // *The International Journal of Humanities & Social Studies*. 2020. Vol. 8. № 5. Pp. 169-175.

⁵⁷ *Khalafyan R.* Shanghai Cooperation Organisation: Reassessment of the Priorities Against the Background of Old Problems and New Challenges. Book Review: «The Shanghai Cooperation Organization: Exploring New Horizons» // *International Organisations Research Journal*. 2023. Vol. 18. № 1. Pp. 232–237.

⁵⁸ *Haacke J., Williams P.* Regional Arrangements and Security Challenges: A Comparative Analysis. London, UK: London School of Economics, 2009.

⁵⁹ *Aksu A.* China's Growing Role in Regional Institutions: Application of Institutional Realism to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) // *The Maastricht Journal of Liberal Arts*. 2017. Vol. 8. Pp. 3–12.

⁶⁰ *Battams-Scott G.* How Effective Is the SCO as a Tool for Chinese Foreign Policy? [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.e-ir.info/2019/02/26/how-effective-is-the-sco-as-a-tool-for-chinese-foreign-policy/>. (date accessed: 29.01.2024)

⁶¹ *Guang P.* The SCO's Success in Security Architecture // *The Architecture of Security in the Asia-Pacific*, 2009. Pp. 33–44.

In highlighting how regional organizations like the SCO and ASEAN shape their respective strategic environments, K. Ho Chun⁶² proposes implementing an autonomous security mechanism inside ASEAN to effectively tackle non-traditional security concerns and internal conflicts while recognizing the impact of external powers. However, he notes that ASEAN's effectiveness as a security institution is hindered by obstacles such as state sovereignty, preference for bilateral relations, and limitations of the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC) Blueprint.

Reiterating Ho Chun's points, R. Sukma⁶³ highlights ASEAN's role in promoting cooperation and trust-building among Southeast Asian countries. He highlights ASEAN's role in fostering collaboration and trust-building among Southeast Asian countries, shaping regional security architecture through participation in multilateral institutions like the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and EAS. However, he warns that ASEAN's current model may not address strategic challenges in East Asia, requiring improvements in its Charter and initiatives.

The *fifth group* comprises authors who specifically examine the dynamics of regional security cooperation between the SCO and ASEAN. These authors investigate the underlying motivations, strategies, and effectiveness of such cooperation at various levels, often considering the influence of external powers. They explore the complexities of geopolitics, geo-economics, and socio-cultural factors that influence the nature and extent of security cooperation. Their research identifies synergies and differences between SCO and ASEAN mechanisms, contributing to practical regional

⁶² Chung C. The role of Asia–Pacific organizations in maintaining regional security // Korean Journal of Defense Analysis. 2008. Vol. 20. № 2. Pp. 169–185.

⁶³ Sukma R. ASEAN And Regional Security In East Asia. Singapore, Singapore: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2009. https://www.kas.de/documents/252038/253252/Panorama_2-2010_SecurityPolitics_Sukma.pdf/f403d654-428e-0632-1daa-4cdb12de4765 (date accessed: 30.08.2023).

security collaboration discourse. These authors include M. Clarke⁶⁴, S. Simon⁶⁵, S.F. Hasnat and Z. Awan⁶⁶, A. Gerstl⁶⁷, D. Arase⁶⁸, M.I. Qadir and S. Rehman⁶⁹, N. Ganesan⁷⁰, W. Song⁷¹, S. Averianov⁷², C. Hughes⁷³, F. Egberink and F.P. Putten⁷⁴, and P. Murray⁷⁵.

In discussing the philosophical foundations of the Shanghai Spirit and ASEAN Way. S.A. Bokeria and G. Honrada⁷⁶ provide valuable insights into the reactions of both organizations toward Western normative influence and their strategies for promoting regionalism. Understanding their norms and values is crucial for comprehending their approaches to regional security and alternative regional and

⁶⁴ *Clarke M.* China and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization: The Dynamics of “New Regionalism”, “Vassalization”, and Geopolitics in Central Asia // *The New Central Asia*. 2010. Pp. 117–147.

⁶⁵ *Simon S.* ASEAN and Multilateralism: The Long, Bumpy Road to Community // *Contemporary Southeast Asia*. 2008. Vol. 30. № 2. Pp. 264–292.

⁶⁶ *Hasnat S.F., Awan Z.* Shanghai Cooperation Organization as a Platform for Regional Understanding: Its Economic, Political and Security Potential // *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs*. 2016. Vol. 21. № 1. Pp. 83–100.

⁶⁷ *Gerstl A.* The China Factor in Regional Security Cooperation The ASEAN Regional Forum and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization // *Austrian Journal of South-East Asian Studies*. 2008. Vol. 1. Pp. 118–139.

⁶⁸ *Arase D.* Non-Traditional Security in China-ASEAN Cooperation: The Institutionalization of Regional Security Cooperation and the Evolution of East Asian Regionalism // *Asian Survey*. 2010. Vol. 50. № 4. Pp. 808–833.

⁶⁹ *Qadir M.I., Rehman S.* Expansion of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Harbinger of Regional Peace and Prosperity // *Journal of Political Studies*. 2006. Vol. 23. № 1. Pp. 117–132.

⁷⁰ *Ganesan N.* ASEAN’s Relations with Major External Powers // *Contemporary Southeast Asia*. 2000. Vol. 22. № 2. Pp. 258–278.

⁷¹ *Song W.* Interests, Power and China’s Difficult Game in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) // *Journal of Contemporary China*. 2013. Vol. 23. № 85. Pp. 85–101.

⁷² *Averianov S.* Security aspect of Asean-China relations in South-East Asia // *Bulletin of Mariupol State University. Series: History. Political Studies*. 2020. Vol. 10. № 28–29. Pp. 133–143.

⁷³ *Hughes C.R.* New Security Dynamics in the Asia-Pacific: Extending Regionalism from Southeast to Northeast Asia // *The International Spectator*. 2007. Vol. 42. № 3. Pp. 319–335.

⁷⁴ *Egberink F., Putten F.P.* ASEAN and Strategic Rivalry among the Great Powers in Asia // *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*. 2010. Vol. 29. № 3. Pp. 131–141.

⁷⁵ *Murray P.* Managing Security: Reimagining ASEAN’s Regional Role // *Asian Studies Review*. 2019. Vol. 44. № 1. Pp. 44–60.

⁷⁶ *Honrada G.J.P., Bokeria S.A.* The Shanghai Spirit and the ASEAN Way as the Foundations of a New Regionalism // *Vestnik RUDN. International Relations*. 2023. Vol. 23. № 2. Pp. 253–264.

international relations frameworks that diverge from conventional Western-centric methodologies.

Exploring the potential for SCO-ASEAN regional security cooperation, D.G. Mirjalolovna⁷⁷ highlights the potential for SCO-ASEAN regional security cooperation. She asserts that the two groups share similar aims and goals in upholding regional peace, security, and stability. She emphasizes that they can establish a relationship to strengthen peace and stability in their respective regions by collaborating in various sectors, such as investment and financial cooperation, and jointly implementing projects.

Similarly, D.N. Govor and K.K. Rakhimov highlight the potential for a multifaceted partnership between the SCO and ASEAN in various areas, including the economy, transportation, culture, tourism, and investment. Govor and Rakhimov's work highlights the importance of collaboration to bolster regional security and foster economic advancement, particularly in the Asia-Pacific.

The literature review thoroughly explores the development of security collaboration between the SCO and ASEAN from 2001 to 2022. It outlines how these organizations have navigated complex regional and global contexts, utilizing distinct but occasionally overlapping strategies to enhance regional security and cooperation. The SCO tackles urgent security challenges via collaborative military and political initiatives. Conversely, ASEAN has adopted a decentralized, consensus-driven strategy, focusing on dialogue and non-interference. This review highlights the potential of SCO-ASEAN collaboration in enhancing regional stability and security, notwithstanding obstacles such as geopolitical competition and issues of internal cohesion. Understanding the evolving security dynamics in Eurasia and Southeast Asia requires a deep knowledge of pertinent organizations' strategic orientations and operational tactics. The extensive analysis in the literature review establishes a basis

⁷⁷ *Mirjalolovna D.G. SCO-ASEAN: cooperation for mutual interest and socio-economic modernization // Academic leadership. 2023. Vol. 22. № 1. Pp. 39–44.*

for further investigation into how regional institutions can work together to tackle common challenges, utilizing their distinct advantages to create more cohesive regional security structures.

The **object of the study** is regional security cooperation.

The **subject of the study** is the main directions, institutional instruments, and policies of the SCO and ASEAN in this cooperation.

The **purpose of the dissertation** is to reveal the specifics of regional security cooperation between the SCO and ASEAN.

Achieving this goal requires accomplishing the following tasks:

- Examine the SCO and ASEAN's origins, historical progression, and unique structures, focusing on the evolution of their pivotal regional security cooperation policies and institutional mechanisms.

- Review the security policies of SCO and ASEAN, exploring how these initiatives are shaped by and interact with each organization's geopolitical and security contexts.

- Conduct a comparative evaluation of the SCO and ASEAN's strategies for handling counterterrorism, drug control, and human trafficking, including assessing the methods and resources utilized to tackle these security issues.

- Evaluate the complexities of SCO and ASEAN's regional security collaboration, identifying its advantages, potential, and challenges.

- Compare the regional security strategies of SCO and ASEAN, highlighting their unique features and assessing future collaboration prospects in light of changing geopolitical scenarios and emerging threats.

- Analyze how the SCO and ASEAN apply common norms, emphasizing the nuances how both organizations implement such in their unique strategic environments.

- Identify challenges in regional security cooperation between the SCO and ASEAN and discuss how both organizations can pursue cooperation despite those constraints.

- Find avenues of practical cooperation between the SCO and ASEAN, with such avenues conducted in line with both organizations' common norms, being feasible despite challenges in cooperation.

Chronological framework of the study

The chronological framework examines the trends, changes, and advancements within a specific timeframe of a given dataset. For this research, the chronological framework investigates the development of SCO-ASEAN regional cooperation from 2001 to 2022. The lower limit of the study is because the SCO was founded in 2001, and the organization's earliest official documents and sources start from that year. These documents include the Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism, and Extremism and the SCO Charter. The upper limit of the study is based on the November 2022 meeting of the SCO and ASEAN Secretaries-General at Phnom Penh, Cambodia, wherein both sides confirmed their readiness to enhance cooperation and underscored the urgency of developing new forms of interaction, improving ties between secretariats, and improving coordination and exchanges in political, economic, and humanitarian fields.

Source base review. The first group of sources includes *regulatory and legislative documents*. These documents include global policy frameworks and commitments by UN member states to address specific challenges. They outline actions, urge member states to adopt particular policies, and establish mechanisms for international cooperation. These include international conventions⁷⁸, United Nations

⁷⁸ 1988 UN Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/DT%20UN%20Conv%20Narc%20Psych%201988.pdf> (date accessed: 05.09.2023); United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNTOC/Publications/TOC%20Convention/TOCebook-e.pdf> (date accessed: 07.09.2023).

Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR)^{79,80}, and United Nations General Assembly Resolutions (UNGAR).⁸¹ These documents *delineate the framework of relations between the UN, SCO, and ASEAN*. These documents signify the organizations' efforts to address various global and regional challenges. These documents include UNGARs, Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs)⁸², Joint Declarations⁸³, and Action Plans.⁸⁴ Also, these documents encompass *SCO and ASEAN internal documents facilitating regional security and cooperation* among member states. This includes addressing challenges like terrorism, extremism, and transnational crime. These documents serve as legal and policy frameworks guiding the actions and cooperation of member states

⁷⁹ UNGA Resolution 1624 (2005) [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N05/510/52/PDF/N0551052.pdf?OpenElement> (date accessed: 05.09.2023).

⁸⁰ UNSC Resolution 2117 [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/757831?ln=en> (date accessed: 05.09.2023).

⁸¹ UNGA Resolution 60/288 [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N05/504/88/PDF/N0550488.pdf?OpenElement> (date accessed: 05.09.2023); UNGA Resolution 64/211 [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N09/474/49/PDF/N0947449.pdf?OpenElement> (date accessed: 05.09.2023); Cooperation between the United Nations and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization: draft resolution / China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation, Sudan, and Tajikistan [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3822992> (date accessed: 04.09.2023).

⁸² 2007 Memorandum of Understanding Between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the United Nations (UN) on ASEAN-UN Cooperation. [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/2007-Memorandum-of-Understanding-between-ASEAN-and-the-UN-on-ASEAN-UN-Cooperation.pdf> (date accessed: 04.09.2023).

⁸³ Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Partnership between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the United Nations [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Joint-Declaration-on-Comprehensive-Partnership-between-ASEAN-and-the-United-Nations.pdf> (date accessed: 04.09.2023).

⁸⁴ Plan of Action to Implement the Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Partnership between ASEAN and the United Nations (2016-2020) [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/ASEAN-UN-POA-FINAL-AS-OF-5-SEP-2016.pdf> (date accessed: 04.09.2023); Plan of Action to Implement the Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Partnership between ASEAN and the United Nations (2021-2025) [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/ASEAN-UN-POA-2021-2025-final.pdf> (date accessed: 04.09.2023).

in various security and socio-economic issues. These include Conventions⁸⁵, Charters⁸⁶, Agreements⁸⁷, MOUs⁸⁸, and Declarations.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ The Shanghai Convention on Combatting Terrorism, Separatism, and Extremism [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://eng.sectsc.org/load/202907/> (date accessed: 07.09.2023); Convention of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization against Terrorism [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://eng.sectsc.org/load/207551/> (date accessed: 08.03.2023); SCO Secretary-General: The Convention on countering extremism is the SCO's common response to this growing threat [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://eng.sectsc.org/news/20170613/295928.html> (date accessed: 07.09.2023); ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/ACCT.pdf> (date accessed: 07.09.2023); ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://asean.org/asean2020/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/ACTIP.pdf> (date accessed: 08.03.2023).

⁸⁶ Charter of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://eng.sectsc.org/load/203013/> (date accessed: 07.09.2023); The ASEAN Charter [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/images/archive/publications/ASEAN-Charter.pdf> (date accessed: 08.03.2023).

⁸⁷ Agreement on Cooperation in Combating Illicit Traffic of Narcotic Drugs Psychotropic Substances and Precursors between the Member States of the SCO [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://eng.sectsc.org/load/207293/> (date accessed: 05.09.2023); Agreement of SCO on long-term neighborliness, friendship and cooperation [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://cis-legislation.com/document.fwx?rgn=20606> (date accessed: 23.03.2023); Agreement on Cooperation in Combating Illicit Trafficking in Arms, Ammunition and Explosives between the Governments of the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://eng.sectsc.org/load/206229/> (date accessed: 08.03.2023).

⁸⁸ Memorandum of Understanding between the Secretariat of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Secretariat of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/images/ASEAN-SCO-MOU.pdf> (date accessed: 07.03.2023).

⁸⁹ Declaration by the Heads of the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://eng.sectsc.org/files/193445/193445> (date accessed: 28.11.2023); 2001 ASEAN Declaration on Joint Action to Counter Terrorism [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/2001-ASEAN-Declaration-on-Joint-Action-to-Counter-Terrorism.pdf> (date accessed: 07.03.2023); Qingdao Declaration of the Council of Heads of State of Shanghai Cooperation Organization [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.iri.edu.ar/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/a2018eurasiaDoc2QingdaoDeclaration.pdf> (date accessed: 08.04.2023); Moscow Declaration of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://eng.sectsc.org/load/690349/> (date accessed: 08.09.2023); Dushanbe Declaration on the 20th Anniversary of the SCO [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://eng.sectsc.org/news/20210917/782639.html> (date accessed: 08.09.2023); The Samarkand Declaration of the Heads of State Council of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://eng.sectsc.org/load/914622/> (date accessed: 08.09.2023); Manila Declaration to Counter the Rise of Radicalization and Violent Extremism [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Manila-Declaration-to-Combat-RRVE-Adopted-by-the-11th-AMMTC.pdf> (date accessed: 27.11.2023); ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://asean.org/wp->

The second group of sources includes *speeches, interviews, and pronouncements by SCO and ASEAN leaders*. These include former SCO Secretary-General Vladimir Norov's February 2021 speech at the international videoconference on "The Role of Youth in Countering Radicalism, Extremism, and Terrorism"⁹⁰, President Vladimir Putin's address at the January 2022 Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) Extraordinary Session⁹¹, President Xi Jinping's address at the Council of Heads of State of the SCO 22nd meeting⁹², and the 2018 Written Interview Response of His Excellency Mr. Prak Sokhonn, Cambodian Senior Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation⁹³.

The third group of sources includes *statistical databases, quantitative analyses, and databases on terrorism, illegal drugs, and human trafficking*. These include the Global Terrorism Database⁹⁴, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and the Counter-Trafficking Data Collaborative (CTDC).⁹⁵

The source base provided in the document is robust and well-suited to support the dissertation's exploration of SCO-ASEAN regional security cooperation. The first

content/uploads/2017/11/ASEAN-Consensus-on-the-Protection-and-Promotion-of-the-Rights-of-Migrant-Workers1.pdf (date accessed: 27.11.2023); Development Strategy of the SCO until 2025 [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://eng.sectsco.org/load/200162/> (date accessed: 08.03.2023); Declaration of ASEAN Concord II (Bali Concord II) [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://asean.org/speechandstatement/declaration-of-asean-concord-ii-bali-concord-ii/> (date accessed: 08.03.2023).

⁹⁰ SCO Secretary-General attends international videoconference on the Role of Youth in Countering Radicalism, Extremism and Terrorism [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://eng.sectsco.org/news/20210218/721293.html> (date accessed: 29.10.2023).

⁹¹ Нельзя допустить реализацию сценария цветных революций, заявил Путин [Электронный ресурс]. URL: <https://ria.ru/20220110/kazakhstan-1767129605.html> (дата обращения: 12.08.2023).

⁹² Full text of Xi's speech at SCO Samarkand summit [Electronic resource]. URL: http://english.scio.gov.cn/topnews/2022-09/17/content_78424890.htm (date accessed: 08.08.2023).

⁹³ Written Interview Response By H.E. Mr. Prak Sokhonn, Senior Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.mfaic.gov.kh/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/SM-Written-Interview-Response-SOC-Summit-2018-Sph.pdf> (date accessed: 27.11.2023).

⁹⁴ Global Terrorism Database [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/> (date accessed: 12.07.2023)

⁹⁵ Counter-Trafficking Data Collaborative – Global Synthetic Database [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.ctdatacollaborative.org/page/global-synthetic-dataset> (date accessed: 12.07.2023)

group of sources, encompassing regulatory and legislative documents like international conventions, resolutions from the UN, and internal documents from SCO and ASEAN, offers a solid legal and policy framework. These sources are crucial for grasping how the organizations articulate their security strategies and collaborate on terrorism, extremism, and transnational crime. The second category, encompassing speeches and declarations from critical leaders, sheds light on the organizations' shifting political and strategic directions as they react to contemporary security challenges. The third category, which includes statistical databases and quantitative studies, facilitates a factual assessment of the security environment where the SCO and ASEAN function. This consolidation of legal structures, leadership perspectives, and statistical evidence offers a solid base for evaluating the efficacy and obstacles of SCO-ASEAN security collaboration, thereby confirming the adequacy of the sources for the dissertation's objectives.

Theoretical Framework. This study investigates SCO-ASEAN dynamics using the analytical frameworks of Ole Waever's Securitization Theory and Barry Buzan's Regional Security Complex Theory. This study aims to conduct an empirical-historical examination of the strategies employed by these two organizations in addressing regional security concerns and fostering collaboration between 2001 and 2022. The analysis will utilize established theories as interpretative frameworks for understanding the observed phenomena.

The SCO and the ASEAN have been crucial in effectively handling security concerns within Eurasia and Southeast Asia. Both groups have encountered various problems, such as terrorism, political instability, and economic vulnerability. Gaining insight into their methodologies is crucial for grasping the broader scope of regional security dynamics.

Ole Waever's Securitization Theory offers a theoretical framework that facilitates the comprehension of the process by which states reframe specific issues as security questions. Within the SCO and ASEAN context, these organizations have identified

particular concerns, such as terrorism and political instability, as significant security challenges. An illustrative example of securitization may be observed in the SCO's considerable focus on countering the 'three evils' - terrorism, separatism, and extremism. Similarly, the ASEAN emphasizes addressing a broader set of security challenges. This predisposition is consistent with the fundamental ideas of the theory mentioned before. The importance of de-securitization procedures becomes apparent when organizations can effectively shift their focus from security to regular political processes, especially when diplomatic efforts have shown greater efficacy.

Barry Buzan's Regional Security Complex Theory provides valuable insights into the interplay of geographical and political elements, which give rise to distinct regional security dynamics. This theory provides a comprehensive understanding of both organizations' interrelated security concerns. The presence of many security complexes within these organizations, characterized by the inclusion of distinct member states, has resulted in various security interactions. Given its Eurasian orientation, the SCO has addressed security concerns from internal and foreign sources, including the impact of influential global actors like Russia and China. In Southeast Asia, ASEAN has effectively managed a multifaceted security landscape by carefully addressing regional concerns while considering the impact of external factors such as the US and China.

The practical application of these theories becomes evident through a research methodology that centers on specific events and developments within the SCO and ASEAN. Historical occurrences, such as the SCO's response to the Afghan conflict and the ASEAN's approach to addressing the Myanmar conflict and South China Sea territorial disputes, provide concrete examples of the practical implications of securitization and regional security dynamics.

The study examines the divergences and convergences between SCO and ASEAN in their respective security strategies. The SCO has a centralized attitude towards security matters, particularly counter-terrorism and political stability. In

contrast, ASEAN has frequently embraced a decentralized and consensus-driven approach, prioritizing a broader spectrum of security concerns. The observed disparities can be attributed to each region's unique geopolitical circumstances and internal dynamics.

Theoretical Significance. The dissertation holds significant theoretical value, offering fresh perspectives on international relations and regional studies. The dissertation analyzes these two critical regional organizations and provides novel theoretical insights into various crucial domains.

The dissertation critically examines and broadens the scope of current theoretical frameworks concerning regional security cooperation. In international relations, ideas such as realism and liberalism have traditionally emphasized state-centric models and the dynamics of power balance. Nevertheless, examining the SCO and ASEAN offers a sophisticated comprehension of regional security collaboration beyond conventional power dynamics, including a more comprehensive array of concerns, such as regional security cooperation. It presents a nuanced and integrated perspective on regional security, adding to the theoretical discussion by emphasizing the diverse and numerous aspects of regional cooperation. It provides fresh perspectives on the interplay between global and regional forces. From 2001 to 2022, there were notable worldwide transformations, including the emergence of China as a significant power, changes in US international strategy, and the development of global security concerns like terrorism and cyber threats. Examining the impact of these worldwide developments on both organization's strategies and policies enhances comprehension of how regional organizations adjust to and affect the global political environment. This approach improves discourse on globalization and regionalism by providing a more dynamic and mutually beneficial comprehension of these phenomena.

Additionally, it offers a theoretical contribution to the comprehension of regional identity and the establishment of community. Both organizations strived to foster a collective sense of regional identity among their member states, which is vital to their

collaborative processes. The research examines how these groups have effectively managed cultural, political, and economic diversity to establish a regional community. This contributes to constructivist theories in international relations, which emphasize the role of ideas, norms, and identities in international politics, offering a deeper understanding of how regional identities are constructed and maintained.

The dissertation's comparative analysis of SCO and ASEAN approaches to regional security concerns contributes to the field of comparative regionalism. By examining these two distinct models of regional cooperation, the research offers a comparative perspective that enriches the understanding of how different regional organizations operate and interact. This comparison highlights each organization's unique features and approaches. It sheds light on their common challenges and opportunities, contributing to developing a more nuanced theoretical framework for studying regionalism.

The dissertation also contributes to the security complex theory. Examining the interactions and security dynamics within and between SCO and ASEAN offers new perspectives on how regional security complexes are formed and evolve. This is especially pertinent considering that these two groups have members and interests that overlap, complicating the regional security structure in Asia.

The dissertation's focus on regional security issues contributes to the expanding field of security studies. Analyzing how SCO and ASEAN address regional security challenges broadens the scope of what constitutes 'security' in the contemporary world. This contributes to the theoretical debate on the expanding agenda of security studies, moving beyond traditional military and state-centric concerns.

Finally, the dissertation offers new theoretical insights into the power dynamics in international relations. The interactions and strategies of SCO and ASEAN in the context of major global powers like China, Russia, and the US challenge traditional notions of power in international relations. It offers a nuanced and intricate

comprehension of power, highlighting the influence of regional groups in generating global power relations.

Research Method. The study utilizes an empirical-historical approach for analysis and research. The dissertation conducts a narrative analysis that examines the complexities and opportunities in regional security cooperation between the SCO and ASEAN. It focuses on these organizations' institutional instruments, legal frameworks, and diverse security priorities. The aim is to critically assess the potential for non-Western models of international collaboration between the SCO and ASEAN.

The research framework employs an interdisciplinary approach, drawing on sources and data from various fields of study, including international relations, political science, international law, and history. It utilizes a systematic analysis method to identify the potential and dynamics of regional security cooperation between the SCO and ASEAN. The research has revealed the intricate dynamics of collaboration between the two institutions in tackling terrorism, extremism, and economic stability, which could facilitate further cooperation between the two groups.

The author compared the strategic goals of both organizations. The study focused on analyzing how these groups tackle security concerns, including terrorism, drug trafficking, and human trafficking. The study's ultimate objective was to identify potential areas for collaboration between the two organizations, particularly in the current global landscape characterized by dynamic alliances and widespread transnational issues.

Scientific Novelty of the Work:

- The dissertation shows how the SCO and ASEAN employ the non-intervention norm as a strategic response to unique geopolitical challenges. It explores the SCO's utilization of non-intervention to counter Western influence and secure regime stability, while ASEAN applies this principle to protect sovereignty and manage diversity. This analysis reveals the emergence of an Asian regional security complex, highlighting the

pivotal role of state sovereignty in fostering stability within strategic security environments, thus contributing new insights into regional security cooperation in Asia.

- An interdisciplinary method is to examine the SCO-ASEAN security cooperation, leveraging insights from diverse fields and historical contexts. This approach deepens understanding of international cooperation beyond Western paradigms, elucidating the complex dynamics of geopolitical and socio-political factors, and significantly advancing the scholarly conversation on this subject.

- A comparative analysis of the SCO and ASEAN's counterterrorism, drug control, and human trafficking strategies, is used to examine their unique geopolitical and organizational contexts. The analysis potential areas for collaboration, outlines strategic alignments and divergences, and facilitates innovative pathways for international security cooperation.

- The non-intervention principle is fundamental to SCO and ASEAN security cooperation and has a significant impact on regional identities and strategies that diverge from Western norms. The analysis enhances comprehension of non-Western international relations and contests the prevailing Western-centric narrative.

- The potential for SCO-ASEAN security collaboration is analyzed, scrutinizing their institutional frameworks in the face of geopolitical challenges. It outlines strategic pathways for future partnerships, combining theoretical insights with practical solutions to advance academic discourse and enhance global security cooperation.

Statements of Defense. These statements are submitted for defense:

1. The SCO has evolved from focusing solely on regional security to embracing a broader agenda that includes economic and cultural cooperation, driven by the strategic imperatives of China and Russia. In contrast, ASEAN prioritizes open communication and consensus-building to navigate the complex political landscape of Southeast Asia, ensuring regional stability and independence. Together, the SCO and ASEAN enhance the multipolar world order through their collaboration on stability and development initiatives. Their distinctive and complementary security approaches offer

a viable alternative to the predominant Western-centric model, enriching the global discourse on regional cooperation.

2. The SCO, with its focus on countering terrorism, separatism, and extremism, underscores the shared security concerns of its members. In contrast, ASEAN's strategy revolves around communication, consensus, and respect for sovereignty, fostering inclusivity and mutual trust among its member states. Despite their differences, both organizations share strategic visions that could harmonize to create a more comprehensive and successful regional security framework. This alignment, rooted in their shared goals, could effectively promote stability and development in Eurasia and Southeast Asia, underscoring the potential of their collaboration.

3. For counterterrorism, the SCO combines military cooperation and educational and cultural programs to combat immediate and underlying ideological threats. Conversely, ASEAN adopts a dialogue-based approach that addresses the socio-economic factors contributing to terrorism. In managing drug trafficking, the SCO focuses on enforcement and interdiction, whereas ASEAN employs a comprehensive strategy that includes public education and collaboration between law enforcement agencies to target both the supply and demand. For human trafficking, the SCO prioritizes security-driven measures, while ASEAN's strategy encompasses prevention, law enforcement engagement, and support for victims. Although the methods of the SCO and ASEAN differ, their strategies are complementary, potentially enhancing the efficacy of regional security efforts through combined practical and dialogue-based approaches.

4. Non-intervention plays a critical role in shaping the security strategies of both the SCO and ASEAN, as detailed in the dissertation. For the SCO, this principle acts as a safeguard against Western influence, enhancing regime stability. ASEAN, on the other hand, uses non-intervention to protect member state sovereignty and maintain its central role in regional affairs. This principle has facilitated both organizations' efforts to independently tackle issues like terrorism, drug trafficking, and human trafficking.

Despite differing implementations of non-intervention, both the SCO and ASEAN leverage flexible organizational structures and consensus-based decision-making to navigate their security challenges effectively. This approach fosters cooperation and could lay the groundwork for a unified security framework.

5. The institutional mechanisms of the SCO and ASEAN navigate diverse political ideologies to facilitate practical cooperation, critical in today's multipolar world. The significant influence of China and Russia within the SCO, alongside ASEAN's dedication to inclusivity and neutrality, introduces challenges to their collaboration, often intensified by geopolitical tensions and external influences. Despite these challenges, both organizations' commitment to non-intervention and respect for sovereignty forms a robust basis for future collaboration. This foundation is particularly effective in areas such as intelligence sharing, the exchange of best practices, and capacity building, which are essential for enhancing functional cooperation.

6. The institutional synergy between the SCO and ASEAN through their institutional mechanisms provides a critically important foundation for multilateral dialogue, confidence-building measures, and coordinated responses to common challenges and security threats. The diverse composition of participants and the inclusive nature of these mechanisms contribute to comprehensive discussions and the development of joint strategies necessary to maintain regional stability and security. By integrating their efforts within these multilateral mechanisms, the SCO and ASEAN can strengthen regional stability and security, demonstrating the effectiveness of collaborative approaches compared to unilateral actions.

7. The joint efforts of the SCO and ASEAN underscore the inseparable link between security and economic development. Both organizations recognize the importance of economic integration as a foundation for regional security and utilize their collective resources and strategic positions to foster stability and prosperity in their regions by aligning economic and security strategies. This approach enhances

economic interconnectivity and reduces security risks by addressing the root causes of instability through sustainable development and economic cooperation.

Practical significance of the work. The dissertation provides essential insights and recommendations for state security agencies, regional institutions, and non-governmental organizations. It also proposes a framework for resolving collaboration issues within the SCO and ASEAN. The research findings could be used to develop educational materials and courses related to regional security cooperation, international relations, conflict analysis, and non-state actors.

Reliability and validity of the study results. The author utilized a wide range of sources to ensure the reliability of the research findings on regional security cooperation between SCO and ASEAN. The collection included scholarly literature in English and Russian as well as historiographical and legal sources. The author also examined the current methodologies and techniques and sought the perspectives of experts from SCO, ASEAN, and the Western world.

Approbation of the research results. The dissertation's primary findings and conclusions are presented in three scientific publications. One article has been published in peer-reviewed scientific journals listed by the Higher Attestation Commission and the People's Friendship University of Russia (PFUR). In contrast, the other two articles are published in publications listed in the international citation database Scopus.

The structure of the dissertation. The dissertation consists of an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, a list of sources and literature, and a list of abbreviations.

CHAPTER 1: HISTORY, POLICIES, AND INSTITUTIONAL INSTRUMENTS OF THE SCO AND ASEAN

1.1. Historical Retrospective for SCO and ASEAN Regional Security Cooperation

The emerging regional security cooperation between the SCO and ASEAN can be traced to their convergent evolution. While both regional security organizations evolved in different strategic environments, both faced similar conditions, which led to their eventual convergence of security cooperation.

The author categorizes the SCO's development from 2001 to 2022 into stages: Establishment, Expansion, Consolidation, Integration, and Maturity. This periodization is crucial for understanding the SCO's developmental trajectory and strategy.

The Establishment Phase (2001-2005) is marked by the first attempts to create confidence and security, primarily focusing on promoting regional security cooperation. Subsequently, during the Expansion Phase (2005-2010), the SCO's scope and impact were expanded as additional observer governments joined, and there was a shift towards fostering broader Eurasian collaboration. During the Consolidation Phase (2010-2015), the SCO was established as a formal organization, and its scope expanded to include economic matters, marking a shift towards becoming a comprehensive regional organization. The Integration Phase (2015-2020) emphasizes this change even more, as the SCO actively promotes economic integration and collaboration in line with the worldwide trend of regional economic consolidation. The Maturity Phase (2020-2022) solidifies the SCO's position as a prominent participant in regional and international domains, emphasizing its diverse political, economic, and security collaboration involvement.

De Hass and van der Putten characterized the Establishment Phase of the SCO (2001-2005) as primarily concerned with implementing confidence and security-

building measures to reduce border tensions that arose after the end of the Cold War.⁹⁶ Bailes and Dunay assert that the SCO's origins may be traced to the protracted Sino-Soviet border conflicts, which subsequently evolved into a multilateral concern following the independence of former Soviet countries in Central Asia.⁹⁷ The SCO's primary objective is facilitating Eurasian regional security cooperation in economic and cultural development. However, the SCO is not a formal alliance akin to NATO or an official monetary union like the EU.⁹⁸

In June 2001, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Uzbekistan signed the Shanghai Convention on Combatting Terrorism, Separatism, and Extremism. This convention aims to facilitate regional security cooperation by providing a legal framework specifying the organizations' lines of action in addressing these shared security challenges.⁹⁹

Those countries signed the SCO Charter at the same inaugural event, formally establishing the organization. The SCO Charter outlines the SCO's fundamental principles, objectives, organizational structure, and operational framework.¹⁰⁰ The SCO's primary goals are to strengthen confidence and cooperation among member states, foster regional peace and stability, and combat terrorism, separatism, extremism, illicit narcotics, arms trafficking, and other transnational crimes.¹⁰¹

Subsequently, the Saint Petersburg Declaration was ratified in June 2002 at the SCO's second summit.¹⁰² The Declaration outlines SCO's objective of enhancing

⁹⁶ *Putten F.P., Haas M.* The Shanghai Cooperation Organization: Towards a full-grown security alliance? Clingendael Institute, 2007. P.7.

⁹⁷ *Bailes A. et al.* The Shanghai Cooperation Organization as a regional security institution // The Shanghai Cooperation Organization: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2007. P.4.

⁹⁸ What is the Shanghai Co-operation Organization? [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.economist.com/the-economist-explains/2022/09/14/what-is-the-shanghai-co-operation-organisation> (date accessed: 07.03.2023).

⁹⁹ The Shanghai Convention on Combatting Terrorism, Separatism, and Extremism.

¹⁰⁰ Charter of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² Declaration by the Heads of the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

collaboration among member nations in diverse domains.¹⁰³ It aims to foster regional tranquility, safeguarding, and constancy while tackling rising challenges and threats.¹⁰⁴ It emphasizes mutual respect, non-interference, and implementing the SCO Charter and RATS to ensure effective functioning.¹⁰⁵

The SCO initiated its inaugural multinational military drill, Coalition 2003, in August 2003. The exercise included China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan. China participated in this joint military drill for the first time, marking its inaugural involvement in such a maneuver. This exercise aimed to showcase the complete spectrum of military equipment, machinery, and weaponry while conveying to international observers that the SCO is fully prepared to address the threats posed by terrorists.

The SCO founded the RATS during the 3rd SCO summit in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, in June 2004. The RATS functions as the central organizational framework within the SCO to exchange intelligence and coordinate counter-terrorism initiatives among its member nations. Additionally, it establishes the policy framework for practical collaboration inside the SCO, enabling the organization to engage in joint training exercises, exchange best practices, and carry out collective operations. At this time, the SCO also established relations with the UN. At the December 2004 59th plenary session of the UNGA, the UNGA adopted Resolution A/RES/59/48, giving the SCO observer status to participate in the sessions and work of the UNGA.

In 2005, the SCO launched the Peace Mission military exercises to improve its members' capabilities to address terrorism and other security challenges, which aligned with the RATS emphasis on practical security cooperation. Peace Mission has been held yearly since 2004, giving SCO member states a venue to enhance military interoperability and coordination.

¹⁰³ Declaration by the Heads of the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

In June 2005, SCO and the Afghan government established the SCO-Afghanistan Contact Group in Astana, Kazakhstan. The SCO-Afghanistan Contact Group fosters interactions between the involved parties and seeks to establish stability in Afghanistan by collaborating on counterterrorism efforts, combating drug trafficking, and addressing organized crime.

Including additional observers during the SCO's Expansion Phase (2005-2010) led to more significant interactions with other international and regional security organizations. In 2005, India, Iran, and Pakistan were granted observer status, marking the SCO's openness to South Asian countries and enhancing its geopolitical reach. This move signaled the organization's intent to extend its influence beyond the Central Asian region and to become a more inclusive platform for Eurasian cooperation. The SCO significantly ramped its focus on regional security and counter-terrorism with the Peace Mission military exercises. Economic cooperation also gained momentum during this period, as SCO members engaged in discussions to foster trade, investment, and connectivity within the region. The SCO's engagement with other international organizations and countries outside its immediate region increased, notably with the signing of an MOU with ASEAN. The SCO also called for greater regional cooperation to stabilize Afghanistan and combat drug trafficking, a significant problem affecting many members.

De Hass and van der Putten note that the SCO remained primarily a security organization but has since evolved into a regional organization, improving international linkages and expanding its membership, marking the third phase of the SCO's evolution.¹⁰⁶ In addition, Laumulin mentions that signing the agreements and creating institutional instruments indicates that the SCO has moved from reducing post-Cold War border tensions to becoming a security organization.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ *Putten F.P., Haas M.* Ibid. P. 6.

¹⁰⁷ *Laumulin M.* The Shanghai Cooperation Organization as "Geopolitical Bluff?" A View from Astana., 2006. P. 4.

Also, the SCO's increasing membership shows increased interest in the organization by other states. This demonstrates the organization's achievement in providing an alternative to security arrangements and institutions led by Western countries. It also shows the effectiveness of its standards and methods and its ability to tackle existing and future security concerns.

During the SCO Astana Summit in June 2005, the SCO extended observer status to India, Iran, Mongolia, and Pakistan. This was the first notable expansion of the organization since its inception in 2001. The development of the SCO enables the organization to extend its reach and influence in West Asia and South Asia, increases the breadth of its economic cooperation, strengthens the SCO's standing as a regional security organization, legitimizes the success of the SCO's norms and values, and extends its influence in areas of strategic importance.

In addition to the Peace Mission military exercise, the SCO established the SCO Border Guard Command at Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, in December 2007. Its primary responsibility is coordinating SCO members' efforts to maintain border security and explicitly prevent cross-border crimes, drug trafficking, and smuggling.

In line with its expansion, in August 2008, the SCO established a new observer category in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. The new observer status has two divisions: Dialogue Partner and Observer. Dialogue Partner status is given to countries and organizations with close relations with the SCO. In contrast, Observer status is given to countries interested in adhering to the SCO's principles and policies.

At the June 2009 SCO Summit in Ekaterinburg, India expressed its intention to join the organization, driven in part by the then-recent 2008 Mumbai terror attacks. India's participation as an observer is noteworthy, as it was its first time attending an SCO event at the leadership level. Pakistan was also present during the summit, with the SCO providing a forum for representatives from both countries to discuss their position regarding the Mumbai attacks.

The Consolidation Phase of the SCO (2010-2015) focused on institutionalizing the organization's structure and expanding its membership. This phase is characterized by expanding the SCO's role into the economic sphere, increased engagement with interested countries and regional organizations, and enlargement. Underscoring that point, Kalra and Saxena note that the SCO also focuses on economic and social integration, pointing out that the organization's future addresses economic and social issues.¹⁰⁸

At the June 2012 SCO Summit in Beijing, Cambodia was granted SCO observer status, making it the first Southeast Asian and ASEAN member to express an interest in the organization. Sokhonn notes that Cambodia has noted the SCO's growing potential for cooperation in the spheres of security and economy and other areas of cooperation, including trade, investment, energy, tourism, and anti-terrorism.¹⁰⁹ He notes that Cambodia can serve as a window to the Mekong sub-region and ASEAN, given that it is the only ASEAN member that has started to explore cooperation opportunities under the SCO framework.¹¹⁰ He notes that Cambodia believes that the SCO's security cooperation framework is complementary to the EAS and ARF, stressing that security cooperation with the SCO is essential for a broader region that can benefit from collaborative efforts.¹¹¹

The Integration Phase of the SCO (2015-2020) focuses on deepening economic and trade ties between its members and strengthening its institutional instruments. The SCO underwent a major strategic shift, moving from focusing on security to enhancing economic integration and cooperation in line with global trends toward regional economic consolidation. It worked on creating a solid framework for regional economic collaboration, streamlining trade and customs policies to foster transnational trade and

¹⁰⁸ Kalra P., Saxena S. *Shanghai Cooperation Organization and Prospects of Development in the Eurasia Region.*: Turkish Quarterly. Pp. 96-97.

¹⁰⁹ Written Interview Response By H.E. Mr. Prak Sokhonn, Senior Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

investment. This evolution marked the SCO's adaptability and proactive approach to maintaining regional security and political stability and promoting economic prosperity across Eurasia.

At the June 2016 SCO Summit in Tashkent, India and Pakistan joined the organization. India's rationale for joining the SCO is to increase its role in Eurasian affairs, extend its influence on Central Asia, and open a possible cooperation and dialogue between itself, Pakistan, and China.¹¹² Likewise, Pakistan's rationale in joining the SCO is driven by its need to play up its strategic importance by providing a link between Central Asia, South Asia, and the Indian Ocean.¹¹³

During the SCO Heads of State Council meeting in Astana in June 2017, the SCO reaffirmed and strengthened its stance on extremism by approving the Astana Declaration. This declaration promotes international collaboration by exchanging information, intelligence, and best practices among SCO members and other international organizations, such as ASEAN, whose Secretary-General attended the event.¹¹⁴

The June 2018 SCO Summit at Qingdao, China, saw the organization's adoption of the Qingdao Declaration, which reaffirms the SCO's commitment to the organization's norms and values, re-emphasizes economic interconnectivity through the BRI, says the SCO's commitment to supporting the Afghan-led Afghanistan peace process, and promotes people-to-people contacts, and education and cultural exchanges.¹¹⁵ The declaration articulates the SCO's commitment to bolstering regional peace, security, and cooperation in various domains while underscoring the significance

¹¹² Upadhyay B. India's SCO Membership: Prospects & Constraints - Indian Council of World Affairs [Electronic resource]. URL: https://www.icwa.in/show_content.php?lang=1&level=3&ls_id=603&lid=545 (date accessed: 07.03.2023).

¹¹³ Zeb R. Pakistan in the SCO: Challenges and Prospects [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles/item/13496-pakistan-in-the-sco-challenges-and-prospects.html> (date accessed: 07.03.2023).

¹¹⁴ SCO Secretary-General: The Convention on countering extremism is the SCO's common response to this growing threat.

¹¹⁵ Qingdao Declaration of the Council of Heads of State of Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

of mutual trust, equality, cultural diversity, and shared development by the Shanghai Spirit.¹¹⁶

It highlights the significance of international cooperation in tackling issues such as terrorism, drug trafficking, and organized crime. The declaration highlights the importance of maintaining values such as respect for each country's independence, not interfering in their internal affairs, and resolving conflicts peacefully without aggression in an ever-evolving global context.¹¹⁷ It calls for increased cooperation in countering terrorism, extremism, and separatism, advocating for a multipolar world order, and resolving regional conflicts through political and diplomatic means.¹¹⁸

The SCO's Maturity Phase (2020-2022) involves its consolidation as a regional security organization, strengthening its role as a key player in political, economic, and political cooperation. During this period, the SCO experienced a pivotal stage in its evolution, distinguished by increased membership, improved multilateral collaboration, and heightened international impact. Throughout this timeframe, the SCO significantly increased its membership and emphasis on multilateralism. The SCO's regional security and counter-terrorism responsibilities were further emphasized with the 2021 withdrawal of the US from Afghanistan. The SCO has intensified its international diplomatic outreach, highlighting its dedication to multilateralism and expanding its participation in tackling global challenges, signifying its transformation into a prominent actor in the global arena¹¹⁹.

The November 2020 SCO Summit was conducted virtually due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The summit concluded by adopting the Moscow Declaration, which emphasized the SCO's collective dedication to multilateralism, international law, and

¹¹⁶ Qingdao Declaration of the Council of Heads of State of Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ *Кум Е.В., Конопьянова Л.О. ШОС И АСЕАН: перспективы сотрудничества // Вестник Забайкальского государственного университета. 2017. Т. 23. № 11. С. 51-55.*

the principles outlined in the UN Charter.¹²⁰ The Declaration underscores the importance of multilateralism, compliance with international law, and the need for a multipolar world order while emphasizing the organization's role in forging a more inclusive global system.¹²¹ The Declaration underscores the significance of tackling terrorism, separatism, extremism, drug trafficking, and organized crime through comprehensive and unified endeavors, which involve enhanced collaboration and adherence to pertinent UN resolutions and the SCO Convention on Countering Extremism.¹²² The document also affirms that member nations of the SCO commit to improving their cooperative endeavors through communication and collaboration to tackle regional crises and foster stability in Afghanistan, Syria, and the broader Middle East.¹²³

The 20th SCO anniversary summit occurred in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, in September 2021. The Dushanbe Declaration was signed at the event, highlighting the SCO's dedication to fostering regional peace, stability, and development and outlining its upcoming goals and priorities.¹²⁴ Through the declaration, SCO members expressed their commitment to the SCO Charter and international law, stating their determination to combat terrorism, separatism, and extremism through international cooperation while focusing on enhancing security and stability in Central Asia and promoting political and diplomatic solutions to regional conflicts, specifically in Afghanistan.¹²⁵

Following that, the SCO 2022 Summit at Samarkand, Uzbekistan, resulted in the signing of the Samarkand Declaration, which vividly showed the SCO's mission to provide a multilateral platform to gather Eurasian leaders.¹²⁶ Iran was included as a new

¹²⁰ Moscow Declaration of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Dushanbe Declaration on the 20th Anniversary of the SCO Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ The Samarkand Declaration of the Heads of State Council of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Ibid.

member during the summit, and the accession procedure for Belarus was initiated.¹²⁷ The SCO granted dialogue partner status to Bahrain, Maldives, Kuwait, and the UAE and agreed to include Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar as new dialogue partners.¹²⁸ The summit also re-emphasized Central Asia as the SCO's strategic core and allowed SCO leaders to discuss issues bilaterally, trilaterally, and multilaterally.¹²⁹

During the summit, SCO leaders also renewed discussions about the security situation in Afghanistan, called for the eventual transformation of the SCO into an economic platform, and called for greater economic and infrastructure connectivity.

The author thoroughly describes the ASEAN development from 2001 to 2022. This development is divided into five clear phases: the period of establishing ASEAN centrality (2001-2006), the phase of addressing global security challenges (2006-2013), the stage of strengthening ASEAN-led mechanisms (2014-2015), the period of improved cooperation with external partners (2016-2017), and the phase of promoting a regional rules-based order (2018-2022).

The ASEAN Centrality Phase (2001-2006) aimed to consolidate the organization's position as the primary catalyst for regional integration and collaboration in Southeast Asia. Consequently, ASEAN enhanced its institutional mechanisms and structures to strengthen its position as the core regional organization in Southeast Asia. It established new institutional mechanisms and structures, formed alliances with external entities, and encouraged regional discussions and diplomacy.

At the 7th ASEAN Summit in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei, ASEAN approved the Declaration on Joint Action to Counter Terrorism, which laid the groundwork for cooperation in countering terrorism within the organization.¹³⁰ The document issued by

¹²⁷ The Samarkand Declaration of the Heads of State Council of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ 2001 ASEAN Declaration on Joint Action to Counter Terrorism [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/2001-ASEAN-Declaration-on-Joint-Action-to-Counter-Terrorism.pdf> (date accessed: 07.03.2023).

ASEAN in response to the 9/11 attacks condemns all forms of terrorism, calls for increased regional cooperation and information sharing, recommends the formation of a legal framework to facilitate the prosecution and extradition of terrorists, and commits to addressing the root causes of terrorism.¹³¹

In October 2003, at the 9th ASEAN Summit in Bali, Indonesia, ASEAN signed the Bali Concord II, which outlines the vision of an ASEAN Community to promote regional integration, cooperation, and development between ASEAN member states.¹³² It aims to promote more significant trade, investment, and growth in Southeast Asia, strengthen ASEAN mechanisms and regional security cooperation, encourage connectivity people-to-people and cultural exchange, and show ASEAN as a significant actor internationally and regionally.¹³³

In its phase of responding to global security challenges (2006-2013), ASEAN strengthened its regional security architecture, promoted greater cooperation among its members, and established various mechanisms to tackle common security challenges.

In May 2006, ASEAN held the first ADMM in Kuala Lumpur, primarily focused on fostering regional security and enhancing collaborative efforts among ASEAN nations, excluding Myanmar.¹³⁴ At the summit, ASEAN approved the creation of the ASEAN Defense Senior Officials' Summit (ADSOM) to formulate a detailed work program that will address the security and defense aspects outlined in the ASEAN Security Community Plan of Action and the Vientiane Action Program.¹³⁵ During the discussions, the representatives emphasized the need to improve collective security by

¹³¹ 2001 ASEAN Declaration on Joint Action to Counter Terrorism [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/2001-ASEAN-Declaration-on-Joint-Action-to-Counter-Terrorism.pdf> (date accessed: 07.03.2023).

¹³² Declaration of ASEAN Concord II (Bali Concord II), Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Report of the Inaugural ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting [Electronic resource]. URL: https://admm.asean.org/dmdocuments/Report%20of%20the%20Inaugural%20ADMM_9%20May%202006.pdf (date accessed: 07.03.2023).

¹³⁵ Report of the Inaugural ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting [Electronic resource]. URL: https://admm.asean.org/dmdocuments/Report%20of%20the%20Inaugural%20ADMM_9%20May%202006.pdf (date accessed: 07.03.2023).

re-evaluating the existing defense networks and promoting mutual trust and transparency through initiatives like adopting the ADMM Concept Paper, which aims to address regional security challenges and encourage cooperation and shared prosperity.¹³⁶

In line with that, in November 2009, at the 15th ASEAN Summit held at Hua Hin, Thailand, ASEAN adopted the APSC Blueprint.¹³⁷ It provides a framework for ASEAN member states to cooperate on political and security concerns, using measures such as conflict prevention, confidence-building, crisis management, enhancing political-security regional integration, strengthening institutional capacity, and promoting intra-organizational dialogue and engagement.¹³⁸

Building on the success of the ADMM, in November 2010, ASEAN held the first ADMM+ meeting in Hanoi, Vietnam.¹³⁹ During this event, ASEAN defense ministers and its Dialogue Partners' defense ministers¹⁴⁰ discussed regional security, maritime security, humanitarian assistance and disaster response (HADR), security cooperation, and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).¹⁴¹

At the November 2011 19th ASEAN Summit in Bali, Indonesia, ASEAN established the ASEAN Coordinating Center for Humanitarian Assistance (AHA

¹³⁶ Report of the Inaugural ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting [Electronic resource]. URL: https://admm.asean.org/dmdocuments/Report%20of%20the%20Inaugural%20ADMM_9%20May%202006.pdf (date accessed: 07.03.2023).

¹³⁷ Chairman's Statement of the 15th ASEAN Summit — "Enhancing Connectivity, Empowering Peoples" [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://asean.org/chairmans-statement-of-the-15th-asean-summit-enhancing-connectivity-empowering-peoples/> (date accessed: 08.03.2023).

¹³⁸ 2009 APSC Blueprint, Ibid.

¹³⁹ Chairman's Statement of the First ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus: "ADMM-Plus: Strategic Cooperation for Peace, Stability, and Development in the Region" Ha Noi, 12 October 2010 [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://asean.org/chairmans-statement-of-the-first-asean-defence-ministers-meeting-plus-admm-plus-strategic-cooperation-for-peace-stability-and-development-in-the-region-ha-noi/> (date accessed: 07.03.2023).

¹⁴⁰ ASEAN Dialogue Partners are Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, Russia, and the US.

¹⁴¹ Chairman's Statement of the First ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus: "ADMM-Plus: Strategic Cooperation for Peace, Stability, and Development in the Region" Ha Noi, 12 October 2010, Ibid.

Center) to improve ASEAN's response capabilities to natural disasters and serve as the organization's coordinating center for disaster management.¹⁴²

At the 22nd ASEAN Summit in April 2013 in Bander Seri Begawan, Brunei, ASEAN members deliberated on many regional and global security concerns, including maritime security, counterterrorism, nuclear proliferation, and the security status of the Korean Peninsula.¹⁴³ During the meeting, the participants also discussed several non-traditional security issues, including HADR, containing infectious diseases, and human trafficking.¹⁴⁴

The period from 2014 to 2015 marked a significant milestone for ASEAN as it witnessed the enhancement of the ASEAN-led processes. Considerable progress was made in enhancing regional integration, fostering member collaboration, and bolstering its role in maintaining regional stability. Key features included the strong emphasis on the ASEAN Community, heightened attention to security and socio-cultural integration, and the importance of upholding ASEAN primacy in regional forums.

The May 2014 24th ASEAN Summit at Naypyitaw, Myanmar, enabled the host country to show its commitment to political and economic reform and regional integration.¹⁴⁵ It focused on realizing the ASEAN Community by 2015, strengthening ASEAN institutions, and setting a strategic direction post-2015.¹⁴⁶ Discussions included promoting regional peace, stability, economic development, and enhancing external relations.¹⁴⁷ It also emphasized ASEAN unity and commitment to a rules-based

¹⁴² Chair's Statement of the 19th ASEAN Summit Bali, 17 November 2011 [Electronic resource] URL: <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/CS.pdf> (date accessed: 03.04.2023).

¹⁴³ Chairman's Statement of the 22nd ASEAN Summit, "Our People, Our Future Together" [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://asean.org/chairmans-statement-of-the-22nd-asean-summit-our-people-our-future-together/> (date accessed: 07.03.2023).

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Chairman's Statement of the 24th ASEAN Summit: "Moving forward in Unity to a Peaceful and Prosperous Community" [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/24th-Summit-Chairman-Statement.pdf> (date accessed: 06.02.2024).

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

community for peace and security and reaffirmed pledges to democracy, good governance, and upholding human rights and fundamental freedoms.¹⁴⁸

Subsequently, during the 26th ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, held in November 2015, leaders of ASEAN signed the Declaration on the Establishment of the ASEAN Community, signifying the official commencement of the ASEAN Community.¹⁴⁹ Its goal is to pursue economic integration by creating a single market and production base, strengthening cooperation to address security concerns, promoting greater people-to-people and cultural contacts, enhancing infrastructure and digital connectivity, and enhancing ASEAN's international linkages.¹⁵⁰

At the same event, ASEAN adopted the ASEAN Vision 2025, which outlines ASEAN's long-term development vision and identifies the priority areas that ASEAN will work on from 2010 to 2025.¹⁵¹ ASEAN Vision 2025 stresses the importance of maintaining regional peace and security, enhancing integration and connectivity, and creating a people-centric ASEAN.¹⁵²

During ASEAN's development period in creating a regional order based on rules (2018-2021), the organization emphasized its importance in the face of growing competition among major powers. The document highlighted the significance of international law, resolving conflicts through peaceful means, and fostering collaboration among its member states and other nations and organizations.

At the June 2019 34th ASEAN Summit in Bangkok, Thailand, ASEAN released its Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, which describes ASEAN's position vis-à-vis the US

¹⁴⁸ Chairman's Statement of the 24th ASEAN Summit: "Moving forward in Unity to a Peaceful and Prosperous Community" [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/24th-Summit-Chairman-Statement.pdf> (date accessed: 06.02.2024).

¹⁴⁹ Chairman's Statement of the 26th ASEAN Summit Kuala Lumpur & Langkawi [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/26th-Chairman-Statement-of-the-26th-ASEAN-Summit.pdf> (date accessed: 06.02.2024).

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.

Free and Open Indo-Pacific concept.¹⁵³ The document declares ASEAN's desire to have a leading role in shaping the region's security architecture according to the idea.¹⁵⁴ It is also viewed as ASEAN's reassertion of its centrality in the Asia-Pacific, signed when competing powers were forwarding their geopolitical narratives to shape the regional strategic environment.

ASEAN leaders discussed various topics during the June 2020 36th ASEAN Summit in Vietnam. These included regional collaboration on public health matters to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic, the advancement of regional economic integration through the implementation of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Blueprint 2025, the significance of adhering to international law concerning disputes in the South China Sea, and strategies to address other regional security concerns such as counterterrorism, cybersecurity, and the promotion of a regional order based on established rules¹⁵⁵.

At the October 2021 38th ASEAN Summit held at Bander Seri Begawan, Brunei, ASEAN leaders discussed ways to increase resilience against COVID-19 and future pandemics, post-pandemic economic recovery, resilience to climate change, and ASEAN's responsibility to the Paris Agreement and strengthening the nascent ASEAN Community.¹⁵⁶

At the November 2022 40th ASEAN summit in Cambodia, ASEAN leaders reiterated the organization's focus on growth and sustainable development amidst an

¹⁵³ Chairman's Statement of the 22nd ASEAN Summit, "Our People, Our Future Together" [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://asean.org/chairmans-statement-of-the-22nd-asean-summit-our-people-our-future-together/> (date accessed: 09.03.2023).

¹⁵⁴ ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific [Electronic resource] URL: https://asean.org/asean2020/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/ASEAN-Outlook-on-the-Indo-Pacific_FINAL_22062019.pdf (date accessed: 08.03.2023).

¹⁵⁵ Chairman's Statement of the 36th ASEAN Summit [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Chairman-Statement-of-the-36th-ASEAN-Summit-FINAL.pdf> (date accessed: 10.03.2023).

¹⁵⁶ Chairman's Statement of the 38th and 39th ASEAN Summits [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/FINAL-Chairmans-Statement-of-the-38th-and-39th-ASEAN-Summits-26-Oct.pdf> (date accessed: 08.04.2023).

increasingly unpredictable global security environment.¹⁵⁷ ASEAN also re-emphasized its efforts to maintain centrality as the foundation of regional security and order in the Pacific, noting that it should strengthen itself amidst intensifying US-China rivalry.¹⁵⁸ Also, ASEAN reiterated its call for all parties involved in the Myanmar conflict to adhere to the Five Point Consensus, which calls for the immediate cessation of hostilities in Myanmar's long-running insurgency.¹⁵⁹

Formal contact between the SCO and ASEAN started in October 2002, when the SCO Special Representative of the President of the Russian Federation visited the ASEAN Secretariat.¹⁶⁰ At the 3rd SCO summit in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, in June 2004, the SCO considered establishing a network of multilateral associations and identified ASEAN as a potential regional organization to be included in this network.¹⁶¹

In July 2004, then-ASEAN Secretary-General Ong Keng Yong and then-SCO Secretary-General Zhang Daguang met in Beijing, China, to exchange views about development and best practices, explore possible avenues of cooperation, and establish high-level linkages between the two organizations.¹⁶²

One key direction in SCO-ASEAN cooperation is providing regional security, as both organizations are connected by geography, common norms and values, and a shared concern for upholding peace and security in each other's strategic environments.¹⁶³ In addition, the SCO presents a viable complement to the regional

¹⁵⁷ Chairman's Statement of the 40th and 41st ASEAN Summits [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/01-Chairmans-Statement-of-the-40th-and-41st-ASEAN-Summits-rev.pdf> (date accessed: 12.04.2023).

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Overview of ASEAN-SCO Relations [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/DONEOverview-of-ASEAN-SCO-as-of-Oct-17-fn.pdf> (date accessed: 08.05.2023).

¹⁶¹ Tashkent Declaration by Heads of the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://eng.sectesco.org/load/197344/> (date accessed: 08.05.2023).

¹⁶² Overview of ASEAN-SCO Relations, Ibid.

¹⁶³ SCO-ASEAN Cooperation for Mutual Interests [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://en.sco-russia.ru/cooperation/20140905/1013179818.html> (date accessed: 07.03.2023).

security architecture for the Asia-Pacific. At the same time, ASEAN is an effective mechanism for discussing and tackling regional security issues in Southeast Asia.¹⁶⁴

In November 2008, the SCO and ASEAN Secretaries General met in Beijing, China, reconfirming their organization's intentions to pursue high-level contacts. Following that, in December 2015, SCO Secretary-General Dmitry Mezentsev met with ASEAN Secretary-General Le Luong Minh to signify the SCO's willingness to cooperate with ASEAN to address terrorism, drug trafficking, and illegal immigration.¹⁶⁵ The SCO Secretary-General also mentioned possible economic, financial, and environmental cooperation.¹⁶⁶

In November 2019, SCO Secretary-General Vladimir Norov met with ASEAN and SCO member countries in Jakarta, focusing on the potential for further cooperation between the two organizations and highlighting the importance of security, trade, and economic ties.¹⁶⁷ Norov commended the present capabilities of the two organizations and reached an agreement on the List of Possible Events for 2019-2020, as outlined in the 2005 MOU.¹⁶⁸ The discussion also addressed the potential for tangible collaboration in security, counterterrorism efforts, combating separatism, illegal drug trade, cybercrime, investment, banking, financial cooperation, trade, tourism, and education.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁴ SCO-ASEAN Cooperation for Mutual Interests [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://en.sco-russia.ru/cooperation/20140905/1013179818.html> (date accessed: 07.03.2023).

¹⁶⁵ Shanghai Cooperation Organization to Strengthen Ties with ASEAN [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://asean.org/shanghai-cooperation-organisation-to-strengthen-ties-with-asean/> (date accessed: 08.05.2023).

¹⁶⁶ *Ким Е.В., Конопьянова Л.О.* ШОС И АСЕАН: перспективы сотрудничества // Вестник Забайкальского государственного университета. 2017. Т. 23. № 11. С. 55.

¹⁶⁷ SCO Secretary-General meets with ASEAN and SCO ambassadors [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://eng.sectsc.org/news/20190329/521758.html> (date accessed: 07.04.2023).

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

The SCO and ASEAN Secretariats met again during the November 2022 40th ASEAN summit at Phnom Penh, Cambodia.¹⁷⁰ During the meeting, then-ASEAN Secretary-General Lim Jock Hoi expressed to SCO Secretary-General Zhang Ming ASEAN's willingness to enhance and build up joint efforts as stated in the 2005 SCO-ASEAN MOU to respond to current geopolitical challenges and threats.¹⁷¹ Furthermore, both secretariats stressed the importance of promptly establishing novel modes of collaboration and strengthening connections and interactions between the SCO and ASEAN in politics, economics, and humanitarian affairs..¹⁷²

The author's research of the SCO and ASEAN from 2001 to 2022 encompasses a multidimensional approach, delving into their distinct strategies in securitization and regional security challenges, the influence of major powers and regional autonomy, and their collaboration mechanisms and institutional evolution. This analysis comprehensively explains how these regional organizations have adjusted and evolved within their distinct geopolitical circumstances, emphasizing the interaction between regional dynamics and global geopolitics.

The author established the periodization of the SCO's development from 2001 to 2022 by analyzing the SCO's key documents and strategic policies. This periodization encompasses crucial documents and other notable agreements that demonstrate the multifaceted approach of these organizations in addressing regional security challenges. The periodization also highlights the parallel development of regional security cooperation between the SCO and ASEAN despite their evolution in distinct strategic contexts. Both organizations encountered comparable circumstances, resulting in their eventual merging in security collaboration, depicted in the different stages of the SCO's development.

¹⁷⁰ SCO and ASEAN Secretaries-General meet [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://eng.sectSCO.org/politics/20221115/923711/SCO-and-ASEAN-Secretaries-General-meet.html> (date accessed: 10.04.2023).

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid.

Understanding ASEAN's strategic adaptation and growth in response to regional and global forces relies heavily on this periodization. The division of ASEAN's evolution from 2001 to 2022 demonstrates a sequential advancement in ASEAN's reaction to global security concerns, improvement of its internal systems, broadening of foreign collaboration, and, eventually, the advocacy of a regional order based on established rules. This periodization provides a systematic framework for analyzing ASEAN's changing role, strategy, and influence in Southeast Asia. It emphasizes ASEAN's ability to adapt and plan to navigate the intricate dynamics of regional and global events.

Grace observes that China considers the SCO a platform to express its interests, influence the direction of global affairs based on its domestic goals, persuade neighboring countries to adopt its strategies and establish these perspectives through a recognized multilateral process.¹⁷³ China's involvement in the SCO mainly focuses on stimulating financial endeavors, such as establishing free-trade zones and investing in infrastructure projects as part of the BRI. Pradhan and Mohanty note that the SCO and BRI have the potential to complement each other, as security cooperation within the SCO could lead to economic collaboration, while the BRI could contribute to the SCO's objective of promoting multilateral cooperation.¹⁷⁴

Furthermore, Azizi notes that the BRI is seamlessly integrated with the SCO framework, serving China's foreign policy interests by providing infrastructure for regional connectivity and a corresponding institutional platform for cooperation.¹⁷⁵ He states that in practice, the BRI and SCO reinforce each other, as the BRI and SCO have

¹⁷³ Grace A. The Lessons China Taught Itself: Why the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Matters [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://jamestown.org/program/the-lessons-china-taught-itself-why-the-shanghai-cooperation-organization-matters/> (date accessed: 06.02.2024).

¹⁷⁴ Pradhan R., Mohanty S.S. Chinese Grand Strategies in Central Asia: The Role of Shanghai Cooperation Organization and Belt and Road Initiative // Fudan Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences. 2021. Vol. 14. № 2. P. 210.

¹⁷⁵ Azizi S. China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI): The Role of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Geopolitical Security and Economic Cooperation // Open Journal of Political Science. 2024. Vol. 14. № 01. Pp. 122–124.

the same Eurasian geostrategic scope, allowing alignment between the BRI's economic objectives and the SCO's security objectives.¹⁷⁶

For Russia, Šćepanović notes that Russia supports the SCO since it helps manage its relations with China and Central Asia, promotes Russia's vision of multipolar world order, amplifies Russia's position against color revolutions and regional security challenges, and showcases Russia's commitment in joint military drills under the SCO framework.¹⁷⁷ Additionally, Falcon asserts that Russia's participation in the SCO is a strategy to limit US political interference, counter China's economic influence in Central Asia, and showcase Russia's alignment with similar partners while establishing itself as a global power.¹⁷⁸

The author views the SCO as a platform strongly influenced by China and Russia. It aims to oppose Western influence in Central Asia by combining security cooperation and economic projects such as the BRI. Additionally, the SCO helps strengthen Russia's global power standing and manage regional dynamics in Eurasia. The SCO's scope of responsibilities is expanding to include cyber threats, drug trafficking, and international crime in security cooperation. The expansion reflects the SCO's adaptability to the changing security situation in Eurasia. The SCO's alignment with Chinese and Russian interests in security problems highlights significant regional geopolitical shifts, which differ from ASEAN's approach. The organization's institutional development, encompassing economic, cultural, and environmental dimensions, demonstrates its adaptability to shifting regional dynamics.

Nevertheless, the overwhelming influence of these prominent nations has sparked apprehensions regarding the independence of smaller member states,

¹⁷⁶ *Azizi S.* China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI): The Role of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Geopolitical Security and Economic Cooperation // *Open Journal of Political Science*. 2024. Vol. 14. № 01. Pp. 122–124.

¹⁷⁷ *Šćepanović J.* Russia and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization: a question of the commitment capacity // *European Politics and Society*. 2021. Vol. 23. № 5. Pp. 8-11.

¹⁷⁸ *Facon I.* Moscow's Global Foreign and Security Strategy // *Asian Survey*. 2013. Vol. 53. № 3. Pp. 480–481.

potentially eclipsing their interests and questioning the concept of equitable collaboration within the SCO. Notwithstanding these difficulties, the SCO places great importance on collective security, including measures such as the RATS and collaborative military drills to demonstrate its dedication to tackling immediate risks to regional stability.

ASEAN's principal objective is to preserve its pivotal position in East Asia in the face of increasing competition among major powers. It aims to ensure its member countries retain sovereignty over security matters without aligning themselves with any particular side. The 'ASEAN Way' is a distinctive method adopted by ASEAN that prioritizes non-interference, consensus, and informal diplomacy. This approach reflects the organization's accommodating stance towards its member states' varied political systems and cultures.

Beeson notes that the ASEAN Way shows a process of regional interactions and cooperation based on discreteness, informality, consensus-building, and non-confrontational bargaining, which allows regional elites to 'preserve face' while avoiding the perceived adversarial and excessive legalism of Western models of regionalism.¹⁷⁹ Further, Yoshimatsu notes that participation in ASEAN institutional mechanisms is the starting point to bring all stakeholders into one forum and enable them to establish and maintain continuous dialogues, which induces the participants to develop mutual respect and restraint to discuss common challenges with non-adversarial posturing.¹⁸⁰ He notes that ASEAN gives value to the socialization process in its institutional mechanisms, that the process is the end in itself, over-delivering tangible results, resulting in "institutional thickening" rather than "institutional strength".¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁹ Beeson. *Ibid.* P. 207.

¹⁸⁰ *Yoshimatsu H.* Meanings, norms, and social constitution: revisiting ASEAN centrality in East Asian regionalism // *Japanese Journal of Political Science*. 2023. Vol. 24. № 4. Pp. 413–414.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.* P. 414.

This strategy represents a decentralized approach that encourages cooperative dialogue on various issues. ASEAN operates in a strategically significant region, skillfully balancing the interests of major global powers, including the US, China, and Russia, while maintaining autonomy and centrality in regional forums. ASEAN's policy involves a careful balancing act that enables the organization to engage with large powers on its terms, sometimes as a mediator in regional issues. A deliberate and cautious process of institutional development defines the organization's structure. It emphasizes collaboration structures such as the EAS, ARF, and ADMM. Furthermore, the AEC highlights its dedication to cooperative economic growth and regional integration despite the diverse characteristics and differing levels of development among its member states. This approach to maintaining regional autonomy and stability while navigating the rising assertiveness of powers like China and the strategic interests of the US showcases ASEAN's nuanced, multipronged approach to external influences and its quest for a rules-based regional order.

The author delineates the divergent strategies of both organizations in addressing regional security and interacting with major global powers. Kim and Konpyanova note that the SCO, heavily influenced by dominant members like China and Russia, adopts a practical and direct approach, focusing on concrete threats and collective action, thereby playing a pivotal role in the geopolitical alignments of Central Asia.¹⁸² In contrast, ASEAN employs a more dialogue-based strategy, valuing autonomy and a balanced approach to external influences. This strategy encompasses a broader spectrum of issues addressed through cooperative dialogue and a consensus-based model.

Aris notes similarities and differences between the mandates of the SCO and ASEAN and the norms, membership, rules, and scope of institutionalization. In terms of mandate, Aris says the SCO was formed to tackle sub-state threats, while ASEAN

¹⁸² *Ким Е.В., Конопьянова Е.О. ШОС и АСЕАН: перспективы сотрудничества // Вестник Забайкальского государственного университета. 2017. Т. 23. № 11. С. 51.*

was created to promote cooperation among member countries against sub-state threats and prevent the threat of war.¹⁸³ For norms, Aris notes that the SCO and ASEAN are preoccupied with ensuring the stability of their territorial integrity and regime survival, seeking sovereignty enhancement and not sovereignty pooling, as seen in the EU.¹⁸⁴ Regarding membership, Aris says that the SCO, with China and Russia, has been more overt in providing alternative norms from the dominant Western liberal-democratic model of international relations; he mentions that the SCO is trying to replicate the ASEAN Way in its approach, validating the latter.¹⁸⁵

For rules and norm-setting capacity, Aris says that while China and Russia dominate the SCO, ASEAN's membership has an equal power distribution, with its organizational momentum coming from more varied sources.¹⁸⁶ Aris says that in terms of cooperation scope, ASEAN cooperation with SCO would further legitimize its ASEAN Way by the diplomatic weight of China and Russia. In contrast, SCO cooperation with ASEAN would help dispel notions that the SCO is an organization bent on hegemony in Central Asia and opposing the West.¹⁸⁷

While the SCO's approach to security emphasizes direct action, ASEAN's method respects its member states' diverse political and cultural backgrounds, requiring careful diplomacy and strategic foresight to manage the competing interests of various major powers while advancing collective regional interests. The institutional evolution and collaboration mechanisms of these organizations reflect their distinct approaches: the SCO is intensifying its security and economic collaboration under China's influence, whereas ASEAN has developed a more comprehensive and adaptable framework for cooperation across political, economic, and socio-cultural dimensions, ensuring its continued relevance and central role in East Asian affairs.

¹⁸³ *Aris S.* A new model of Asian regionalism: does the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation have more potential than ASEAN? // *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*. 2009. T. 22. № 3. C. 456.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.* Pp. 456-459.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.* Pp. 459-461.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.* Pp. 461-463.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.* Pp. 463-464.

Further, the author's research reveals distinct securitization strategies and challenges within the SCO and ASEAN. Despite having mechanisms to address regional security threats, both organizations exhibit varying degrees of effectiveness and cooperation. Under the significant influence of China and Russia, the SCO grapples with balancing its members' diverse interests within a collective security framework. At the same time, ASEAN, adhering to a consensus-based model, faces hurdles in executing decisive security actions due to its non-interference policy. The evolving geopolitical landscape and emerging security challenges are expected to shape the future trajectories of both organizations. The SCO must strive to equilibrate its centralized approach with member states' varied interests, and ASEAN needs to enhance its capability to tackle security issues within its consensus framework. The influence of significant powers remains a pivotal factor in their evolution and functioning, with the SCO likely continuing under China and Russia's sway, particularly in security and economic realms, and ASEAN persisting in its diplomatic balancing act among major global powers to foster regional integration and cooperation. As Yuan notes, China's institutional balancing strategy involves transforming and molding the SCO to align with its expanding interests while seeking Russian support for its diplomatic goals and preventing US influence.¹⁸⁸ The author underscores the profound impact of significant powers on the strategies and autonomy of SCO and ASEAN, noting that despite their distinct challenges, these organizations have the potential to significantly influence regional dynamics and contribute to stability and development, with their adaptability and resilience being critical to their ongoing relevance and success in addressing regional and global challenges.

Given the above, the author argues the SCO and ASEAN have great potential for regional security cooperation despite their difference and nuances.

¹⁸⁸ Yuan J., *Ibid*, P. 422.

The convergence between the SCO and ASEAN's mandate, norms, membership, rules, and scope offers a distinctive framework for regional security cooperation, transcending mere geographical and political interests to signify a fundamental shift in global governance. It questions traditional Western-centered models, presenting alternative collaboration frameworks significant in the Global South and elsewhere.

The author points out that SCO-ASEAN collaboration can produce substantial results, bolstering states' authority and improving the legitimacy of governing systems in a period of increasing instability. Strategic coordination and consolidation of resources between the SCO and ASEAN are crucial in effectively tackling common regional security problems. An essential aspect of this collaboration is its focus on non-Western international relations, deviating from conventional Western-centric frameworks and concentrating on concepts of sovereignty, non-interference, and inclusivity. This approach results in fairer and more balanced institutions.

Aris notes that while both emphasize a shared environment, method, and political system, they diverge from Western liberal democracies.¹⁸⁹ This commonality is important because it suggests a form of regional cooperation based on mutual understanding and respect for different governing arrangements.

The author emphasizes that the SCO can balance its approach through a unique form of regionalism adaptable in a multipolar world, offering an alternative to conventional Western-centric models of regionalism. The potential for a multifaceted partnership between the SCO and ASEAN in various areas, including the economy, transportation, culture, tourism, and investment, emphasizes the extensive array of possible collaborative prospects.

Further, the author points out the crucial role of the ASEAN Way in enabling SCO-ASEAN regional security cooperation. The ASEAN Way can address regional security challenges and foster cooperation with the SCO using a consensus-based

¹⁸⁹ Aris S. Ibid, P. 458.

model against increasing geopolitical complexities and the requirement for decisive security measures. It facilitates a distinctive type of conversation and conflict resolution that diverges dramatically from Western approaches involving confrontation or involvement.

Moreover, the author emphasizes that the ASEAN Way's capacity to cultivate a sense of ownership and dedication among member states, as choices are made jointly and willingly, caters to the SCO and ASEAN's objectives of strengthening state sovereignty. The consensus-based paradigm includes many perspectives, minimizing the likelihood of disagreement among member nations. This strategy is essential for establishing confidence and maintaining long-term collaboration, critical for addressing complex regional security concerns.

In addition, both organizations effectively resisted Western normative influence, with the SCO positioning as a counterbalance to Western liberal democratic norms. At the same time, ASEAN has established its normative identity, emphasizing non-interference, pragmatic regionalism, flexible guidelines, and non-binding instruments. Given that, the broad potential of the SCO, including addressing security concerns and promoting economic cooperation, along with ASEAN's instrumental role in fostering collaboration and trust-building among Southeast Asian countries, particularly by shaping regional security architecture, underscores the profound capacity of these organizations to work together effectively. Mirjalolovna notes that the SCO's expansion was carefully considered based on determining the maximum size it could handle without losing focus on its core mission or risking self-destruction.¹⁹⁰

¹⁹⁰ *Mirjalolovna, D.G., Ibid, P. 39.*

1.2. SCO and ASEAN Platforms for Regional Security Cooperation

Institutional instruments are vital for the SCO and ASEAN to fulfill their respective mandates. They promote political, economic, and security cooperation among their members and other regional organizations. Moreover, these institutional instruments establish frameworks for capacity-building, conflict prevention to advance regional security and stability within their respective areas, and collaboration and coordination on behalf of the diverse membership of these organizations.

The RATS is the leading institutional platform the SCO uses to encourage collaboration among its members to tackle extremism, separatism, and terrorism through joint anti-terrorism exercises, intelligence sharing, and capacity building.¹⁹¹ In addition to counterterrorism measures, the RATS also tackles many transnational menaces, including drug trafficking, arms smuggling, and money laundering. It also conducts joint operations and drills to enhance the ability of SCO member nations to confront these rising security concerns.

Since 2005, the SCO has conducted the Peace Mission military exercises to improve cooperation and interoperability among its member states' armed forces. The routine exercise within the SCO framework aims to deepen defense and security cooperation between member states, improve their capability to cope with new challenges and threats, and jointly safeguard regional peace and security.¹⁹²

The armed forces of SCO member states contribute troops, equipment, and other resources according to a pre-determined plan, with observer countries also participating in the exercise. The Peace Mission exercises simulate multiple security scenarios, such as counterterrorism operations, hostage rescue, intelligence sharing, and disaster relief.

¹⁹¹ About SCO RATS [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://ecrats.org/en/about/history/> (date accessed: 07.03.2023).

¹⁹² A glance at SCO "Peace Mission" anti-terrorism drills - Global Times [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202109/1234443.shtml> (date accessed: 07.03.2023).

The exercise is carried out through a series of stages: initial planning and preparation, command and control, live fire exercise, and subsequent analysis and evaluation.

ASEAN employs many institutional mechanisms to enhance regional security collaboration, primarily using the EAS, ARF, and ADMM.

The EAS is a yearly diplomatic gathering when the heads of state from 18 nations¹⁹³ convene to discuss regional issues. Decisions during this meeting are not legally binding. The platform facilitates discussions among members on economic development, energy security, marine security, terrorism, and non-proliferation.¹⁹⁴ Furthermore, the EAS serves as a platform for discussions regarding political and security matters, regional crises, and disputes.

The forum is a valuable platform for regional collaboration and conversation on crucial matters impacting the East Asian area. It also works with regional forums like the ARF and the ASEAN+3. The organization's extensive membership represents the region's wide-ranging economic, political, and strategic interests. This setup highlights the significance of working together to tackle common concerns.

EAS is the sole institutional instrument that permits leaders of pivotal Asia-Pacific nations to convene in an informal setting to deliberate on strategic matters. The objective is to establish an open, inclusive, and outward-focused forum to unite significant nations that adhere to ASEAN standards and values to advance regional stability.¹⁹⁵ Reddy further asserts that the EAS, functioning as an ASEAN institutional instrument, has effectively achieved its objective of promoting the fundamental ideals of regionalism, including inclusivity, unity, equal opportunity, balance, non-

¹⁹³ EAS membership includes the 10 ASEAN member states, China, Japan, South Korea, India, Australia, New Zealand, Russia, and the United States.

¹⁹⁴ About The East Asia Summit [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://eastiasummit.asean.org/about-east-asia-summit> (date accessed: 07.03.2023).

¹⁹⁵ Rethinking the East Asia Summit: Purpose, Processes, and Agenda [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://www.siiainline.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/2014-10-Policy-Brief-Rethinking-the-East-Asia-Summit-Purpose-Processes-and-Agenda.pdf> (date accessed: 03.07.2023). P. 1.

dominance, and openness.¹⁹⁶ Bisley further highlights the significant strategic relevance of the EAS due to its political power, ability to foster trust and cooperation among important Asian nations, and its impact on regional policy decisions.¹⁹⁷

Nevertheless, the EAS is subject to limitations due to its nature as an institutional instrument. Emmers notes that the cooperative process in the EAS is mainly restricted to dialogues and joint declarations with limited tangible outcomes despite repeated demands for a more focused and structured agenda.¹⁹⁸ He notes that the absence of practical consequences stems from the EAS' institutional format, which is under-institutionalized, having no secretariat, budget, or membership fees to support its agenda.¹⁹⁹

Institutional overlap is also a significant challenge for the EAS. Yeo notes that the informal nature of Asian institutional instruments and competing visions of regionalism make Asia prone to overlapping regionalism.²⁰⁰ He mentions that historical grievances and long-running disputes preclude the emergence of generalized trust, which makes institution-building a nigh-impossible undertaking.²⁰¹ In line with that, Feigenbaum notes that the problem of Asian regionalism suffers from a functional issue in that it is characterized by too much redundancy, which accomplishes little, if any.²⁰² Also, Ha and Cook note that there has been no serious attempt to overhaul the EAS

¹⁹⁶ Reddy G.J. East Asia Summit: Interests and Expectations // International Journal of Peace and Development Studies. 2010. Vol. 1. № 3. P. 45.

¹⁹⁷ Bisley N. The East Asia Summit and ASEAN: Potential and Problems // Contemporary Southeast Asia. 2017. Vol. 39. № 2. P. 269.

¹⁹⁸ Emmers R. The East Asia Summit: On a Road to Somewhere? // Security Architectures Under Threat. Singapore: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2017. P. 15.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Yeo A.I. Overlapping regionalism in East Asia: determinants and potential effects // International Relations of the Asia-Pacific. 2016. Vol. 18. № 2. P. 161.

²⁰¹ Ibid. P. 183.

²⁰² Feigenbaum E.A. America is Being Left Behind in Asia [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.cfr.org/blog/america-being-left-behind-asia-east-asia-summit-edition> (date accessed: 11.04.2023).

structure to preserve its “leaders-led” nature and manage overlaps with other institutional instruments in functional cooperation, like the ARF and ADMM.²⁰³

The ARF is the primary channel for discussing political and security matters among ASEAN member states and with the organization's dialogue partners.²⁰⁴ It operates on the principle of consensus, meaning all participants must agree on any decisions and recommendations made during the forum. It also provides a discussion forum on various regional security issues. As ASEAN’s primary regional non-binding institutional instrument, the ARF has been described as a “norms factory” for East Asia since it is critical in promoting regional norms that guide its member states, such as consensus decision-making, developing several important regional security agreements, and contributing to conflict and dispute management. It also emphasizes a cooperative approach to regional security through promoting dialogue, with the view that regional security challenges are complex and overlapping, requiring a collective response.

The ARF is characterized by its inclusiveness, in line with ASEAN’s push to maintain its central role as the foundation of regional order in Southeast Asia, and its efforts to be perceived as a regional conductor that can harmonize the diverse values and interests of different regional actors. It is also characterized by the facilitation of Track 2 Diplomacy,²⁰⁵ which promotes a deeper understanding of regional security issues beyond state-level discourse and can inform member states’ policy decisions.

In particular, the May 2020 Chairman’s Statement of The Tenth Meeting of the ARF emphasizes the role of ASEAN in developing friendly relations and partnerships

²⁰³ *Ha H.T., Cook M.* Is the East Asia Summit Suffering Erosion? [Electronic resource]. URL: https://www.iseas.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/ISEAS_Perspective_2021_61.pdf (date accessed: 03.06.2023). P. 4.

²⁰⁴ ASEAN Regional Forum [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://aseanregionalforum.asean.org/about-arf/> (date accessed: 07.03.2023).

²⁰⁵ Track 2 Diplomacy, or “backchannel talks,” involves a nongovernmental, informal, and unofficial form of conflict resolution to de-escalate conflict by reducing anger, fear, and tension and improving communication and mutual understanding.

with various entities, including external partners, human rights bodies, and international and regional organizations.²⁰⁶ This approach reflects ASEAN's commitment to mutually beneficial dialogues and cooperation beyond its member states, fostering a more connected and cooperative international community.²⁰⁷

Chanto notes that the objective of the ARF was to create a more predictable and stable pattern of relationships between major powers and Southeast Asia, recognizing that regional issues needed the engagement of great powers in regional affairs.²⁰⁸ He notes that given the dialogue-based nature of ASEAN, the ARF emphasizes mutual engagement as a way of conflict prevention and deterrence, using soft institutionalism based on accepting the least legally binding collective norms and values.²⁰⁹

In terms of the ARF's importance in counter-terrorism cooperation, Katsumata mentions that the ARF should be seen as a norm-building exercise promoting ASEAN's understanding of an appropriate approach to security based on dialogue and mutual understanding, encouraging external powers to pursue policies consistent with the organization's norms.²¹⁰ Moreover, Heller mentions that the ARF functions as an arena wherein participants are exposed to continuing mutual contact wherein they are supposed to cooperate and show good intentions steadily, with the increasing appeal, broadening and deepening of security cooperation, and the adjustment of conflicting perceptions among its members are readily observable benefits to regional security.²¹¹ In addition, Huisken and Milner say that the ARF sustains awareness of regional

²⁰⁶ Chairman's Statement The Tenth Meeting of ASEAN Regional Forum [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://asean.org/speechandstatement/chairmans-statement-the-tenth-meeting-of-asean-regional-forum/> (date accessed: 06.02.2024).

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Chanto S.D. The ASEAN Regional Forum – The Emergence of 'Soft Security': Improving the Functionality of the ASEAN Security Regime // Dialogue + Cooperation. 2003. Vol. 3. P. 41.

²⁰⁹ Ibid. P. 46.

²¹⁰ Katsumata H. ASEAN's Cooperative Security Enterprise: Norms and Interests in the ASEAN Regional Forum: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. P. 7.

²¹¹ Heller D. The Relevance of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) for Regional Security in the Asia-Pacific // Contemporary Southeast Asia. 2005. Vol. 27. № 1. Pp. 141-142.

security challenges and forms part of an early warning system should those challenges exacerbate tensions between major powers.²¹²

Despite the ARF's critical place in the ASEAN's institutional instruments roster, it has many limitations, such as a lack of common threat perception between external partners and slow progress. Narine argues that ASEAN's achievements as a security community result from its members' collective political determination to mitigate conflicts among them, a characteristic not mirrored in the ARF due to the inclusion of several powerful countries and a lack of shared threat perception.²¹³ Also, Chalermphanupap notes that while the ARF's modality of progressing at a pace comfortable for all suits ASEAN, it has hampered the speed of institutionalizing confidence-building, leaving the forum stuck in doing preventive diplomacy, which has diminished ASEAN's claim of centrality for the ARF.²¹⁴ He notes that major ARF participants, such as the US, Japan, China, and India, have grown impatient with the ARF's rate of progress and opted to form the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QSD) as a parallel to the ARF.²¹⁵

The ADMM is a platform for ASEAN defense ministers to discuss regional security issues and promote defense cooperation among their countries.²¹⁶ Its objective is to foster trust and confidence among ASEAN member states, promote regional peace and stability, and encourage cooperation in defense efforts. It has been instrumental in establishing practical cooperation measures, such as direct communication links

²¹² *Huisken R., Milner A.* ASEAN Regional Forum: less might be more [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/asean-regional-forum-less-might-be-more> (date accessed: 04.08.2023).

²¹³ *Narine S.* ASEAN and the ARF: The Limits of the "ASEAN Way" // *Asian Survey*. 1997. Vol. 37. № 10. P. 973.

²¹⁴ *Chalermphanupap T.* The ASEAN Regional Forum: Genesis, Development, and Challenges [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.iseas.edu.sg/images/pdf/ASEANMattersIssue3.pdf> (date accessed: 11.06.2023). P. 2.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

²¹⁶ About the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://admm.asean.org/index.php/about-admm/about-admm.html#:~:text=The%20ADMM%20is%20the%20highest,enhancement%20of%20transparency%20and%20openness.> (date accessed: 08.03.2023).

between ASEAN defense institutions, multilateral naval exercises, and information sharing on regional security threats. It is also unique because it has an ADMM+ sub-forum, which includes the defense ministers of ASEAN's eight dialogue partners. This allows ASEAN to deepen its defense and security cooperation with regional partners.²¹⁷ As with the ADMM, it has a regional security focus, emphasizes multilateral engagement, has a comprehensive security agenda, and has a non-binding nature. The ADMM and ADMM+ aim to establish connections among military groups in the region to maintain a secure environment, peace, and stability and demonstrate the region's shared commitment to addressing shared security concerns, playing a significant role in ASEAN's efforts to promote a cooperative and secure regional environment.

Consistent with the goals and characteristics of the ARF, the ADMM is a platform for ASEAN defense ministers to discuss regional security issues and promote defense cooperation among their countries.²¹⁸ It aims to encourage mutual trust and confidence between member nations of ASEAN, improve regional peace and stability, and foster cooperation in defense. The ADMM has been instrumental in establishing practical cooperation measures, such as direct communication links between ASEAN defense institutions, multilateral naval exercises, and information sharing on regional security threats.

Regarding the ADMM, Teo and Tsjeng note that its inclusion in the Asia-Pacific's security infrastructure is significant because it formalized multilateral defense diplomacy and cooperation.²¹⁹ They mention its considerable accomplishments, which include deepening networking and confidence-building between the defense and

²¹⁷ About the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://admm.asean.org/index.php/about-admm/about-admm.html#:~:text=The%20ADMM%20is%20the%20highest,enhancement%20of%20transparency%20and%20openness.> (date accessed: 08.03.2023).

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ *Teo S., Tsjeng H.* A Diplomatic Decade: The ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting [Electronic resource]. URL: https://www.globalasia.org/v11no1/feature/a-diplomatic-decade-the-asean-defence-ministers-meeting_sarah-teohenrick-z-tsjeng (date accessed: 17.04.2023).

military establishments of ASEAN members, avoiding politicization of defense cooperation, and engaging major regional powers in practical and functional collaboration.²²⁰ Shoji notes that the rationale behind the ADMM was to create an atmosphere of security cooperation within ASEAN.²²¹ He mentions that it introduced the “defense cooperation” concept, forging positive and productive relationships between regional militaries, thereby creating a peaceful and stable security environment.²²² In the same line of thought, Lin says that the ADMM pushes for building a security community that focuses on norms-setting, confidence-building, conflict prevention, and resolution.²²³

Also, Ba notes that the ADMM appears to mark a more focused, task-oriented approach beyond confidence building, focusing on defense industries, logistics cooperation, military medicine, military readiness, HADR, intra-ASEAN crisis emergency communications links, and a peacekeeping network.²²⁴ She also mentions that the ADMM gives defense ministers freedom to set their agenda as they can engage each other directly rather than being subordinated to plans developed by their foreign ministries.²²⁵

By extension, Teo notes that the ADMM+ facilitates dialogue at various defense sector levels and advances practical cooperation between regional defense forces.²²⁶ Ha

²²⁰ *Teo S., Tsjeng H.* A Diplomatic Decade: The ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting [Electronic resource]. URL: https://www.globalasia.org/v11no1/feature/a-diplomatic-decade-the-asean-defence-ministers-meeting_sarah-teohenrick-z-tsjeng (date accessed: 17.04.2023).

²²¹ *Shoji T.* ASEAN Defense Ministers’ Meeting (ADMM) and ADMM Plus: A Japanese Perspective // *NIDS Journal of Defense and Security*. 2013. Vol. 4. P. 7.

²²² *Ibid.* P. 8.

²²³ *Lin J.* ASEAN and ADMM: Climbing Out of a Deep Hole [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://fulcrum.sg/asean-and-admm-climbing-out-of-a-deep-hole/> (date accessed: 09.08.2023).

²²⁴ *Ba A.* ASEAN and the Changing Regional Order: The ARF, ADMM, and ADMM-Plus [Electronic resource]. URL: https://www.eria.org/ASEAN_at_50_4A.8_Alice_Ba_final.pdf (date accessed: 11.05.2023). P. 147.

²²⁵ *Ibid.* P. 151.

²²⁶ *Teo S.* The Future of ADMM-Plus in the Indo-Pacific [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://isdpeu/content/uploads/2023/05/Brief-May-2-2023-Sarah-1.pdf> (date accessed: 07.07.2023). P. 1.

emphasizes the impact of ADMM+ in enhancing mutual trust, fostering engagement among involved militaries through practical operational-level collaboration, and expanding security cooperation beyond just diplomacy to include tangible, task-driven exercises and frameworks.²²⁷ He points out that the distinctive operational facet of ADMM+, which provides for collaborative activities and exercises involving military personnel and resources, sets it apart in the ASEAN-led regional security structure, particularly when compared to the foreign affairs-driven ARF.²²⁸

Analyzing the SCO RATS, EAS, ARF, and ADMM provides a comprehensive overview of the complexity and diversity of Eurasian and Southeast Asian regional security frameworks. This analysis offers crucial observations regarding these entities' architecture, goals, and effectiveness in addressing regional security challenges. This study explores the complex dynamics of cooperation and conflict resolution amongst different organizations, namely in counterterrorism, security, and diplomacy. It emphasizes the joint efforts and difficulties involved in resolving conflicts. In addition, the author analyzes the interaction between dominant nations and the impact of geopolitical forces on these structures, reflecting the broader strategic goals and power struggles of global actors. This comprehensive analysis highlights the intricate and interrelated design of regional security systems and their influence on creating the geopolitical landscape.

The RATS is crucial in regional security, primarily focusing on Central Asia. It was created as a response to the changing danger of Islamic extremism, specifically in Central Asia. It follows a security approach emphasizing cooperation and coordinated strategies among member states. This approach aligns with the overall security philosophy of the SCO, which China and Russia heavily influence.

²²⁷ *Ha H.T.* Repositioning the ADMM-Plus in a Contested Region [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.iseas.edu.sg/articles-commentaries/iseas-perspective/iseas-2021-13-repositioning-the-admm-plus-in-a-contested-region-hoang-by-thi-ha/> (date accessed: 25.05.2023).

²²⁸ *Ibid.*

Wallace notes that the Uighur separatist problem in Xinjiang is China's primary influence in its security policy and stake in the RATS.²²⁹ He mentions while Chinese sources describe the SCO as more than a security organization, its focus on counter-terrorism is primarily due to China's threat perception of Uighurs.²³⁰ Wallace also says that China values the RATS as a rhetorical device giving moral justification for its actions in Xinjiang and has been successful in maintaining the pretense of counterterrorism for authoritarian regimes seeking to prevent a popular uprising or to crush political dissent.²³¹

In contrast to China, Russia's interests in the RATS appear to be much more limited. Troitsky points out that while Russia co-established the RATS with China, Russian policymakers have highlighted that the SCO's documents do not include defense cooperation and that the organization has no intentions of creating multinational military or police formations.²³² Additionally, he emphasizes that the scope of RATS is limited to intelligence analysis and collaboration among SCO member countries' national intelligence agencies to counter terrorist risks..²³³ Despite that, Troitsky mentions that Russia is interested in expanding RATS activities to combat the drug trade through and from Central Asia.²³⁴

Given that, the author notes that the efficacy of RATS is apparent in its coordinated counter-terrorism endeavors, which encompass collaborative military drills and intelligence exchange activities. Nevertheless, the author also emphasizes difficulties such as the subordination of the individual member states' interests to those of dominant members and the need to balance counter-terrorism efforts, human rights,

²²⁹ Wallace T. China and the Regional Counter-Terrorism Structure: An Organizational Analysis // Asian Security. 2014. T. 10. № 3. P. 200.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Ibid. P. 212.

²³² Troitsky M. et al. A Russian Perspective on the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. : Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2007. Pp. 36-37.

²³³ Ibid. P. 37.

²³⁴ Ibid. P. 38.

and civil freedoms. The strategic priorities within RATS, influenced by the security interests of China and Russia, illustrate how the national concerns of influential states can determine the agenda, potentially sidelining other security issues and causing conflicts with the broader diplomatic and security goals of other regional organizations.

While the SCO is dominated by China and Russia, which are continental powers, there is potential for SCO cooperation to move into the maritime domain.

Vijay notes that the membership of maritime-oriented states such as India and Pakistan will highly likely lead to an eventual reorientation of their security concerns, forcing the SCO's influential members China and Russia to transcend their continental mindset, as the membership of the former two brings the Indian Ocean into the SCO's area of interest.²³⁵ He notes that the RATS would have to redesign its framework to respond to maritime threats and that the SCO cannot indefinitely exclude the maritime interests of even its landlocked members, as the latter still indirectly depend on the oceans for economic growth.²³⁶ According to Vijay, China is aligning its BRI with the SCO framework, as evident by significant projects like Gwadar in Pakistan and Chabahar in Iran.²³⁷

The BRI can also be a springboard for SCO-ASEAN cooperation, as several BRI projects exist in Southeast Asia. An October 2018 study by the CIMB ASEAN Research Institute and London School of Economics IDEAS think tank shows Southeast Asia's ten most significant BRI projects.²³⁸

²³⁵ Vijay A. Shanghai Cooperation Organisation — The Maritime Potential of a Continental Construct [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://maritimeindia.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/shanghai-cooperation-organisation-SCO-maritime-potential.pdf> (date accessed: 06.02.2024).

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ <https://www.lse.ac.uk/ideas/Assets/Documents/reports/LSE-IDEAS-China-SEA-BRI.pdf>

Rank	Year	Chinese Entity / Project	Cost US\$	Sector	Subsector (where applicable)	Country of investment
1	2017	Kuala Lumpur–Kota Bahru Rail (Construction)	14,300,000,000	Transport	Rail	Malaysia
2	2013	Preah Vihear–Kaoh Kong Railway	9,600,000,000	Transport	Rail	Cambodia
3	2017	Vanke, Hopu, Hillhouse, Bank of China	9,060,000,000	Logistics		Singapore
4	Unclear	Kyaukpyu Deep Sea Port (Construction)	7,300,000,000	Transport	Posts/ Shipping	Myanmar
5	2015	China General Nuclear	5,960,000,000	Energy		Malaysia
6	2016	Vientiane–Boten Railway Project	5,800,000,000	Transport	Rail	Laos
7	2017	Bangkok to Nakhon Ratchisima High-Speed Railway (Phase 1)	5,352,905,500	Transport	Rail	Thailand
8	2013	Zhejiang Hengyi	3,440,000,000	Energy	Oil	Brunei
9	2017	China Railway Engineering	3,190,000,000	Transport	Rail	Indonesia
10	2017	China Railway Construction, China Railway Engineering	2,690,000,000	Transport	Rail	Thailand

Figure 1: Biggest BRI projects in Southeast Asia as of 2018. China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and Southeast Asia [Electronic Resource]. URL: <https://www.lse.ac.uk/ideas/Assets/Documents/reports/LSE-IDEAS-China-SEA-BRI.pdf> (date accessed: 06.02.2024)

The author contends that as China's BRI increases in reach and impact, the requirement for a robust institutional framework to handle the consequent diplomatic, economic, and security difficulties becomes increasingly crucial. The expansion of the BRI into Southeast Asia emphasizes the geopolitical importance of this region and the need for improved systems of regional collaboration. Expanding the scope of the SCO to encompass maritime and other security concerns in this situation offers a strategic chance to promote more extensive cooperation with the ASEAN. An enlargement of this nature would effectively connect the two prevailing regional security bodies, bringing them into alignment under a uniform strategic framework. This alignment is

positioned to enable a holistic approach to regional security cooperation, encompassing both conventional and unconventional security threats in a more unified manner. By synchronizing the SCO and ASEAN's endeavors, these two entities can utilize their capabilities and specialized knowledge to foster stability, bolster economic growth, and minimize regional security threats. This proposed collaboration highlights the changing nature of regional security structures and the growing global geopolitical landscape, where regional collaborations are essential in addressing complex challenges. The confluence of both organizations in a joint strategic area would be noteworthy in regional collaboration, signaling a fresh period of combined security and economic success in Eurasia and Southeast Asia. Such can be made possible through cooperation via institutional mechanisms. Further, Mirjalolovna notes that the convergence of the two groups with observer status at the UN General Assembly enhances their favorable global image and fuels a growing global demand for their corresponding ideologies.²³⁹

The author characterizes the EAS as a pivotal regional platform encompassing various security and development matters. The EAS is an important platform that enables critical regional stakeholders, including the US, Russia, China, and ASEAN members, to engage in discussions and work together. It is essential in addressing various topics, such as maritime security, disaster management, and climate change.

The EAS' encompassing and comprehensive nature enables a holistic perspective on regional security. Nevertheless, this extensive directive also poses difficulties in attaining specific results and sustaining a concentrated plan. The efficacy of the EAS relies heavily on the capacity of its heterogeneous constituents to reach consensus amidst conflicting national concerns, particularly in volatile ones such as territorial disputes in the South China Sea. The author acknowledges that although the EAS enables significant discussions at a senior level, it also serves as a platform for intense rivalry among major powers, which mirrors more comprehensive strategic

²³⁹ *Mirjalolovna D.G. Ibid. P. 39.*

competitions in the Indo-Pacific area. The intricate process of harmonizing the many interests of participants, combined with the involvement of influential global forces, influences the agenda and results of the organization. This constraint can occasionally restrict its ability to collaborate effectively with more specialized institutions such as RATS or ADMM.

According to the author's analysis, the ADMM plays a vital role in Southeast Asia's regional security framework. ADMM aims to strengthen mutual trust and comprehension of military and security concerns, serving as the most significant consultative and cooperative platform for ASEAN's defense. The author emphasizes the crucial role of ADMM in facilitating tangible military collaboration and enhancing security. The author supports this claim by mentioning specific efforts, such as combined maritime patrols and counter-terrorism drills, demonstrating ADMM's proactive stance towards non-conventional security challenges. Nevertheless, the consensus-driven nature of ADMM can occasionally hinder prompt and resolute action on contentious regional security matters despite its commitment to inclusivity. The author highlights a need for ADMM's involvement in more comprehensive diplomatic platforms like the EAS and specialized entities like RATS. This situation indicates a need for more cohesive strategies combining ADMM's defense-focused initiatives with more extensive diplomatic and security discussions. Moreover, the impact of foreign powers, namely the US and China, is apparent in the actions of ADMM. The US's support for capacity-building initiatives and China's involvement in ADMM-related activities are part of their broader strategic interests, impacting the autonomy and strategic direction of ADMM. In line with that, Zhang notes ASEAN's commitment to preserving and improving its distinct unity, centrality, and inclusive development exemplifies its strategic autonomy amidst the competition between China and the US.²⁴⁰

²⁴⁰ *Zhang J.* Rebuilding strategic autonomy: ASEAN's response to US–China strategic competition // *China International Strategy Review*. 2023. T. 5. № 1. P. 79.

The author delineates the intricate and diverse nature of regional security frameworks in Eurasia and Southeast Asia, focusing on the RATS, EAS, ARF, and ADMM. Each institutional instrument's unique approach and scope contributes differently to the regional security landscape. Further, Ratnyushak and Sokol note that the SCO's counterterrorism effectiveness is backed by statistics, as from 2013 to 2017, SCO member states prevented over 600 terrorist crimes during the planning phase, dismantled over 500 training camps, and confiscated more than 50 tons of explosives, 10,000 firearms, and over a million munitions, demonstrating their strong and proactive stance against terrorism.²⁴¹ With a focused strategy, RATS excels in counter-terrorism but needs help balancing diverse members' interests. While inclusive and comprehensive, EAS faces difficulties in achieving concrete outcomes due to its broad agenda. ARF, though instrumental in fostering dialogue, occasionally struggles with divisive issues. ADMM, pivotal in defense diplomacy, is limited by its consensus-driven decision-making process. The author underscores that the effectiveness of these frameworks is closely tied to their ability to harmonize diverse approaches, cooperate, and resolve conflicts amidst the complex regional security challenges and the significant influence of major global powers. This dynamic interplay between regional and international influences reflects the complexities of managing security challenges in a rapidly evolving geopolitical environment.

Based on an extensive analysis of SCO and ASEAN institutional mechanisms, the author emphasizes that cooperation between them is possible for the following reasons.

The essence of the possible collaboration is the capacity of these two organizations to discover a shared understanding despite their contrasting approaches. With its RATS, characterized by its practical and assertive position, the SCO could gain advantages from ASEAN's more inclusive strategy based on agreement. This approach

²⁴¹ *Ratushnyak O., Sokol V. Shanghai Cooperation Organization: The Evolution Of Counter-Terrorism At A Regional Level // The European Proceedings of Social and Behavioural Sciences. 2019. P. 2655*

may offer a more comprehensive comprehension of the regional security situation, considering the socio-political complexities of Southeast Asia. In contrast, ASEAN may utilize the SCO's resources and expertise to address non-conventional security challenges, thus enhancing its security procedures.

Moreover, both organizations demonstrated their capacity to withstand Western normative influence by building their identities based on soft regionalism. The shared characteristic could establish a basis for their cooperation. The SCO's primary objective of fostering economic cooperation and security, as highlighted by China, along with ASEAN's role in encouraging cooperation and trust-building among Southeast Asian nations, creates prospects for mutually beneficial partnership.

Although there are inherent difficulties in combining the SCO's practical security approach with ASEAN's inclination for non-interference and consensus decision-making, there is still potential for effective partnership. To do this, one must comprehend strategic cultures and be receptive to collaborating on security matters. Collaboration on maritime security can aid in achieving collective strategic goals, such as ensuring regional stability and addressing non-traditional security concerns. Bueger and Edmunds state that the emergence of new forms of international order at sea is driven by a pragmatic and incremental approach to maritime security, influenced by innovation and changes in the marine arena rather than broader geopolitical developments or international regulations.²⁴² Both organizations can potentially establish a new maritime security model, leveraging both institutions' respective strengths to develop a more robust and comprehensive security framework.

Further, the EAS has the potential to foster effective cooperation between the SCO and ASEAN despite the difficulties in aligning different national interests and the intense competition among major global powers in the region. The EAS provides a comprehensive platform that covers various security and development issues. This is

²⁴² *Bueger C., Edmunds T. Beyond seablindness: a new agenda for maritime security studies // International Affairs. 2017. Vol. 93. № 6. Pp. 1310.*

based on the fact that the EAS offers a distinct platform where influential nations and regional groups can have discussions beyond traditional security issues. This leads to improved strategic cooperation and pooling of essential resources to tackle shared regional security challenges. Zha says that it is vital to acknowledge obstacles highlighted by Southeast Asian nations, such as the perception of the US not consistently prioritizing the region, a tendency to pursue independent actions, and a tendency to downplay economic matters, as factors could potentially affect the interactions and collaborations among the dominant powers in the region.²⁴³

The EAS's inclusive methodology, which corresponds with the non-Western international relations framework stressed in this research, provides an alternative viewpoint for analyzing global governance. These ideas are fundamental in the current era of growing geopolitical intricacies, as prioritizing the principles of sovereignty, non-interference, and inclusivity can lead to establishing more equitable and impartial institutions. The EAS, by its inherent structure, caters to its constituents' varied development objectives, challenges, and accomplishments, hence promoting cooperation across different non-Western coalitions. The collaborative atmosphere is crucial for discerning SCO and ASEAN's strategic convergence and divergence. This is vital for formulating collective plans and strategies that can successfully tackle the security problems in the region. In line with that, Acharya says developing countries have played a significant role in shaping the standards and institutions that promote universal human rights, sovereignty, international development, disarmament, and participation at a global level, even though this contribution has not been fully acknowledged until now.²⁴⁴

Also, the EAS plays a crucial role in fostering a worldwide trend towards increased interconnectivity and the emergence of various centers of power, which holds

²⁴³ *Zha W.* Southeast Asia amid Sino-US Competition: Power Shift and Regional Order Transition // *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*. 2023. Vol. 16. № 2. P. 248.

²⁴⁴ *Acharya A.* Global International Relations (IR) and Regional Worlds // *International Studies Quarterly*. 2014. Vol. 58. № 4. P. 652.

considerable significance. Amidst a period marked by growing unpredictability, the EAS is a vital forum for enhancing nations' control and the credibility of governance structures through collaborative involvement and cooperation. Considering the intricacies inherent in the geopolitical terrain, this endeavor has the potential to yield significant outcomes in terms of regional security and development.

The ADMM, through its defense-oriented initiatives, can effectively integrate with the broader diplomatic and security deliberations of SCO, despite the consensus-based approach of ADMM and the impact of the US and China on its strategic trajectory. The integration is possible since the strategic aims and operational frameworks of SCO and ASEAN are complementary. The consensus-driven approach of the ADMM, which prioritizes non-interference and inclusivity, is well-aligned with the SCO's focus on sovereignty and collaborative security, as emphasized in this dissertation. This alignment enables the development of a shared strategic framework that upholds each member state's independence and strategic interests. Allison notes that the SCO's 'protective integration' practice can further enhance that process, as it exhibits loose, flexible integration while aiming to foster regime security, encouraging interaction, shared norms, and collective political security.²⁴⁵

The author emphasizes the importance of strategic cooperation and consolidation of resources between the SCO and ASEAN to address shared regional security challenges effectively. This cooperative approach is essential for expanding into other areas of collaboration, thereby strengthening the power of nations and enhancing the credibility of governing systems in a time marked by growing volatility. The research offers a detailed comprehension of the intricate processes that promote collaboration within these non-Western alliances, emphasizing the significance of finding areas of strategic alignment and divergence between the SCO and ASEAN. An extensive

²⁴⁵ Allison R. Protective Integration and Security Policy Coordination: Comparing the SCO and CSTO // The Chinese Journal of International Politics. 2018. Vol. 11. № 3. P. 297.

examination is crucial for developing a collaborative strategy that effectively addresses the ever-changing geopolitical landscape and the diverse interests of member nations.

Moreover, the focus on non-Western international relations in this study provides an alternate viewpoint for analyzing global governance, which aligns more with the ideals of equity and equilibrium. This viewpoint holds great importance, especially within SCO and ASEAN frameworks and SCO, as member nations exhibit substantial disparities in development objectives, challenges, and accomplishments. By utilizing this alternative framework, the ADMM can efficiently incorporate its initiatives into the SCO's wider diplomatic and security dialogues, providing a comprehensive approach to regional security that is inclusive and considerate of its member states' varied interests and strategic concerns.

The ARF has the potential to align with the broader diplomatic and security dialogues of the SCO, despite the ARF's consensus-based decision-making process and the impact of external forces such as the US and China on its strategic trajectory. The possibility for this is based on the shared objectives of the ASEAN and SCO, both aiming to improve regional security and stability. The ARF's emphasis on confidence-building measures and preventative diplomacy aligns with the SCO's focus on regional security, especially in addressing terrorism, extremism, and separatism. Sen notes that SCO and ASEAN contributions may reinvent international relations, moving away from Western modernity as the universally desired goal and acknowledging alternative visions of the international system that detract from imperialist concepts of global politics.²⁴⁶

The author examines SCO-ASEAN regional security cooperation, highlighting its ability to go beyond traditional security issues and encompass many forms of collaboration. Adaptability is essential for incorporating the ARF's activities into the SCO's broader security deliberations. This research emphasizes integrating resources

²⁴⁶ Sen S. Decolonizing to reimagine International Relations: An introduction // Review of International Studies. 2023. Vol. 49. № 3. P. 341.

between the SCO and ASEAN to address shared regional security issues successfully. This strategic coordination and consolidation of resources is crucial for handling these concerns. The ARF's method, driven by consensus and may incorporate various perspectives impacted by foreign actors, can be a valuable addition to the SCO's framework. The SCO's framework is built on sovereignty, non-interference, and inclusivity principles.

1.3. SCO and ASEAN Policies for Regional Security Cooperation

SCO and ASEAN policy documents are formal statements of intent regarding these organizations' principles, institutional instruments, and programs for regional security cooperation. These documents establish common goals and objectives, set standards for measuring progress, and provide a legal basis for engagements between the two organizations.

The 2001 Shanghai Convention of Combatting Terrorism, Separatism, and Extremism is a cooperative framework for SCO members to address regional security threats.²⁴⁷ The document defines terrorism, separatism, and extremism and outlines the countermeasures member states can take to prevent and manage these threats.²⁴⁸ It includes provisions for mutual assistance, extradition, and legal assistance related to these offenses.²⁴⁹ The Convention facilitates information exchange, coordinates prevention and detection measures, and shares resources and training.²⁵⁰

The 2002 SCO Charter outlines the organization's goals, structure, and decision-making processes.²⁵¹ Its key goals include countering terrorism, separatism, extremism,

²⁴⁷ 2001 Shanghai Convention of Combatting Terrorism, Separatism, and Extremism, Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ 2002 Charter of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Ibid.

and other transnational criminal activities.²⁵² The document sets out the SCO's norms, which include respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence of member states.²⁵³ The main areas of cooperation include maintaining peace and security, finding common positions on foreign policy issues, promoting regional economic cooperation, and managing environmental resources.²⁵⁴

Building on the SCO Charter, the 2007 Agreement on Long-Term Good-Neighborliness, Friendship, and Cooperation promotes peace, security, and sustainable development within the SCO region and globally.²⁵⁵ It emphasizes respect for each state's right to choose its political, economic, social, and cultural development paths and adherence to sovereignty and territorial integrity.²⁵⁶ The document prohibits activities contradicting these principles and participation in alliances or organizations directed against other contracting parties.²⁵⁷ It also has provisions for cooperation to address transnational crimes and enhance border and customs control.²⁵⁸

ASEAN has several policy documents that guide its approach toward regional security cooperation. The 2007 ASEAN Charter is a policy document showing ASEAN's regional security cooperation approach.²⁵⁹ It formalized ASEAN and gave the organization a legal personality, strengthening its role as a regionally and globally active intergovernmental organization.²⁶⁰ The document's core principles encompass the values of autonomy, self-governance, parity, the inviolability of member states' boundaries, and refraining from meddling in domestic matters.²⁶¹ It also governs

²⁵² 2002 Charter of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, *Ibid.*

²⁵³ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁵ 2007 SCO Agreement on Long-Term Good-Neighborliness, Friendship, and Cooperation, *Ibid.*

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁹ 2007 ASEAN Charter, *Ibid.*

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*

ASEAN's external relations, promoting friendly and mutually beneficial partnerships with other countries and international organizations.²⁶²

The 2009 APSC Blueprint envisions a cohesive, peaceful, and resilient region.²⁶³ It seeks to improve regional security cooperation in political and security affairs.²⁶⁴ The document envisions a rules-based, people-oriented community that promotes human rights.²⁶⁵ It proposes measures to strengthen democracy, good governance, human rights, and fight corruption.²⁶⁶

The 2005 MOU between the Secretariat of the ASEAN and the Secretariat of the SCO allows both organizations to begin meaningful collaboration on matters of shared concern, particularly in the areas of counter-terrorism, drug and narcotics control, arms smuggling, money laundering, and human trafficking.²⁶⁷ In terms of cooperation, it mandates sharing best practices, regular dialogues, and specific technical and sectoral cooperation.²⁶⁸

The author's analysis of the SCO and ASEAN policies underscores a multifaceted and evolving approach to regional security challenges. The author dissects the intricate interrelations of institutional frameworks and collaborative mechanisms, highlighting how these agreements foster cooperation, address emerging security concerns and reflect the nuances of regional cooperation. The author delves into the changing paradigms of regional dynamics, exploring the complexities inherent in fostering effective partnerships and the gradual evolution of these frameworks in response to the changing geopolitical landscape. The author's exploration provides a deep understanding of the collaborative decision-making processes and the concerted

²⁶² 2007 ASEAN Charter, Ibid.

²⁶³ 2009 APSC Blueprint, Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ 2005 MOU between the ASEAN Secretariat and the SCO Secretariat, Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

efforts undertaken by these regional organizations to tackle the complex security challenges in Eurasia and Southeast Asia.

The 2001 Shanghai Convention reflects a collective stance of member states against shared security challenges in Central Asia, driven by mutual concerns and influenced by the strategic interests of key players like China and Russia.²⁶⁹ Focusing on these 'three evils' signifies a shift in securitization processes, prioritizing regional stability and transcending traditional interstate conflict paradigms.²⁷⁰ The author notes that the Convention fosters collaborative efforts in intelligence sharing, joint military exercises, and law enforcement cooperation, strengthening regional security and promoting good neighborliness and mutual reliance among SCO members.²⁷¹ The Convention creates a strong institutional framework that enables synchronized actions against shared threats, demonstrating SCO's dedication to a collaborative security approach through a formalized structure, and this thorough examination emphasizes the Convention's contribution to preparing for an integrated and strategic response to the developing security obstacles in the area.²⁷²

The 2002 SCO Charter not only reaffirms the commitment to combating the 'three evils' of terrorism, separatism, and extremism but also introduces comprehensive mechanisms for security cooperation and legal frameworks, marking a shift towards a more structured and formalized approach.²⁷³ Furthermore, the author notes that the Charter broadens the scope of the SCO's collaboration beyond mere security concerns to include economic, cultural, and environmental aspects, thereby advocating for comprehensive regional cooperation.²⁷⁴ Emphasizing mutual respect, equality, and non-interference, the Charter reflects the SCO's dedication to fostering a stable, harmonious,

²⁶⁹ 2001 Shanghai Convention, Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ 2002 Charter of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

and sustainably developing regional environment.²⁷⁵ Additionally, the author highlights that the Charter's inclusion of structures for political dialogue, economic collaboration, and cultural exchange, emphasizing equal rights and mutual benefit, showcases the SCO's holistic approach to regional issues.²⁷⁶ This approach integrates security with economic and cultural cooperation, enhancing the organization's capacity to address various regional challenges and affirming its role as a multifaceted regional actor.

The 2007 Agreement on Long-Term Good-Neighborliness, Friendship, and Cooperation reflects a broader perspective on regional security, extending the scope of cooperation beyond counterterrorism efforts to include economic, cultural, and environmental aspects.²⁷⁷ The author highlights that this multidimensional approach signifies the SCO's adaptive response to the complex interplay of regional security dynamics, aiming to foster holistic and sustainable regional stability. This Agreement delves deeper into socio-economic and cultural realms, promoting extensive trade, investment, and people-to-people ties cooperation.²⁷⁸ The author suggests that this demonstrates the SCO's recognition of the interconnected nature of regional challenges and the importance of a holistic approach to addressing them.²⁷⁹ Furthermore, the Agreement's extension into various spheres, such as trade, infrastructure, and humanitarian assistance, as pointed out by the author, indicates the SCO's awareness of the need for multifaceted cooperative frameworks to ensure regional stability and development.²⁸⁰ This evolution showcases the SCO's commitment to comprehensively adapting its collaborative mechanisms to address various regional challenges.

The 2007 ASEAN Charter establishes a foundational framework for the ASEAN in addressing regional security, presenting a stark contrast to the SCO's approach. The Charter emphasizes non-interference, consensus, and respect for sovereignty,

²⁷⁵ 2002 Charter of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, *Ibid.*

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁷ 2007 SCO Agreement on Long-Term Good-Neighborliness, Friendship, and Cooperation, *Ibid.*

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

delineating a distinct path for ASEAN in managing security concerns.²⁸¹ Unlike the SCO's centralized model, ASEAN's strategy is decentralized, prioritizing dialogue and building mutual trust among member states. This approach reflects ASEAN's commitment to a balanced and inclusive security framework that accommodates its members' diverse political systems and cultures. The author emphasizes that the Charter establishes fundamental principles such as respect for sovereignty, non-interference, decision-making based on consensus, and peaceful resolution of disputes.²⁸² Additionally, the author underscores ASEAN's commitment to preserving regional harmony and stability, effectively handling diversity, and promoting unity. Furthermore, the Charter formalizes ASEAN's operational structures, providing a legal and institutional foundation that enables the organization to navigate the diverse political landscapes of its member states, fostering cooperation while respecting individual sovereignty.²⁸³ The author underscores ASEAN's unique approach to regional cooperation, which is marked by a commitment to balance, inclusivity, and respect for the diverse dynamics of Southeast Asia.

The 2009 APSC Blueprint represents a significant development in ASEAN's approach to regional security, building upon the principles established in the ASEAN Charter. The Blueprint outlines a comprehensive framework for political-security cooperation, demonstrating ASEAN's commitment to deepening integration and enhancing its capacity to respond to various security challenges.²⁸⁴ The author notes that the Blueprint's focus on collaborative mechanisms for conflict resolution, maritime security, transnational crime, human trafficking, environmental degradation, and public health crises illustrates ASEAN's endeavor to strengthen regional resilience and promote a secure and peaceful environment.²⁸⁵ As the author appreciates, this

²⁸¹ 2007 ASEAN Charter, *Ibid.*

²⁸² *Ibid.*

²⁸³ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁴ 2009 APSC Blueprint, *Ibid.*

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

comprehensive nature of the Blueprint underlines ASEAN's nuanced and adaptive approach to security, extending beyond traditional defense and political cooperation to encompass socio-economic and cultural dimensions.²⁸⁶ This indicates ASEAN's responsive mechanism to evolving regional and global challenges, integrating different security aspects under a unified framework. The author points out that the Blueprint is a strategic document that charts the course for ASEAN's engagement in various security domains, enhancing the organization's collective ability to address traditional and non-traditional challenges and reinforcing its role as a multifaceted regional actor in addressing complex security dynamics.²⁸⁷

The author makes the case that regional security cooperation between the SCO and ASEAN is feasible and complementary within both organization's policy frameworks.

Whether the contrasting SCO and ASEAN strategies can be reconciled to establish a successful framework for collaborative regional security is complex and requires careful consideration. This success hinges on the SCO's practical model, which effectively combines with ASEAN's approach, emphasizing dialogue, sovereignty, and non-interference.

It is necessary to consider both organizations' fundamental principles and goals to validate the feasibility of policy harmonization between the SCO and ASEAN. As stated in its Charter, the SCO unequivocally affirms its dedication to collective efforts in addressing regional security challenges. The commitment is reinforced by the Treaty on Long-Term Good-Neighborliness, Friendship, and Cooperation, which obligates member nations to collaborate on security issues. Conversely, ASEAN promotes a collaborative and all-encompassing strategy towards security matters, as outlined in its Charter and other policy documents, such as the APSC Blueprint 2025. This approach

²⁸⁶ 2009 APSC Blueprint, *Ibid.*

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

upholds the principles of sovereignty and non-interference, aiming to resolve security challenges through dialogue and establishing consensus.

Although there are different perspectives, it is possible to find common ground and reach an agreement by acknowledging shared dangers and the advantages of security cooperation. Both organizations recognize the significance of a stable and secure environment for economic and social progress. The SCO's emphasis on combating the 'three evils' aligns with ASEAN's broader security priorities, encompassing transnational criminal activities and terrorism, as stated in the 2005 MOU. The potential for harmonization exists by utilizing the SCO's organized and proactive approach to strengthen ASEAN's ability to tackle specific security challenges. At the same time, ASEAN's focus on dialogue and consensus can temper the SCO's strategy, ensuring it conforms to Southeast Asia's regional norms and sensitivities. Heng points out that the ASEAN Way established the groundwork for a security community in Southeast Asia that differs from other prevalent security cooperation models, such as the collective defense systems of NATO and the UN.²⁸⁸

Aligning the SCO and ASEAN approaches to regional security is possible and beneficial. Integrating the SCO's practical posture on specific security challenges with ASEAN's inclusive and dialogue-based approach can build a more comprehensive and successful regional security framework. This framework would utilize the benefits of both organizations, efficiently addressing the diverse and ever-changing security issues in the Greater Eurasian region with a comprehensive and effective strategy.

The wide-ranging SCO 2007 Agreement within the SCO is comprehensive in its scope, extending to economic, cultural, and environmental collaboration areas. The comprehensive viewpoint reflects the diverse strategy towards regional security and cooperation adopted by ASEAN, as outlined in the 2009 APSC Blueprint and the 2007 ASEAN Charter. The APSC Blueprint presents a vision for a secure, peaceful, and

²⁸⁸ Heng P. K. The "Asean Way" and Regional Security Cooperation in the South China Sea // SSRN Electronic Journal. 2014. P. 3.

united community in its efforts to solve problems and threats to regional peace and stability. Additionally, it emphasizes the significance of economic and socio-cultural factors. The ASEAN Charter delineates various objectives, including enhancing regional tranquility and stability, promoting economic amalgamation, and endorsing sustainable development and cultural legacy.

The SCO and ASEAN have the potential to work together by synchronizing their comprehensive aims. Both organizations prioritize diverse collaboration domains, from security to culture, which can harmonize with each other's multifaceted approach to regional matters. The basis of both organizations' charters is to uphold sovereignty, territorial integrity, and non-interference, which creates a solid foundation for cooperation based on respect and mutual benefit. By utilizing these common principles and objectives, the SCO and ASEAN can cooperate towards a comprehensive regional security framework that covers conventional security risks and economic, cultural, and environmental aspects. Mirjalolovna suggests that initiating proactive communication and promoting mutual understanding through the SCO's active participation in joint forums can benefit both institutions by enabling closer collaboration to tackle shared obstacles.²⁸⁹

The comprehensive nature of the SCO's 2007 Agreement on Long-Term Good-Neighborliness, Friendship, and Cooperation offers a practical structure for harmonizing with ASEAN's diverse goals. This alignment has the potential to cultivate a comprehensive and multifaceted regional security relationship, thereby bolstering peace, stability, and prosperity between these organizations. Based on shared principles and aligned objectives, this collaboration would represent a notable advancement in regional cooperation, tackling the intricate and interconnected issues confronting the Eurasian region.

²⁸⁹ *Mirjalolovna D.G. Ibid. P. 44.*

The complexity lies in determining whether the fundamental principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and non-interference, which are crucial in the SCO and the ASEAN, can either facilitate or impede the establishment of collaborative mechanisms within the SCO-ASEAN regional security cooperation framework. Although fundamental to the beliefs of both organizations, these values offer advantages and difficulties in promoting efficient collaboration for regional security. However, Gerstl notes that the focus on output legitimacy and regional stability in South-East and North-East Asia is a response to China's rising economic, political, and military power, which poses a significant challenge to the balance of power in the region.²⁹⁰

The SCO Charter explicitly defines these values as essential to its functioning. The ASEAN Charter reaffirms the significance of upholding the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and non-interference. These principles establish trust and mutual respect among member states, which is essential for any international collaboration, particularly in sensitive domains like security.

Adhering to sovereignty and non-interference can facilitate collaboration by respecting the member nations' political, social, and legal systems. This mutual respect fosters an environment favorable for open communication and cooperation since countries are confident that their internal policies and regional independence are not in jeopardy. An example is the SCO's RATS, which showcases how member nations can cooperate on security matters while upholding each other's sovereignty, as stated in Article 2 of the SCO Charter. The ASEAN Convention on Counterterrorism (ACCT) establishes a framework for collaboration in combating terrorism while upholding principles of sovereignty and non-interference, as outlined in the APSC Blueprint 2025.

However, these principles might present difficulties to the extent and effectiveness of collaborative processes, especially when addressing transnational

²⁹⁰ Gerstl A. Ibid. P. 120.

issues that necessitate cross-border involvement or the alignment of laws and enforcement measures. The non-interference principle can restrict these institutions' capacity to directly tackle challenges within member nations, potentially resulting in deficiencies in the regional security framework. Addressing issues such as human trafficking and cyber security necessitates the implementation of comprehensive and unified policies that transcend national borders and legal jurisdictions.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, sovereignty, territorial integrity, and non-interference do not intrinsically impede collaboration in tackling transnational crimes. Instead, they necessitate a more subtle and sophisticated approach to cooperation. This strategy may entail the exchange of intelligence, dissemination of best practices, and implementation of capacity-building initiatives, all while upholding the sovereignty of member states. Collaborative endeavors could concentrate on sharing information, collective training, and establishing unified criteria for legislation while acknowledging and respecting each nation's independent rights.

However, Sundram notes that although ASEAN member states have recognized the importance of collaborating with non-state entities to tackle cross-border challenges, the success of such efforts is influenced by factors like the complexity of the challenges and the differing resources available to each member state.²⁹¹ Also, the values of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and non-interference in the SCO and ASEAN frameworks may provide obstacles, but they do not necessarily impede the progress of collaborative mechanisms. By prioritizing mutual respect and actively seeking areas of agreement, these principles help establish a robust basis for successful regional collaboration in tackling cross-border security issues. The crucial aspect is formulating collaborative methods that uphold these ideals while tackling cross-border security challenges.

²⁹¹ Sundram P. ASEAN cooperation to combat transnational crime: progress, perils, and prospects // *Frontiers in Political Science*. 2024. Vol. 6. P. 2.

The author makes the case that regional security cooperation between the SCO and ASEAN is feasible and complementary within both organization's policy frameworks.

It is necessary to consider both organizations' fundamental principles and goals to validate the feasibility of policy harmonization between the SCO and ASEAN. As stated in its Charter, the SCO unequivocally affirms its dedication to collective efforts in addressing regional security challenges. The commitment is reinforced by the Treaty on Long-Term Good-Neighborliness, Friendship, and Cooperation, which obligates member nations to collaborate on security issues. Conversely, ASEAN promotes a collaborative and all-encompassing strategy towards security matters, as outlined in its Charter and other policy documents, such as the APSC Blueprint 2025. This approach upholds the principles of sovereignty and non-interference, aiming to resolve security challenges through dialogue and establishing consensus.

However, Emmers mentions that ASEAN has not been able to effectively resolve conflicts due to residual mistrust among Southeast Asian states.²⁹² Although there are different perspectives between SCO and ASEAN members, it is possible to find common ground and reach an agreement by acknowledging shared dangers and the advantages of security cooperation. Both organizations recognize the significance of a stable and secure environment for economic and social progress. The SCO's emphasis on combating the 'three evils' aligns with ASEAN's broader security priorities, encompassing transnational criminal activities and terrorism, as stated in the 2005 MOU. The potential for harmonization exists by utilizing the SCO's organized and proactive approach to strengthen ASEAN's ability to tackle specific security challenges. At the same time, ASEAN's focus on dialogue and consensus can temper the SCO's strategy, ensuring it conforms to Southeast Asia's regional norms and sensitivities.

²⁹² *Emmers R. Enduring Mistrust and Conflict Management in Southeast Asia: An Assessment of ASEAN as a Security Community // TRaNS: Trans -Regional and -National Studies of Southeast Asia. 2016. Vol. 5. № 1. P. 76.*

Aligning the SCO and ASEAN approaches to regional security is possible and beneficial. Integrating the SCO's practical posture on specific security challenges with ASEAN's inclusive and dialogue-based approach can build a more comprehensive and successful regional security framework. This framework would use the benefits of both organizations, successfully addressing the diverse and ever-changing security problems in the Greater Eurasian region with a comprehensive and effective strategy. However, Narine notes that ASEAN's ability to manage regional security in Southeast Asia has been hindered by the involvement of powerful nations in shaping its security strategies, as well as the differences in security opinions and interests among ASEAN members, which have made collaboration within the organization challenging and evaluation of its security objectives difficult.²⁹³

The wide-ranging SCO 2007 Agreement on Long-Term Good-Neighborliness and Friendship, which covers not only counterterrorism but also economic, cultural, and environmental cooperation, can align with the ASEAN goals as outlined in the 2009 APSC Blueprint and the 2007 ASEAN Charter. This interesting proposition could lead to a comprehensive and multifaceted regional security partnership.

The convergence of these comprehensive aims allows for synchronization between the SCO and ASEAN. The SCO's focus on diverse collaboration domains, from security to culture, can harmonize with ASEAN's multifaceted approach to regional matters.

The fundamental principles of upholding sovereignty, territorial integrity, and non-interference, which are the basis of both organizations' charters, establish a solid basis for cooperation characterized by respect and mutual benefit. By utilizing these common principles and objectives, the SCO and ASEAN may initiate a journey towards a comprehensive regional security framework that tackles conventional security risks and includes economic, cultural, and environmental aspects.

²⁹³ *Narine S.* ASEAN and the Management of Regional Security // Pacific Affairs. 1998. Vol. 71. № 2. P. 195.

The comprehensive nature of the SCO's 2007 Agreement on Long-Term Good-Neighborliness, Friendship, and Cooperation offers a practical structure for harmonizing with ASEAN's diverse goals. This alignment has the potential to foster a robust regional security network among member states of both organizations. Based on shared principles and aligned objectives, this collaboration would represent a notable advancement in regional cooperation, tackling the intricate and interconnected issues confronting the Eurasian region.

It is complex to determine whether sovereignty, territorial integrity, and non-interference, essential in the SCO and the ASEAN, can help or hinder the development of cooperative mechanisms to address cross-border security challenges within the SCO-ASEAN regional security cooperation framework. Although fundamental to the beliefs of both organizations, these values offer advantages and difficulties in promoting efficient collaboration for regional security.

Len points out that the ASEAN Way is similar to the SCO's Shanghai Spirit, with common themes such as mutual trust and benefit, respect for different cultures, and shared prosperity.²⁹⁴ Adhering to sovereignty and non-interference can facilitate collaboration by respecting the member nations' political, social, and legal systems. This mutual respect fosters an environment favorable for open communication and cooperation since countries are confident that their internal policies and regional independence are not in jeopardy.

However, these principles might present difficulties to the extent and effectiveness of collaborative processes, especially when addressing transnational issues that necessitate cross-border involvement or the alignment of laws and enforcement measures. Coe observes that insecure regimes are characterized by less intrusive institutions, noting that regionalism in the Global South serves a different purpose than the EU-style regionalism, as it supports newly developing states in dealing

²⁹⁴ Len C. Energy Security Cooperation in Asia: An ASEAN-SCO Energy Partnership? // Energy Perspectives on Singapore and the Region: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2007. P. 169.

with internal instability and external intervention.²⁹⁵ The non-interference principle can restrict these institutions' capacity to directly tackle challenges within member nations, potentially resulting in deficiencies in the regional security framework. Addressing regional security issues necessitates the implementation of comprehensive and unified policies that transcend national borders and legal jurisdictions.

The values of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and non-interference in the SCO and ASEAN frameworks may provide obstacles, but they do not necessarily impede the progress of collaborative mechanisms. By prioritizing mutual respect and actively seeking areas of agreement, these principles help establish a robust basis for successful regional collaboration in addressing cross-border security concerns, including transnational crime, human trafficking, and cyber security. The critical factor lies in devising cooperative strategies that respect these principles while addressing the inherently transnational nature of these security issues.

The author acknowledges that SCO-ASEAN collaboration in counterterrorism holds significant potential due to various factors. While there has not been any direct historical cooperation in counterterrorism between these two groups, their strategic objectives and frameworks are compatible, which lays a strong foundation for potential collaboration.

The SCO, with its comprehensive strategies to combat terrorism as outlined in critical documents, has significant experience and resources that can be effectively synergized with ASEAN. The possibility for these two organizations to synchronize their counter-terrorism plans and policies is based on their shared comprehension of the complex nature of terrorism and the imperative for a comprehensive approach to defeat it.

²⁹⁵ *Coe B. Sovereignty Regimes and the Norm of Noninterference in the Global South: Regional and Temporal Variation // Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations. 2015. Vol. 21. № 2. P. 276.*

Collaboration between SCO and ASEAN in the field of intelligence sharing has the potential to generate substantial advantages. Developing mechanisms for exchanging information on terrorist threats, movements, and financing can strengthen the capacity of both groups to anticipate and reduce these dangers. Such coordination might evolve into a more comprehensive regional intelligence network, complementing the capabilities of individual member governments. However, Corbett and Danoy point out challenges in intelligence sharing, namely reluctance to share classified information, bureaucratic challenges, and a general risk aversion that limits intelligence sharing to the lowest tactical level.²⁹⁶

Capacity building presents a promising opportunity for prospective collaboration. Collaborative training programs, conferences, and seminars focusing on counterterrorism can contribute to the standardization and improvement of processes across both organizations. These activities could encompass a wide range of counterterrorism elements, such as cyber-terrorism, border control, and de-radicalization programs, strengthening the region's ability to withstand terrorist threats.

Functional collaboration in border security, marine security, and counteracting terrorist funding could yield notable results. The SCO's expertise in addressing security difficulties in Central Asia, along with ASEAN's efforts in maritime security and counter-radicalization, could contribute to collaborative operations that address the immediate and underlying factors of terrorism.

Moreover, aligning the policies and objectives of SCO and ASEAN could have a crucial impact on building a regional response to counter-terrorism that is strong and in line with each member state's sovereignty and legal frameworks. This strategy would

²⁹⁶ Corbett S., Danoy J. Beyond NOFORN: Solutions for increased intelligence sharing among allies. URL: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/issue-brief/beyond-noforn-solutions-for-increased-intelligence-sharing-among-allies/> (date accessed: 10.01.2024).

guarantee that counterterrorism endeavors are equitably aligned with the imperative of upholding human rights and the rule of law.²⁹⁷

By using their capabilities and expertise, the SCO and ASEAN have the potential to establish an effective security partnership. This relationship would strengthen regional security and significantly contribute to global counterterrorism endeavors. The convergence of their strategic goals and the creation of collaborative structures could signal a fresh phase in regional security cooperation, establishing a model for others to emulate. However, Wibisono and Kusumasomantri highlight that for rights-based counterterrorism based on SCO and ASEAN member states' policies to be effective, it is necessary to build legitimacy and capacity of both organizations to provide unbiased feedback, but the challenge lies in harmonizing their policies as both organizations prioritize non-interference.²⁹⁸

The amalgamation of SCO's and ASEAN's diverse yet complementary counterterrorism experiences can facilitate a more comprehensive and interconnected comprehension of terrorism throughout the expansive Asian region. In a collaborative environment like this, sharing best practices would be a prominent aspect. The SCO member states might greatly benefit from ASEAN's efforts in implementing community-based preventive measures and strategies to counter radicalization. SCO's proficiency in organizing extensive counterterrorism drills and handling separatist risks could give ASEAN valuable perspectives.

The potential for SCO-ASEAN counterterrorism cooperation combines resources and expertise to improve training programs, conduct joint exercises, and organize seminars. This will significantly boost the counterterrorism capabilities of both organizations. This collaboration may also result in the creation of a

²⁹⁷ Чан З.Т., Ионов Е.М. Деятельность АСЕАН и Вьетнама, в частности, по борьбе с терроризмом // *Международные отношения*. 2023. № 1. С. 41-55.

²⁹⁸ Wibisono A.A., Kusumasomantri A.R. Assessing the Expectations and Limitations of ASEAN-EU Counter-Terrorism Cooperation // *JAS (Journal of ASEAN Studies)*. 2020. Vol. 8. № 1. P. 66.

comprehensive framework to tackle emerging types of terrorism, such as cyber-terrorism, online radicalization, and terrorist finance.

This partnership would not only benefit SCO and ASEAN member nations, but it may also make a substantial contribution to global counterterrorism efforts. By sharing information and implementing the most effective tactics, the SCO and ASEAN can significantly contribute to establishing successful measures to combat rising terrorist threats, thereby improving security on both regional and global scales. However, Wicaksana points out that organizations such as the SCO and ASEAN that uphold state-centric norms, these multilateral organizations may be limited to being facilitators that make non-binding arrangements, which incompatibilities between each member's policies may hamstring.²⁹⁹

Nevertheless, the possibility of SCO-ASEAN collaboration in counterterrorism holds promising prospects. The collaborative future being promised entails sharing knowledge and aligning plans, which would significantly improve the Asian region's counterterrorism capabilities and have a favorable impact on global peace and security endeavors.³⁰⁰

The SCO, consisting of nations with varying political and security interests, primarily concentrates on security matters in Central Asia. In contrast, with its heterogeneous member states, ASEAN tackles regional issues in Southeast Asia. Both organizations have successfully maneuvered through intricate political and ideological terrains inside their respective territories. This expertise gives them a distinct comprehension and ability to handle and potentially reconcile conflicting perspectives among member states.

The key to resolving political and ideological disagreements is the shared acknowledgment by SCO and ASEAN that it is crucial to cooperate in a shared strategic

²⁹⁹ *Wicaksana I. G. W. Militarizing Counterterrorism in Southeast Asia // European Journal of East Asian Studies. 2019. Vol. 18. № 2. Pp. 228–229.*

³⁰⁰ *Чан З.Т., Ионов Е.М. Деятельность АСЕАН и Вьетнама, в частности, по борьбе с терроризмом // Международные отношения. 2023. № 1. С. 41-55.*

space. This acknowledgment fosters a practical approach in which shared security issues can be cooperatively tackled, even with varying political and ideological perspectives. However, Banlaoi points out that while ASEAN member states are willing to cooperate with external parties, differing threat perceptions of China and security outlooks may limit what can be accomplished with the SCO, such as intelligence exchange, capacity building, and coordination between law enforcement.³⁰¹

Nevertheless, economic interdependencies and the necessity for regional stability in an increasingly interconnected world urge these states to find common ground. In this framework, counterterrorism is a cohesive agenda that surpasses political and ideological disparities, directly affecting member states' economic and social welfare.

The SCO and ASEAN organize frequent dialogues for ongoing engagement and discussion among member states. These contacts can enhance comprehension of various viewpoints, promoting an atmosphere conducive to the collaborative pursuit of shared goals, such as combating terrorism.

Although both organizations have yet to engage in formal cooperative counterterrorism measures, fruitful collaboration has considerable potential. The potential of both organizations to bring together member states with diverse political and ideological backgrounds implies their ability to adopt a unified strategy toward regional security and counterterrorism activities in the future. This potential collaboration has the potential to make a substantial advancement in tackling the mutual obstacles of terrorism, thereby enhancing regional and global security.

³⁰¹ *Banlaoi R.* Counterterrorism Cooperation between China, ASEAN, and Southeast Asian Countries // *China Review*. 2021. Vol. 21. № 4. Pp. 159–160.

CHAPTER 2: MAIN DIRECTIONS AND INSTRUMENTS OF SCO AND ASEAN IN REGIONAL SECURITY COOPERATION

2.1. Counterterrorism activities of SCO and ASEAN

Counterterrorism is one of the SCO's core functions, as emphasized in the 2001 Shanghai Convention, the organization's foundational policy. Yuan acknowledges that the SCO's original focus on terrorism, extremism, and separatism has expanded to include energy security, economic development, and emerging non-traditional security challenges.³⁰² However, combating terrorism remains a crucial priority for the organization.

Terrorist threats have been a persistent concern for SCO member states, especially China and Central Asian countries. According to Wang and Kong, in the 1970s to 1980s, extremist Islamic groups, backed by Arab and Western states, established branches in Central Asia to spread their ideology, and after the Soviet Union's collapse, various Islamic groups, including extremist ones, gained influence in the region due to the challenges faced by Central Asian countries in nation-building.³⁰³

Data from GTD showing the number and details of terrorist incidents in Central Asia from 2001 to 2020 shows there were 224 terrorist incidents in Central Asia during that period, with 35 attacks happening in 2019.³⁰⁴ The most common perpetrator group was the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), which carried out seven attacks.³⁰⁵ According to the data, the most common target type was private citizens and property, which was attacked 67 times, with the most deadly attack being the 2019 Tajikistan

³⁰² Yuan J. Forging a New Security Order in Eurasia: China, the SCO, and the Impacts on Regional Governance // Chinese Political Science Review. 2022. Vol. 8. № 3. P. 423.

³⁰³ Wang J., Kong D. Counter-Terrorism Cooperation Between China and Central Asian States in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization // China Quarterly of International Strategic Studies. 2019. Vol. 05. № 01. P. 67.

³⁰⁴ Global Terrorism Database, Ibid.

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

prison riot, which killed 32 people and injured an unknown number.³⁰⁶ The data also shows that the frequency of terrorist attacks in Central Asia has increased in recent years, especially since 2017.

Terrorism is a common and joint threat between Central and Southeast Asia since both share a common strategic space. Wang and Kong assert that the Taliban's rule in Afghanistan turned the nation into a significant hub for Islamic extremism in Central Asia, leading to the education of many terrorists and extremists, as well as the supply of Al-Qaeda and Taliban-trained Islamic militants to China's Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region.³⁰⁷ In addition, they say Central Asian terrorist movements have become internationalized, with extremists from the region fighting alongside the Taliban after the US invasion of Afghanistan and later joining groups like the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS).³⁰⁸ Notably, Wang and Kong mentioned that a network connecting ISIS extremists from Central Asia and Southeast Asia was constructed, with reports of ISIS recruiters in Hong Kong approaching Indonesians and using Malaysia as a hub for gathering potential fighters.³⁰⁹

In connection with that, in 2014, it is estimated that 1,000 jihadi fighters were inspired to leave their homes in the Philippines and Indonesia to fight in Iraq and Syria, where they could have contacted Central Asian terrorist groups, later to return to their home countries and stage terrorist attacks later.³¹⁰ Notably, insurgent groups in the Philippines have pledged allegiance to the more extensive ISIS global network. For instance, the so-called “Maute Group” and Abu Sayyaf terrorist organizations in the Philippines pledged allegiance to ISIS in the same year, culminating in the 2017 Battle of Marawi, which was the largest urban battle the Philippine military has fought since

³⁰⁶ Global Terrorism Database, *Ibid.*

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.* P. 68.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.* P. 69.

³¹⁰ *Hartman G.* Marawi Battle Highlights the Perils of a Stalled Peace Process in the Philippines [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.csis.org/analysis/marawi-battle-highlights-perils-stalled-peace-process-philippines> (date accessed: 07.02.2024).

World War II.³¹¹ The Maute Group represents the next generation of Islamic extremism in Southeast Asia, with leaders educated in Egypt and Jordan, alongside ties with Middle Eastern and Southeast Asian jihadi groups.³¹²

Given the threat of terrorism to the SCO, the organization uses a combination of practical and soft approaches to deal with the threat. Since 2005, the RATS has organized the Peace Mission military exercises to enhance collaboration and compatibility among the armed forces of its member states. The regular exercise within the SCO framework aims to improve defense and security cooperation among member states, bolster their abilities to tackle growing issues and challenges, and collectively guarantee regional peace and security.³¹³ Mosyakov et al. emphasize the importance of military exercises as a form of diplomacy, essential in protecting a nation's interests, promoting military development, and supporting foreign policy objectives by building bilateral security relations and addressing international security issues.³¹⁴

The Peace Mission is a military exercise that involves various participants, including Russia, China, and other SCO member states.³¹⁵ It replicates different security scenarios, such as counterterrorism operations, hostage rescue, and disaster assistance.³¹⁶ The exercise involves planning, command and control, live fire, and post-

³¹¹ *Hartman G.* Marawi Battle Highlights the Perils of a Stalled Peace Process in the Philippines [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.csis.org/analysis/marawi-battle-highlights-perils-stalled-peace-process-philippines> (date accessed: 07.02.2024).

³¹² *Ibid.*

³¹³ A glance at SCO “Peace Mission” anti-terrorism drills - Global Times [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202109/1234443.shtml> (date accessed: 07.03.2023).

³¹⁴ Mosyakov D. V., Shpakovskaya M. A., Ponka T. I. Role of Military Diplomacy in the PRC’s Foreign Policy in the South China Sea // *Vestnik RUDN. International Relations*. 2023. T. 23. № 2. P. 361.

³¹⁵ *Weitz R.* Assessing Chinese-Russian Military Exercises: Past Progress and Future Trends [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.csis.org/analysis/assessing-chinese-russian-military-exercises-past-progress-and-future-trends> (date accessed: 05.09.2023).

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*

exercise analysis.³¹⁷ The most recent Peace Mission exercise occurred in 2021 and involved all eight SCO member states.³¹⁸

The Peace Mission military exercises exemplify the development of military collaboration and readiness among SCO member states. The emphasis of these exercises has transitioned from conventional military exercises to more intricate operations encompassing counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, and swift reaction to diverse security challenges. The shift in the Peace Mission's focus results from the region's evolving geopolitical situation and the emergence of new security threats. In general, these exercises illustrate the dedication of SCO member states to upholding regional peace and security.

Concerning participation, the initial Peace Mission exercises were primarily bilateral, involving China and Russia. However, there has been a transition towards increased involvement of other members of the SCO in multilateral activities. China and Russia were the primary participants in the initial drills. Gradually, there has been a transition towards collaborative exercises that include other member nations of the SCO. The exercises were first limited to northern China and the Russian Far East. The expansion of the locations now includes other SCO countries, such as Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, indicating a broader regional emphasis.

Furthermore, the complexity of the exercises has increased over time. Initial iterations focused on developing anti-aircraft defenses and implementing maritime blockades. Subsequent iterations incorporated more intricate scenarios, encompassing air and ground strikes and counterinsurgency operations. The situation's complexity highlights the necessity of a focused endeavor to improve the collective military

³¹⁷ Weitz R. Assessing Chinese-Russian Military Exercises: Past Progress and Future Trends [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.csis.org/analysis/assessing-chinese-russian-military-exercises-past-progress-and-future-trends> (date accessed: 05.09.2023).

³¹⁸ SCO Peace Mission 2021 - China Military [Electronic resource]. URL: http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/2021special/node_114300.htm. (date accessed: 27.10.2023)

capabilities, special operations, and intelligence collection crucial for effective counterterrorism missions.

The drills have also showcased varying magnitudes, spanning 2,000 to 10,000 soldiers. Furthermore, there has been a progressive expansion in the assortment and type of military equipment utilized. Also, there is a trend to employ increasingly sophisticated weaponry, such as unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), fighter aircraft, and armored tanks. Furthermore, the SCO's shift in focus from large-scale warfare to counterterrorism in its exercises has facilitated the coordination of military doctrines, operational protocols, and tactical strategies among its members, specifically in counterterrorism and counterinsurgency scenarios.

Increased participation in the Peace Mission exercises makes it possible to use the exercise as a forum for regional security cooperation, which is essential in the fight against transnational terrorism. Furthermore, some of the strategic messaging behind the emphasis on counterterrorism may be intended to justify specific domestic policies and military postures to internal and external audiences.

Aside from a practical approach, the SCO also has a soft approach towards counterterrorism. Such an approach emphasizes information in the form of intelligence and education.

Valleau et al. state that the SCO counterterrorism strategy emphasizes education through collaboration between members and non-state actors to organize cultural events to promote values such as patriotism, civic identity, and interfaith dialogue to prevent the spread of radical ideologies among youth.³¹⁹ They mention that the SCO members implementing an inclusive counterterrorism program are a new phase in the organization's soft diplomacy approach toward regional security cooperation.³²⁰

³¹⁹ Valleau A., Rahimov K., Cherkasov A. The Soft Dimension of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's Fight Against the "Three Evil Forces". Insights on Counterterrorism Preventive Measures and Youth Education // European Journal of Contemporary Education. 2018. Vol. 7. № 4. P. 858.

³²⁰ Ibid.

The 2018 Joint Address of the Heads of the SCO for the Youth expresses concern over the involvement of youth in terrorist and extremist activities.³²¹ The document condemns these activities and emphasizes the need for coordinated measures to counter radical ideologies among young people.³²² It also stresses the task of states and their competent bodies in counteracting the spread of extremism among youth through close interaction within the SCO's regional counter-terrorist structure.³²³ Finally, the document outlines priority tasks and goals for the youth policy of SCO member states, including intellectual development, fostering a culture of tolerance, and promoting patriotism.³²⁴

Further, the SCO Secretary-General Vladimir Norov attended an international videoconference on the Role of Youth in Countering Radicalism, Extremism, and Terrorism in Tashkent on 18 February 2021.³²⁵ He highlighted the targeting of young people by terrorist groups and extremist movements through aggressive propaganda and recruitment.³²⁶ Norov referenced the Joint Appeal to Young People adopted at the Qingdao Summit 2018, which focuses on preventing youth involvement in terrorist and radical groups and fostering closer cooperation between youth organizations.³²⁷ He also mentioned various initiatives and events, such as the SCO Youth Council activities, which aim to stimulate entrepreneurial endeavors and promote innovative projects.³²⁸

However, the SCO has been criticized as a talking shop that merely provides a venue for its members' elites but provides little to no practical follow-through due to its being beholden to its members' interests and consensus decision-making. Further,

³²¹ Joint Address of the heads of Shanghai Cooperation Organization for the Youth [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://eng.sectsc.org/load/443966/> (date accessed: 11.02.2023).

³²² Ibid.

³²³ Ibid.

³²⁴ Ibid.

³²⁵ SCO Secretary-General attends international videoconference on the Role of Youth in Countering Radicalism, Extremism and Terrorism, Ibid.

³²⁶ Ibid.

³²⁷ Ibid.

³²⁸ SCO Secretary-General attends international videoconference on the Role of Youth in Countering Radicalism, Extremism and Terrorism, Ibid.

Piekos and Economy note that SCO obscures, rather than solves, regional security issues, with its fractured and divided nature doing little to forward its ideals and members' interests.³²⁹

For instance, its members' divergent security interests allow for little common cause within the organization's framework. While China is concerned with terrorism, extremism, and separatism in its Xinjiang region, India is more concerned with terrorist activities from Pakistan. At the same time, Russia focuses on terrorist threats in Central Asia. Hillman notes that these divergent interests and the organization's members' aversion to devolving state sovereignty to a regional organization have prevented deeper cooperation.³³⁰ In the same vein, Fan mentions that security cooperation problems in the SCO are due to the principle of non-interference limiting security cooperation between the organization's members and objectively presenting a deterrent to collaboration in that field.³³¹

The author's analysis of the counterterrorism strategy of the SCO emphasizes a two-pronged approach that integrates intensive military exercises, referred to as the Peace Mission exercises, with soft power initiatives targeting youth education and cultural exchange to combat radical ideologies. The military exercises play a vital role in improving the capabilities of member states to cooperate effectively and efficiently, specifically in addressing the issues associated with counterterrorism operations. The SCO's primary objective is to counteract the allure of extremist beliefs among young people through educational and cultural initiatives. This approach highlights the importance of soft power in maintaining lasting security and stability.³³² Nevertheless,

³²⁹ *Piekos W., Economy E.* The Risks and Rewards of SCO Expansion [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.cfr.org/expert-brief/risks-and-rewards-sco-expansion> (date accessed: 05.08.2023).

³³⁰ *Hillman J.E.* India and Pakistan Join the Shanghai Club [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.csis.org/analysis/india-and-pakistan-join-shanghai-club> (date accessed: 15.08.2023).

³³¹ *Fan X.* Existing Mechanisms of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and Their Problems Dealing With Non-traditional Security Challenges // *International Organizations Research Journal*. 2021. Vol. 16. № 1. Pp. 120-121.

³³² *Рахимов К.Х.* История создания основных этапов становления и развития ШОС// Альманах «Казачество». 2021. № 51 (1). С. 52-70.

the organization encounters difficulties due to non-interference and the varied interests of its member states, which might impede extensive cooperation on matters of regional security.

Notwithstanding these challenges, the SCO's all-encompassing approach emphasizes its dedication to tackling the manifestations and underlying factors of terrorism. The future efficacy of the SCO's counterterrorism endeavors will primarily hinge on aligning the interests of member states and surmounting the constraints imposed by non-interference. Strengthening the SCO's regional and global security role is crucial to promoting collaboration and cultivating a united political determination.

For ASEAN, the rise of ISIS presents new challenges for Southeast Asian governments, as the region has numerous dynamic economies and three Muslim-majority states, including Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim-majority nation.³³³ Despite moderate Islamic practices and religious diversity, the area is home to several violent separatist movements and pockets of Islamist radicalism, which have notably eased in the late 2000s-early 2010s, with some Southeast Asian governments intensifying counterterror efforts since 2014.³³⁴ The terrorism threat in Southeast Asia is driven by conservative actors in Muslim-majority countries, recruitment by ISIS in local languages, and porous borders leading to trans-border threats.³³⁵

According to statistical data from GTD, there were 11,320 terrorist incidents in Southeast Asia from 2001 to 2020, with 1,096 happening in 2016.³³⁶ The most common perpetrator group was the New People's Army (NPA), which carried out 1,139 attacks.³³⁷ The most common target type was private citizens and property, which was

³³³ Terrorism in Southeast Asia [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/r/r44501/5> (date accessed: 29.10.2023).

³³⁴ Ibid.

³³⁵ Ibid.

³³⁶ Global Terrorism Database, Ibid.

³³⁷ Ibid.

attacked 2,865 times.³³⁸ The deadliest attack was the 2002 Bali bombings, which killed 202 people and injured 209.³³⁹

According to Febrica, ASEAN's anti-terrorism strategy is founded on the principles of the ASEAN Way, which prioritizes peaceful conflict resolution, sovereignty, noninterference, and mutual respect among member countries.³⁴⁰ Nevertheless, she argues that the ASEAN Way has occasionally hindered regional collaboration in counterterrorism efforts and advancing human rights protection and promotion.³⁴¹

ASEAN adopted the Declaration on Joint Action to Counter Terrorism after the 9/11 terror attacks in 2001.³⁴² The declaration denounces terrorism, disclaims any association between terrorism and religion or race, and pledges to combat, preempt, and quell acts of terrorism actively.³⁴³ The document delineates pragmatic strategies to counteract terrorism, such as bolstering collaboration among law enforcement entities and facilitating the interchange of information and intelligence.³⁴⁴ It highlights the importance of enhancing cooperation and coordination across ASEAN entities and establishing initiatives to improve regional capacity-building.³⁴⁵

The 2007 ACCT aims to enhance ASEAN's role in managing counterterrorism efforts.³⁴⁶ It defines terrorism-related offenses and outlines a collaborative framework to prevent, suppress, and counter-terrorism.³⁴⁷ The convention highlights the importance of respecting sovereignty and human rights while fulfilling obligations

³³⁸ Global Terrorism Database, Ibid.

³³⁹ Ibid.

³⁴⁰ *Febrica S.* ASEAN Counter-Terrorism Cooperation and Human Rights Protection // International Human Rights and Counter-Terrorism / eds. E. Shor, S. Hoadley. Singapore: Springer Singapore, 2019. Pp. 154-155.

³⁴¹ Ibid.

³⁴² 2001 ASEAN Declaration on Joint Action to Counter Terrorism, Ibid.

³⁴³ *Чан З.Т., Ионов Е.М.* Деятельность АСЕАН и Вьетнама, в частности, по борьбе с терроризмом // Международные отношения. 2023. № 1. С. 41-55.

³⁴⁴ Ibid.

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

³⁴⁶ 2007 ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism, Ibid.

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

under the convention.³⁴⁸ It represents a united effort by ASEAN countries to address terrorism comprehensively.³⁴⁹

The 2017 ASEAN Comprehensive Plan of Action on Counter-Terrorism outlines a strategic approach to counter-terrorism in the ASEAN region.³⁵⁰ Its objective is to combat, preempt, and quell terrorism, dismantle support networks, and apprehend terrorists for legal prosecution.³⁵¹ The plan prioritizes enhancing the individual capacities of ASEAN member nations by facilitating the exchange of best practices, knowledge, expertise, and technology.³⁵² Finally, it ensures that ASEAN Member States integrate it into their national strategies and provide adequate resources for its execution.³⁵³

ASEAN has also enacted policies to address extremist radicalization in Southeast Asia. The 2017 Manila Declaration aims to counter radicalization and violent extremism in ASEAN.³⁵⁴ It calls for prevention, deradicalization, rehabilitation, and community engagement programs to combat these challenges.³⁵⁵ Mutual legal assistance, extradition, and information sharing among ASEAN members are also proposed.³⁵⁶ The declaration tasks an Ad-hoc Experts Working Group with developing an ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalization and Violent Extremism.³⁵⁷

³⁴⁸ 2007 ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism, Ibid.

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

³⁵⁰ ASEAN Comprehensive Plan of Action on Counter Terrorism, Ibid.

³⁵¹ Ibid.

³⁵² Ibid.

³⁵³ Чан З.Т., Ионов Е.М. Деятельность АСЕАН и Вьетнама, в частности, по борьбе с терроризмом // *Международные отношения*. 2023. № 1. С. 41-55.

³⁵⁴ Manila Declaration to Counter the Rise of Radicalization and Violent Extremism, Ibid.

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

³⁵⁶ Ibid.

³⁵⁷ Ibid.

In line with that, the 2018-2025 ASEAN Plan of Action aims to prevent and counter radicalization and violent extremism.³⁵⁸ It calls for a comprehensive approach, including promoting moderation and tolerance, empowering communities, and utilizing religious leaders to foster peace.³⁵⁹ The plan highlights the importance of quality education, strategic communication, and research to understand the factors leading to radicalization.³⁶⁰ It also emphasizes regional and international partnerships to ensure effective execution and periodic plan updates.³⁶¹

ASEAN focuses mainly on counterterrorism cooperation through dialogue. There are several explanations for this desire for dialogue. First, despite past conflicts and disputes, ASEAN favors dialogue-based cooperation because of its non-interference principle and consensus decision-making, which support the development of trust among member states. Due to past conflict and mistrust among member states, ASEAN adopts a gradualist approach to collaboration through consensus-building and dialogue. Third, using a dialogue-based strategy with a broad spectrum of foreign partners, ASEAN preserves an inclusive and neutral posture in its external dealings. Finally, in an increasingly complex regional and global scene, ASEAN's dialogue-based cooperation fosters community among its heterogeneous members while enabling adaptability and relationship management in response to changing geopolitical forces.

At the February 2018 ADMM Retreat, attendees agreed to strengthen collaboration in countering terrorism by engaging in joint exercises, training, sharing information, and fostering conversation between ASEAN member states and external

³⁵⁸ ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalization and Violent Extremism [Electronic]. URL: <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Adopted-ASEAN-PoA-to-Prevent-and-Counter-PCVE-1.pdf> (date accessed: 12.11.2023).

³⁵⁹ Ibid.

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ Ibid.

partners.³⁶² Additionally, they aim to facilitate the utilization of the expertise and resources of ASEAN defense establishments in countering terrorism and strengthening collaboration with allied nations through diverse exchanges and activities.³⁶³ The participants aim to fight against terrorist propaganda and promote messages of respect, inclusivity, and moderation by collaborating to create regional counter-narratives and supporting initiatives that foster religious tolerance and moderation in ASEAN centers.³⁶⁴

At the 13th EAS in November 2018 in Singapore, the participants emphasized the complex nature of the terrorist threat, which includes the return and resettlement of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs), the recruitment of new fighters, and the crossing of national borders.³⁶⁵ The importance of a consistent and all-encompassing strategy was highlighted, requiring active engagement and cooperation from all nations, international organizations, non-governmental groups, and the business community.³⁶⁶ In addition, they stressed the importance of global collaboration in countering terrorism, addressing the root causes that contribute to the spread of terrorism and violent extremism, and managing the threat posed by returning FTFs from conflict zones.³⁶⁷

The April 2022 virtual 17th ASEAN Regional Forum International Meeting on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (ARF ISM on CTCC) addressed various essential topics related to counter-terrorism.³⁶⁸ The participants deliberated on diverse

³⁶² Joint Statement by the ASEAN Defence Ministers on Countering Terrorism in ASEAN [Electronic resource]. URL: https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/ADMM-Joint-Statement-on-Counter-Terrorism_Final.pdf (date accessed: 11.02.2023).

³⁶³ Ibid.

³⁶⁴ Ibid.

³⁶⁵ EAS Leaders' Statement on Countering the Threat of Foreign Terrorist Fighters and Returnees. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://eastasiasummit.asean.org/storage/eas_statements_file/X3S61Kv79haOKVkunjpOVKpb2EO2hy4GRNGRe9Fa.pdf (date accessed: 06.11.2023)

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

³⁶⁷ Ibid.

³⁶⁸ Co-Chairs' Summary Report 17th ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime [Electronic resource]. URL:

facets of the influence of COVID-19 on terrorism and counterterrorism efforts, encompassing the heightened online presence of terrorists and the formulation of protocols for the welfare of youngsters affiliated with terrorist groups.³⁶⁹

ASEAN's dialogue-based counterterrorism cooperation underscores the organization's efforts to balance its member states' diverse and sovereign interests with the necessity of fostering effective regional collaboration against the persistent and evolving threat of terrorism. The dialogue-based strategy, firmly rooted in ASEAN's non-interference and consensus-driven decision-making guiding principles, cultivates an environment of mutual respect and trust essential for addressing terrorism within its heterogeneous membership.

The decision to prioritize dialogue reflects ASEAN's intent to navigate its internal diversity and historical sensitivities, particularly those arising from past conflicts and colonial legacies. This nuanced engagement respects its member states' unique political, economic, and cultural contexts, facilitating a cooperative atmosphere for counterterrorism efforts. By engaging in dialogue, ASEAN aligns divergent national interests and capacities, establishing a consolidated position on terrorism that upholds each member's sovereignty and operational preferences.

Moreover, ASEAN's dialogue-centric policy positions the organization as a neutral and inclusive actor on the international stage. ASEAN's strategic neutrality bolsters its flexibility in counterterrorism efforts by maintaining open communication channels with a broad spectrum of foreign partners without aligning too closely with any major power bloc. This enables ASEAN to mediate, facilitating global cooperation amidst shifting geopolitical dynamics.

In addressing terrorism, ASEAN recognizes the challenge as extending beyond mere security concerns to encompass socio-economic, political, and ideological

<https://aseanregionalforum.asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Co-Chairs-Summary-Report-ARF-ISM-on-CTCC-22-April-2021.pdf> (date accessed: 11.02.2023).

³⁶⁹ Чан З.Т., Ионов Е.М. Деятельность АСЕАН и Вьетнама, в частности, по борьбе с терроризмом // *Международные отношения*. 2023. № 1. С. 41-55.

dimensions. The organization's emphasis on dialogue seeks to build trust and consensus among members while crafting comprehensive strategies that address the underlying causes of terrorism. This involves fostering community among its members and enhancing their resilience to terrorist threats.

The author highlights the distinct approaches to combating terrorism within the SCO and ASEAN, noting their adaptation to specific geopolitical contexts. While the SCO adopts a centralized framework reflecting the geopolitical ambitions and security imperatives of key members like China and Russia, focusing on coordinated intelligence and military responses, ASEAN opts for a decentralized, inclusive approach. This approach respects its member states' diverse political systems and cultural backgrounds, advocating for gradual integration.

ASEAN's counterterrorism strategy, characterized by a comprehensive approach that tackles terrorism's root causes, including socio-economic disparities, underscores the importance of collaboration with various stakeholders. This includes governmental bodies, civil society, and international partners, aiming for a multifaceted response to terrorism. However, Chan and Ionov mention that ASEAN member states' varied political and socio-economic landscapes challenge the uniform application and enforcement of counterterrorism policies across the region.³⁷⁰ Further, Chow notes that the challenge of achieving multilateral counterterrorism cooperation in ASEAN arises from varying threat perceptions, concerns over violating sovereignty, and divergent relations with outside powers.³⁷¹ The author suggests that enhanced coordination, resource sharing, and capacity-building initiatives are essential to cultivating a more unified and effective regional counterterrorism strategy. Despite these challenges, ASEAN's inclusive and holistic approach lays a solid foundation for addressing terrorism effectively, emphasizing safeguarding human rights.

³⁷⁰ Чан З.Т., Ионов Е.М. Деятельность АСЕАН и Вьетнама, в частности, по борьбе с терроризмом // *Международные отношения*. 2023. № 1. С. 49.

³⁷¹ Chow J. T. ASEAN Counterterrorism Cooperation Since 9/11 // *Asian Survey*. 2005. Vol. 45. № 2. P. 303.

Both organizations have distinct strategies for addressing terrorism. The SCO emphasizes military and intelligence collaboration to tackle pressing security challenges. In contrast, ASEAN concentrates on socio-economic aspects to attain long-term stability through community development and economic cooperation. This approach demonstrates that underlying socio-economic factors frequently drive terrorism. The author highlights that both organizations possess the qualities of flexibility and adaptability. However, the SCO is more adept at addressing imminent dangers, but ASEAN's decision-making process, which relies on agreement, may impede its capacity to respond promptly.

The author notes that SCO-ASEAN counterterrorism cooperation has great potential for multiple reasons. Although there has not been any direct historical collaboration in counterterrorism between these two organizations, their strategic aims and frameworks complement each other, providing a solid basis for possible collaboration. Also, Nasu and Tan mention that ASEAN's gradual development of a regional counter-terrorism framework has helped member states build their capacity for international cooperation against terrorist threats while acknowledging the political and legal constraints that limit their capacity.³⁷²

Through its RATS and ASEAN, the SCO, with its comprehensive strategies to combat terrorism as outlined in critical documents, has significant experience and resources that can be effectively combined. The possibility for these two organizations to synchronize their counter-terrorism plans and policies is based on their shared comprehension of the complex nature of terrorism and the imperative for a comprehensive approach to defeat it.

Collaboration between SCO and ASEAN in the field of intelligence sharing has the potential to generate substantial advantages. Developing mechanisms for exchanging information on terrorist threats, movements, and financing can strengthen

³⁷² *Nasu H., Tan S.S. ASEAN and the Development of Counter-Terrorism Law and Policy in Southeast Asia // University of New South Wales Law Journal. 2016. Vol. 39. № 3. Pp. 1237–1238.*

the capacity of both groups to anticipate and reduce these dangers. Such coordination might evolve into a more comprehensive regional intelligence network, complementing the capabilities of individual member governments.

Capacity building presents a promising opportunity for prospective collaboration. Collaborative training programs, conferences, and seminars focusing on counterterrorism can contribute to the standardization and improvement of processes across both companies. These activities could encompass a wide range of counterterrorism elements, such as cyber-terrorism, border control, and de-radicalization programs, strengthening the region's ability to withstand terrorist threats.

Clarke notes that terrorism is evolving to become more diverse, decentralized, democratized, and fueled by disinformation, necessitating a multi-domain approach.³⁷³ Functional collaboration, however challenging, gives another avenue for cooperation to address the threat. Efficient collaboration in domains such as border security, marine security, and counteracting the funding of terrorists could yield notable results. The SCO's expertise in addressing security difficulties in Central Asia, along with ASEAN's efforts in maritime security and counter-radicalization, could contribute to collaborative operations that address the immediate and underlying factors of terrorism.

Moreover, aligning the policies and objectives of SCO and ASEAN could have a crucial impact on building a regional response to counter-terrorism that is strong and in line with each member state's sovereignty and legal frameworks. This approach would ensure that counterterrorism efforts are reasonably balanced with maintaining human rights and the rule of law, which are fundamental principles for both organizations.³⁷⁴

³⁷³ Clarke C. Five Trends Driving the Future of Terrorism - Foreign Policy Research Institute [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.fpri.org/article/2022/09/five-trends-driving-the-future-of-terrorism/> (date accessed: 10.01.2024).

³⁷⁴ Чан З.Т., Ионоу Е.М. Деятельность АСЕАН и Вьетнама, в частности, по борьбе с терроризмом // Международные отношения. 2023. № 1. С. 41-55.

Through leveraging their respective skills and specialized knowledge, the SCO and ASEAN possess the capacity to forge a highly efficient partnership in the fight against terrorism. This relationship would strengthen regional security and significantly contribute to global counterterrorism endeavors. The convergence of their strategic goals and the creation of collaborative structures could signal a fresh phase in regional security cooperation, establishing a model for others to emulate.

The synergy between SCO's and ASEAN's diverse yet complementary counterterrorism experiences can facilitate a more comprehensive and interconnected comprehension of terrorism throughout the expansive Asian region. Valteau et al. note that the SCO uses soft diplomacy with an inclusive approach to combating violent extremism, which is a complex task due to the involvement of many actors, diverse areas of cooperation, and the vast cultural diversity of the SCO region.³⁷⁵ Likewise, ASEAN is characterized by myriad cultures, ideologies, and regime types.

Sharing best practices would be prominent in a diverse environment like this. The SCO member states might greatly benefit from ASEAN's efforts in implementing community-based preventive measures and strategies to counter radicalization. SCO's proficiency in organizing extensive counterterrorism drills and handling separatist risks could give ASEAN valuable perspectives.

The potential for SCO-ASEAN counterterrorism cooperation combines resources and expertise to improve training programs, conduct joint exercises, and organize seminars. This will significantly boost the counterterrorism capabilities of both organizations. This collaboration may also result in the creation of a comprehensive framework to tackle emerging types of terrorism, such as cyber-terrorism, online radicalization, and terrorist finance.

The author highlights that this partnership would not only be advantageous for SCO and ASEAN, but it may also significantly contribute to global counterterrorism

³⁷⁵ Valteau A et al., *Ibid.* P. 868.

endeavors. Through the exchange of intelligence and the adoption of optimal strategies, both organizations have the potential to contribute substantially to developing effective countermeasures against emerging terrorist risks, thus enhancing security at both regional and global levels.

In the author's view, SCO-ASEAN collaboration in counterterrorism holds promising prospects. The collaborative future being promised entails the sharing of knowledge and the alignment of plans, which would significantly improve the counterterrorism capabilities of the Asian area. This would have a favorable impact on global peace and security endeavors.

The SCO, consisting of nations with varying political and security interests, primarily concentrates on security matters in Central Asia. Laumulin and Kozhirova note that the SCO's effective counter-terrorism, Islamist extremism, and drug trafficking efforts are recognized, and it is understood by SCO member nations that combatting terrorism is a global challenge and cannot be tackled by any one country alone.³⁷⁶ In contrast, with its heterogeneous member states, ASEAN tackles regional issues in Southeast Asia. Both organizations have successfully maneuvered through intricate political and ideological terrains inside their respective territories. This expertise gives them a distinct comprehension and ability to handle and potentially reconcile conflicting perspectives among member states.

The key to resolving political and ideological disagreements is the SCO and ASEAN's acknowledgment that cooperation is crucial to maintaining security. This acknowledgment fosters a practical approach in which shared security challenges like terrorism can be cooperatively tackled, even with varying political and ideological perspectives.

As the author has noted the economic incentive that the BRI brings to SCO-ASEAN regional security cooperation, most BRI projects are in poor, unstable, and

³⁷⁶ *Laumulin M., Kozhirova S. CICA and Asian Cooperation Organizations (SCO, ASEAN, OIC): Cooperation Potential and Prospects // Central Asia and the Caucasus. 2021. Vol. 22. № 4. P. 23.*

conflict-ridden countries, with their security situation impacting economic progress and regional integration. Saltskog and Clarke note that as the BRI expands, China has to consider the impact of political unrest, anti-Chinese sentiment, and fallout from terrorists and organized crime.³⁷⁷ They mention that Central Asia hosts several terrorist groups, such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Jamaat Ansarullah, and the Islamic Jihad Union.³⁷⁸ They also say that Chinese citizens have been killed in Thailand and Pakistan, with the ongoing Myanmar Civil War threatening its BRI projects in that country.³⁷⁹ Saltskog and Clarke stress that high-profile BRI infrastructure projects are appealing soft targets for terrorist groups.³⁸⁰ Given that situation, China must develop a holistic security strategy, especially counterterrorism, to secure its BRI geostrategic project. The SCO and ASEAN may be ideal organizations for this endeavor.

Both organizations have organized multiple secretariat-level meetings, which serve as platforms for ongoing engagement and discussion among member states. These contacts can enhance comprehension of various viewpoints, promoting an atmosphere conducive to the collaborative pursuit of shared goals, such as combating terrorism.

Although both organizations have yet to engage in formal cooperative counterterrorism measures, fruitful collaboration has considerable potential. The potential of both organizations to bring together member states with diverse political and ideological backgrounds implies their ability to adopt a unified strategy toward regional security and counterterrorism activities in the future. This potential collaboration has the potential to make a substantial advancement in tackling the mutual challenges of terrorism, thereby enhancing regional and global security.

³⁷⁷ *Saltskog M., Clarke C.* The Little-Known Security Gaps In China's Belt and Road Initiative [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/little-known-security-gaps-chinas-belt-and-road-initiative-44587> (date accessed: 07.02.2024).

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

2.2. Drugs and narcotics control policies and programs of SCO and ASEAN

In addition to counterterrorism, tackling the drug issue is a vital responsibility of the SCO. In Central Asia, Peyrouse says that in Central Asia, poverty and corruption are the crucial elements that fuel the illicit drug trade, rather than open borders and enhanced connectivity.³⁸¹ Further, the drug trade, specifically opiates from Afghanistan, is believed to fund global terrorist organizations and is associated with conflicts in the region.³⁸² Moreover, the region's proximity to major drug-producing areas like Afghanistan has led to an increase in drug use, which has resulted in various health and social issues.³⁸³

According to 2021 UNODC data, in Central Asia and Transcaucasia, drug use trends indicated a significant prevalence of cannabis and opioids.³⁸⁴ The estimated number of cannabis users in the region was around 1,530,000, with a prevalence rate of approximately 2.57%, fluctuating between 0.76% and 4.25%.³⁸⁵ Opioid use, encompassing both opiates and prescription opioids, was estimated at 530,000 users, translating to a prevalence rate of roughly 0.90%, with a range from 0.77% to 1.02%.³⁸⁶

Given the drug threat, the SCO has enacted several initiatives addressing that security concern. Such activities include practical cooperation, policy coordination, and international cooperation initiatives.

³⁸¹ *Peyrouse S.* Diagnosing Central Asia's Drug Problem [Electronic access]. URL: <https://reconasia.csis.org/diagnosing-central-asias-drug-problem/> (date accessed: 11.02.2023).

³⁸² Central Asia: Drugs and Conflict [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-asia/afghanistan/central-asia-drugs-and-conflict>. (date accessed: 11.02.2023).

³⁸³ Prevalence of Drug Use in the General Population, *Ibid.*

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

On 5 October 2007, the SCO and the CSTO secretariats signed a MOU in Dushanbe.³⁸⁷ This document aims to promote fair and effective cooperation between two organizations, particularly about maintaining security and stability on regional and global scales, by tackling issues such as terrorism, drug trafficking, arms smuggling, organized transnational crime, and other shared concerns.³⁸⁸ There have also been calls for greater SCO participation in CSTO-led anti-drug operations, notably Operation Channel, which is a regional permanent anti-drug operation aimed at ensuring collective security and countering the transit of drugs produced in Northern Afghanistan, targeting the drug raw material base and distribution channels of cannabis and synthetic substances.³⁸⁹

In September 2018, the SCO and Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Center (CARICC) signed a protocol on cooperation outlining methods of collaboration in combatting terrorism financing through proceeds from illicit drug trafficking and promoting interaction between these two international institutions aimed at countering terrorism and trans-border drug crime.

In line with those policies, the SCO has adopted the Anti-Drug Strategy for 2018-2023 and the Concept for the Prevention of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, reaffirming their dedication to the current international system and planning to enhance cooperation to combat illegal drug trafficking.³⁹⁰

In 2019, the SCO initiated Operation Spider Web to cut off the distribution and sale of synthetic and novel psychoactive drugs among its member countries.³⁹¹ The

³⁸⁷ General Information [Electronic Resource]. URL: <http://eng.sectsco.org/cooperation/#:~:text=The%20document%20outlines%20points%20of,arms%20trafficking%3B%20combating%20organised> (date accessed: 03.11.2023).

³⁸⁸ Ibid.

³⁸⁹ *Фань Ханьци, Цуй Хэн. Достижения и опыт политического сотрудничества в Шанхайской Организации Сотрудничества // Вопросы национальных и федеративных отношений. 2023. Т. 13. № 9 (102). С. 3872-3884.*

³⁹⁰ Qingdao Declaration of the Council of Heads of State of Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Ibid.

³⁹¹ Fight against illegal drug trafficking in the SCO region: International Anti-Drug Operation Spider Web [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://eng.sectsco.org/news/20190712/565195.html#:~:text=On%208,2023%20%2814%20June%202019%2C%20Bishkek> (date accessed: 11.02.2023).

SCO coordinated the operation alongside representatives of anti-drug agencies' competent bodies, law enforcement agencies, national security, customs and cross-border services, and international organizations.³⁹² Since the operation began, 6,422 kilos of illegal narcotics have been seized through sharing experiences and implementing effective measures against drug trafficking.³⁹³

In 2020 Operation Spider Web, SCO members mentioned their intention to continue such efforts. They emphasized efforts to disrupt the funding of drug trafficking, which is linked to other types of organized crime and terrorism.³⁹⁴ SCO members also noted that the drug threat is connected to organized crime and economic crime within the SCO and believe that creating more international cooperation mechanisms in this area would enhance their ability to address these challenges effectively.³⁹⁵ In addition, Operation Solidarity Border the same year seized over 450 kilos of heroin, 150 kilos of herbal drugs, and 2,200 kilos of synthetic drugs, including powerful substances.³⁹⁶

In November 2020, during the 10th Meeting of the Heads of the Competent Authorities for Combating Illicit Drug Trafficking of SCO Member States, the talks revolved around enhancing cooperation among narcotics control agencies and promoting international collaboration to combat illegal drug trafficking in SCO members.³⁹⁷ They also expressed concern about the increasing production of narcotic

³⁹² Fight against illegal drug trafficking in the SCO region: International Anti-Drug Operation Spider Web [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://eng.sectesco.org/news/20190712/565195.html#:~:text=On%208,2023%20%2814%20June%202019%2C%20Bishkek> (date accessed: 11.02.2023).

³⁹³ Ibid.

³⁹⁴ Moscow Declaration of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Ibid.

³⁹⁵ Ibid.

³⁹⁶ SCO For a World Without Drugs International Counternarcotics Campaign [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://eng.sectesco.org/news/20210521/755159.html#:~:text=In%20particular%2C%20it%20was%20indicated,includin%20strong%20substances%2C%20were%20seized> (date accessed: 03.11.2023).

³⁹⁷ Press release on the results of the 10th Meeting of the Heads of the Competent Authorities for Combating Illicit Drug Trafficking of SCO Member States [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://eng.sectesco.org/news/20201105/688749.html> (date accessed: 03.11.2023).

drugs, new trends in narcotic drug production, and the adverse effects of modern technology and electronic financial tools.³⁹⁸ Finally, they were willing to enhance bilateral and multilateral counter-narcotic cooperation between SCO member states.³⁹⁹

On 28-29 March 2022, Uzbekistan hosted a videoconference meeting on law enforcement, anti-drug collaboration, and enhancing legal framework as part of the SCO Counter-Narcotics Agencies Meeting.⁴⁰⁰ During their meeting, the experts discussed countering drug trafficking and reviewed the progress of implementing the Program of Action for the SCO Anti-Drug Strategy for 2018–2023.⁴⁰¹ Moving forward, the experts agreed to exchange updates on this matter through the SCO Secretariat regularly.⁴⁰²

On 28 June 2022, a workshop on preventing, treating, and rehabilitating synthetic drug addiction was conducted via videoconference by the SCO Secretariat and the Ministry of Public Security of China.⁴⁰³ Representatives from eight SCO member countries shared updates on their regions and collaborated on innovative methods for treating and rehabilitating addiction by the SCO Anti-Drug Strategy for 2018-2023.⁴⁰⁴

In March 2023, the SCO and UNODC held a side event to discuss strategic priorities for further cooperation and review strategic directions and priorities for joint action in shared mandated areas against drugs during the 66th Session of the UN

³⁹⁸ Press release on the results of the 10th Meeting of the Heads of the Competent Authorities for Combating Illicit Drug Trafficking of SCO Member States [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://eng.sectsco.org/news/20201105/688749.html> (date accessed: 03.11.2023).

³⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁰¹ SCO develops cooperation between law enforcement agencies [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://eng.sectsco.org/news/20220403/828572.html#:~:text=On%2028%E2%80%9229%20March%202022%2C%20Uzbekistan,Narcotics%20Agencies> (date accessed: 03.11.2023).

⁴⁰² Ibid.

⁴⁰³ Workshop of SCO experts on prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of synthetic drug addiction [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://eng.sectsco.org/news/20220630/845530.html#:~:text=On%2028%20June%202022%2C%20the,rehabilitation%20of%20synthetic%20drug%20addiction> (date accessed: 03.11.2023).

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid.

Commission on Narcotic Drugs.⁴⁰⁵ The SCO reiterated its dedication to fighting drug trafficking through international laws and discussed future strategic priorities for cooperation.⁴⁰⁶ In addition, the SCO representatives emphasized the increasing threats of drug trafficking in Central and Southeast Asian countries and called for intensified counter-narcotics efforts to confront this challenge effectively.⁴⁰⁷

Drug abuse is a serious issue throughout Southeast Asia. The Golden Triangle, which connects Laos, Myanmar, and Thailand, is notorious for being a hub for the manufacturing and trafficking of drugs, particularly methamphetamine. Because it is produced illegally in this region, the substance is more readily available in Southeast Asia due to its increased quality and decreased cost. Due to its easy accessibility and low cost, methamphetamine misuse is a big problem in the region, especially among young people. Due to inadequate border security and the territory's proximity to drug-producing areas, the region also has difficulties with the movement of illegal substances across borders.

2021 UNODC data shows that in Southeast Asia, drug use trends for the year 2021 highlighted significant usage of cannabis and opioids, with the region having an estimated 19,270,000 cannabis users, with a prevalence rate of about 1.21%.⁴⁰⁸ This figure ranged from a low of 0.56% to a high of 1.49%.⁴⁰⁹ Opioid use, which includes both opiates and prescription opioids, was estimated at 2,780,000 users, with a prevalence rate of approximately 0.17%, ranging from 0.12% to 0.22%.⁴¹⁰ The number

⁴⁰⁵ UNODC and Shanghai Cooperation Organization conduct a side event to discuss strategic priorities for further cooperation [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.unodc.org/centralasia/en/news/unodc-and-shanghai-cooperation-organization-conduct-a-side-event-to-discuss-strategic-priorities-for-further-cooperation.html#:~:text=On%2013%20March%2C%20the%20Shanghai,norms%20and%20principles%20of> (date accessed: 03.11.2023).

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁸ Prevalence of Drug Use in the General Population, Ibid.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid.

of opiate users was slightly higher at 2,800,000, with a prevalence rate of about 0.18%, ranging from 0.12% to 0.22%.⁴¹¹

Given the drug threat in Southeast Asia, ASEAN has come up with work plans and declarations highlighting illegal drugs as a threat to the organization's members and outlining the organization's intent to address it.

The 2009 – 2015 ASEAN Work Plan on Combating Illicit Drug Production, Trafficking, and Usage seeks to address the issues of illicit drug production, trafficking, and usage.⁴¹² The plan aims to diminish illegal cultivation of substances, production, and distribution through various initiatives and collaborations.⁴¹³ The plan additionally aims to eradicate criminal organizations engaged in the smuggling of illicit narcotics and deter the unauthorized diversion of precursor chemicals from legitimate commerce.⁴¹⁴ This plan includes implementing preventive measures, strengthening cross-border law enforcement cooperation, utilizing mutual legal assistance treaties, intensifying awareness and education campaigns, improving access to treatment and rehabilitation services, and fostering partnerships between the public and private sectors and civil society organizations.⁴¹⁵

At the March 2013 11th ARF ISM on CTTC, various types of transnational crime, including terrorism, drug trafficking, and illegal gambling, were identified.⁴¹⁶

In November 2013, ASEAN established the ASEAN Narcotics Cooperation Center (ASEAN-NARCO) to lead the efforts of ASEAN national drug control agencies toward a drug-free region, coordinating with relevant agencies in the early stages of

⁴¹¹ Prevalence of Drug Use in the General Population, Ibid.

⁴¹² ASEAN Work Plan on Combating Illicit Drug Production, Trafficking and Use 2009 - 2015 [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Doc-1-ASEAN-WP-on-Combating-Illicit-Drug-Production-2009-2015.pdf> (date accessed: 03.11.2023).

⁴¹³ Ibid.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid.

⁴¹⁶ Highlights of Developments in ARF Cooperation on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://aseanregionalforum.asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Highlights-of-ARF-Cooperation-on-CTTC-as-of-March-2018.pdf> (date accessed: 03.11.2023).

drug cases, exchange information on anti-drug activities, and monitoring drug situations and control activities.⁴¹⁷ It works as a platform to publish information regarding illegal drugs in ASEAN, an instrument for intelligence exchange, a tool for surveillance, and a mechanism for linkages with other international organizations.⁴¹⁸

At the April 2014 12th ARF ISM on CTTC, the participants discussed the increasing production and consumption of illegal drugs and the use of precursor chemicals in drug manufacturing.⁴¹⁹ In addition, they exchanged their firsthand experiences in implementing counter-terrorism measures and addressing the correlation between terrorism and transnational organized crime.⁴²⁰

During the May 2015 13th ARF ISM on CTTC, regional collaboration to combat terrorism and transnational crimes was discussed, with a focus on addressing the challenges posed by terrorists' use of ICT and the internet, strengthening international cooperation, improving border management, and tackling common issues such as human trafficking and illegal drugs.⁴²¹

The 2015 Leaders' Declaration on Drug-Free ASEAN highlights drugs as a significant security issue, particularly for the youth, due to its potential to harm society, incur government expenses, and cause criminal activities that may endanger state stability, as well as its association with other crimes such as money laundering and arms smuggling.⁴²² It acknowledged and called for efforts to combat illicit drug trafficking and achieve a drug-free ASEAN Community through strengthened institutional

⁴¹⁷ ASEAN-NARCO [Electronic resource]. URL: https://aseannarco.oncb.go.th/forum/info/About_ASEAN-NARCO/Vision&Mission/36 (date accessed: 03.11.2023).

⁴¹⁸ History [Electronic resource]. URL: https://aseannarco.oncb.go.th/forum/info/About_ASEAN-NARCO/Vision&Mission/36 (date accessed: 03.11.2023).

⁴¹⁹ Highlights of Developments in ARF Cooperation on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime, Ibid.

⁴²⁰ Ibid.

⁴²¹ Ibid.

⁴²² ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Drug-Free ASEAN 2015 [Electronic resource]. URL: https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Doc1-ASEAN-Leaders-Declaration-on-Drug-Free-ASEAN-2015_Endorsed-by-Summit_FINAL.pdf (date accessed: 03.11.2023).

linkages and coordinated efforts.⁴²³ It also called for deepening cooperation and coordination measures through sharing information and best practices to enhance more effective enforcement of illicit drug control in the region.⁴²⁴

Building on the previous work plan with strategic guidance from the leader's declaration, the 2016-2025 ASEAN Work Plan on Securing Communities Against Illicit Drugs serves as a strategic guide for collective action in combating the issue of illicit drug trafficking and usage, emphasizing the importance of adaptability and coordination among its member states.⁴²⁵ It aims to create a comprehensive strategy to counter illegal drug activities across its member states, outlining a decade-long plan focused on securing communities from the threats posed by illicit narcotics.⁴²⁶ The document presents ASEAN's multi-faceted approach to the issue, encompassing law enforcement measures, policy frameworks, community-based initiatives, and inter-agency and inter-state cooperation while stressing the broader social and economic aspects of drug trafficking.⁴²⁷

Also, at the October 2021 7th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Drug Matters (AMMD), ASEAN leaders reaffirmed their commitment to implementing proposed activities effectively and expeditiously.⁴²⁸ During the meeting, ASEAN reiterated its dedication to promoting regional collaboration in achieving a drug-free ASEAN by adopting a policy of no tolerance for illegal drug use while upholding the principles of law and human rights and showing respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity

⁴²³ ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Drug-Free ASEAN 2015 [Electronic resource]. URL: https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Doc1-ASEAN-Leaders-Declaration-on-Drug-Free-ASEAN-2015_Endorsed-by-Summit_FINAL.pdf (date accessed: 03.11.2023).

⁴²⁴ Ibid.

⁴²⁵ The ASEAN Work Plan on Securing Communities Against Illicit Drugs 2016-2025 [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/9.-July-2017-ASEAN-Work-Plan-on-Illicit-Drugs.pdf> (date accessed: 03.11.2023).

⁴²⁶ Ibid.

⁴²⁷ Ibid.

⁴²⁸ The Seventh ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Drug Matters (7th AMMD) 14 October 2021 via videoconference Chairman's Statement [Electronic resources]. URL: https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/ADOPTED_7th-AMMD-Chairmans_Statement.pdf (date accessed: 03.11.2023).

of ASEAN member states.⁴²⁹ Also, ASEAN confirmed its strong position against the production and legalization of illegal drugs for non-medical or non-scientific purposes, as well as any actions that would weaken international control over illicit drugs and psychotropic substances without proper scientific evidence that is verifiable and reliable.⁴³⁰

In September 2022, the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOTMC) established a policy framework to combat various illegal activities, such as drug and human trafficking, piracy, money laundering, cybercrime, and the illicit trafficking of wildlife and timber.⁴³¹ The activities mentioned in the work plan cover information exchange, legal matters, law enforcement, capacity building, and cooperation beyond the region.⁴³²

While the possibility of SCO-ASEAN cooperation to address trafficking faces political, economic, legal, and technological challenges, the author argues that cooperation between those organizations in that field has tremendous untapped potential.

The author points out that the disparity in political and economic systems among the member states of the SCO and the ASEAN poses significant obstacles in devising a unified and efficient approach to address drug trafficking in their respective regions. The intricacy arises from the fundamental differences in governance methods, legal frameworks, and economic priorities that define these two regional organizations. The SCO, consisting of nations with varying political ideologies and governance structures,

⁴²⁹ The Seventh ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Drug Matters (7th AMMD) 14 October 2021 via videoconference Chairman's Statement [Electronic resources]. URL: https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/ADOPTED_7th-AMMD-Chairmans_Statement.pdf (date accessed: 03.11.2023).

⁴³⁰ Ibid.

⁴³¹ The ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) Work Program to Implement the ASEAN Plan of Action to Combat Transnational Crime [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/4-SOMTC-WP-TC-2022-2024.pdf> (date accessed: 03.11.2023).

⁴³² Ibid.

including authoritarian and semi-authoritarian governments, encounters the task of reconciling these varied political philosophies to establish a unified counter-narcotics strategy. The dynamics within ASEAN are particularly complex owing to the diversity of its member states, which spans from democratic to more authoritarian forms of government. Each member has distinct policy agendas and enforcement methods.

Furthermore, the economic inequalities among these countries contribute an additional level of intricacy. The resources allocated to anti-drug initiatives and the extent to which drug trafficking overlaps with lawful economic operations are greatly influenced by economic factors. Countries with strong economies may have more significant resources for advanced surveillance and enforcement systems, whereas others may face difficulties due to limited financial capacities. The economic disparity can result in varying degrees of dedication and capability in combating drug trafficking.

Moreover, both organizations' legal frameworks differ significantly, which affects the feasibility of implementing uniform protocols for cross-border collaboration and extradition. Ensuring legal consistency is crucial for the success of regional anti-drug initiatives, as any discrepancies might create opportunities for traffickers to exploit. Disparities in narcotics legislation, sanctions, and the overarching legal procedure pose challenges in facilitating collaborative operations and the exchange of intelligence. Duggan et al. note that South-South regional cooperation, as exemplified by the SCO and ASEAN, is crucial in addressing challenges that cannot be resolved at the national level and achieving fairness between developed and developing nations.⁴³³

Political and economic variety inside the SCO and ASEAN poses significant obstacles, but it also offers a valuable chance for a diverse interchange of viewpoints and strategies. To overcome these problems, it is necessary to make a focused and collaborative attempt to identify shared interests while also acknowledging and

⁴³³ *Duggan N. et al.* Introduction: 'The BRICS, Global Governance, and Challenges for South-South Cooperation in a Post-Western World' // *International Political Science Review*. 2021. Vol. 43. № 4. P. 473.

upholding the independence of each nation. This collective effort should be directed towards achieving a harmonized objective of reducing drug trafficking. This requires adaptable techniques considering the diverse political, economic, and legal contexts, promoting a cooperative atmosphere that facilitates the exchange of optimal methods and resources.

The variations in legal frameworks and law enforcement methodologies within both organizations present considerable obstacles in establishing joint initiatives and cooperative efforts to manage drug trafficking routes that extend across both regions efficiently. These differences frequently appear as contrasting regulations on drugs, varied levels of strictness in enforcement, and distinct legal procedures. For example, certain countries within these blocs may implement rigorous anti-drug measures with harsh consequences, while others may adopt more permissive strategies. This discrepancy might result in incongruities in managing transnational drug trafficking cases, rendering it challenging to build a cohesive stance against drug traffickers who frequently capitalize on these legal ambiguities.

Further, the methods and abilities to implement laws differ significantly across the nations belonging to the SCO and ASEAN. Certain nations possess sophisticated technology assets and highly skilled law enforcement agencies; others may lack the requisite infrastructure and skills. This disparity not only hampers the individual nations' capacity to address drug trafficking within their borders but also undermines the efficacy of regional efforts to combat narcotics. The disparities in surveillance methodologies, data acquisition techniques, and the degree of complexity in monitoring and intercepting drug trafficking present difficulty in coordinating endeavors across national boundaries. Moreover, Jenners notes that legal disparities complicate the economic dynamics of the drug trade, as the risk of incarceration increases production

costs and creates a monopolistic industry with fewer but more resilient market suppliers than a normal, free market would make.⁴³⁴

The legal procedures for extraditing individuals and providing mutual legal assistance between these nations are not always synchronized, complicating cross-border collaboration in criminal cases. Obstacles such as varying understandings of legal norms, procedural obligations, and administrative obstacles might hinder prompt and efficient collaborative efforts.

The differences in legislative frameworks and law enforcement approaches among both organizations pose significant barriers to developing unified strategies to combat drug trafficking. In addition to that, Sousa-Santos notes that illicit drug markets involve corruption through the infiltration of government agencies and departments, bribery of public officials, and the use of coercive and violent tactics.⁴³⁵ However, it is essential to note that these issues can be overcome. To tackle these problems, it is necessary to align laws, strengthen skills, and improve communication channels. By cultivating a culture of cooperation and comprehension, together with a readiness to learn from one another's experiences and the most successful methods, the SCO and ASEAN may establish more efficient systems to combat the international threat of drug trafficking.

The differing levels of technological progress and allocation of resources among member states of the SCO and the ASEAN substantially impact their combined capacity to efficiently monitor, detect, and dismantle transnational drug trafficking networks. The variation in technological capacities and resources significantly influences the efficiency and efficacy of each member state's involvement in the collective endeavor to combat drug trafficking.

⁴³⁴ *Jenner M.* International Drug Trafficking: A Global Problem with a Domestic Solution // *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies*. 2011. Vol. 18. № 2. P. 904.

⁴³⁵ *Sousa-Santos J.* Drug trafficking in the Pacific Islands: The impact of transnational crime [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/drug-trafficking-pacific-islands-impact-transnational-crime> (date accessed: 11.01.2024).

Several countries in the SCO and ASEAN regions utilize advanced technologies, including surveillance systems, data analytics, and cyber-intelligence tools, to monitor and combat drug trafficking. These technologies provide the quick and precise examination of substantial amounts of data, resulting in enhanced detection of trafficking patterns and prompt reaction to developing dangers. Nevertheless, in many member states, the scarcity of resources or divergent objectives leads to the utilization of less advanced techniques for drug interception. These nations' lack of sophisticated technology infrastructure impedes their capacity to engage fully in comprehensive regional anti-drug measures.

The distribution of resources for combating drug-related activities differs significantly among these countries. While certain nations may commit significant funds towards law enforcement, surveillance, and border control expressly aimed at combating drug trafficking, others may have little financial resources to allocate to these domains.

Further, the author mentions that incorporating technology and allocating resources are essential for fostering collaboration across borders. Technologically compatible systems are crucial for effectively sharing information, coordinating activities, and providing mutual support in collaborative projects. Sinclair emphasizes the need for advanced tools, such as cyber capabilities, to bolster the capabilities of law enforcement agencies. Additionally, member countries must be prepared and capable of dedicating the necessary resources.⁴³⁶ Unequal allocation of technology and resources can result in disparities in the exchange of intelligence, discrepancies in enforcement measures, and difficulties in adopting a coordinated strategy to combat the complex and adaptable operations of international drug trafficking networks.

⁴³⁶ *Sinclair M.* The wicked problem of drug trafficking in the Western Hemisphere [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-wicked-problem-of-drug-trafficking-in-the-western-hemisphere/>. (date accessed: 11.01.2024)

To address drug trafficking, it's necessary to enhance technological capabilities and ensure equitable resource allocation. This requires joint training programs, technology transfer initiatives, and collaborative finance methods to strengthen both organizations' ability to combat and dismantle transnational drug trafficking networks.

2.3. Initiatives of SCO and ASEAN to address Trafficking in Persons

Human trafficking affects a large number of people globally, with a significant number of cases concentrated in China, Central Asia, and Russia. Central Asia faces a considerable challenge with human trafficking, with many victims coming from, passing through, or being taken to the region.⁴³⁷ Migrant laborers originating from this region often fall prey to exploitation in countries like Russia, where the enforcement of laws against human trafficking is feeble, and corruption presents a substantial hindrance to their effectiveness.⁴³⁸ Dost states that human trafficking in Central Asia takes two primary forms: the exploitation of males through forced labor, particularly in the construction and agricultural industries, and the enforced participation of women and children in the sex trade.⁴³⁹ Also, a significant challenge in addressing human trafficking in Central Asia is the distrust of victims towards law enforcement bodies and their reluctance to ask for assistance.⁴⁴⁰

⁴³⁷ Combating Human Trafficking in Central Asia [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.usaid.gov/kyrgyz-republic/news/combating-human-trafficking-central-asia> (date accessed: 03.11.2023).

⁴³⁸ Ibid.

⁴³⁹ Zaynab Dost: Fighting Human Trafficking in Central Asia: Problems and Challenges [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://cabar.asia/en/zaynab-dost-fighting-human-trafficking-in-central-asia-problems-and-challenges> (date accessed: 03.11.2023).

⁴⁴⁰ Trends and Challenges in Addressing Human Trafficking in Central Asia: Civil Society and Survivor Perspectives [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.osce.org/odihr/484979> (date accessed: 03.11.2023).

Most victims of human trafficking in Russia are migrant workers from China, North Korea, Vietnam, Ukraine, Central Asia, and Nigeria.⁴⁴¹ Potential victims are drawn in by traffickers' promises of well-paying jobs and the paperwork required to cross the border. Once they fall victim, they are kept in forced labor by the traffickers' refusal to give them travel documents, withholding their wages, or abusing them physically or mentally.⁴⁴²

Shuai and Liu describe China as a nexus for human trafficking, serving as a source, transit, and destination country and encompassing forced labor, involuntary marriage, sexual exploitation, illegal infant adoptions, and human smuggling.⁴⁴³ Further, Chinese citizens are said to have experienced coerced labor in multiple Asian, African, and European nations that are participants in the BRI projects, and internationally, Chinese citizens are trafficked into Europe, the US, Thailand, and Malaysia.⁴⁴⁴

According to data from the CTDC, an analysis of the human trafficking data in Central Asia from 2001 to 2022 reveals several key findings from 3,562 recorded cases.⁴⁴⁵ The data indicates that males are more frequently victimized, with 1,051 out of 1,942 recorded cases specifying gender.⁴⁴⁶ The age group most affected appears to be 39-47 years, though complete age data is unavailable for all patients.⁴⁴⁷ Notably, the majority of victims are citizens of Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan emerges as the predominant country of exploitation.⁴⁴⁸

⁴⁴¹ Trends and Challenges in Addressing Human Trafficking in Central Asia: Civil Society and Survivor Perspectives [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.osce.org/odihr/484979> (date accessed: 03.11.2023).

⁴⁴² Ibid.

⁴⁴³ Shuai H., Liu J. Human Trafficking in China // The Palgrave International Handbook of Human Trafficking / eds. J. Winterdyck, J. Jones: Palgrave McMillan, 2020. Pp. 1244–1248.

⁴⁴⁴ China - United States Department of State [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-trafficking-in-persons-report/china/> (date accessed: 03.11.2023).

⁴⁴⁵ Counter-Trafficking Data Collaborative – Global Synthetic Database, Ibid.

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid.

Human trafficking has been a significant topic of discussion in SCO international cooperation initiatives and forums. In December 2019, Former SCO Secretary-General Vladimir Norov met with International Organization for Migration (IOM) Chinese Mission Chief Giuseppe Crocetti to discuss illegal migration and human trafficking.⁴⁴⁹ They reached a consensus on combating human trafficking and decided to collaborate with organizations such as UNODC, OSCE, SCO, and the IOM to prevent it.⁴⁵⁰

In the October 2021 19th Meeting of the Prosecutors General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, participants deliberated about the increasingly global nature of human trafficking.⁴⁵¹ The Secretary-General of the SCO suggested collaborative actions to tackle human rights abuses, including adopting preventive measures, conducting targeted operations, and exchanging legal information to combat human trafficking, safeguard victims, and prosecute perpetrators.⁴⁵² In addition, the prosecutors general of the SCO members agreed to strengthen collaboration, share knowledge about their respective national laws, and coordinate various initiatives at many levels.⁴⁵³

After the October 2021 session, the SCO put into effect a protocol that aims to improve cooperation to prevent and combat the growing menace of human trafficking, with a particular focus on women and children.⁴⁵⁴ It promotes the reciprocal adoption

⁴⁴⁹ SCO Secretary-General meets with Chief of International Organization for Migration Mission in China [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://eng.sectSCO.org/news/20191220/618788.html#:~:text=They%20agreed%20that%20human%20trafficking,trafficking%20of%20drugs%20and%20weapons> (date accessed: 03.11.2023).

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁵¹ Human trafficking: SCO Prosecutors General discuss preventing and combating the growing threat [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://eng.sectSCO.org/news/20211021/796390.html#:~:text=Human%20trafficking%3A%20SCO%20Prosecutors%20General,via%20videoconference%2C%20under%20India%27s%20chairmanship> (date accessed: 04.11.2023).

⁴⁵² Ibid.

⁴⁵³ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁴ SCO member states adopt protocol to strengthen cooperation in preventing human trafficking [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/sco-member-states-adopt-protocol-to-strengthen-cooperation-in-preventing-human-trafficking/articleshow/87371481.cms> (date accessed: 04.11.2023).

of national legislation to tackle this issue.⁴⁵⁵ The protocol seeks to provide assistance and protection to victims of trafficking while also fostering cooperation among educational institutions of SCO member nations to educate prosecutors on effectively addressing human trafficking, with a particular focus on cases involving women and children.⁴⁵⁶

Human trafficking is a substantial security threat in Southeast Asia. According to Caballero-Anthony, an estimated 40 million men, women, and children in the region are impacted by this modern form of slavery, which often manifests as forced labor, forced marriages, and sexual exploitation.⁴⁵⁷ According to Caballero-Anthony, people who become victims of human trafficking, often from faraway and impoverished regions, are transported to China, Japan, Malaysia, and Thailand, with Thailand receiving most of its victims from Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar, and Malaysia being the destination for individuals from Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam.⁴⁵⁸ Further, Qiao-Franco notes that victims are forced to flee their native countries due to circumstances like violence, prejudice, or poverty and sometimes end up in uncertain legal status and abusive work environments.⁴⁵⁹

Data from the CTDC about human trafficking in Southeast Asia from 2001 to 2022, based on 22,728 recorded cases, reveals critical insights into the region's trafficking dynamics.⁴⁶⁰ The data predominantly shows that females are the most frequent victims, accounting for 13,289 out of 20,081 cases where gender is

⁴⁵⁵ SCO member states adopt protocol to strengthen cooperation in preventing human trafficking [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/sco-member-states-adopt-protocol-to-strengthen-cooperation-in-preventing-human-trafficking/articleshow/87371481.cms> (date accessed: 04.11.2023).

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁷ Caballero-Anthony M. Human Trafficking in Southeast Asia [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/fandd/issues/2018/09/human-trafficking-in-southeast-asia-caballero> (date accessed: 04.11.2023).

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁹ Qiao-Franco G. Rethinking human trafficking in Southeast Asia to better reflect survivors' agency [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.melbourneasiareview.edu.au/rethinking-human-trafficking-in-southeast-asia-to-better-reflect-survivors-agency/> (date accessed: 04.11.2023).

⁴⁶⁰ Counter-Trafficking Data Collaborative – Global Synthetic Database, Ibid.

specified.⁴⁶¹ A significant proportion of victims are from the Philippines, with Indonesia being the most common exploitation country.⁴⁶² Notably, the duration of trafficking often exceeds five years.⁴⁶³ 2016 stands out with 13,184 cases, followed by substantial figures in 2014 and 2017.⁴⁶⁴

Given the threat human trafficking poses to ASEAN members, the organization has enacted several policies and discussed the challenge in different forums to address the threat.

In 2004, ASEAN leaders ratified the Declaration Against Trafficking in Persons, Particularly Women and Children, which mandates the organization to undertake coordinated endeavors to address the problem of human trafficking, specifically focusing on women and children.⁴⁶⁵ It suggests creating a regional network for better border control and information sharing while protecting passports and travel documents from fraud.⁴⁶⁶ It also emphasizes the importance of distinguishing between victims and perpetrators, ensuring their humane treatment, and protecting their dignity and human rights while also calling for coercive actions against traffickers and strengthening regional and international cooperation.⁴⁶⁷

In 2009, the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) was established to improve regional collaboration and advance human rights strategies.⁴⁶⁸ The AICHR is an essential part of ASEAN's organizational structure and

⁴⁶¹ Counter-Trafficking Data Collaborative – Global Synthetic Database, Ibid.

⁴⁶² Ibid.

⁴⁶³ Counter-Trafficking Data Collaborative – Global Synthetic Database, Ibid.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁵ ASEAN Declaration Against Trafficking in Persons Particularly Women and Children [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://asean.org/asean-declaration-against-trafficking-in-persons-particularly-women-and-children/> (date accessed: 04.11.2023).

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁸ About AICHR [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://aichr.org/about-aichr-2/> (date accessed: 03.11.2023).

is an overarching institution responsible for promoting and protecting human rights across the ASEAN region.⁴⁶⁹

In 2015, ASEAN adopted the Plan of Action Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. The plan aims to deter all forms of trafficking while providing protection and assistance to victims and working towards a comprehensive and coordinated regional approach.⁴⁷⁰ The aims of this plan include enhancing the enforcement of legal principles and border control, intensifying the prosecution of instances involving human trafficking, and promoting regional collaboration to combat all types of trafficking, with a particular focus on women and children.⁴⁷¹ The plan outlines the specific actions taken by ASEAN to combat human trafficking, including steps to prevent it, protect victims, enforce laws and prosecute offenders, and promote collaboration at both regional and international levels.⁴⁷²

The November 2017 AICHR meeting in Bohol highlighted priority programs and hosted an award ceremony for a youth video competition focused on combating human trafficking.⁴⁷³ The conference focused on critical human rights issues in the ASEAN region, particularly Trafficking in Persons (TIP).⁴⁷⁴ About 200 delegates, including senior officials and ministers, discussed measures against TIP, recognizing its prevalence, especially in the Philippines, Cambodia, and Malaysia.⁴⁷⁵ Future workshops on education and health rights for children with disabilities were planned alongside discussions on the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (AHRD).⁴⁷⁶

⁴⁶⁹ About AICHR [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://aichr.org/about-aichr-2/> (date accessed: 03.11.2023).

⁴⁷⁰ ASEAN Plan of Action Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/APA-FINAL.pdf> (date accessed: 04.11.2023).

⁴⁷¹ Ibid.

⁴⁷² Ibid.

⁴⁷³ The ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) Annual Report 2018 [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Adopted-AICHR-Annual-Report-2018-31072018.pdf> (date accessed: 03.11.2023).

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid.

The 2017 ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers outlines the responsibilities of sending and receiving states to protect migrant workers.⁴⁷⁷ The consensus emphasizes the importance of upholding these workers' dignity and fundamental rights and providing access to legal recourse.⁴⁷⁸ It also stresses the specific rights of migrant workers, such as fair remuneration and freedom of movement.⁴⁷⁹ The consensus aims to enhance the rights and well-being of migrant workers through intra-ASEAN collaboration.⁴⁸⁰

The 2017 ASEAN Plan of Action in Combatting Transnational Crime seeks to sustain ASEAN collaboration in preventing and suppressing human trafficking while bolstering the organization's ability to address these issues promptly and efficiently.⁴⁸¹ The document emphasizes that ASEAN member countries should implement national strategies to address transnational crime. These strategies should involve the creation of specialized units within law enforcement agencies, enhancing regional cooperation, establishing financial intelligence agencies, adopting controlled delivery investigative techniques, and collaborating with relevant parties to improve the criminal justice system and safeguard witnesses.⁴⁸² The document addresses policy matters such as signing, ratifying, and implementing international agreements about transnational crimes. It delves into the potential for creating new regional legal agreements, aligning national policies, and recognizing the illicit trade of wildlife and timber and people smuggling as emerging areas of concern.⁴⁸³

⁴⁷⁷ ASEAN Consensus on the Protection of the Rights of Migrant Workers [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/3.-March-2018-ASEAN-Consensus-on-the-Protection-and-Promotion-of-the-Rights-of-Migrant-Workers.pdf> (date accessed: 04.11.2023).

⁴⁷⁸ ASEAN Consensus on the Protection of the Rights of Migrant Workers [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/3.-March-2018-ASEAN-Consensus-on-the-Protection-and-Promotion-of-the-Rights-of-Migrant-Workers.pdf> (date accessed: 04.11.2023).

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁸¹ ASEAN Plan of Action in Combatting Transnational Crime, Ibid.

⁴⁸² Ibid.

⁴⁸³ Ibid.

In addition, the January 2018 AICHR Singapore meeting expanded the scope of discussion to encompass freedom of expression and the rights of those with disabilities. The meeting also endorsed documents aimed at enhancing the availability of information on human trafficking, with a particular focus on women and children.⁴⁸⁴ However, challenges like the AICHR's limited independence and the ASEAN's non-interference policy were noted, impacting its ability to address human rights issues effectively.⁴⁸⁵ Concerns were raised about the need for ASEAN to strengthen human rights protection and address regional human rights issues more proactively.⁴⁸⁶

During the June 2018 AICHR meeting at Hanoi, the participants advanced a comprehensive regional approach to combat human trafficking, focusing on prevention strategies and enhancing regional cooperation.⁴⁸⁷ Following that, at the March 2022 AICHR conference, participants discussed the progress of its Five-Year Work Plan, which includes a focus on combating human trafficking, among other human rights issues, as part of its priority programs and activities for 2022-2024.⁴⁸⁸ It marked the beginning of new leadership for the 2022-2024 term and discussed updates on human rights initiatives from Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, and the Philippines.⁴⁸⁹ Key topics included the progress of the AICHR's Five-Year Work Plan and its priority programs, covering diverse issues such as children's rights, disability rights, freedom of religion, human trafficking, and environmental rights.⁴⁹⁰ Additionally, discussions

⁴⁸⁴ The ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) Annual Report 2018, Ibid.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁷ *Сомкамнерд Н.* Роль и сотрудничество Таиланда со странами в Юго-восточной Азии в сфере решения прав человека // *Актуальные проблемы гуманитарных и естественных наук.* 2016. № 12-4. С. 117-121.

⁴⁸⁸ Press Release 34th Meeting of AICHR, 30-31 March 2022, Video Conference [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://aichr.org/news/press-release-34th-meeting-of-aichr-30-31-march-2022-video-conference/> (date accessed: 01.11.23)

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid.

were held on plans for the Annual Report of AICHR 2022, future activities, and enhancing stakeholder engagement and international collaboration.⁴⁹¹

At the October 2022 AICHR conference, attendees examined methods to promote the alignment of laws and policies across the region, exchange successful strategies, and establish practical guidelines and databases to enhance the fight against human trafficking in the ASEAN region.⁴⁹²

Based on the policies mentioned above and the efforts of both organizations, the author emphasizes that cooperation between these organizations to address human trafficking has significant potential for the following reasons.

The potential collaboration between the SCO and the ASEAN in combating human trafficking, particularly in addressing cross-border crimes and the exploitation of vulnerable populations, can be a significant step in regional security cooperation. Such collaboration aligns with the broader regional security objectives of both organizations.

With its focus on political, economic, and security issues in Eurasia and ASEAN and its emphasis on regional integration and community building in Southeast Asia, the SCO brings diverse resources, expertise, and perspectives together. This diversity is crucial in addressing the multifaceted nature of human trafficking, which often transcends national boundaries and legal jurisdictions. Cross-border human trafficking necessitates a coordinated response, and the collaboration between SCO and ASEAN offers a platform for sharing intelligence, harmonizing legal frameworks, and conducting joint operations.

⁴⁹¹ Press Release 34th Meeting of AICHR, 30-31 March 2022, Video Conference [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://aichr.org/news/press-release-34th-meeting-of-aichr-30-31-march-2022-video-conference/> (date accessed: 01.11.23)

⁴⁹² AICHR convenes human rights consultation with national task forces on countering trafficking in persons in ASEAN [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://aichr.org/news/aichr-convenes-human-rights-consultation-with-national-task-forces-on-countering-trafficking-in-persons-in-asean/> (date accessed: 01.11.23)

One of the critical aspects of this collaboration is the emphasis on protecting and aiding vulnerable populations, who are often the primary victims of human trafficking. This focus aligns with the ASEAN's humanitarian and human rights-oriented policies and complements the SCO's security-focused approach. By pooling their resources and expertise, SCO and ASEAN can offer more comprehensive support to victims, including rehabilitation and integration programs, and work towards preventing the conditions that lead to trafficking in the first place, such as poverty, unemployment, and social inequality.

Further, the collaboration allows for the development of standardized protocols and best practices in combating human trafficking, ensuring that efforts are coordinated but also practical and efficient. This collaboration includes the creation of collaborative training initiatives for law enforcement and border control organizations and the construction of interconnected databases for monitoring illegal actions associated with human trafficking.⁴⁹³

However, it is crucial to acknowledge the challenges inherent in such a partnership. Differences in political systems, levels of economic development, and legal frameworks can obstruct seamless cooperation. Additionally, the sensitive nature of sovereignty and the need to respect each member state's territorial integrity can sometimes limit the scope of joint operations.

Despite these challenges, collaborative efforts between SCO and ASEAN can demonstrate a significant commitment to addressing human trafficking. By leveraging their combined strengths and learning from each other's experiences, these regional organizations can substantially progress in combating this global issue. This collaboration reflects a growing recognition of multilateral approaches to transnational challenges. Further, Heng notes that to ensure ASEAN's success despite the prevailing

⁴⁹³ *Сомкамнерд Н.* Роль и сотрудничество Таиланда со странами в Юго-восточной Азии в сфере решения прав человека // *Актуальные проблемы гуманитарных и естественных наук.* 2016. № 12-4. С. 117-121.

contradictions and differences, it is essential to prioritize and pursue both bilateral and multilateral mechanisms while maintaining unity and resilience, upholding a rules-based international order, and promoting the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific.⁴⁹⁴

Both organizations have developed robust legal instruments and action plans that emphasize cooperation in addressing transnational crimes, including human trafficking. Through instruments like the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons (ACTIP) and action plans such as the ASEAN Plan of Action in Combating Transnational Crime, ASEAN has laid a comprehensive framework focusing on prevention, law enforcement, and victim support. Similarly, the SCO has focused on enhancing regional security and judicial cooperation among its member states, which is crucial in tackling transnational crimes like human trafficking.

The potential convergence in their approaches is seen in the emphasis on strengthening law enforcement collaboration, enhancing legal and judicial cooperation, and improving victim assistance and protection. Both organizations advocate harmonizing national laws and policies with international standards, promoting regional strategies to combat transnational crime.

There has been a growing recognition of the need for information sharing and intelligence cooperation, vital for tracking and dismantling trafficking networks. Joint training programs, workshops, and seminars have been conducted under both frameworks, aiming to build capacity and share best practices among member states.⁴⁹⁵

Despite significant convergence in legal frameworks and policies, challenges remain due to differences in legal systems, resource allocation, and commitment levels to implementation. Achieving total harmonization is further complicated by geopolitical diversity and the vastness of the region covered by both organizations.

⁴⁹⁴ Heng K. ASEAN's Challenges and the Way Forward [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://thediplomat.com/2020/08/aseans-challenges-and-the-way-forward/> (date accessed: 11.01.2024).

⁴⁹⁵ Чан З.Т., Ионов Е.М. Деятельность АСЕАН и Вьетнама, в частности, по борьбе с терроризмом // Международные отношения. 2023. № 1. С. 41-55.

Nevertheless, the legal frameworks and policies of SCO and ASEAN show substantial potential for harmonization, providing a solid policy framework for effective collaboration in combating human trafficking. This ongoing process ensures a coordinated and comprehensive regional response to this global challenge. Regarding harmonization, Aris notes that the RATS has created shared norms to address potential security threats by establishing common standards and collaborating on intelligence.⁴⁹⁶

The divergent cultural, political, and socio-economic characteristics of the SCO and ASEAN member nations substantially influence their capacity to establish a coherent and consolidated stance in combating human trafficking.

Politically, member countries of SCO and ASEAN range from democratic to authoritarian regimes. This diversity leads to different political will levels and commitment to addressing human trafficking. In some nations, political stability and strong governance enable effective implementation of anti-trafficking policies, while political challenges can hinder coordinated action in others.

Socio-economically, disparities in economic development among these countries result in varying capacities to combat human trafficking. Wealthier nations might have more resources for law enforcement, victim support, and public awareness campaigns. In contrast, less developed member states may struggle with limited resources, making them more vulnerable to trafficking activities. Caballero-Anthony notes that to effectively combat human trafficking, a comprehensive and multitrack approach that goes beyond just enforcing anti-trafficking laws and addresses various drivers of trafficking, such as poverty and political repression, is necessary.⁴⁹⁷

Despite these challenges, SCO and ASEAN can develop tailored approaches that address the unique aspects of human trafficking in each country by recognizing and respecting these differences. Collaboration and dialogue facilitated through these organizations help bridge gaps, leading to more effective regional strategies against

⁴⁹⁶ Aris S. *Eurasian Regionalism: The Shanghai Cooperation Organization*: Springer, 2011. P. 109.

⁴⁹⁷ Caballero-Anthony M. *Ibid.*

human trafficking. This includes sharing best practices, harmonizing legal frameworks, and conducting joint training and operations.

CHAPTER 3: EFFECTIVENESS OF REGIONAL SECURITY COOPERATION BETWEEN THE SCO AND ASEAN

3.1. Strategic Application of Non-Intervention by the SCO and ASEAN

Non-intervention is an advantage for the SCO and ASEAN, pivotal in shaping their regional dynamics. This principle strengthens state norms within the SCO, acting as a bulwark against Western interference. Similarly, ASEAN's commitment to non-intervention, deeply rooted in its colonial history and the region's diverse culture, protects its members' sovereignty, ensuring stability even in tumultuous times. While the SCO leans towards safeguarding regime survival, ASEAN uses non-intervention to maintain its centrality. In championing non-intervention, the SCO and ASEAN resist Western norms, crafting distinct regional identities that pave the way for a multipolar world.

The SCO's stance on various international matters aligns with the non-intervention principle, though it is often implied rather than stated outright. One such example is the SCO's position towards Afghanistan. Wani notes that concerning Afghanistan, the SCO chose to adopt an approach of non-intervention, emphasizing the state's role in fighting terrorism and insurgency and focusing on strengthening and rebuilding the anti-terrorism grid of the member countries based on non-intervention to prevent the spillover effects of Afghanistan's instability from impacting neighboring countries.⁴⁹⁸ ASEAN has also invoked the non-intervention norm in Myanmar, as taking overtly punitive steps against the latter would set a precedent for ASEAN members whose regimes came into power by military force, such as Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam. Also, ASEAN taking punitive steps on Myanmar would send the message that the organization has ceased to be an impartial regional conductor and is unilaterally acting on its own accord, which could damage the trust given to the

⁴⁹⁸ Wani A. A House Divided: The SCO's Afghanistan Conundrum [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.orfonline.org/research/a-house-divided-the-scocs-afghanistan-conundrum/> (date accessed: 22.08.2023).

organization by external parties. In addition to the Myanmar issue, ASEAN has invoked the non-intervention norm in territorial disputes in the South China Sea. Diaz Alichan notes that concerning overlapping claims in the South China Sea, non-intervention should not be confused with doing nothing, mentioning that keeping involved parties in dialogue, containing spillover and escalation, setting out norms and principles to guide actions, and consolidating the organization's unity and centrality is ASEAN's best approach.⁴⁹⁹ The emphasis may have evolved from the historical backdrop of organizations that serve relatively weak governments with colonial histories and uncertain leadership. This emphasis highlights the need to preserve the existing state of affairs and the regime's legitimacy. It is essential for the success of both organizations to recognize and respect the sovereignty of each nation and the autonomy of constituent regimes. Upholding non-intervention and respect for sovereignty promotes equal engagement and collective discussion among member states, achieving their goals of regime legitimization.

Both organizations have different approaches to implementing the non-intervention norm. Leading members of the SCO, China and Russia, have vehemently opposed regime change and stressed the importance of the non-intervention norm in maintaining the status quo and ensuring regime survival. At the 22nd meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the SCO, Chinese President Xi Jinping stated that SCO countries should guard against attempts by external forces to instigate color revolutions, jointly oppose interference in other countries' internal affairs under any pretext, and hold their future firmly in our own hands.⁵⁰⁰ Similarly, Russian President Vladimir Putin mentioned in a January 2022 CSTO meeting that the measures taken through the organization have clearly shown that it will not allow the situation to be shaken at home

⁴⁹⁹ *Diaz Alichan M.* Non-interference principle or doing nothing? role of ASEAN in contemporary geopolitical conflicts: the case of South China Sea dispute [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://hdl.handle.net/2105/51325> (date accessed: 04.08.2023). P. 32.

⁵⁰⁰ Full text of Xi's speech at SCO Samarkand summit, *Ibid.*

and will not allow the scenario of the so-called color revolutions to be realized.⁵⁰¹ This norm has helped protect SCO members from external interference and allowed their leaders to maintain control over domestic policies. The resistance to regime changes stems from Western attempts to promote democracy in Eurasia, leading the SCO to challenge the idea of universal democratic norms and counter these efforts. As the SCO becomes more prominent in Eurasia, it reinforces state norms prioritizing regime survival over democratization, providing a legitimizing space for state values among its member states' leaders.

The SCO, which promotes non-intervention in promoting the centrality of the state and regime survival, rejects Western democratic norms. While they have briefly adopted such norms in the past, they have vocally opposed "color revolutions" in the former Soviet space. Hinkle notes that Russia can use the SCO to support its members and avoid color revolutions and similar political uprisings.⁵⁰² She points out that the SCO Charter stresses sovereignty, security, and territorial integrity, allowing its members to cooperatively maintain security on their terms without the external imposition of external models and values, while Russia uses the organization to increase its regional influence and spread its narrative of sovereignty.⁵⁰³ Similarly, Peyrouse notes that China has used the SCO to question Western democratic values, accusing the US and EU of contaminating foreign policy with ideology, using democracy and human rights to interfere in internal affairs, and extending their influence to weaken their rivals.⁵⁰⁴ He also says that China sees color revolutions as a Western advance in its sphere of influence, risking a domino effect capable of impacting its territory, citing the SCO Research Center in saying that to maintain hegemony in Central Asia, the US will

⁵⁰¹ Нельзя допустить реализацию сценария цветных революций, заявил Путин, Ibid.

⁵⁰² *Hinkle K.* Russia's Reactions to the Color Revolutions [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/AD1045875.pdf> (date accessed: 03.07.2023). P. 68.

⁵⁰³ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁴ *Peyrouse S.* China's Impact on Democracy and Human Rights in Central Asia // Security and Human Rights. 2022. Vol. 32. № 1–4. P. 55.

do its best to contain China, and that trend would gradually increase.⁵⁰⁵ Those examples show that the SCO is a serious contender as it promotes alternatives to Western norms, institutions, and organizations. Additionally, the domestic situations of SCO member states are more conducive to state and regime survival than democratic norms and exert considerable influence over other member states in defining their political systems and values.

The ASEAN Way strongly emphasizes non-intervention as a core principle. This is due to concerns from each ASEAN member regarding state sovereignty and maintaining domestic stability. The approach is grounded in ASEAN states' political elite's colonialism and foreign domination experiences. Severino states that colonial regimes shaped much of today's Southeast Asian nations, with the newness of the region's national experience and ethnoreligious groups straddling national boundaries, making it difficult for the newly independent states to transcend racial, ethnic, and religious groups.⁵⁰⁶ He also emphasizes that race, ethnicity, and religion were critical factors in the formation of most Southeast Asian nations.⁵⁰⁷ He contends that the EU's regional integration model is unsuitable for ASEAN, as the EU relied on US assistance, perceived the Soviet threat as a unifying factor, and integrated West Germany into Europe following a devastating war.⁵⁰⁸ In contrast, Severino notes that the newly independent Southeast Asian states had not gone to war with each other, with inter-state conflicts between them outgrowths of their colonial legacies and circumstances as newly independent states.⁵⁰⁹ Given that, Othman and Othman mention that in practice, ASEAN's non-intervention principle is an explicit assurance that the sovereignty of each member state is guaranteed, and no unwarranted intervention would happen if any

⁵⁰⁵ *Peyrouse S.* China's Impact on Democracy and Human Rights in Central Asia // *Security and Human Rights*. 2022. Vol. 32. № 1–4. P. 55.

⁵⁰⁶ *Severino R.* Southeast Asia In Search of an ASEAN Community: Insights from the former Secretary-General. Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2006. Pp. 6-7.

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid.* Pp. 5-6.

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid.* P. 6.

⁵⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

member state experiences internal problems.⁵¹⁰ From an operational point of view, ASEAN's implementation of non-intervention entails refraining from criticizing the actions of member states' governments towards their people, avoiding state actions perceived to be a breach of non-intervention, denying any support to rebel groups seeking to overthrow the government of member states, and providing political or material support to member states in their actions against subversive activities.⁵¹¹ They are suspicious of coercive external intervention that fails to understand their countries' best interests. In line with that, Vershinina et al. mention that ASEAN states that have suffered from colonialism emphasize sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the non-use of peacekeeping, viewing traditional peacekeeping practices as a means of great powers dominating small and middle powers.⁵¹² Thus, ASEAN states have prioritized non-interference in ASEAN institutional instruments to promote their interpretation of that norm. This has resulted in non-intervention becoming one of the defining norms of the ASEAN Way.

The power distribution between ASEAN and SCO is different. China and Russia dominate the SCO, whereas ASEAN's power is spread more evenly. China and the US hold significant influence over ASEAN and strategically play both sides to maintain their importance in the Pacific region. This situation has affected how ASEAN views non-intervention, allowing smaller states a more robust voice against external powers while preserving their sovereignty through the ASEAN Way. China seeks to increase its influence by establishing common norms with ASEAN, which may influence weaker ASEAN states. Weissman notes that ASEAN and China have extensively tapped into

⁵¹⁰ *Othman M. F., Othman Z.* The principle of non-interference in ASEAN: Can Malaysia spearhead the effort towards a more interventionist ASEAN [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/12118557.pdf> (date accessed: 11.08.2023). P. 40.

⁵¹¹ *Ibid.* P. 41.

⁵¹² *Vershinina V.V., Koldunova E.V., Kuklin N.S.* Southeast Asian States' Approaches to Peacekeeping and Conflict Resolution // *Vestnik RUDN. International Relations.* 2023. T. 23. № 2. P. 275.

their soft power resources to shape each other's perceptions.⁵¹³ He notes the two-way dynamic of that shaping process, with China trying to counter perceptions of a "China threat" to ASEAN and ASEAN working hard to enmesh China in the regional order and convince it to accept norms such as multilateralism and the ASEAN Way.⁵¹⁴ For Russia, Bukh notes that Russia is perceived positively in Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand due to historical ties and common political norms.⁵¹⁵ He mentions that Russia, Vietnam, and Laos were Cold War allies and that Russia played a huge role in shaping the national identities of the latter two.⁵¹⁶ However, Bukh says Russia's ties with Thailand are relatively distant, with the last perceiving Russia as a foreign "other," as Thailand views its relations with Russia through the Cold War historical lens and contemporary events that have little impact on Thailand.⁵¹⁷ However, as the regimes of Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand came to power via military means rather than democratic elections, they may be comfortable with Russia as a strategic partner that stresses non-intervention, emphasizing regime stability over democratization and liberalization.

The US is also an active player in shaping ASEAN norms. Stromseth notes that a critical theme of the Biden Administration's engagement with ASEAN is emphasizing the latter's centrality in the Pacific regional security architecture, mentioning that the US was not forcing ASEAN to take sides but ensuring that the latter have choices.⁵¹⁸ Also, the US maintains longstanding and robust defense and security ties with the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand, adding a security dimension to its engagement with the regional organization. However, Stromseth mentions that despite the US

⁵¹³ *Weissmann M.* Chinese Soft Power and ASEAN's Constructive Engagement: Sino-ASEAN relations and the South China Sea - Kyoto Review of Southeast Asia [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://kyotoreview.org/issue-15/chinese-soft-power-and-aseans-constructive-engagement-sino-asean-relations-and-the-south-china-sea/> (date accessed: 04.08.2023).

⁵¹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵¹⁵ *Bukh.* *Ibid.* Pp. 459-460.

⁵¹⁶ *Ibid.* Pp. 461-462.

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid.* Pp. 469-470.

⁵¹⁸ *Stromseth J.* Taking stock of US-ASEAN relations as Biden convenes a special summit [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/taking-stock-of-u-s-asean-relations-as-biden-convenes-a-special-summit/> (date accessed: 10.08.2023).

upholding ASEAN centrality in its meetings with the regional organization, strategic competition between the US and China is increasingly becoming the binary choice between ASEAN member states.⁵¹⁹

Given those interactions, ASEAN acknowledges its unique status in the international hierarchy and tries to accommodate China, given its regional predominance, and Russia as an alternative strategic partner. However, ASEAN is also open to the US as a counterbalance to China's growing influence in Southeast Asia and is wary of US secondary sanctions due to dealing with Russia. In addition, some ASEAN states hope to gain support from the US by affirming Western norms such as democracy and human rights. Despite this, these norms have yet to penetrate ASEAN's political elite circles and society significantly.

When it comes to creating an identity for ASEAN, non-intervention has played a significant role. This has brought attention to the paradoxical position of regional political elites. To gain legitimacy amidst criticism, ASEAN has promoted democratic norms and endorsed them in its policies and statements. However, the success of putting these norms into practice varies. Chin notes that democratization faces many challenges in Southeast Asia, noting that China does not care about what kinds of regimes Southeast Asian states may have if the latter recognizes the former's dominance in the South China Sea, which strengthens anti-democratic forces in the region, with some parties openly admiring China's "strong state" system.⁵²⁰ He also says that while the US and Australia openly promote democracy in the region, pro-democracy groups fear that authoritarian regimes may target them as "foreign agents," which would drive people to support autocrats espousing populist nationalism.⁵²¹ Also, he mentions that

⁵¹⁹ *Stromseth J.* Taking stock of US-ASEAN relations as Biden convenes a special summit [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/taking-stock-of-u-s-asean-relations-as-biden-convenes-a-special-summit/> (date accessed: 10.08.2023).

⁵²⁰ *Chin J.* Democracy has always been fragile in Southeast Asia. Now, it may be sliding backwards [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://theconversation.com/democracy-has-always-been-fragile-in-southeast-asia-now-it-may-be-sliding-backwards-157510> (date accessed: 04.07.2023).

⁵²¹ *Ibid.*

Southeast Asia's political diversity, which includes systems such as military juntas, one-party rule, Sharia law, constitutional monarchy, and liberal democracy, makes it challenging to package Western-style democracy as an ideal political system.⁵²² Chin points out Southeast Asia's colonial past when it was not in the interest of colonial powers to promote democracy but instead to consolidate their power by supporting local elites and clamping down on nationalist resistance movements.⁵²³ That had the effect of institutionalizing extractive political systems that persisted after colonial rule, benefitting local elites who served as proxies for colonial powers rather than fostering grassroots participative governance and accountability. Most tellingly, Chin says that traditional power structures that are state, feudal, and authoritarian have persisted even after colonial rule, saying it is erroneous to assume that the young Southeast Asian states would automatically chart a course to Western democracy in their nation-building process.⁵²⁴ As a result, ASEAN members have yet to fully implement democratic norms at the state level, where domestic politics take priority over democratization. Furthermore, Western norms may not consider each ASEAN member's internal dynamics. A rigid approach to setting norms may not be practical in the unique context of ASEAN.

Given those points, both organizations have successfully resisted Western normative influence, with the former legitimizing state rule and presenting itself as a counterweight to Western democracy and taking on a normative identity of its own. Honrada and Bokeria note that while the Shanghai Spirit of SCO and ASEAN Way share similar features like non-interference, practical approach to regionalism, flexible regionalism, and non-binding commitments, they have differences such as their understanding of non-intervention, cooperation based on practicality versus dialogue,

⁵²² *Chin J.* Democracy has always been fragile in Southeast Asia. Now, it may be sliding backwards [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://theconversation.com/democracy-has-always-been-fragile-in-southeast-asia-now-it-may-be-sliding-backwards-157510> (date accessed: 04.07.2023).

⁵²³ *Ibid.*

⁵²⁴ *Ibid.*

and the focus on state security versus human security.⁵²⁵ They note that the unique characteristics of Shanghai Spirit and ASEAN Way can be utilized to establish a new adaptable regionalism that abides by the state-centered Westphalian order of the global system, which can effectively address the challenges of a world with multiple centers of power.⁵²⁶

The non-intervention policy is critical for the SCO and ASEAN, playing a crucial role in shaping their respective regional dynamics. This principle shields the SCO, defending against potential Western interventions and emphasizing state sovereignty and regime longevity. Similarly, ASEAN leverages non-intervention to assure its member states' sovereignty, thus fostering stability amidst their diverse cultural and historical milieus. The application of non-intervention, however, manifests differently in each context. The SCO strategically employs a policy of non-intervention to counteract Western influence and strengthen the stability of its regimes, emphasizing the organization's emphasis on domestic security and political continuity. Conversely, ASEAN uses this principle to maintain regional balance and autonomy, navigating the influences of major external powers. This approach is critical in ASEAN's diplomatic engagements and its role as a regional mediator. Both organizations, despite challenges in adopting Western democratic norms due to their distinct political and cultural landscapes, have adeptly withstood Western normative pressures. This resistance has enabled them to cultivate and reinforce unique regional identities. Consequently, this approach has birthed a distinctive form of regionalism, accommodating a multipolar world's intricacies while adhering to a state-centric system. This nuanced regionalism underscores their commitment to sovereignty and non-interference, reflecting a strategic balance between internal cohesion and external autonomy.

The adherence to non-intervention by the SCO and the ASEAN undoubtedly strengthens their ability to foster trust and mutual respect among member states. This,

⁵²⁵ *Honrada G.J.P., Bokeria S.A. Ibid. Pp. 260-262.*

⁵²⁶ *Ibid. P. 255.*

in turn, dramatically facilitates more seamless regional security cooperation. This principle, firmly embedded in the charters of both organizations, serves as a fundamental cornerstone that upholds member nations' autonomy and geographical boundaries, guaranteeing the coexistence of diverse political systems and security issues without direct intervention. Within the SCO and ASEAN, which consist of various political systems and security concerns, the adherence to non-intervention promotes a stable and respectful atmosphere conducive to the growth of communication and collaboration. Both organizations have effectively addressed intricate regional security matters by prioritizing agreement and mutual respect. They have also actively participated in significant security discussions and collaborative training sessions. Non-intervention permits member states to maintain their sovereignty while simultaneously engaging in collective security measures, bolstering overall trust within the organizations. Moreover, it promotes the willingness of states to willingly exchange intelligence and cooperate on security problems, with the assurance that their internal affairs will be upheld and preserved. This strategic approach reduces the possibility of internal conflicts among the organizations and enhances their combined ability to tackle external security concerns. Essentially, the SCO and ASEAN's commitment to non-intervention maintains the varied political and security situation among its members and strengthens a collaborative structure that is vital for tackling the complex security issues in the area at present. Both organizations have shown that, despite their member states' diverse political systems and security challenges, it is feasible to create an environment of trust and mutual respect that promotes effective regional security cooperation. This is in line with Pisanò's observation that the SCO and ASEAN are firmly committed to the principles of Westphalian sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of neighboring countries.⁵²⁷

⁵²⁷ Pisanò A. Human Rights and Sovereignty in the ASEAN Path Towards a Human Rights Declaration // Human Rights Review. 2014. T. 15. № 4. P. 392.

The strategic application of non-intervention by the SCO and ASEAN has demonstrated its efficacy in dealing with transnational security challenges. This approach effectively safeguards member states' sovereignty and internal affairs while promoting a stable and secure regional atmosphere. The principle of non-intervention does not entail doing anything but rather highlights the need to respect a country's sovereignty and achieve security goals through cooperation and consensus. The norm enables the SCO and ASEAN to establish a basis for trust-building by promoting mutual respect and understanding. This is crucial for exchanging intelligence, implementing best practices, and coordinating cross-border activities to address common threats. The non-intervention policy encourages member nations to freely participate and exchange essential information, with the assurance that this collaboration will not violate their domestic governance. A collaborative framework can implement joint initiatives and mechanisms in both organizations, including the ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalization and Violent Extremism and the SCO's RATS. These initiatives have played a crucial role in combating terrorism in these organizations. Likewise, in the fight against cybercrime and drug trafficking, the focus on developing skills, exchanging information, and conducting collaborative training exercises has allowed member nations to improve their own and combined powers without sacrificing their independence. Strategic cooperation enables organizations to successfully tackle the underlying causes and expressions of transnational dangers by utilizing each member's strengths and respecting their sovereign rights. While Wunderlich notes that the concept of non-intervention has been periodically challenged, it is unlikely that the SCO and ASEAN will abandon it as they were designed to support state-building processes in their respective regions.⁵²⁸ Hence, the deliberate implementation of non-intervention by the SCO and ASEAN demonstrates how regional organizations can effectively manage the

⁵²⁸ Wunderlich J.-U. Comparing regional organisations in global multilateral institutions: ASEAN, the EU and the UN // *Asia Europe Journal*. 2012. Vol. 10. № 2–3. P. 139.

delicate equilibrium between upholding state sovereignty and promoting joint efforts to address shared security concerns, guaranteeing a more secure and stable regional atmosphere.

The principle of non-intervention in the charters of the SCO and the ASEAN allows both organizations to address internal conflicts within member states without directly intervening in their domestic affairs. This approach promotes collaborative and consensus-driven methods for resolving disputes and fostering peace while respecting each other's political independence and geographical boundaries. This approach has led to developing preventive diplomacy, establishing forums for debate and communication, and promoting diplomatic discussions while respecting individual nations' autonomy. Rab and Zhilong emphasize that the SCO is a platform that promotes cooperation among member countries in different sectors, enhances economic and security ties for mutual benefits, and provides a forum for communication and dialogue to resolve differences without mentioning conflicts.⁵²⁹ The SCO and ASEAN also prioritize economic development and connectivity efforts to address root causes of conflicts, such as poverty, inequality, and limited access to resources. The ASEAN Connectivity Master Plan and the SCO's economic and infrastructure projects aim to strengthen regional integration and establish shared interests, reducing the likelihood of confrontations. Rab and Zhilong note that the SCO Charter upholds the principle of nonalignment promotes mutual trust and collaboration with international organizations and offers potential benefits for member countries in areas such as economic and trade, military, energy, culture, and connectivity.⁵³⁰ Despite the principle of non-intervention limiting the SCOs and ASEAN's capacity to involve themselves in internal conflicts, it enhances their role as promoters of peaceful resolutions and creators of a stable regional structure.

⁵²⁹ Rab A., He Z. SCO, India and Pakistan: New Perspectives and New Hopes // International Journal of African and Asian Studies. 2018. Vol. 50. P. 12.

⁵³⁰ Ibid.

3.2. Challenges in Regional Security Cooperation Between the SCO and ASEAN

The SCO and ASEAN are vital to Asia's geopolitical landscape, but both face challenges in promoting regional security cooperation. The SCO deals with institutional overlaps, complex China-Russia dynamics, and a lukewarm commitment to multilateralism. Meanwhile, despite emphasizing unity and consensus, ASEAN has received criticism for its muted stance on critical issues, notably the South China Sea territorial disputes and the Myanmar crisis. Thus, both organizations need help to turn their diplomatic dialogues into tangible security outcomes.

Greater Eurasia is central to the SCO idea, which aims to create a large, interconnected region from Europe to Asia. It is ambitious but has some flaws. First, the concept is characterized by strong ambiguity and challenging framing of regional security cooperation. Lo points out that there is little consensus on the meaning and purpose of Greater Eurasia, describing it as an all-in-one geopolitical enterprise, political slogan, economic aspiration, and ideological construct, noting that it is more of an anti-project, an expression of Russian animosity towards the Western-dominated liberal world order.⁵³¹ He describes Greater Eurasia as Russia's flexible strategy, more focused on establishing an anti-Western stance and consensus than specific details.⁵³² Also, Lo adds that Russia could put the Greater Eurasia label on its policies and initiatives and then declare progress, which, if it progresses favorably, could turn the Greater Eurasia concept into a genuinely positive vision.⁵³³ However, he also says that the Greater Eurasia concept can drift along in Russian discourse, policies, and strategies without progress, becoming increasingly devoid of substance, a normative veneer for

⁵³¹ *Lo B.* Greater Eurasia: The Emperor's New Clothes or an Idea whose Time has Come? [Electronic resource]. URL: https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/bobo_lo_greater_eurasia_2019.pdf (date accessed: 03.08.2023).

⁵³² *Ibid.* P. 9.

⁵³³ *Ibid.* P. 39.

Russia's realist foreign policy, and ending any pretense of becoming an alternative framework for global order.⁵³⁴

Further, Starr notes the lack of scientific or expert consensus on the precise meaning of Greater Eurasia and the lack of any productive forces, cultural, or historical affinity binding Russia and China, the concept's two prominent advocates.⁵³⁵ Starr highlights that while supporters of Greater Eurasia acknowledge that the idea will be put into action through the SCO and EAEU, Russia is experiencing difficulties due to the demographic and economic imbalance between these two organizations. Russia must use persuasion, coercion, or force to convince Central Asian and Caucasus states to back the EAEU, with these states aligning themselves with Russia's Greater Eurasia concept out of practicality or necessity rather than genuine belief.⁵³⁶

ASEAN's approach to a defined geostrategic concept can be criticized for its lack of cohesion. While ASEAN's emphasis on consensus and non-interference has effectively maintained regional harmony, it also means that the organization needs a unified strategic voice in more extensive geopolitical discussions.

The territorial disputes in the South China Sea are prime examples of the challenges ASEAN faces in developing a unified strategic voice due to multiple factors. According to Tong, ASEAN is currently redefining its regional role, and the South China Sea disputes serve as a crucial test to determine whether ASEAN can adapt to confront China's increasingly aggressive behavior.⁵³⁷ She also says that if ASEAN fails

⁵³⁴ *Lo B.* Greater Eurasia: The Emperor's New Clothes or an Idea whose Time has Come? [Electronic resource]. URL: https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/bobo_lo_greater_eurasia_2019.pdf (date accessed: 03.08.2023). P. 40.

⁵³⁵ *Starr S.F.* Kennan Cable №. 46: Greater Eurasia: Russia's Asian Fantasy [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/kennan-cable-no-46-greater-eurasia-russias-asian-fantasy> (date accessed: 03.09.2023).

⁵³⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵³⁷ *Tong L.* The ASEAN Crisis, Part 1: Why the South China Sea Is a Critical Test [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://thediplomat.com/2016/12/the-asean-crisis-part-1-why-the-south-china-sea-is-a-critical-test/> (date accessed: 05.08.2023).

to resolve these disputes, it risks losing its reputation as a competent regional organization and a dependable upholder of its members' safety and prosperity.⁵³⁸

Tong notes that at the state level of the South China Sea disputes, each ASEAN member prioritizes their national interests and hesitates to relinquish sovereignty to ASEAN's decision-making mechanism.⁵³⁹ She mentions that due to past disputes between ASEAN member states, differences in political, economic, and social circumstances, and varying levels of collaboration with China, ASEAN nations are hesitant to come to a consensus on their stance towards China.⁵⁴⁰ Also, she says it is a region where each country has its interests, noting that the unclear sovereignty status of the Paracel and Spratly Islands has persisted since the conflict arose several decades ago.⁵⁴¹ At the international level, Tong observes that major global powers, especially China with its economic and political influence and the US with its military support, impact the cohesiveness of ASEAN.⁵⁴²

Also, the Rohingya refugee crisis significantly challenges ASEAN's cohesion. Ha and Htut say that the Rohingya crisis has evolved and has significant security implications for the entire region and the unity and credibility of ASEAN, pointing out that ASEAN cannot afford to isolate itself from this ongoing crisis by relying on non-interference as a shield.⁵⁴³ According to Kurlantzick, the unity of ASEAN on the matter is impeded because the organization requires a consensus to act, and other authoritarian governments in ASEAN oppose a strong reaction, fearing future consequences for their

⁵³⁸ *Tong L.* The ASEAN Crisis, Part 1: Why the South China Sea Is a Critical Test [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://thediplomat.com/2016/12/the-asean-crisis-part-1-why-the-south-china-sea-is-a-critical-test/> (date accessed: 05.08.2023).

⁵³⁹ *Tong L.* The ASEAN Crisis, Part 2: Why Can't ASEAN Agree on the South China Sea? [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://thediplomat.com/2016/12/the-asean-crisis-part-2-why-cant-asean-agree-on-the-south-china-sea/> (date accessed: 08.05.2023).

⁵⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴² *Ibid.*

⁵⁴³ *Ha H. T., Htut Y.* Rakhine Crisis Challenges ASEAN's Non-Interference Principle [Electronic resource]. URL: https://www.iseas.edu.sg/images/pdf/ISEAS_Perspective_2016_70.pdf (date accessed: 19.07.2023). P. 7.

regimes.⁵⁴⁴ Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos are hesitant for ASEAN to take more decisive action on Myanmar because, just like the latter, their regimes came into power through military means. While Malaysia and Indonesia have expressed a stronger stand on the matter, domestic politics has taken Malaysia's priorities, while Indonesia cannot act without ASEAN consensus. Further, Brunei, Singapore, the Philippines, and Vietnam have taken a notably muted stand, seeing the Rohingya issue as none of their concern while giving lip service to ASEAN's statements.

Furthermore, ASEAN might require a fresh narrative to mold global perceptions of the organization in a manner that is better suited to an evolving multipolar world marked by intense competition among major powers. Pongsudhirak notes that in the 1990s and 2000s, ASEAN emphasized economic integration through a single market and cross-border connectivity through hard and soft infrastructure, from roads and railways to tourism and people-to-people contacts.⁵⁴⁵ However, he says that the narrative has lost its luster as the geopolitical setting has changed, with the organization's success requiring relative peace and a rough balance between major powers.⁵⁴⁶ Li emphasizes that ASEAN benefits from positive competition among China, the US, and Japan for trade, investment, and educational opportunities, welcoming open competition between the big powers for peace and progress.⁵⁴⁷ He stresses that ASEAN aims to avoid zero-sum rivalry that would create tension, mistrust, and division, pulling the region apart.⁵⁴⁸

⁵⁴⁴ *Kurlantzick J.* ASEAN's Complete Failure on Myanmar: A Short Overview [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.cfr.org/blog/aseans-complete-failure-myanmar-short-overview> (date accessed: 17.08.2023).

⁵⁴⁵ *Pongsudhirak T.* The End of ASEAN as We Know It [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/asean-needs-realignment-for-new-geopolitical-realities-by-thitinan-pongsudhirak-2022-10> (date accessed: 29.07.2023).

⁵⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴⁷ *Li M.* ASEAN's responses to AUKUS: implications for strategic realignments in the Indo-Pacific // *China International Strategy Review*. 2022. Vol. 4. № 2 P. 277.

⁵⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

But ASEAN has yet to forward its geostrategic narrative save for repeatedly emphasizing its centrality in an increasingly volatile region regardless of whatever geostrategic concept external powers use to frame Southeast Asia, resulting in a reactive rather than proactive stance in shaping regional perceptions. In line with that, Rudd notes that ASEAN's strategic response to external challenges in the past was to safeguard its internal unity and the consistent assertion of ASEAN centrality, shaping intra-regional affairs in Southeast Asia and ASEAN's broader engagements.⁵⁴⁹ An excellent example of this reactive stance is the 2019 ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, which stresses the organization's centrality in a region framed by the US Free and Open Indo-Pacific geopolitical concept. Acharya notes that the document is a statement of norms and aspirations, not action, noting that the US Free and Open Indo-Pacific geopolitical concept pressures ASEAN's autonomy, identity, and capacity for independent action.⁵⁵⁰ Also, Saha mentions that the document does not mention the strategic challenges that may eventually pressure ASEAN to create its Indo-Pacific outlook, and it does not provide some ways for ASEAN to navigate these challenges.⁵⁵¹

The SCO and ASEAN are important groups that could impact Asia's geopolitical and economic landscape. However, they have yet to achieve many tangible accomplishments. Critics of the SCO highlight several issues, including the organization's insufficient political determination and internal unity, institutional fragility leading to substantial disparities between announced initiatives and their actual

⁵⁴⁹ *Rudd K.* The United States, China, And Southeast Asia: Can ASEAN Find a New Strategic Equilibrium? [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://asiasociety.org/policy-institute/united-states-china-and-southeast-asia-can-asean-find-new-strategic-equilibrium> (date accessed: 21.08.2023).

⁵⁵⁰ *Strangio S.* Amitav Acharya on ASEAN and Its Discontents [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://thediplomat.com/2021/09/amitav-acharya-on-asean-and-its-discontents/> (date accessed: 02.08.2023).

⁵⁵¹ *Saha P.* ASEAN's Indo-Pacific outlook: An analysis [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/aseans-indo-pacific-outlook-an-analysis-52542/> (date accessed: 03.07.2023).

execution, limited financial resources, and the absence of diversity in the foreign policies of its member states.⁵⁵²

MacFarlane observes that the SCO's rationale is similar to other Central Asian regional organizations, such as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), and Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), which creates overlap and reduces the effectiveness of each organization, leading their members to search for other alternatives.⁵⁵³ He mentions that central SCO members China and Russia have weak commitment to multilateralism, as both prefer bilateral negotiations over multilateral forums where they may be constrained, and smaller SCO members are relatively weak.⁵⁵⁴

ASEAN has been criticized for not acting on territorial disputes and regional security challenges despite existing for a long time and emphasizing unity. The organization has been scrutinized for its inefficiencies and inability to turn diplomatic dialogue into concrete results. Putra et al. note that even the establishment of the APSC is questioned for its failure to organize a fully rules-based community of shared values and norms where all members contribute to maintaining a secure regional security environment.⁵⁵⁵ Roberts argues that competing territorial claims over the South China Sea's significant oil and gas reserves hinder the establishment of an ASEAN Security Community, as ASEAN and China have disagreed on a Code of Conduct for the disputed body of water.⁵⁵⁶ However, he notes that despite the high stakes involved in

⁵⁵² The Shanghai Cooperation Organization [Electronic resource]. URL: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2015/564368/EPRS_BRI\(2015\)564368_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2015/564368/EPRS_BRI(2015)564368_EN.pdf) (date accessed: 04.07.2023). P. 9.

⁵⁵³ MacFarlane N. Ambition versus Achievement [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.zois-berlin.de/en/publications/zois-spotlight/archiv-2017/ambition-versus-achievement> (date accessed: 09.08.2023).

⁵⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁵ Putra B., Darwis D., Burhanuddin B. ASEAN Political-Security Community: Challenges of establishing regional security in the Southeast Asia // Journal of International Studies. 2019. Vol. 12. № 1. URL: https://www.jois.eu/files/2_601_Putra%20et%20al.pdf P. 46.

⁵⁵⁶ Roberts C. ASEAN's Security Community Project: Challenges and Opportunities in the Pursuit of Comprehensive Integration [Electronic resource]. URL:

the disputes, the fact that there hasn't been a significant clash between rival claimant states since the 1988 Johnson Reef Skirmish is an achievement.⁵⁵⁷

The Myanmar civil war is also a regional security issue that exposes the underlying weakness of ASEAN. Bland notes ASEAN's divided stance on Myanmar, mentioning that while the organization has disinvited Myanmar's junta from regional summits, it has not disbarred Myanmar from the organization.⁵⁵⁸ He also notes that ASEAN is split along maintaining its credibility in the face of Myanmar's junta's intransigence and the need to uphold its non-intervention norm.⁵⁵⁹ He notes that ASEAN member countries are divided in their efforts to call for the release of political prisoners, with some state regimes opposing the approach due to the fear of setting a precedent.⁵⁶⁰ Despite that, Bland says ASEAN's response to the Myanmar civil war appears contradictory in delivering a diplomatic rebuke to the Myanmar junta but implicitly offering support for the opposition without taking a substantive stand on whether to suspend Myanmar from ASEAN or stop further cooperation.⁵⁶¹

The SCO and the ASEAN significantly shape Asia's geopolitical landscape. However, both organizations face unique obstacles when promoting strong regional security cooperation. Overlapping institutional roles, intricate dynamics between key members China and Russia, and a tendency towards cautious multilateral engagement hamper the SCO's effectiveness. Despite its emphasis on unity and consensus, ASEAN frequently encounters criticism for its careful stance towards critical matters such as the

<https://unsworks.unsw.edu.au/server/api/core/bitstreams/e9a2932b-e26f-440a-a53b-c2396460a061/content> (date accessed: 15.08.2023). P. 266.

⁵⁵⁷ Roberts C. ASEAN's Security Community Project: Challenges and Opportunities in the Pursuit of Comprehensive Integration [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://unsworks.unsw.edu.au/server/api/core/bitstreams/e9a2932b-e26f-440a-a53b-c2396460a061/content> (date accessed: 15.08.2023). P. 275.

⁵⁵⁸ Bland B. ASEAN muddles through on Myanmar [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/asean-muddles-through-myanmar> (date accessed: 07.07.2023).

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁶¹ Ibid.

South China Sea territorial disputes and the Myanmar crisis. This highlights a disparity between its diplomatic discussions and tangible security outcomes. The Greater Eurasia concept, which holds a significant position within the policy of the SCO, exhibits grandiose aspirations. However, it is plagued by conceptual ambiguity and an absence of a coherent and cohesive approach towards fostering regional security cooperation. The perception of this program frequently leans towards being viewed as a political response to Western dominance rather than a comprehensive geopolitical plan. On the other hand, ASEAN requires a revitalized strategic narrative, particularly in light of the swiftly evolving global landscape characterized by multipolarity. The SCO and ASEAN encounter challenges in converting their regional importance into coherent and effective measures, substantially hampers their ability to influence Asia's wider geopolitical and economic landscape. These obstacles arise from both internal and foreign factors. Notably, Gerstl points out that crucial SCO member China's rise causes uncertainty as it is unclear what China's long-term strategic intentions are, which may cause reluctance among ASEAN members to pursue cooperation with the SCO.⁵⁶²

The heterogeneity of political and economic systems among SCO and ASEAN members poses considerable difficulties in aligning policies and strategies for regional security cooperation. However, these disparities do not wholly impede the execution of collaborative efforts to combat transnational threats. The presence of diverse perspectives and capacities enhances conversation and cooperation. However, it may present difficulties in aligning national interests and legal frameworks. Both organizations have exhibited an exceptional aptitude for managing these disparities by employing adaptable structures and decision-making procedures based on agreement, which upholds each member's autonomy and domestic policies. Both organizations effectively launched and implemented numerous collaborative endeavors to address transnational challenges, including terrorism, cybercrime, and drug trafficking,

⁵⁶² Gerstl A., *Ibid.* P.120.

demonstrating the potential for overcoming these disparities. Further, Xu and Rogers emphasize that despite the SCO's broadening mandate and shifting interests of critical members China and Russia, security cooperation is still its primary focus.⁵⁶³ In line with that, the ASEAN Plan of Action to Combat Transnational Crime and the SCO's RATS demonstrate the organizations' dedication to overcoming their internal differences and maintaining focus to tackle shared security issues. These projects highlight the significance of common objectives and reciprocal advantages in promoting collaboration, especially among nations with divergent political and economic systems. Moreover, the practical strategy of prioritizing achievable and easily attainable goals, such as exchanging information, enhancing capabilities, and conducting collaborative exercises, has enabled both businesses to achieve concrete advancements without requiring a total alignment of their internal policies and strategies. SCO and ASEAN member nations engage in ongoing conversations, workshops, and forums to foster mutual comprehension of their respective systems and identify areas of shared agreement. Consequently, the varied political and economic situations of SCO and ASEAN members present difficulties for regional security cooperation. However, these organizations have been compelled to employ inventive, all-encompassing, and adaptable collaboration methods. As a result, they have positively contributed to the regional security framework and the successful execution of joint efforts against transnational dangers.

The differing levels of dedication and capability among SCO and ASEAN members to tackle non-traditional security challenges, such as cybersecurity and climate change, pose a considerable obstacle to establishing a coherent and harmonized regional security framework. Nevertheless, these constraints do not entirely hinder progress; they require and promote a more intricate and diverse approach to regional collaboration. The variation in levels of commitment and capabilities among member

⁵⁶³ Xu X., Rogers R. A. China's changing expectations of the SCO between 2001 and 2019 // PLOS ONE. 2023. Vol. 18. № 3. P. 2.

states highlights the significance of having flexible and adaptable frameworks that can accommodate different national goals and resources. Both the SCO and the ASEAN have acknowledged the crucial importance of regional security threats and have made significant progress in tackling these concerns through cooperative endeavors that capitalize on the capabilities of their member countries. These activities recognize that a uniform approach is impractical in addressing intricate, diverse problems beyond national boundaries. Furthermore, implementing coordinated strategies and creating dedicated entities or task forces inside these organizations enable focused interventions while enhancing member states' capabilities through technical support, exchanging expertise, and disseminating exemplary approaches. This approach improves the region's capacity to handle non-traditional security concerns and promotes the gradual alignment of policies and programs, leading to a more integrated regional security framework. Hence, the variations in dedication and capability among member states of the SCO and ASEAN present obstacles to establishing a comprehensive and unified security framework. However, these differences also stimulate creativity and adaptability in regional collaboration, gradually facilitating more interconnected and efficient approaches to shared security challenges. Also, Caballero-Anthony notes that the transnational nature of the threats SCO and ASEAN face means that domestic measures can no longer address them, making regional cooperation all the more critical.⁵⁶⁴

Despite the challenges posed by geopolitical rivalries and external influences, the SCO and ASEAN have demonstrated their resilience and ability to cooperate in achieving regional security and peace. They have established multiple platforms and projects for communication, trust-building, and cooperative security measures. They have successfully reduced the effects of external forces through international diplomacy

⁵⁶⁴ Caballero-Anthony M. *Non-Traditional Security Challenges, Regional Governance, and the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC)*. Singapore: Center for Non-Traditional Security Studies, 2010. P.2.

and combined negotiating strength. The organizations also uphold principles of mutual respect, non-interference, and consensus-building, which enable them to pursue shared security objectives beyond rivalries among individual member states and the influence of external forces. The SCO and ASEAN work towards a more secure and stable regional environment through joint exercises, information-sharing systems, and cooperating initiatives.

3.3. Multilateral and Practical Approaches for Regional Security Cooperation Between the SCO and ASEAN

Efficient and successful diplomacy is essential for promoting security cooperation between the SCO and ASEAN. This approach advocates for a novel perspective on global affairs that prioritizes the existence of several centers of power and refrains from intervening in the internal affairs of other nations. Institutional mechanisms EAS, ARF, the ADMM, and the ADMM+ are crucial for promoting tangible collaboration and establishing a unified security framework. With its broad membership, the EAS and ARF, which includes non-ASEAN and SCO members, has already established a reputation in preventive diplomacy, facilitating understanding of security perceptions and confidence-building measures.

The ARF promotes open discussions on regional security. Hassan notes that such is possible because of the ARF's degree of inclusivity and accommodation of external players, which is unheard of in any other regional grouping.⁵⁶⁵ He observes that the ARF embraces diverse political beliefs without exclusion, utilizing a three-step approach of confidence-building measures, preventive diplomacy, and dispute resolution to achieve inclusivity despite some participants holding opposing views

⁵⁶⁵ *Hassan M.J.* The ASEAN Regional Forum: Challenges and Prospects [Electronic resource]. URL: https://pacforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/issuesinsights_Vol21WP8.pdf (date accessed: 12.08.2023). P. 1.

toward specific political systems.⁵⁶⁶ Given that, Liu notes that the ARF may be a testing ground for cooperative security between the SCO and ASEAN, with a common feature of both organizations being the promotion of mutual trust through equal dialogue and seeking security through multilateral cooperation.⁵⁶⁷

The ADMM and ADMM+ present opportunities as institutional instruments to inspire defense collaboration, initiate joint efforts, and reinforce maritime security, counter-terrorism, and humanitarian assistance between the SCO and ASEAN.

ASEAN-SCO cooperation marks a significant shift in international relations, moving away from unilateralism and power politics towards a more collaborative security model. Institutional mechanisms such as the EAS, ARF, ADMM, and ADMM+ highlight a synergy beyond traditional security measures, encompassing economic integration and emphasizing mutual trust and political alignment. Given that, there are numerous opportunities for collaboration in information-sharing, cultural exchange, and education.

Information exchange and collaboration between SCO and ASEAN offer significant opportunities to be meticulously analyzed across several dimensions. Sharing intelligence and knowledge is crucial for a strong cooperative framework between SCO and ASEAN. This collaboration can effectively combat global issues like terrorism, organized crime, and drug trafficking. A coordinated intelligence framework can enhance member states' capacity to predict, identify, and respond to emerging threats. It can also help trace financial networks supporting terrorism and organized crime.

Plater-Zyberk and Monaghan indicate that the RATS is presently collecting data from diverse sources, such as the internet, electronic, and print media, in addition to

⁵⁶⁶ *Hassan M.J.* The ASEAN Regional Forum: Challenges and Prospects [Electronic resource]. URL: https://pacforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/issuesinsights_Vol21WP8.pdf (date accessed: 12.08.2023). P. 1.

⁵⁶⁷ *Liu X.* Strengthening ASEAN-China Cooperation in the ASEAN Regional Forum // ASEAN-China Relations: Realities and Prospects / eds. S.-H. Saw, L. Sheng, K. W. Chin, 2005. P. 42.

intelligence agencies of SCO member states, as they construct an international terrorism intelligence-sharing database.⁵⁶⁸ They note the RATS database encompasses data about terrorist, separatist, and extremist organizations, including details on their organizational structures, operational strategies, leadership, membership, and funding sources, as well as information on the trafficking of illicit narcotics and their constituents.⁵⁶⁹ They say the RATS database contains information on terrorism, extremism, and separatism, including strategies to combat them, laws affecting member nations and organizations, and analysis of terrorist activities and tools used.⁵⁷⁰

Similarly, ASEAN is creating a platform for sharing intelligence called "Our Eyes." This platform will facilitate the exchange of information on terrorism, radicalism, and violent extremism, similar to the SCO's RATS system. Wilujeng and Risman suggest implementing Our Eyes as a strategic mechanism exclusively for ASEAN countries, which would effectively address the deficiencies in exchanging strategic information and monitoring the activities of foreign terrorist fighters, radicalism, violent terrorism, and the connection between crime and terrorism.⁵⁷¹ Further, Suhirwan et al. suggest that using Our Eyes offers various possibilities in combating terrorism, including establishing a regional intelligence-sharing system to share important information and build trust among ASEAN countries.⁵⁷² Moreover, Usuluddin et al. emphasize that a shared perception of threat plays a crucial role in establishing Our Eyes, leading ASEAN members to collaborate in developing a

⁵⁶⁸ *Plater-Zyberk H., Monaghan A.* Strategic Implications of the Evolving Shanghai Cooperation Organization. United States of America: The United States Army War College, 2014. URL: <https://press.armywarcollege.edu/monographs/486/> P. 23.

⁵⁶⁹ *Ibid.* P. 24.

⁵⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷¹ *Wilujeng N.F., Risman H.* Examining ASEAN Our Eyes dealing with regional context in counter-terrorism, radicalism, and violent extremism // *PEOPLE: International Journal of Social Sciences*. 2020. Vol. 6. № 1. Pp. 267-268.

⁵⁷² *Suhirwan et al.* Opportunities and Optimization of the Our Eyes Initiative as the Strategy for Counter-Terrorism in ASEAN // *World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology International Journal of Law and Political Sciences*. 2019. Vol. 13. № 1. P. 2.

transnational communication mechanism.⁵⁷³ They note that the policy convergence in Our Eyes is not the result of ASEAN institutional processes but of the common threat that international terrorism poses to ASEAN member countries.⁵⁷⁴

The SCO's RATS and ASEAN's Our Eyes initiatives demonstrate the potential for collaboration in addressing regional threats. This possible interconnection between SCO and ASEAN could create synergies in research, development, and technology exchange programs, fostering collaboration beyond boundaries and contributing to regional stability and development.

The SCO RATS and ASEAN's Our Eyes initiative mechanisms could facilitate sharing best practices, training programs, and capacity-building. By participating in such collaborations, member states can learn from each other's experiences and adopt best practices suited to their unique needs and contexts. This potential collaboration allows member states to combine resources and expertise for more effective counter-terrorism strategies. It also increases the efficiency and effectiveness of counter-terrorism measures across the region. Integrating functional cooperation and sharing best practices into institutional instruments such as the SCO's RATS and ASEAN's Our Eyes initiative demonstrates a mature, practical approach to counter-terrorism.

Further, Karim notes that the SCO has taken significant steps to institutionalize counter-terrorism cooperation. The organization's scope has broadened to encompass practical aspects such as military collaboration, exchange of intelligence, and enhanced counter-terrorism exercises that fully engage the armed forces of its member states.⁵⁷⁵ He notes that while ASEAN may face challenges in engaging military forces to address

⁵⁷³ *Usuluddin F., Widodo P., Amiruddin B.A.* A Common Threat Analysis of Intergovernmental Policy Convergence in the Framework of Regional Integration: A Case Study of the ASEAN Strategic Partnership "Our Eyes" // *Jurnal Hubungan Internasional*. 2019. Vol. 8. № 2. P. 121.

⁵⁷⁴ *Ibid.* P. 138.

⁵⁷⁵ *Karim M.A.* Should the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Revisit its Core Areas? [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://aei.um.edu.my/should-the-asean-regional-forum-arf-revisit-its-core-areas> (date accessed: 14.07.2023).

terrorism in the Asia-Pacific region, the ARF member-states yearly defense white papers suggest advancements in military transparency.⁵⁷⁶

Using their current institutional structures, both organizations can implement collaborative initiatives to strengthen capabilities and develop a synchronized response system to ensure prompt action in emergencies. This collaboration could build trust and confidence between the two organizations.

The SCO's significant powers, namely China and Russia, have adopted an assertive position that starkly contrasts with ASEAN's principles of inclusivity and neutrality. The inconsistency frequently leads to determining security alignments when ASEAN countries occasionally align with powers that conflict with the goals of SCO, thus generating underlying tensions that could impede collaboration. Moreover, the ongoing geopolitical competition between Russia and China within the SCO undermines its effectiveness as a regional security facilitator. This situation exacerbates the view of the SCO as a weak and ineffective organization, making it even more challenging to foster collaboration with ASEAN.

The SCO stands out because of the significant involvement of China and Russia, which starkly contrasts ASEAN's emphasis on inclusivity and neutrality. Consequently, this often results in divergent security alignments. Furthermore, several ASEAN members prefer other influential global entities, which might occasionally conflict with the interests of SCO members, thereby generating underlying tensions that could impede collaboration. Despite its intended purpose, the SCO has not effectively responded to the Afghanistan crisis, according to Tokbaeva.⁵⁷⁷ Tokbaeva further highlights the detrimental impact of the geopolitical rivalry between Russia and China within the SCO, which has contributed to its perception as an organization that appears

⁵⁷⁶ *Karim M.A.* Should the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Revisit its Core Areas? [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://aei.um.edu.my/should-the-asean-regional-forum-arf-revisit-its-core-areas> (date accessed: 14.07.2023).

⁵⁷⁷ *Tokbaeva D.* Shanghai Cooperation Organization: Paper Tiger or Sleeping Dragon? [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/shanghai-cooperation-organisation-paper-tiger-or-sleeping-dragon> (date accessed: 10.08.2023).

formidable but is ineffective.⁵⁷⁸ Lastly, Bhatia asserts that while the organization emphasizes the importance of combating terrorism, its position seems hypocritical, repeatedly declaring an anti-terrorist stance but failing to take a firm stand on Pakistan's questionable record.⁵⁷⁹ He observes that despite relying on Russia and China for security and economic assistance, Central Asia holds suspicions towards them and is divided on the issue of Ukraine.⁵⁸⁰

For ASEAN, Harding et al. observe that ASEAN countries face a complex relationship with Russia, highlighting Indonesia's proactive stance as a potential "bridge for peace." At the same time, other member states demonstrate varied responses to Russia's actions in Ukraine, coupled with pragmatic economic concerns.⁵⁸¹ They further note the ongoing challenges in negotiating a South China Sea Code of Conduct between ASEAN and China, emphasizing the deep divisions and the Philippines' opposition to China's maritime actions, leading to skepticism about an agreement's feasibility.⁵⁸² Additionally, they point out a gradual improvement in US-China relations, characterized by increased communication and high-level meetings, seen as steps towards détente and conflict prevention, even without immediate diplomatic breakthroughs.⁵⁸³

The dynamics between regional organizations and blocs like the QSD, SCO, Australia, UK, US (AUKUS), and ASEAN can be complex. ASEAN's emphasis on maintaining its centrality, inclusiveness, neutrality, and consensus-driven approach can sometimes contrast with other regional groupings' security alignments and interests.

⁵⁷⁸ *Tokbaeva D.* Shanghai Cooperation Organization: Paper Tiger or Sleeping Dragon? [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/shanghai-cooperation-organisation-paper-tiger-or-sleeping-dragon> (date accessed: 10.08.2023).

⁵⁷⁹ *Bhatia R.* SCO Summit: Same old, some new [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.gatewayhouse.in/sco-summit-same-old-some-new/> (date accessed: 24.08.2023).

⁵⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸¹ *Harding B., Stephenson A., Tower J.* Four Takeaways from the ASEAN Summit [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/07/four-takeaways-asean-summit> (date accessed: 11.06.2023).

⁵⁸² *Ibid.*

⁵⁸³ *Ibid.*

Singh says that ASEAN's centrality, a cornerstone in maintaining regional stability and peace, has been gradually weakened by the emergence of non-ASEAN-centric bodies, particularly the SCO, representing an Asian cooperation effort that potentially sidesteps ASEAN's central role.⁵⁸⁴ He mentions that while ASEAN has crafted a regional architecture allowing it to serve as the hub of activity, growing great power rivalry and efforts like the SCO have called this centrality into question, posing a severe challenge to ASEAN's position in the region.⁵⁸⁵ He says that the waning of ASEAN unity and centrality, exemplified by initiatives such as the SCO that create distance from ASEAN, coupled with internal disunity on critical issues, is a stark reminder that ASEAN must act decisively and efficiently to assert its substantive centrality or face diminishing strategic significance.⁵⁸⁶

In the same vein, Valencia notes that the QSD, consisting of Australia, India, Japan, and the US, seeks to maintain a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" but emphasizes that this may undermine ASEAN's centrality by fortifying a Western-centric order.⁵⁸⁷ He observes that the QSD's multifaceted agenda, combining military and non-traditional security concerns, could evolve into an anti-China defense alignment, further challenging ASEAN's core role in the region.⁵⁸⁸ Valencia also points to the contradictions in the QSD's stance, as it speaks of an inclusive Indo-Pacific while engaging in coercive strategies that exclude China and marginalize ASEAN's influence.⁵⁸⁹ He points out that despite the QSD's vocal support for ASEAN centrality, its moves in the South China Sea and the formation of defense pacts like AUKUS reveal

⁵⁸⁴ *Singh G.* Whither ASEAN centrality? [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/whither-asean-centrality/> (date accessed: 07.08.2023).

⁵⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸⁷ *Valencia M.* To understand Quad's real ambitions, look at what it does, not what it says [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.scmp.com/comment/opinion/article/3223608/understand-quads-real-ambitions-ignore-its-empty-rhetoric-and-look-its-actions-indo-pacific> (date accessed: 03.08.2023).

⁵⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸⁹ *Valencia M.* To understand Quad's real ambitions, look at what it does, not what it says [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.scmp.com/comment/opinion/article/3223608/understand-quads-real-ambitions-ignore-its-empty-rhetoric-and-look-its-actions-indo-pacific> (date accessed: 03.08.2023).

an undermining effect on ASEAN's central position in regional security.⁵⁹⁰ Further, Li observes that one year after the pronouncement of AUKUS, ASEAN has cautiously accepted the tripartite security pact as a new reality shaped by concerns about ASEAN centrality and possible negative impacts on regional stability.⁵⁹¹ He notes the fears among policymakers and analysts that AUKUS may ignite a regional arms race in specific areas, increasing challenges to regional stability, and he points out uncertainties regarding the pact's implementation that cause doubts about its potential balance of power and deterrence effects.⁵⁹² Li also anticipates that more regional powers may gravitate toward AUKUS in various forms of cooperation over time, suggesting that AUKUS could introduce a new and flexible mode of strategic alignment in the Indo-Pacific, warning that amidst escalating US-China strategic rivalry, the Indo-Pacific's strategic landscape may grow even more divisive and competitive.⁵⁹³

Given those points, the complex dynamics between major powers like China and Russia within the SCO and ASEAN's principles of inclusiveness and neutrality create tensions that threaten regional security cooperation. Geopolitical conflicts and the emergence of non-ASEAN-centric organizations further complicate the partnership. Mosyakov highlights that despite the current political tension and visible geopolitical rivalry, there are some chances for small and medium-sized states situated at the forefront of this struggle.⁵⁹⁴

The importance of diplomatic engagement in the security cooperation between the SCO and the ASEAN highlights their dedication to a multipolar world order with several centers of power and their adherence to standards prohibiting intervention in

⁵⁹⁰ *Valencia M.* To understand Quad's real ambitions, look at what it does, not what it says [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.scmp.com/comment/opinion/article/3223608/understand-quads-real-ambitions-ignore-its-empty-rhetoric-and-look-its-actions-indo-pacific> (date accessed: 03.08.2023).

⁵⁹¹ *Li.* Ibid. P. 265.

⁵⁹² Ibid.

⁵⁹³ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁴ *Мосяков Д.В.* Размывание традиционной культуры международных отношений в Индо-Тихоокеанском регионе // Юго-Восточная Азия: актуальные проблемы развития. 2023. Том 1. № 1. С. 18.

each other's affairs. The practical cooperation and establishment of a complete security architecture heavily rely on institutional frameworks like the EAS, ARF, and ADMM in this collaborative effort. The involvement of the ARF is crucial in enabling open and diverse political discussions necessary for forging cooperative security and confidence-building measures. Intelligence cooperation is vital in combating global threats like terrorism and is demonstrated by efforts like the SCO RATS and the ASEAN's "Our Eyes" program. However, it is essential to highlight that the SCO's focus on the influential roles occupied by big powers sharply differs from ASEAN's dedication to inclusiveness and impartiality. This discrepancy can result in divergent security measures and give rise to regional conflicts. Nevertheless, Dadabaev notes that the SCO aims to shift its focus to economic and infrastructure-oriented goals to become more inclusive and regionally focused while protecting smaller members from more prominent attempts to take over its organizational agenda and identity.⁵⁹⁵ The intricacy of this position is amplified by the creation of alliances, such as the QSD and AUKUS, that do not revolve around ASEAN. These alliances threaten ASEAN's central role in regional dynamics and contribute to the difficulty of maintaining united regional security cooperation in a geopolitical climate that is growing increasingly multipolar and competitive.

Establishing direct communication channels and intelligence-sharing networks between the SCO and ASEAN can enhance the efficiency of their joint efforts in tackling transnational security threats. This allows for immediate sharing of important information and knowledge, enabling member countries to react more quickly and unitedly to emerging dangers. This system promotes trust and collaboration, allowing the coordination of strategies and operational tactics across international boundaries. The intricate characteristics of transnational security concerns often surpass national

⁵⁹⁵ *Dadabaev T.* In search of a new identity for SCO [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://eastasiaforum.org/2022/09/20/in-search-of-a-new-identity-for-sco/> (date accessed: 11.01.2024).

borders and legal jurisdictions, necessitating a consolidated response that utilizes the combined resources and skills of the SCO and ASEAN countries. This cooperative setting enhances the ability of participating nations to anticipate and counteract threats, carry out joint inquiries, execute synchronized operations against criminal networks, and disrupt unlawful monetary transactions. The partnership also presents a chance to address the fundamental reasons behind the lack of security, such as financial disparities and political unrest.

The SCO and ASEAN have developed flexible and inclusive collaborative initiatives that address transnational challenges such as terrorism, cybercrime, and drug trafficking by coordinating law enforcement operations, exchanging intelligence, and providing training. Their combined diplomatic approach promotes regional stability and peace by engaging in discussions with external powers and other regional organizations to ensure a comprehensive security strategy. Pham stresses that an influential global network of international, regional, and interagency law enforcement partners is required to combat cross-border security challenges, work together, and disrupt the activities of transnational threat actors.⁵⁹⁶ The SCO and ASEAN's diverse strategic priorities and functional mechanisms stimulate innovation and adaptability in regional security cooperation, ultimately enhancing their collective determination and capability to tackle common security challenges. Their proactive engagement in promoting dialogue and peace negotiations within their regions can potentially decrease significant tensions and foster long-term stability. They serve as intermediaries by providing communication platforms, facilitating conflict resolution, and creating an atmosphere conducive to discussing shared concerns. Including countries with diverse backgrounds gives them an advantage in comprehending the complex nature of conflicts and developing customized strategies.

⁵⁹⁶ *Pham T.* Countering transnational crime demands greater global cooperation [Electronic source]. URL: <https://eastasiaforum.org/2021/11/06/countering-transnational-crime-demands-greater-global-cooperation/> (date accessed: 11.01.2024).

CONCLUSION

The dissertation meticulously examines the origins, historical progression, and institutional structures of SCO and ASEAN, centering on the evolution of their pivotal regional security cooperation policies and mechanisms. It charts the developmental stages of both organizations, beginning with their establishment phases and transitioning through various phases of expansion, consolidation, integration, and maturity, analyzing the strategic shifts and alignments within these periods. It delves into each organization's unique institutional mechanisms to foster regional security cooperation, highlighting their divergent yet complementary strategies. It contrasts their approaches to handling regional security issues, revealing SCO's centralized, action-oriented method versus ASEAN's decentralized, dialogue-based approach. The dissertation provides a thorough chronological and theoretical analysis of SCO and ASEAN's roles in regional security, enriched by detailed insights into their structural and strategic evolutions.

The SCO and ASEAN security policies are reviewed in detail, emphasizing the influence of their respective regions' distinctive geopolitical and security backgrounds. The dissertation explores how these unique contextual factors intricately shape these policies. It details the SCO's emphasis on counterterrorism, separatism, and extremism, reflecting its Central Asian geopolitical concerns. At the same time, ASEAN's security initiatives focus on non-traditional threats, showcasing its approach to handling diverse challenges in Southeast Asia. The dissertation demonstrates how the strategic interests of major powers like China and Russia influence SCO's security policies. In contrast, ASEAN's policies are shaped by its principle of non-interference and consensus-building among its member states. It also explores the interaction between these regional security policies and global security dynamics, indicating how international influences and regional exigencies drive the security agendas of both organizations. It presents a nuanced understanding of how SCO and ASEAN tailor their security

strategies to their geopolitical realities and the implications of these strategies for regional cooperation.

The SCO and ASEAN's approaches to counterterrorism, drug control, and human trafficking are compared in the dissertation by outlining their distinct strategies and allocation of resources. The SCO's robust counterterrorism measures, which include military cooperation and intelligence sharing, are underpinned by the legal frameworks established to combat 'the three evils' of terrorism, separatism, and extremism. In contrast, ASEAN's strategy focuses more on dialogue-based approaches and preventive measures, emphasizing the socio-economic drivers behind these issues and the need for a collaborative regional response. The SCO adopts a stringent law enforcement approach for drug control, whereas ASEAN promotes balanced measures targeting supply and demand, including public education and rehabilitation programs. It also notes that in addressing human trafficking, the SCO prioritizes security-oriented solutions, while ASEAN relies on comprehensive action plans that focus on prevention, law enforcement, and victim support.

The collaborative dynamics of the SCO and ASEAN's regional security collaboration are evaluated in the dissertation, providing a nuanced understanding of their complexities. It identifies the advantage of their strategic geographic positioning, allowing them to address a broad spectrum of regional security concerns effectively. The potential for enhanced cooperation is recognized in aligning their security objectives, particularly in areas like counterterrorism and drug trafficking, where joint efforts could synergize. However, the analysis also points out significant challenges, including the varied political systems and the dominance of major powers within the SCO, which can complicate consensus-building. It underscores the need for both organizations to overcome these hurdles by fostering a more integrated approach to regional security, suggesting that a collaborative future is necessary and achievable despite challenges.

The dissertation examines the security strategies of both SCO and ASEAN regions by outlining their unique methodologies and evaluating the potential for future cooperation in the face of evolving geopolitical conditions and emerging risks. It highlights the SCO's centralized, robust security framework, primarily driven by the geopolitical interests of influential member states like China and Russia. It focuses on direct actions such as military exercises and anti-terrorism operations. In contrast, ASEAN employs a decentralized, flexible strategy that prioritizes dialogue and consensus among diverse member states, addressing various security issues through diplomatic and non-military means. It posits that these differing approaches could complement SCO's strength in addressing challenging security threats and ASEAN's effectiveness in managing softer, non-traditional security challenges. It suggests that evolving geopolitical dynamics and the rise of new security threats, such as cybercrime and regional instability, could catalyze more integrated security efforts between the two, fostering a multifaceted regional partnership.

The dissertation delves into utilizing shared norms by the SCO and ASEAN in their distinctive strategic contexts, highlighting the intricate execution of these norms molded by specific regional factors. It illustrates that the SCO, influenced heavily by the geopolitical interests of China and Russia, applies norms such as non-intervention and regional sovereignty to support its centralized and security-focused agenda. In contrast, ASEAN's application of similar norms involves a more flexible, consensus-driven approach that accommodates the political diversity and softer security concerns of its Southeast Asian member states. The analysis highlights that while both organizations prioritize sovereignty and non-interference, the SCO uses these norms to bolster collective defense and security measures. In contrast, ASEAN leverages them to foster dialogue and cooperation on non-traditional security issues. Understanding these applications is critical for assessing the effectiveness of SCO and ASEAN's regional strategies and their potential for future collaboration in an increasingly complex international landscape.

The dissertation highlights various obstacles in regional security collaboration between the SCO and ASEAN. These difficulties include the variations in political structures, the prevalence of influential states within the SCO, and the differing levels of progress among various ASEAN members. It articulates that these factors can lead to differing priorities and approaches to security, potentially hindering seamless collaboration. Despite these challenges, both organizations can cooperate effectively by focusing on shared concerns like counterterrorism and drug trafficking, where their strategic interests align. It proposes enhancing dialogue mechanisms and joint training programs to build trust and understanding, facilitating a more cohesive approach to common threats. Ultimately, the SCO and ASEAN have great potential for cooperation, with adaptive strategies that respect each organization's unique context while addressing regional security needs collaboratively.

It explores the possibility of practical collaboration between SCO and ASEAN by following their shared principles of non-interference and respect for sovereignty despite the difficulties involved in working together. It suggests that joint efforts in counterterrorism and anti-narcotics operations can serve as effective platforms for collaboration, leveraging the SCO's robust security mechanisms and ASEAN's extensive diplomatic and preventive measures network. The dissertation also proposes sharing intelligence and best practices as a practical step, which respects the autonomy of each member while enhancing collective capabilities. Additionally, it highlights the potential for cooperation in addressing human trafficking, suggesting the development of shared legal frameworks and cooperative enforcement initiatives. By focusing on these specific areas, the dissertation posits that the SCO and ASEAN can build a foundation for broader security cooperation, effectively navigating their strategic and operational differences.

The extensive analysis conducted in this dissertation demonstrates the nuanced and evolving nature of regional security cooperation between the SCO and the ASEAN. Despite numerous challenges, such as geopolitical rivalries and differing organizational

structures, these organizations have established a framework that supports potential collaboration on shared security concerns. Notably, both organizations' strategic use of non-intervention norms suggests a mutual respect for sovereignty and a careful navigation of geopolitical complexities that might otherwise hinder cooperation. Strengthening SCO-ASEAN ties appears feasible and beneficial, promising to enhance regional stability and create more resilient security architectures. Both organizations must continue fostering dialogue and engagement, leveraging their strengths to address the common challenges of terrorism, transnational crime, and political instability in their regions.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACCT – ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism

ACTIP - ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons

ADMM - ASEAN Defense Ministers’ Meeting

ADMM+ - ASEAN Defense Ministers’ Meeting Plus

ADSOM – ASEAN Senior Defense Officials’ Meeting

AEC – ASEAN Economic Community

AHA Center – ASEAN Coordinating Center for Humanitarian Assistance

AHRD – ASEAN Human Rights Declaration

AICHR – ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights

APSC – ASEAN Political-Security Community

ARF – ASEAN Regional Forum

ARF ISM on CTCC – ASEAN Regional Forum International Meeting on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime

ASEAN – Association of Southeast Asian Nations

ASEAN SOMTC - ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime

ASEAN+3 – ASEAN Plus Three

ASEAN-NARCO – ASEAN Narcotics Cooperation Center

AUKUS – Australia, UK, and US

BRI – Belt and Road Initiative

CARICC – Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Center

CIS – Commonwealth of Independent States

CSTO – Collective Security Treaty Organization

CTDC – Counter-Trafficking Data Collective

EAEU – Eurasian Economic Union

EAS – East Asia Summit

FTF – Foreign Terrorist Fighters

GTD – Global Terrorism Database
HADR – Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response
IOM – International Organization for Migration
ISIL – Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
ISIS – Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
MOU – Memorandum of Understanding
NPA – New People’s Army
PFUR – People’s Friendship University of Russia
QSD – Quadrilateral Security Dialogue
RATS – Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure
SCO – Shanghai Cooperation Organization
TIP – Trafficking In Persons
UAV – Unmanned Aerial Vehicles
UNGA – United Nations General Assembly
UNODC – United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNSC – United Nations Security Council
WMD – Weapons of Mass Destruction