



THE GLOBAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANIZATION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COMMUNITY OF HUMAN DESTINY

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ABSTRACT

Assessing the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's (SCO) impact within the framework of a shared human future is crucial not only for the SCO's own success but also for advancing the "Shanghai spirit" to address pressing global issues. The SCO has consistently evolved and its influence on the global stage has progressively expanded. Viewed through the lens of a shared human destiny, the SCO's significance lies in its ability to offer innovative frameworks for reshaping international relations, forging new pathways towards collective growth and prosperity, creating platforms for intercultural dialogue and appreciation, and consolidating key resources to enhance global governance.

KEYWORDS: *Community of Human Destiny, Shanghai Cooperation Organization, The Global Contribution*

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INTRODUCTION

In today's interconnected world, international organizations play a pivotal role in shaping the socio-political and economic landscapes. One such organization that has gained considerable attention over the past few years is the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Founded in 2001 by China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, the SCO's main objectives are regional security, economic cooperation, and cultural exchange among its member countries. However, its role has broadened to encompass wider global challenges.

The concept of a 'Community of Human Destiny' serves as a prism through which the global contribution of the SCO can be understood in a comprehensive manner. Rooted in the idea of collective well-being and shared future, this concept opens the door to broader discussions around global governance, international relations, economic prosperity, and cultural understanding. In this article, we aim to unpack the multifaceted role of the SCO in light of its contributions to building a Community of Human Destiny.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The body of academic literature on the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) has been extensive, yet its exploration within the context of a Community of Human Destiny remains an underexplored area of research. Here, we categorize the literature into four main streams to provide a comprehensive understanding of the SCO's role and its relevance to the global community.

Early research on the SCO primarily centered around its role in maintaining regional security in Central Asia. Fredholm, M. (2005) in "The Shanghai Cooperation Organization and Eurasian Geopolitics," analyses the SCO's geopolitical strategies aimed at counterbalancing Western influence. His work serves as a fundamental foundation for understanding the SCO's original mandate of maintaining security and political stability in the Eurasian region. However, Fredholm does not touch upon the SCO's broader influence in the realm of global security, an aspect that later research has attempted to cover.

An important strand of literature focuses on China's influence within the SCO. Breslin, S. (2007), in "China's New Diplomacy," delves into China's role as a geopolitical player utilizing the SCO as a soft power platform. He argues that China's leading role within the organization has served its interests in projecting a benign form of hegemony, particularly within the Asia-Pacific region. While this provides a detailed understanding of China's objectives and strategies, it leaves room for exploration of the SCO's broader global objectives and their alignment with the concept of a Community of Human Destiny.

The economic aspect of SCO has gained attention in more recent years. In "The Economics of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization" by Chen, X. (2012), the focus is on the organization's efforts to establish a free trade zone and its broader impact on



global economic cooperation. Chen's work emphasizes the economic benefits accrued to member states but stops short of exploring how the SCO's economic initiatives might contribute to a shared prosperity that is fundamental to a Community of Human Destiny.

A less explored but increasingly important line of inquiry focuses on the SCO's role in fostering cultural exchange and civilizational dialogue. Yang, L. (2019) in "Cultural Diplomacy and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization," argues that the SCO has made significant strides in promoting mutual cultural appreciation through organized events and diplomatic initiatives. Yang touches on the humanistic aspect of the SCO but does not elaborate on how it ties into the grander narrative of a Community of Human Destiny.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The growth of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization

The world is now in the midst of the greatest change of the century. On the one hand, the accelerated evolution of this great change has led to a deepening of the interconnectedness and interdependence of all countries in the world, a more balanced balance of international power, a general trend towards peaceful development, and a community of human destiny in which all countries are part of each other. On the other hand, the world is facing outstanding instability and uncertainty, with weak momentum in world economic development, the rise of regional hotspot issues, and the continued spread of non-traditional security threats such as environmental pollution, terrorism, cyber security and major infectious diseases. In the face of a complex and ever-changing world, where does humanity go from here? Cooperation or confrontation, mutual benefit or beggar-thy-neighbour.....Against this backdrop of world history, it is of great value to examine the development and growth of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and the concept of a community of human destiny it embodies.

The SCO has gone through a process of conception, creation and development. On 26 April 1996, the leaders of five countries - China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan - met in Shanghai and signed "the Agreement on Strengthening Confidence in the Military Field in the Border Areas", aimed at resolving historical border issues and strengthening military mutual trust at the border. ¹With the expansion of the five countries' regional cooperation areas and the enhancement of their influence, the five countries' regional cooperation organisation has been upgraded to a higher level, not only with the expansion of regional cooperation members, but also with the improvement of its mechanism and the further expansion of its cooperation areas. On 14 June 2001, Uzbekistan joined the five-nation regional cooperation. On 15 June of the same year, the Heads of State of the six countries signed "The Declaration on the Establishment of the SCO", and the SCO was formally established in Shanghai. Two new member states, India and Pakistan were added to the SCO in 2017, increasing the number of member states from six to eight, and to increase to 9 member countries in 2022. In 2017, "Promoting the building of a community of human destiny" was included in the Astana Declaration of the Heads of State of the SCO. In 2018, the "common idea of building a community of human destiny" was included in the Qingdao Declaration of the Council of Heads of State of the SCO. In 2021, China proposed at the Qingdao Summit that the future development of the SCO should be based on the concepts of innovation, coordination, green, openness and sharing, further enriching the connotation of the "Shanghai Spirit", which has had a profound impact on promoting the building of a community of human destiny. In 2022, at the 22nd Shanghai Cooperation Summit in Marhan, Uzbekistan, a consensus was once again reached on building a SCO community of destiny, which has injected positive energy into promoting the building of a community of human destiny. At present, the SCO has become the world's most extensive and populous comprehensive regional organization, and with its continuous development and expansion, it has also increasingly demonstrated its strong cohesive and appealing power, providing an important platform for practicing the concept of the community of human destiny and injecting strong impetus into the international community's practice of building a new type of international relations with win-win cooperation at its core.

Analysis of the global contribution of the SCO in the context of the Community of Human Destiny

First, it provides a new concept for building a new type of international relations. Since its inception, the SCO has always upheld the "Shanghai spirit" of "mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and consultation, respect for diverse civilizations and the pursuit of common development", resolutely opposed the Cold War mentality, power politics and hegemony, promoted the democratization of international relations and multipolarity, and promoted the establishment of a new type of international relations with win-win cooperation at its core. With the changes of the times, the SCO, keeping pace with the times, has continuously enriched the connotation of the "Shanghai spirit". For example, Chinese leaders have repeatedly stressed the need to build a common destiny for mankind, especially advocating the abandonment of zero-sum games and bloc politics and the joint adherence to genuine multilateralism. In 2022, on the eve of the 22nd summit of the SCO, the Uzbek leader sent a message to show the world the results of the SCO's development over the past year, summarising in particular the SCO's contribution to the transformation of the modern system of international and regional relations, and emphasising the "Samarkand spirit", which symbolises "cooperation, mutual understanding and friendship", and is intended to organically complement the "Shanghai spirit", among other things. The concept of "Shanghai Spirit" is in line with the trend of the times, and has therefore been highly recognized by other member states, and is

¹Yongbiao-Zhu, Yueyan-Wei. Analysis of the stages of development and prospects of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization[J]. Contemporary Asia Pacific, 2017(3):P42.



gaining more and more influence in the world. Guided by this philosophy, the SCO has, after 21 years of perseverance and practice, become a model for building a new type of international relations.

Second, it explores new paths for common development and common prosperity. The important successful experience of the SCO is its “adherence to mutual political trust” and “adherence to mutually beneficial cooperation”. At the 22nd Summit of the SCO, General Secretary Xi Jinping said, “Increasing mutual support” and “a better life for the peoples of the region is a common goal that we are determined to achieve”. Over the years, the SCO organization has been committed to promoting peace and stability as well as development and revitalization, adhering to the principle of mutual consultation, construction and sharing, strengthening the dovetailing of development strategies, and always following the path of mutual benefit and common prosperity. For example, China's “One Belt, One Road” initiative, Russia's “Greater Eurasia Partnership”, and the North-South International Transport Corridor are all fruitful achievements on the road to mutual benefit and prosperity. According to statistics, the SCO economy accounted for 22.5% of global GDP in 2019². Since the outbreak of the epidemic, the SCO member states have united in good faith to help each other, and have taken a series of political, economic and financial measures to gradually restore sustainable economic development, with the fruits of cooperation between the countries benefiting the people. The achievements of the SCO have proved with hard facts the inevitability and feasibility of the path of mutual benefit and common prosperity for all countries, and laid the foundation for the construction of a “development community” and a “community of destiny”.

Thirdly, it has built a new platform for cultural exchange and mutual appreciation of civilizations.

Strengthening humanistic exchanges and mutual appreciation of civilizations is one of the important elements of the SCO, which also lays the foundation of public opinion for the prosperity of the SCO. For more than two decades, the SCO has been expanding its areas of cooperation, from security cooperation to economic cooperation and then to humanistic cooperation. Humanities cooperation has become one of the three pillars underpinning the development of the SCO. In May 2019, at the opening ceremony of the Asian Civilisation Dialogue Conference, Comrade Xi Jinping proposed that “civilisations communicate through diversity, learn from each other through exchange, and develop through mutual appreciation. Civilisations should strengthen exchanges and mutual appreciation among different countries, nationalities and cultures in the world, and consolidate the humanistic foundation for building a community of Asian destiny and a community of human destiny together.” In May 2019, at the opening ceremony of the Asian Civilisation Dialogue Conference, Comrade Xi Jinping proposed that “civilisations communicate through diversity, learn from each other through exchange, and develop through mutual appreciation. Civilisations should strengthen exchanges and mutual appreciation among different countries, nationalities and cultures in the world, and consolidate the humanistic foundation for building a community of Asian destiny and a community of human destiny together.” At this critical moment of transition between the old and new international order, the SCO has always upheld advanced concepts, followed the trend of global development, and used the organization as a platform to build a “community of destiny” that shares the interests of regional stability, security and development, making an important contribution to the maintenance of regional stability and global strategic stability. Among these, humanistic cooperation plays an irreplaceable role. The strengthening of humanities cooperation in the SCO has built a platform for cultural exchanges and mutual appreciation of civilizations, strengthened the SCO's sense of community of destiny, promoted people-to-people contacts, laid the foundation for generations of friendship between countries and peoples, and injected an endogenous impetus for building a community of destiny.

Fourth, it brings together important forces for strengthening global governance.

At present, global governance is facing a major dilemma. Some countries are practicing unilateralism and protectionism, global governance is in serious deficit, and the functioning of global governance mechanisms of the United Nations, the G20 and other organizations are facing serious challenges. In this regard, strengthening global governance is of urgent relevance. The “Shanghai Spirit” of mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation, respect for diverse civilisations and the pursuit of common development advocated by the SCO plays a unique role and influence in enhancing SCO's role in global governance. The SCO has made remarkable progress in more than two decades. In terms of participation in global governance, it has evolved from a pre-expansion focus on internal building to a post-expansion acceleration of outward-looking development, which has strengthened its participation in global governance. Moving from regional cooperation to regional governance, the SCO has become the frontline of global governance, with expanding areas of governance in political, security, economic, cultural, natural, social and military fields. The member states are facing the difficulties and challenges encountered in development together, transcending the cold war mentality and zero-sum game, and truly practicing the concept of common understanding, construction and sharing, and striving to play an important role in regional and even global governance, such as maintaining peace and security in Asia and Europe, joining hands with China, Russia and Central Asian countries to combat epidemics, promoting the stable economic development of regional countries, and actively exploring good solutions to address the problems of climate change, water distribution and poverty alleviation

² Norov(The SCO Secretary General). The economies of SCO member states account for 22.5% of global GDP, with total foreign trade exceeding US\$6.3 trillion[EB/OL]. [2019-07-06]. <http://www.nbd.com.cn/articles/2019-07-06/1351257.html>.



in the region.

CONCLUSION

Terms such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, the “Shanghai spirit”, the community of destiny and global governance are hot topics in the field of political studies. Compared to the SCO’s status and influence in regional development and internationally, academic research on the SCO’s global contribution does not match, is still in its infancy, and still has much room for theoretical upward mobility. Therefore, the academic community still has a heavy responsibility and urgently needs to conduct systematic research on the global contribution of the SCO, both theoretically and practically, to provide intellectual support for the promotion of the SCO’s prosperity and development, and to contribute to the full play of the SCO’s functions.

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