

## **“Kazakhstani” Identity, Eurasian Regionalism and Shanghai Cooperation Organization: Biopolitics of Forced Migration, Modernity and Multilateralism**

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### **Abstract**

This paper examines a case of forced migration and its effects on the formation of national identity and the consolidation of state agencies, industries, and other formal organizations. A composite of several theories, namely “survival migration” and “biopolitical control” will be used to account for the case that features significant social transformation, conflict and even trauma. In the 1940s the population of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic underwent unprecedented migration of evacuees from the European parts of the USSR due to World War II. However in the same period the Soviet government conducted a “forced migration” policy for particular “ethnic groups” deemed politically unreliable in the context of World War II. In the 1950s-1960s, populations located in the European parts of the USSR were officially induced by the Soviet government to contribute to a massive industrialization initiative by relocating to industrializing

regions in the Asian parts of the USSR. At around the same period, population dislocations in the People's Republic of China caused a diaspora of Uighurs moving to the Soviet Union. The life activities of these migrants would be the basis for a new collective "Kazakhstani" identity that continues to the present day. However, this identity is distinct from, and in some cases opposed to, the historic primordial "Kazakh" identity held by the Turko-Mongol ethno-linguistic societies that inhabited Kazakhstan prior to the Soviet migrations. The government of the present-day Kazakhstan recognizes the significance of the Soviet migrations, and modulates the shift of political power towards ethnic Kazakhs. Checking the newly assertive Kazakh nationalist movement and the unresolved Uighur nationalism in Eurasia through regionalist-technocratic means may increase the viability of the more inclusive and socially constructed multicultural "Kazakhstani" and regional "Eurasian" identities and may help resolve the latent ethno-centrism in the SCO regional order.

**Keywords:** *biopolitics of identity, forced migration, Eurasian regionalism, Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Kazakhstan*

**JEL classification:** *F22, F52, F53, F59*

## 1. Introduction

This paper discusses a case of "identity transformation" from the primordial concepts of "ethnic identity" to multi-ethnic and multi-cultural "national identity" and finally to the emerging "regional identity" in the present day. The "Eurasian identity" in its most recent form appears to be the result of what may be generally termed as biopolitical actions of the Eurasian states intended to coordinate the

control, modernization and industrialization of the socio-economic life-systems of populations in the region and by that change the socio-cultural identity that the resident people-groups have held through generations. With its focus on Kazakhstan, the case consists of three episodes inherent to the modernization and industrialization of societies and their identities:

- 1) “Forced migration” or “deportation” of various ethnic groups from Europe and Asia to labour camps in Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic that occurred in 1930s-1940s and its effects on the consolidation of industrial development and associated initiatives of modern multi-ethnic and multi-cultural nation-building in Soviet Kazakhstan, which ultimately had an impact on the formation of “Kazakhstani” identity as opposite to the traditional primordial “Kazakh” identity;
- 2) “Economic migration” of the youth initiated by the youth wing of the Communist Party from all over Soviet Union to increase the “social mobility” of new generation of “Soviet citizens” and socio-economically modernize and industrialize the agriculture, mining and other sectors of the economy in Kazakhstan in 1950s-1960s as part of the “Sovietization” of the modern identity of the 1950s-1970s generation in Kazakhstan;
- 3) Contemporary “multilateralism” efforts led by China and Russia, but inclusive of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, to consolidate energy, transportation and infrastructure systems in the region and harmonize the “Eurasian identity” in the 21st century with the help of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and, most recently, the Silk Road infrastructure initiatives.

The specific “nation-building” project in Kazakhstan and the broader efforts of “region-building” initiatives throughout Eurasia correspond directly to the contemporary multi-cultural multi-ethnic identity of Kazakhstan in its most recent form. There is recognition within Kazakhstan of the contributions to the desirable national/regional conditions from ethnic/national identities such as “Uighur”, “German”, “Korean”, “Chechen”, “Russian”, “Ukrainian” and many others that have been conflictual elsewhere. Currently this socially constructed “Kazakhstani” composite identity is constitutive of the regional multilateral interaction of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization despite the controversies of Uighur ethnopolitics that include the national movement for the establishment of East Turkestan found both in China and Kazakhstan. However, the restoration and popularization of the primordial “Kazakh” ethnic identity and the associated “Kazakh” nationalism-primordialism, as opposed to the more multi-cultural “Kazakhstani” nationalism, can cause other ethnic identities to pursue similar divisive discourses. Thus, the questions related to “ethnic”, “national” and “religious” identities and their politicised rehabilitation and interpretations in post-totalitarian systems, as well as the attempts to answer these questions, can have an impact beyond the relations within the national “state” borders. Moreover, these discourses, and the policy-related decisions based on these, have a potential to intensify the complexity of cross-border issues among communities of people-groups attempting to construct a composite identity based upon historic and projected commonalities. The inability to take the constructive and pluralist route to form a regional identity might hinder the further development of the socio-economic “Eurasian” regional integration and associated initiatives of multilateralism, such as the “peaceful development” of the region through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

## **2. Traumatic Foundations of Transformation**

Forced migration usually occurs during internal conflicts and state persecution, as well as during natural disasters or technological hazards (Hunter, 2005) when people are "forcibly displaced" (Wood, 1994) and are unable to alter the conditions of the displacement process. The reasons for forced migration differ widely, as for example "some flee systematic persecution while others flee life-threatening natural disaster" (Wood, 1994: 607). Of particular importance, however, are the radical cases of "forced deportation" of an entire "ethnic" population in some geographic areas during Soviet history. These deportations were not intended to provide an option of "fleeing"; rather, the population move was entirely coerced by the "disciplining" or "persecuting" state. At the present time, such a massive coerced migration is likely to be categorized as human trafficking or considered as a "heinous violation of human rights" (Feingold, 2005). However, notwithstanding the resistance of the deportees to the enforced relocation of entire populations in different geographic locations of the Soviet Union, Soviet officials initiated and implemented the policy under the legitimising context of the "state of exception" (Agamben, 1998) when all necessary actions were taken under the pretext of "saving the state" from military, economic and political challenges of the time. This case of "Kazakhstani" identity-building during the Soviet period shows how the Soviet industrialization and the associated "survival migration" resulted in the problem of "biopolitics" (Foucault, 2008) of "bare life" (Agamben, 1998). This was due to the state securitization (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde, 1998) of economic sovereignty of the Soviet Union periphery in the context of "development and underdevelopment" discourse (Duffield, 2007; Parfitt, 2009) of modernization. These concepts will be used to account for the case that features significant

socio-economic and cultural transformation with its initial social trauma of “forced migration” during the totalitarian system of population control and Marxist-Leninist (Balaam and Veseth, 2008) structure of planned economy-driven governance in the Soviet Union.

The Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic was one of the few republics of the Soviet Union that underwent a massive industrialization effort of the Soviet centralised economic planning that included “forced migration” of population from different parts of the Soviet Union. “Forced migration” under conditions of modernizing industrialization was of a diverse nature. This included the Stalinist forced move of “political prisoners” to the labour camps of Soviet military industrial “objects” of strategic importance such as mining and metallurgy during 1930s as well as during World War II and early Cold War. The World War II in the European part of the Soviet Union resulted in the “forced evacuation” of the major industries with its professional “population” to the East of the country. Furthermore, the Stalinist context of World War II included the “forced migration” policy of eviction or deportation for particular “ethnic groups” deemed politically unreliable in the War-time “state of exception” (Agamben, 1998), which included diaspora of Germans from the Volga region, Koreans from the Far East, Tatars from Crimea, Chechens from North Caucasus, Meskhetian Turks from Georgia and others that concluded with their enforced settlement in Kazakhstan as well as in other specified locations in Western Siberia and Central Asia. Later, in the 1950s-1960s, there was another wave of “survival migration” of young professionals and graduates of the higher educational institutions located in the European parts of the Soviet Union. These young people were officially induced by the Soviet government and particularly by the Youth League of the Communist Party, Komsomol, to avoid a corrupting “idle lifestyle” of the urban environment but rather contribute to the industrialization initiative by

relocating to remote regions in the Asian parts of the Soviet Union. Thus, from 1930s until 1960s, two generations of people with diverse identities migrated to Kazakhstan and played a crucial economic role in the period of industrialization and overall socio-cultural modernization drive of the Soviet Union that significantly affected the lives of the local population.

The life activities of these migrants would be the basis for a new collective “Kazakhstani” identity that continues to the present day. However, this identity is distinct from, and in some cases opposed to, the historic “Kazakh” identity held by the nomadic Turkic ethno-linguistic societies that inhabited Kazakhstan prior to the Soviet migrations. Although the government of the present-day Kazakhstan officially recognizes the significance of the Soviet migrations, the re-emergence and rehabilitation of the “Kazakh identity” lost under the Soviet totalitarian system of Russification, post-Soviet nationalism and shift of political power towards “titular nationality” of the newly independent country led to the preference of the Kazakh language and Kazakh ethnics in political, economic and social interactions. This has become a political response of cultural rehabilitation to the totalitarian Russification policies of the Soviet period that made Kazakhstan at the time of independence “the only successor state whose titular group was an ethnic minority (39.7%)” (Schatz, 2000: 489) and with the majority of its population speaking Russian as a native language. Still, if unchecked, the newly revived and assertive Kazakh nationalist movement may reduce the viability of the socially constructed multicultural “Kazakhstani” identity and may cause other disruptive circumstances and associated trauma for the multicultural diaspora within the state borders and beyond, particularly in the increased multilateral interaction with neighbouring states and societies of the Eurasian region.

### 3. Biopolitics of Development and Population Control

The notion of “forced migration” as presented here implies assessment conditions under which populations survive during adverse circumstances. These exceptional existential circumstances of “bare life” (Agamben, 1998) induce social groups to either cooperate, mutually assist for the purpose of collective survival or choose to live in the Hobbesian “state of nature” of continuous fear and threat of death, of “every man against every man”. The early geopolitics/biopolitics school, which worked under the assumptions of *Lebensphilosophie* or the philosophy of life, considered that under the circumstances of “ruthlessness of the life struggle for existences and growth ... one can detect within the group a powerful cooperation for the purposes of existence ...” (Kjellén, 1920: 93-94, in Lemke *et al.*, 2011: 10). The critical discussion of life processes in the studies of *Lebensphilosophie* is conducted under the contextual assumptions of early 20th-century instrumental modernization in Europe, which are identified generally as “processes perceived as adversarial to life, such as processes of rationalization, civilization, mechanization, and technologization” (Lemke *et al.*, 2011: 9). Thus, Kjellén’s concept of biopolitics was closely linked to the organicist idea of a “state as a form of life” rather than a state as “a legal construction whose unity and coherence is the result of acts of free will” (*ibid.*: 10), which was the prevalent “old institutionalist” discussion of the politics at the time. Furthermore, the focus on the biological concept of life system and its associated processes “eludes every rational foundation or democratic decision-making” of the legal and socio-political sphere of governance (*ibid.*: 10-11). The assumption is based on normative bonds of “living whole” that interconnect both society and government and that include everything “genuine and the eternal, the healthy, and the valuable” (*ibid.*: 10).



Furthermore, the concept of biopolitics complimentary to geopolitics or the *Lebensraum* (living space) was considered "the basis for a natural science of the state" (*ibid.*: 12-13). Unfortunately, the notion of biopolitics and geopolitics provided "the ideological foundation for the imperialist expansion of the Nazi Reich", which was conceptualised and operationalised in the foreign policy by Friedrich Ratzel and other academics of the geopolitics school of the period. As a result, geopolitical analysis now includes states and territories and their interaction that is explained through the specific geographic context of space and position.

Biopolitics, on the other hand, evaluates the "livelihood systems and life processes" that support the aggregate level of population in the states, territories or regions of the World (Duffield, 2007: 5). The "livelihood systems" include the most essential components of human life support, such as food, environment, health, hygiene and sanitation and overall safety of the population, which are at the core of biopolitics. The control of these biopolitical variables of population welfare by the government or other actors necessitates the administration of "underdeveloped and developed" categories of modern life at the aggregate level of population, which determines the overall issues of nation-building and sovereignty (*ibid.*).

Therefore, the discussion of "forced migration" in the Soviet case of industrialization and modernization of 1930s-1960s include both the geographic aspects of industrial expansion to otherwise "underdeveloped" remote locations, as well as biopolitical aspects of population control for the purpose of "state survival" in the exceptional circumstances of World War II and post-war reconstruction. Similarly, contemporary regional geographic expansion of the China's "peaceful development" initiatives to the "undeveloped" peripheries of Eurasia with energy, transportation and infrastructure projects will involve in the

future the biopolitical aspects of administration and development of the live-systems of diverse societies in Eurasia. Thus, the notions of biopolitics and geopolitics have been operationalised into the “technology of governmentality” to achieve particular goals of Soviet industrialization drive and overall modernization campaign in the Asiatic periphery of the country. And current developments of the multilateralism of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and Silk Road infrastructure initiatives that will increase the economic integration and interaction of populations of diverse societies in the Eurasian region would most probably need to consider regional mechanisms in the future for monitoring and assessing the socio-cultural mobility and transformation of identities in the future generation.

This notion of biopolitics as a “technology of governmentality” had come from the 1978-1979 lectures of Michel Foucault with the concerns in liberal democratic system of public welfare as well as peace and order. In this modern system of public management of the population the “political economy introduced a formidable wedge into the presumption of the unlimited police state” that is never sufficiently aware that it may risk “governing too much”. However to identify “how to govern just enough” is also an enormous challenge (Foucault, 2008: 17). Foucault emphasises that in the contemporary state the biopolitical “equitable justice” had substituted the “prince’s wisdom” of the sovereign power. Biopolitics explains power as a “technology of governmentality” historically reconceptualised (1) from the seventeenth-century “sovereign power” that “allows and disallows life” to (2) more localised “disciplinary power” limited to the public institutions of medicine, education, military and jails to (3) all-encompassing “biopower” that regulates life on the collective level of population (Foucault, 2008). Hence the biopolitics with its three types of power also represents the change from the classical age to the modern age. However,

contemporary biopolitical "biopower" is differently expressed through allowing, improving and "managing life rather than threatening to take it away" as in the sovereign and disciplinary notions of power (Taylor, 2011: 41-54). Thus, modernizing initiatives of the state or multilateral organization to improve the living conditions of the population in the region through "disciplinary" measures of police and military deterrence or through "biopower" measures of improvements in infrastructure and technology of "managing life" has biopolitical consequence on the earlier identities of population.

Furthermore, contemporary discussion of the "security-development" discourse (Duffield, 2007), particularly as part of the recent biopolitics of "human security" initiatives (Roberts, 2010), which involves interaction between population of the wealthy and more vulnerable poor in developing countries can be biopolitically hierarchical and problematic. This is because population in some geographic regions, particularly in Asia, collectively had a limited comprehensive knowledge of the underlying reasons founded in "statist security" that constructed the circumstances for industrial expansion and forced population movement in their local territories and neighbouring regions in comparison with the wealthier states and regions, for example in Europe and North America. The regulatory biopolitics of state and "security-development" interaction between states as well as territories had "emerged out of the statistical, demographic, economic and epidemiological knowledge through which life was being discovered in its modern societal form, that is, as a series of interconnected natural, social and economic processes operating in and through population" (Duffield, 2007: 5-6). Thus, the understanding of the cases of biopolitically hierarchical migration and socio-economic integration through generations is essential to decrease the gap in the limited reflexivity in the non-Western knowledge on "national identity" as well

as population security and social development, in particular geographic spaces and times in Asia.

#### **4. Biopolitics of Ethnic Migration: “Crime and Punishment” of Stalinist Generation**

The questions of “race” and “ethnicity”, as well as “nationality” do not have simple straightforward definitions. On the contrary “they are not stable definitions of some static social reality, rather they are central concepts of identity that constantly change and adapt to social contexts”. Thus, reflexively about “recognising and deconstructing” our understanding of “socialised values” attached to the notions of nationality, ethnicity and race is essential as these concepts are neither “fixed” or “eternal” nor “positivist’s social fact, but products of history” (Spencer, 2006: 1).

However, the cases of “Kazakh” ethnicity in particular and to a lesser extent “Kazakhstani” nationality are not uncontested concepts, because these concepts feature the “attachments of kinship and heritage” as well as “harder primordial boundary” that include specific family histories, traditional customs and beliefs, which “have a deeper psychological effect on members of the group” (Spencer, 2006:77). The cause of “paramountcy of the titular nationality” are based on arguably consistent traditional family-oriented structure of Kazakh society that was persistent through generations, “which the Soviet authorities were never able to eradicate” (Kolsto, 1998) in spite of the Civil War of 1917-1921, mass starvation and suppression of the “livestock economy” of nomads due to the collectivization policies in the early 1930s (Pianciola, 2001). The pre-Soviet nomadic identity of “Kazakh” nationality included the division into three “Zhuz” or “tribal confederations”, the components of which are often controversially traced historically as far

as the Turko-Mongol identities of the Chengiz Khan Empire. Moreover, each of them is subdivided into "Ru" or "clan", some of which are sometimes traced to the medieval Turkic identities or even ancient periods, where these people-groups belonged to the periphery of Persian or Hun empires. These types of pre-Soviet ethno-tribal identities are "collectively lineage identities" that are based on "genealogical kinship" (Schatz, 2000: 489-490). However this line of thought on identities follows the controversy of primordialism, which is in its most radical form assumes that "cultures are fixed and unchanging – almost genetic blueprints". These primordialist controversial ideas can usually be used by "ideologically employed" nationalist movements that "fit with the dominant prejudices of the public" (Spencer, 2006: 77).

In the early days of independence from the Soviet Union, President Nursultan Nazarbayev made a considerable effort to focus however on the avoidance of any confrontation and conflict based on ethnicity, nationality, religion or race; the official position of the government was that Kazakhstan is a multinational secular society and at the same time a historic homeland of "Kazakhs". Thus, there was a formal attempt to make a division between an "ethnic identity" and a "civic nation" of Kazakhstan (Kolsto, 1998: 56). However, the multinational aspect of the society was not only the product of Russian colonization of "Kazakh" homeland in 1800s, but more the result of the Stalinist forced migration of "ethnic" deportation and re-settlement through 1930s and 1940s, and the Khrushchev period of forced "youth" migration for the industrialization-related activities in 1950s and 1960s.

When the Soviet Union collapsed, Kazakhstan was one of the few successor states that had officially registered a titular ethnic group as a minority – the "Kazakhs" at 39.7% of total population, while the number of officially registered Russians were 33%, Germans and Ukrainians 4% each, and Belarusians, Uzbeks and Crimean Tatars 2% each (Schatz,

2000: 289). These statistics would come from the official registration system of “nationalities” that was written or stamped in the passport of the Soviet and now Kazakhstani citizens. When the passport is received by a citizen of Kazakhstan for the first time, the citizen has a choice to adopt either the mother’s or father’s officially registered “nationality”. Recently Kazakhstan’s passport system included an option of “not showing” the assigned and registered “nationality” in the passport face page, however the records still contain the information on a person’s “nationality” as well as parents’ “nationalities” that contemporary Kazakhstani identity presumes. Thus, Kazakhstan’s government consciously avoided the biopolitical “policies of affirmative action” that were popular in some countries of Asia. However, the state could not completely avoid the rising ideologies of nationalism and its associated trends among the titular “Kazakh” nation, where the assertiveness was justified by the historic Soviet “totalitarian repression” combined with earlier Russian “colonial oppression”. Interestingly, the communicative process in the government and media had used a “national-cultural revival” discourse rather than assertive anti-Russian or anti-Soviet nationalism. The discourse of “national-cultural revival” was also open for other “ethnic groups” and “nations” of the country with “observance of human rights” and “development of other nationalities on a basis of equal rights” (Schatz, 2000). Thus, the national-cultural revival of Uighur, Korean, German, Russian or Chechen identities were as important as the revival of Kazakh identity. The contemporary institutionalized illustration of this is the existence of schools, theatres, restaurants and cultural centres of ethnic groups in Kazakhstan

However, the openness to the revival of other cultures and “ethnic groups” was not only due to the importance of “human rights” or “equal rights” discourse in the contemporary society, but also due to the traumatic history experienced by the other “ethnic groups” who arrived

in Kazakhstan because of the “forced migration” policies in 1930s till 1950s. In other words, the previous generations of current “non-Kazakhs”, who were born and grew up as citizens of the present-day Kazakhstan, in most cases did not have any choice of time for the “eviction” and “movement” or geographic location where the totalitarian state would “deport” them for military, political or economic reasons. This change co-occurred with what appears to have been a continuous rural-to-urban migration throughout Kazakhstan. Although over 90% of the population resided in rural areas in 1926, the rate of urban population growth appears to correspond to the rate of decline in the rural population. By 1970, the population of Kazakhstan was divided almost evenly between urban and rural areas. By 1979 the present condition of a mostly urban population was clearly set. However, another co-occurrence was the shifting ethnic profile of the population within Kazakhstan. Although comprising slightly over 60% of the population in 1926, ethnic Kazakhs comprised only slightly over 30% of the population in 1959. Ethnic Russians however in the same year comprised almost 50% of the population, while ethnic Ukrainians and Germans together comprised close to 15% and other ethnic groups such as Tatars, Uzbeks, Uighurs, Koreans and others comprised close to 5%. Only in 1999 did ethnic Kazakhs comprise a perceivable majority, slightly under 60% (Tolesh, 2012: 5-7). All in all, these changes that reflect the urban/rural and inter-ethnic dynamics in the recent past of Kazakhstan occurred from the repressive Stalinist period of 1930s, which coincided with the major industrialization drive and overall modernization campaign in the context of the Soviet planned and strictly controlled economic system.

From 1930s until 1950s during the Stalinist period of governance, there were “over three million Soviet citizens [who] were subjected to ethnic-based resettlement”. However, the ethnic-based forced migration

was not the only formal “reason” for deportation. The “population politics” of the Soviet Union had at least three categories of people-groups that were affected by the “forced migration” policies: (1) nationalities that have nation-states or large settlements or communities outside of the Soviet Union, for example Germans, Poles, Greeks, Meskhetian Turks; (2) nationalities that “resisted sovietisation”, that is socio-economic modernization and reform in “traditional cultures” and “ways of life”, for example Chechens, Ingush and other North Caucasian people-groups; (3) nationalities that might have lived in different “state configurations” with historic instability of borderlands, particularly before and during World War I and World War II, for example Ukrainians, Estonians, Lithuanians, Latvians in the European part as well as Koreans in the Far East (Werth, 2006). Thus, the geographic scale of “population politics” in the Soviet Union was unprecedented for the Eurasian continent. Nevertheless, this was not a completely original “population policy” in the history of the region. During the Russian Empire in late 19th century similar policies of “population resettlement” were conducted in Kazakhstan. General Kolpakovskiy stationed in Fort Verniy, present-day Almaty, was successful at the resettlement of Russian, Ukrainian and Belorussian peasants after the Peasant Reform in 1861 abolishing the serfdom system. There was also the migration of Muslim Uighur and Dungan ethnic groups due to rebellion against China’s authorities from Dzhungaria and Kashgaria of the Eastern Turkestan, present-day Xinjiang, China, to the Semerechye region, present-day Almaty Oblast, Kazakhstan (Moiseyev, 2003).

As a result, this “population politics” was institutionalised through a number of legislative documents and implemented through public policies that are well documented in the Soviet archives. There are a number of authors who compiled the stories of archives into historic narratives. For example, Polyan (2001) provides a detailed account of



“forced migration” in the Soviet history starting from 1919 until 1953. Particularly in Part One of his book he provides an astonishing description on the extent of the state sanctioned “forced migration” and its biopolitical implementation in the Soviet Union. First he discussed the disciplinary “eviction” and “eradication” of the Kulak class (wealthy peasants) in 1930s in all parts of the Soviet Union. Then he provides the detailed narratives as well as statistical, institutional and legislative information in the Appendices on the way deportation was operationalised for the Kurdish, German, Polish, Finnish and Chechen populations and the Karachay-Cherkessians, Crimean Tatars and Meskhetian Turks from Western parts of the Soviet Union as well as the Korean and Chinese populations from the politically unstable “borderlands” in the Far Eastern parts of the Soviet Union.

Archival materials show that only in a few days of May in 1936 there were estimated 45,000 of Germans and Poles living in the bordering areas of Ukraine, who were deported to Karaganda Oblast in central Kazakhstan; in September and October of 1937 there were about 172,000 Koreans, who were evicted from the Far Eastern borderlands and deported to the cities and villages in Northern Kazakhstan; similarly in the same period there were about 9,000 Chinese deported from the Harbin area to Kazakhstan (Polyan, 2001: 245-246). Furthermore, in 1940 between February and June there were more than 200,000 Poles who were deported mostly to Kazakhstan and then to Uzbekistan (Polyan, 2001: 246). And in September-November of 1941, there was a large forced migration initiative, which included more than 500,000 Germans from the European part of Russia (from Volga German Autonomy Region, as well as from Moscow, Leningrad, and Rostov) who were evicted from their houses and deported mostly to the Central and Northern parts of Kazakhstan, as well as to Western and Eastern Siberia (Polyan, 2001: 246-247). It is essential to keep in mind that this

was the early period of the most traumatic periods of the “state of exception” caused by the World War II context. During this time the majority of Kazakh, Uzbek, Kyrgyz, Uighur, Dungan and other local Central Asian ethnic groups were mobilised to fight against the Nazi fascist forces in the Western part of the Soviet Union. Thus, while the “punished ethnic groups” were trying to survive in the barren steppes, deserts or taiga of Siberia, Kazakhstan and Central Asia, the majority of local Central Asian male populations were killed defending Ukraine, Belarus, Moscow or Stalingrad in Russia, while others surrendered themselves to the concentration camps in Nazi Germany.

The “forced migration” however continued: the period of 1943-1944 was characterised by the “forced migration” of punished ethnicities and people-groups from North Caucasus, Georgia and Crimea. Thus, in August-November 1943 over 70,000 Karachay-Cherkessians and in February 1944 close to 400,000 Chechens and Ingush ethnic groups were moved from Northern Caucasus mostly to Kazakhstan and partly to neighbouring Kyrgyzstan (Polyan, 2001: 247). Similarly in May-June 1944, the Crimean local population, such as about 182,000 Crimean Tatars, and about 42,000 of other Crimean minorities such as Greeks, Armenians, Bulgarians and Turks were forcefully evicted and moved to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan (*ibid.*). And in November 1944, there were close to 100,000 Meskhetian Turks who were deported from Georgia mostly to Kazakhstan and partly to Kyrgyzstan (*ibid.*: 248). Thus, by 1950 the majority of more than 2 million people officially registered as “punished” ethnic groups were located in the “special settlements” of the industrial areas of Kazakhstan and other Central Asian republics (*ibid.*: 147-148). The objectivity and reliability of statistical information during the Stalinist period is currently debated and questioned by historians such as Bugai, Zaitsev, Popov, Nekrasov, Zemskov, Nokhotovich, Dugin, Yakovlev and many other academics as well as politicians,

journalists and government officials working on newly available declassified archives. The most contested academically are the exact numbers of people who were killed by the authorities in the first days of eviction due to protests or suicides, the number of people who died from natural causes such as starvation and disease in the livestock trains used for transportation and the number that died during the first months of resettlement due to natural causes or coercive measures of the government. Thus, the biopolitical dehumanised statistics of “forced migration” can have variations in thousands of people in different sources. However, the fact that “forced migration” occurred in the Soviet history at the time of industrialization drive and World War II that involved hundred thousands of people and the impact of this migration on the local population statistics, particularly the change in urban and rural shares as well as in ethnic composition of population in Kazakhstan, are quite obvious in population dynamics throughout 1920s-1970s (Tolesh, 2012: 5-7).

## **5. Biopolitics of Youth Migration: “Modern Identity” of Komsomol Generation**

The youth organization of the Soviet Communist Party had an exceptional role in the “socio-economic transformation” as part of modernization drive and particularly in the industrialization policy. The Communist Youth League (also known by the more commonly used abbreviation – “Komsomol”) was constructed and developed into one of the main ideological and conformist instruments of the Communist Party to maintain the regime, to introduce new reforms, to prevent rebellion, and to socialise a norm of “Soviet culture” and “Soviet citizen” into the masses. The Soviet Youth organization was effective not only in contributing to the ideological training of young people, but also in

educating several generations of youth and their families about the economic, industrial and regimental procedures of the State Planning system.

Kassoff (1965) identified the main aim of “Komsomol” that was to exert political control over the youth, implement social transformation, conduct psychological reconstruction on the youth to fit them in the image of the new “Soviet Man”. The nature of the tasks assigned demanded that top staff of the organizations be paid functionaries, subject to orders and specific projects from the Central Communist Party apparatus, such as the construction of railways and industrial enterprises in the developing Siberia, Kazakhstan and Far East regions. One of the Soviet industrialization projects where the youth participated en masse was the Virgin or New Land campaign, where they had to participate in establishing the agrarian industrial complex in Kazakhstan. This involved participation in the short-term “stroi otryad” (construction brigades) as well as in the direct and more long-term industrial process of sowing and harvesting the large-scale fields of wheat in Western Siberia and Soviet Kazakhstan. The process of shaping the youth into the greater Soviet modernization plan was as challenging ideologically and psychologically as materially. The results of the Komsomol campaigns, such as “stroi otryad” (construction brigades) are still visible in the former Soviet Union through established infrastructure and industrial systems. The youth, particularly college and university students, were coerced by the authorities to spend required summer working-holidays in the remote regions of the industrialization campaign and in some cases were strongly advised or mandated by the Communist Party authorities to migrate to these remote regions after graduation.

The youth organization of the Soviet Communist Party was constructed and developed into one of the main ideological and conformist instruments of the Communist Party to maintain the regime,

the system of governance and to prevent rebellion. The establishment, development and promotion of the Communist Youth League and its socialization into the major political projects of the Soviet Union were important for the transformation and future of the new society. The Soviet educational system with the Communist Youth League support was structured to achieve this purpose. According to Kassoff (1965), the main aims of “Komsomol” (Communist Youth League) was to exert political control over the youth, implement social transformation, conduct psychological reconstruction on the youth to fit them in the image of the new “Soviet Man”. In order to accomplish these tasks, the educational system formalized youth institutions from the youngest Octobrist organization (from 7 to 9 years old) to Pioneer organization (from 9 to 14 years old) to Komsomol organization (from 14 to 28 years old). Kassoff (1965) outlines the four principal purposes of the youth programme in the Soviet Union: (1) political control, (2) social transformation, (3) psychological reconstruction, and (4) the formalization of youth institutions. Thus, the emphasis of instruction was on the notion of the new Soviet citizens who would be competent “builders of socialism and communism” (строители социализма и коммунизма), by force if required (Muckle, 1987:2).

Political control, social transformation, psychological reconstruction and formalization of youth institution were not only done through ideological training of young people, but also through educating several generations of youth in the economic, industrial and regimental systems and procedures of the Soviet State Planning system. In other words, Youth political education particularly during the Khrushchev era was an intermediary of the relationship between state mandate and socio-economic transformation of population. This was especially true for Komsomol members whose age – ranged between 14 and 28 years old – allowed them to participate in the major economic initiatives as young

professionals. The youth organizations had been certainly a part of the overall systemic reconstruction and industrial development of the Soviet Union particularly during crucial time of the post-World War II economic reconstruction and social transformation of 1950s-1970s. Interestingly, the Komsomol organization had stayed as conservative in the post-World War II period as during 1930-40s and had been exempted from the overall de-Stalinization initiatives and other reforms introduced by the Nikita Khrushchev government after the death of Joseph Stalin in 1953. This is because the de-Stalinization of Soviet Union did not include unconformity and critical attitudes of young people towards government officials and central authority (Kassoff, 1965).

The records of the Department of Komsomol Organs and the Komsomol Department of Agitation and Propaganda from around this time show that open criticism was still occurring among members of the Communist Party's youth wing. A report sent to Vladimir Semichastnyi (at the time, a member of the Komsomol Central Committee but later to become KGB chairman) on 10 December 1956 stated that "Komsomol organisations have not drawn the correct conclusions from the XX Party Congress and need to strengthen their work amongst young people. As a result, in some Komsomol branches an unhealthy atmosphere has appeared with mistaken views on life, speeches alien to Marxist-Leninist views and a tendency to think in bourgeois terms" (Hornsby, 2008: 69).

Still, Komsomol was managed by the state and the aims were quite obvious for the Soviet Union of the Cold War environment of 1950s-1960s: to strengthen the control of the Communist Party over youth, prepare young people for future contributions to the economic and social modernization of the country and to prevent them from coming under the sway of dissident forces from the West (Kassoff, 1965). Thus, after the Communist Party of Soviet Union (CPSU) Congress XX in February 1956, the de-Stalinization policy of Nikita Khrushchev also included

changes in the disciplinary policy of the state towards the dissident attitudes in the society.

[There was] the trend of continuity between the Khrushchev and Brezhnev eras in regard to both dissenting behaviour and the authorities' responses. In this one can also see how pragmatism and rationalism rather than ideology (i.e. Khrushchev's much-vaunted 'return to Leninism') or a sense of liberality set the agenda in dealing with the problem of dissent and that although at times its assumptions were based on fundamentally sound reasoning, the regime consistently exaggerated the threat posed to the state by dissenting behaviour and often overreacted to it as a result. Factors that are highlighted in regard to the changing relationship between state and society include evidence of people's broadening philosophical horizons, declining respect for, and fear of, the authorities along with the gradual emergence of the tacit Brezhnev era social contract between society and the regime (whereby society remained docile as long as the regime fulfilled basic tasks such as providing employment and an acceptable standard of living).

(Hornby, 2008: 4)

Therefore this change from the entirely disciplinary to biopolitical social contract between the population and the state had started in the late 1950s with the de-Stalinization policies of Khrushchev. Virgin Land campaign was one of the first biopolitical "state experiments" to improve the food security and living conditions of the rural population facilitated by young professionals in the periphery of the Soviet Union that was problematic during the Stalinist disciplinary reforms. Kassoff (1965) also pointed out that his interest in Komsomol was primarily the content of the youth programme and the techniques through which it was

carried out. This was important in order to understand the socialization aspects of youth into mainstream government initiatives, such as industrialization. He also emphasised that the 1950s is the specific time-frame when the youth organizations in Soviet Union as a whole achieved a degree of stability and full institutionalization with the immediate tasks of post-war reconstruction and continuity in spite of the death of Joseph Stalin. Kassoff (1965) provides a detailed analysis of the programme which encompasses some 53 million members and evaluates the effectiveness of the regime's efforts to shape the image of the future generation. The majority of the youth with the initial ideological enthusiasm and continuous fear of punishment followed the conformist path of Komsomol-supported educational institutions and professional careers in the government, army, health/educational sector of the economy or in the greater industrial complex of the Soviet Union. In that he admits there was a success of the Soviet youth programme that was integrated into the state economic system. Therefore, industrial modernization of the Soviet Union in the postwar time was run much on the ideological devotion, characteristic persistence and discipline, rigid organizational structure and processes, as well as often on the mere physical and intellectual power of the Komsomol youth (Kassoff, 1965: 143).

The mobilization of Komsomol during the incumbency of Khrushchev was central for the continuity of the industrialization campaign, as Stalin's industrialization was dependent on the extensive system of labour camps (Gregory and Lazarev, 2003). Hence labour policies and practice "relied heavily on forced and semiforced labor to restore the country's economy" (Fitzer, 2010: 131). However, with the de-Stalinization policy after 1956 that involved the amnesty of most of the political prisoners of labour camps who were crucial labour force during industrialization (Gregory and Lazarev, 2003), and the political



rehabilitation of deported “ethnic settlements” and other disciplinary institutions of modernization of the Soviet Union, the industry that was initiated had to carry on the development in spite of the lack of local labour force in remote peripheral locations such as Kazakhstan.

Nevertheless, some of the Soviet Youth at some point of their assignments were disillusioned and openly reacted with boredom, apathy and general resentment as they were deprived of almost any opportunity for spontaneous initiatives, apart from those directed to support the productive activities of the Central Plans, procedures and tasks that were established by the Moscow authorities. Often the discontent and boredom had been expressed in “hooliganism, juvenile delinquency, voluntary unemployment” and other stereotypical behaviour of what was defined as “idlers” (“bezdelnichestvo” – бездельничество). The Komsomol organization was in charge of making sure that the “idlers” were punished, and often punished by harsh years in jail, forced labour camps or volunteerism in major industrial campaigns mostly in Kazakhstan, Siberia and Far East (Kassoff, 1965: 144-170).

The other type of “idlers” that Kassoff curiously analyzed were of the urban middle and upper classes in the rigid Soviet societal stratification who financially lived off their parents and largely devoted their time to the quest of pleasure and fashion. They were called “stilyagi” derived from the word “stil” – стиль, that is translated as “style” (they were the close Soviet version of Britain’s Teddy boys). “Stilyagi” was a term conceived by Soviet citizens to negatively label “young comrades” who had an interest and passion in Western culture in 1950s and 1960s (*ibid.*). However, home-made Jazz LPs made from old X-ray images, movies of the era, and fashion in clothing patronised by the stilyagi show that the duplication was not the most accurate and realistic of either American or European styles of 1950s. Many of them displayed bizarre brightly coloured styles of dress and loud-checked

padded jackets, shoes sized too large, and elaborate and outrageous haircuts. They tried to speak English or French, listened to jazz, rock-n-roll, and particularly “anti-Soviet bands” such as the Beatles and Rolling Stones.

The basic philosophy of “stilyagi” was to get away with the minimum amount of study and work to enjoy their leisure time as much as possible and in the most unusual and shocking way possible. This behaviour was an attempt to imitate what they believed to be the “Western way of living” and popular youth culture grotesquely distorted in their imagination of particular British and American influences. This type of “idling” behaviour was not uncommon in large cities because of the persistence and rigor of press campaigns against them (Kassoff, 1965: 154-164). Therefore, the Communist Party “directives” enforced migration of professional youth as a disciplining measure for inadequate socio-political behaviour in public as well as for the need of industrialization in the remote areas of the Soviet Union

The Komsomol values applied were applicable not only for the urban, but also for rural young people. Rural members of Komsomol were to embrace the values of the new society by “rejection of peasant traditions and patriarchal structures, loyalty to and self-sacrifice for the soviet state and the Komsomol, expectations for a better life and social mobility, and an implicit sense of entitlement”. Moreover, the rural communities had to adjust and absorb the formal state position on the new progressive modernised village and “to reinvent themselves in opposition to their peasant neighbors, old and young” (Tirado, 2001). Thus, the revised “Soviet way of living” obligated urban and rural young population to contribute by “migration” to the development of the industrial agriculture, for example in the “Virgin Lands” campaign under the collective farms systems and promoted the socio-cultural propaganda of the desirable Komsomol “worker” as part of the Soviet industry in the

remote locations.

Even though the youth programme of the Soviet Union could be considered as incredibly successful in disciplining and conforming the youth to the government aims and plans, it was challenging to insulate youth from family influences and other political processes of liberalization that were associated with Khrushchev’s government. Thus, coercive mechanisms of governance such as enforced “professional migration” as a part of “special assignment” or “directive” after graduation were one of the ways to discipline the Communist youth into modernity and isolate them from “corrupting influences”. Moreover, for as long as the Soviet biopolitical plans for rapid industrialization and social “conformist” development remained in place the central values of the Komsomol programme that emphasised achievement, self-sacrifice, and the suppression of independent attitudes and behaviour were to persist. Therefore the mainstream attitudes towards the Soviet youth programmes and their disciplinary participation in the industrial development of the country would tend to become less repressive and probably more empathetic to the needs and shortcomings of the Soviet youth closer to 1980s and the end of the Soviet Union. Still, the generational transformation in accepting the Sovietised “identity” and associated instrumental values and norms of modernity such as the importance of socio-economic mobility, industrialization, technological progress, infrastructure and transportation in the region will affect other massive regional initiatives of “modern development” carried out by the “Komsomol” generation in their adulthood in 1990s-2000s. One of these large-scale development initiatives is the Eurasian regional economic integration, which under the institutional context of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) includes China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. The convergence of the ideas about biopolitical “life struggle for existence and growth” in the current

generation of executives and managers in Russia, Kazakhstan and China who were born and grew up under the traumatic socio-economic and political circumstances of totalitarian “disciplining” state institutions during the Cold War has indeed developed into “a powerful cooperation for the purposes of existence ...” (Kjellén, 1920: 93-94 in Lemke *et al.*, 2011: 10).

## **6. Shanghai Cooperation Organization and New Regionalism: “Eurasian Identity” for Millennial Generation?**

### ***6.1. New Regionalism and Identity***

The consolidation of the People’s Republic of China after the Second World War, particularly after the 1946-1950 civil war, was also characterized by the displacement of large populations. Although more known for the massive recruitment, training and deployment of the “Red Guard” political cadres from the “Great Leap Forward” of 1957 and through the “Cultural Revolution” of 1966, China is also becoming more widely known for its biopolitical migrations. The first was the urban-to-rural migration of labour caused by the Great Leap Forward industrialization movement. The results of the increase in the total urban population in China from 99 million in 1957 to 130 million in 1960 were food shortages in urban areas and famine in rural communities that were depleted of workers. The second was the forceful repopulation of rural areas with urban migrants. An order issued by the Beijing government in 18 June 1961 required 20 million persons to be returned to rural areas, with half of the number to be sent by the end of the year. Among the population that sought to evade the urban-rural repression of Beijing were thousands of Uighur refugees who fled Xinjiang for the Soviet Union. In 1962 alone, about 64,000 refugees crossed the relatively loose Bakhta and Khorgos checkpoints at the China-Kazakh SSR border.

Rather than repatriated, these refugees were provided with basic welfare services by the Soviet government (Dikötter, 2011: 230-239).

Despite major socio-economic reforms in the past three decades in China, the "Uighur problem" persists till the present day; that is, the marginalization of religious, linguistic and cultural practices of the ethnic minorities in Xinjiang resulting in secessionist demand of the Uighur people for their own state outside of China or Kazakhstan. The Uighur people, who historically lived in geographic Central Asia, however have different biopolitical life-system control in Xinjiang, China, and in neighbouring Almaty Oblast, Kazakhstan. "Freedom of speech, religion and movement" for the 11 million Uighur people in China is strictly controlled by the state. However a quarter of a million of Uighur people in neighbouring Kazakhstan "enjoy relative freedom" (Qobil, 2015) in more tolerant multicultural environment. Thus, even if it was a relatively small disruption at the time, the displacement of large populations of Uighurs nowadays may become a major political concern for the states in contemporary Eurasia. That is, China appears to have done less than the former Soviet states at its borders – Kazakhstan and Russia, specifically – in incorporating the Uighur populations into their mainstream societies. This imbalance is likely to have an effect on the prospects of creating a "multicultural" identity that spans Eurasian societies, particularly if China continues to treat the marginalization of the Uighurs as a minor issue.

Contemporary China's "Peaceful Rise" (Zheng, 2005) and the more recent "Peaceful Development" (PRC State Council White Paper, 2011) plans had brought much debate in the academic community about the impact China will have upon the regional stability in Asia. Multilateralism is generally perceived as not the most preferred way of interaction of China with other countries in the region. Nevertheless, China is one of the leaders of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization

(SCO), which is a regional multilateral institution that includes China, Russia and four Central Asian states – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Mongolia (since 2004), India, Iran, Pakistan (since 2005) and Afghanistan (since 2012) have observer status in the SCO, while Belarus, Sri Lanka (since 2009) and Turkey (since 2012) are dialogue partners. More recently, the promotion of the idea of the Silk Road Economic Belt (Tiezzi, 2014) has made SCO to appear as a constructive venue for the promotion of the multilateral economic integration mechanisms to be operationalised in Central Asia and wider Eurasia. Furthermore, the SCO had “finalized procedures for taking in new members, with India, Pakistan, and Iran first on the list” (Tiezzi, 2014) to pursue the ambitious goal of “Eurasian” integration as once envisioned by Mackinder (1904) in “Geographical Pivot of History”; broadly, to ensure economic development, trade and stability in the Eurasian region (McCoy, 2015).

These integration processes involve particular transportation/infrastructure and energy projects. One of the centerpiece projects is the construction of a bullet train link between Lanzhou and Urumqi, to improve economic and socio-cultural links of Central and Southeastern China with the Central Asian countries via Xinjiang in Western China (Hsu, 2015). There are also initiatives between Russia and China to build a high-speed railway between Moscow and Beijing via Kazan in Tatarstan to upgrade the existing Moscow-Beijing passenger train link that was opened in 1954 (*Business Insider*, 2014). The other showpiece initiative that shares similar infrastructure vision for Eurasian integration is the 2700 km of the Western China-Western Europe international road transit corridor being built in Kazakhstan to link China with Russia funded by loans provided by major development banks such as World Bank, Asian Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and Islamic Development Bank. Also, the most recent

ADB loan approved for China is to be used for the improvement of other Xinjiang infrastructure. This is part of the greater “One Belt, One Road” initiative to connect the international transit corridor that includes “Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st-century Maritime Silk Road” (Liu, 2015). In addition to the existing financial platforms to support this grand infrastructural development in Eurasia, the new Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) was established as a “supplement to existing multilateral development institutions”. In spite of criticism and scepticism, the promise of the initiative seems to be “a far cry from monopoly or dominance”, but inclusive of other interested parties in the region and beyond to participate in Eurasian integration (Liu, 2015).

The infrastructure and above all railway and road transportation improvement combined with the recent simplified procedures for visa application at the Khorgos border crossing between China and Kazakhstan in the long term will increase the population interaction and socialization across the national borders (Bradsher, 2013). Furthermore the creation of “SCO university network” similarly to “ASEAN university network” for member-states that promote the integration processes in education and research will provide the arena for new student generation as well as professors to explore the “Eurasian identity” in practice through institutionalized interaction. Thus, there might be a need for a greater attention paid by all the states involved to the socio-cultural issues of divisive political nature, particularly within the SCO institutional context and throughout the overall Silk Road Economic Belt initiatives. The socio-cultural integration towards a more common “Eurasian identity” might be challenging if long-standing divisive “ethnic” or “religious” issues are institutionally ignored rather than peacefully politicized, discussed and founded on consensus-building in the region. Particularly because this generation of managers in modernizing development initiatives would not have the biopolitical

“disciplinary” instruments of 1950s-1960s initiatives in the Soviet Union or China to overcome the resisting tendencies towards new identity reconstruction in the 21st century. The careless use of outdated 20th century’s totalitarian state measures of “disciplining” the rebellious or disloyal through institutions of military and police rather than emancipating and empowering the marginalized through dialogue might hinder the more “peaceful” regional integration, improvement of economic/business competitiveness and overall political reputation of the Eurasian state and non-state multilateral entities in Asia.

More to the point, the economic integration processes within the SCO context, although following a multilateral approach towards the institutionalization of Eurasian regional economic interaction, do not presently provide any guidelines or indicate future plans for procedurally managing or institutionally communicating about various cultural, religious and ethnic identities and associated secessionist issues of the states involved, if they arise. The only SCO regional mechanism available to limit and punish the secessionist-related activities is the disciplinary mandate of Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. There are no provisions for institutionalized “peaceful” politicization, discussion and reflection about the potential of “identity transformation” through more positive biopolitical systems beyond the disciplinary deterrent mechanism of RATS. Thus, one of the obstacles to building mutual political trust and socio-cultural community among member-states and their populations for “peaceful development” is normative; that is, the cultural, religious, ethnic and linguistic diversity of values. Furthermore, the SCO region has a complicated and diverse periphery, which extends from Eastern Europe to West Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific Ocean. In other words, the SCO member-states have to face countries with very different political value systems and socio-cultural systems combined with the accelerated



integration of economic and infrastructural systems. These contextual issues put SCO in a difficult environment to conducting internal and external initiatives as a regional grouping (Yang, 2009).

## ***6.2 SCO Multilateralism as Integrative Influence?***

Still, the SCO is a unique multilateral institution that never claimed a European/EU model and analogue as most other regional institutions of the world did. In purely institutional terms, the SCO is quite the opposite from the European Union (EU) in being extremely inter-governmental with only minimal central institutions and centrally managed resources. This uniqueness, however, may be perceived as a weakness by those who hold the EU as the standard model for regional integration. This is because the SCO, despite being a regional multilateral institution does not follow and, moreover, does not aspire to follow the societal and non-functional norms of the EU. The SCO does not place central emphasis on issues such as democratization, the subordination of state functions to human rights concerns, the institutionalization of supranational governance, and the standardization of multilateral interaction through bureaucracies that are equivalents of the European parliament, the European Council, the Commission, the Council of Europe, and European Central Bank. Nevertheless, there might be legitimate claim against using the European construct to measure other regional multilateral institutions. The states and societies of the non-European or non-Western world, particularly the SCO-member states that industrialized in conjunction with, and reconstructed after, the Soviet system are not the same in terms of values and norms attached to international interaction and institutions as in the post-World War II Europe. More importantly, the SCO is not intended by its member-states as an alternative to the EU system not only because of contextual

differences but also because the economic utility of the SCO vis-à-vis the EU particularly depends on the SCO as a self-sustaining institutional system, controversies notwithstanding. Thus, the establishment of different social order through multilateral institution contradictory to the mainstream liberal institutionalist values can be justified due to different material conditions, national interests and ideational base of states and diversity of societies. However what this non-European and non-Western regional social order might be is a question for academic community to dwell upon, question and discuss.

What is more, the international relations theory does not offer a straight-forward explanation to the perfect model of multilateralism (Coparaso, 1992). There is a difference between a “multilateral institution” that presumes the formal organizational structure of international life and an “institution of multilateralism” that maybe represented in a particular organization, but often “appeals to the less formal, less codified habits, practices, ideas, and norms of international society”. Thus, “multilateralism” is a belief or an ideology that activities need to be organized on a particular basis for a “relevant” group, which promotes future “multilateral” cooperation (Coparaso, 1992: 603).

There are at least three ways to understand multilateralism: the first is the individualist approach, where states have contractual relations with other states; the second is the social-communicative approach with the focus on the “identities and powers of individual state”; and the third is an institutional approach founded on structural determination of a goal-oriented behaviour that is linked with the second approach on the “importance of communication, reflection, discussion, learning, and interpretation”. The individualist interaction is founded on the realist/neo-realist perspective and non-cooperative game theory framework with the strategic focus on the individual preference and no binding morality, norms or commitment (*ibid.*: 605-609). The social-

communicative approach to multilateralism does not only involve individual choice, but it is also where “the choosing agent reflects, discusses, trusts and distrusts, tries to build consensus, alters others’ perception of the world” (*ibid.*: 613). This interaction has been assessed by the political scientists and economists in the cooperative game theory, by the experimental psychologists in the study of persuasion, and by the sociologists in the study of norms and identities. The institutional approach is the goal-oriented interaction, where “the identities, preferences, beliefs, and behaviour of micro-units are given a structural determination” (*ibid.*: 623). Structures are considered useful as they can be more durable than individuals and they can preserve the consistent properties in the variety of participants. The social-communicative approach combined with the institutional approach to multilateralism has a resemblance to the Deutsch theory of “pluralistic security community”, where “communication is the cement of social groups” that enables them to share knowledge and express the “sense of community” (Adler and Barnett, 1998: 3-7). The institution of European Union demonstrates this third point, with its complex bureaucracy and processes that enable communication and persuasion among states that make institutionalization of numerous agreements, as well as supranational standards and policies possible. The SCO however currently closely represents the individualist approach with neo-realist perspective and inter-governmental interaction that involve strategic focus on national interests and preferences, high level of distrust among member-states and no common binding norms and values. However with more economic, business and trade interactions this initial socio-cultural divisive mistrust will need to be overcome by more pragmatic and functional socio-communicative approach to build conscious regional consensus.

Stephen Aris in *Eurasian regionalism* (2011) argues that the development of an emerging regional organization such as the SCO in the post-Soviet Central Asia, which was initiated by China and Russia, corresponds to the perceptions of its member-states about security, regional cooperation and multilateralism. He asserted that many theoretical frameworks for examining regional institutions and regional cooperation apply fixed assumptions to states' perception of security, cooperation and multilateralism and neglect the importance of more dynamic regional contexts and perceptions. The assumptions for the study of regional institutions based solely on the European Union experience may not be true for all regions in the world. Aris has stressed that the development of the SCO is important not only to the member-states, but also to the wider global politics, security and economy. Russia and China are two prominent states of the international system, owing to their territorial size, economic capacity, military strength and status as permanent members of the UN Security Council. Moreover, the activities of the SCO have become central for Russia's and China's regional strategy towards wider Central Asia, South Asia and West Asia that include Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and India as observers and Turkey as a dialogue partner. For its short history, the SCO – in comparison with the EU or the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) – has had visible achievements as a multilateral institution (Aris, 2011).

The SCO Charter was signed in 2002 and came into effect in 2003. In 2004 the SCO formally introduced its permanently functioning bureaucratic institutions such as the Secretariat in Beijing and the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) in Tashkent. The period of 2001-2004 was devoted to the institutional development of the SCO structure that operationalised the mandate of the Charter. This included the establishment of the Council of Head of States, Council of Heads of

Government, and Council of Foreign Ministers, as well as Meetings of the Heads of Ministries and Departments, and Council of National Coordinators. Furthermore, throughout the period of 2004-2007, the SCO primarily focused on addressing the non-traditional security issues commonly perceived by its members as threatening regional stability: terrorism, separatism and extremism. And after 2007, the goal was officially "to consolidate the consensus reached up to this point before moving on to the next stage of agenda development" (Aris, 2011: 4-6). Hence, the establishment of different normative, legal and institutional basis for the SCO in comparison with other regional institutions such as the EU or ASEAN can be considered as an important milestone for the development of regional multilateralism.

Kyrre Elvenes Brækhus and Indra Øverland (2007) are even more optimistic about "A Match Made in Heaven". SCO member-states' material compatibility and overlap of key interests regarding the long-term developments in world politics is considered as the strategic convergence between two leaders of the institution, Russia and China. The compatibility between Russian natural resources and Chinese manufacturing markets seems particularly important. Russia is the world's second largest oil producer, after Saudi Arabia, and China the world's second largest oil consumer, after the United States (US). However the compatibility in "material factors" such as physical and economic aspects of cooperation are as important as compatibility in "ideational factors" such as accepted political and societal norms and views on separatism, politicized Islam, democratization, human rights, regional stability and US hegemony. In other words there is no certainty that a successful regional "multilateral institution" would result in constructive "multilateralism" among people-groups.

The SCO as a multilateral organization is undeniably exceptional for both Russian and Chinese history. This is the first attempt by both

countries to establish a regional institution on equal leadership standing. The positive outlook of this relationship is comparable to the optimism at the start of the EU project with the steel and coal cooperation between France and Germany after World War II. Even though China and Russia, and previously the Soviet Union, did not go to war against each other, the historic bi-lateral relations had still suffered due to the Sino-Soviet doctrinal divergence between Maoism and Marxist-Leninist Communism in 1961, the Soviet Army presence at the disputed Sino-Soviet border and in Mongolia, and the Soviet support of the Vietnamese occupation of Kampuchea. Likewise by the fall of the Soviet Union, there were still disputes over the delimitation of common borders between China and Russia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Considering the historical context of Sino-Soviet relations and realist-prone interaction of both countries in international affairs, the attempts of contemporary Russia and China to engage with other states in the multilateral institutional setting of their construction can already be considered as a regional security enhancement through multilateralism.

Mikhail Troitskiy in “A Russian perspective on the Shanghai Cooperation Organization” (2007), similar to Kyrre Elvenes Brækhus and Indra Øverland, uses the notion of convergence that is necessary for multilateral interaction among states. He also shares the views of Stephen Aris about the importance and uniqueness of the SCO for member-states and the rest of the world. The SCO has three basic features that make it unique in Russia’s history of international relations. Firstly, the organization embodies its members’ converging policy approach towards socio-economic stability and security in a particular geographical region. Secondly, although developing a security dimension, the SCO is not a collective security or defense bloc. Thirdly, Russia is only one of the two powerful states within the organization. Neither the Warsaw Treaty Organization (Warsaw Pact) of the Soviet

times, the post-Soviet Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) nor the present Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) has ever met all three of these criteria (Troitskiy, 2007). Overall, the "Russian perspective" towards the SCO puts emphasis on the advantages of interdependence for national interests and possible future development using structural realist framework of analysis. Furthermore, the SCO is regarded in Russia as a means to add weight to member-states' common positions on key security issues in the international arena. And more importantly from a realist perspective, Russia has been able to retain the prestige and influence of one of the two SCO founding partners, as Russian membership constitutes (no less than China's) part of the organization's initiatives and strategies. Interestingly, both China and Russia understand that, should Russia feel sidelined within the SCO activities, the organization will lose much of its legitimacy and purpose in the eyes of the smaller and economically/militarily weaker Central Asian member-states. (Troitskiy, 2007: 30-44) Therefore, the strategic convergence of Russia and China on issues such as regional non-traditional security, economic and energy cooperation as well as skepticism about Western military interference for democratization and human rights promotion is central for the SCO's future institutional enhancement.

Similar to the Russian perspective, the Chinese view on the SCO's potential for future development as a regional multilateral organization is positive though for somewhat different reasons. Guang Pan in "A Chinese perspective on the Shanghai Cooperation Organization" (2007) suggests that the SCO symbolizes the entry of Chinese diplomacy into a new stage, with an orientation towards multilateral interactions. The SCO enabled China to build unprecedentedly strong security, political, economic and cultural ties with Central Asian states, thus creating the conditions for it to play an active and constructive role in the region.

Moreover, the cooperation within the multilateral framework makes it possible for China to avoid friction with Russia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan as neighbouring countries while preserving and pursuing its own national interests. However, the next phase of the SCO development is critical for a multilateral institution to overcome a number of sectoral and structural issues of the internal environment (Pan, 2007: 45-58).

Shu Yang's article, "Reassessing the SCO's internal difficulties" (2009), provides the Chinese academic perspective on the importance of the Central Asian regional stability, normative harmony and economic development for the SCO's institutional progress. The SCO countries possess a great amount of resources and capabilities, and there is much room to improve multilateral economic and social cooperation under the SCO framework. However, the integration among the SCO members still remains weak. The SCO member-states have very diverse levels of economic development. This to some extent restrains the use of the SCO framework more effectively, particularly on the issue of economic cooperation. One of the impediments to building mutual political trust and social community among member-states is cultural and linguistic diversity. In other words, the issue of the Uighur people's identity that is closer to the Turkic identity of the Kazakhs and other ethnic groups in Central Asia being different from the Han Chinese in Beijing and Slavic Russian in Moscow can hinder the societal integration as part of the regional "community" of SCO. Yang (2009) suggests that the SCO members should work more towards deepening economic, cultural, transport, and communication systems within the region to overcome the contextual issues of each state. Central Asia has its own unique geopolitical, socio-economic and cultural characteristics that are useful for "practicing" multilateral institutionalism. Yang recommends that China and Russia should devote more effort to promoting their interests



in Central Asia, where “the linkages can be matured and expanded to other areas” of the region such as Afghanistan (Yang, 2009: 17-23). Thus, the success of economic development and cooperation of Central Asian states as well as their interaction with the neighbouring countries in the region determines the future of the SCO.

### ***6.3. SCO as a Regional Peacemaker?***

The most challenging state in terms of regional security in both traditional (balance of power, militarization, hegemonic influence) and non-traditional (heroin drug trafficking, terrorism, Islamic extremism and other transnational crimes) forms in Central Asia still continues to be Afghanistan. As the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)’s exit strategy of Afghanistan in 2014 has not yet translated into conclusive decisions about the “operational future” of the security and socio-economic development of the country, the role of neighbouring states might be central for bi-lateral and multi-lateral cooperation and constructive improvement in security. Interestingly all neighbour-states of Afghanistan are members, observers or dialogue partners of the SCO, except for Turkmenistan. Nevertheless, Turkmenistan had participated in almost all of the SCO meetings as a guest attendant and been open as a “neutral state” for regional cooperation that does not restrict its national interests. Thus, the choice and methods of interaction for the SCO with Afghanistan after 2014 would probably indicate the effectiveness of this type of multilateralism. Richard Weitz (2012) wrote in “The Shanghai Cooperation Organization and Afghanistan” about the possible expansion of the SCO activities to Afghanistan. Afghanistan has become a formal observer and Turkey has become a dialogue partner of the SCO in the June 2012 heads-of-state summit in Beijing. The immediate neighbours of Afghanistan, such as Iran, India and Pakistan have already

been observers in the SCO for the past few years. The author argues that only this regional multilateral institution has a more comprehensive set of members and affiliates to address Afghanistan's regional security and economic integration within Eurasia. This would be a significant change to the organization's strategy, as until recently the SCO has pursued a very narrow approach towards Afghanistan that focused primarily on countering narcotics trafficking and anti-terrorist measures under the Regional Anti-terrorist Structure (RATS) office in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

Commonly perceived sources of non-traditional threats such as opium cultivation, production and trade as well as spread of radical Islam in Eurasia are compounded by the political instability of Kabul's central government. Its key failure is the inability to control and manage all the provinces of Afghanistan. Furthermore, the expansion of radical Islamic influences associated with the Taliban movement is likely to promote the ideas of terrorism, extremism and separatism in the region. And exactly these threats to the regional "peaceful development" are included into the SCO's post-modern security agenda. These factors may prompt SCO to more actively pursue preventative policy and development measures in Afghanistan. According to the 2012 report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Afghanistan produces more than 90% of the world's opium. Despite an aggressive campaign to destroy the crop, the total area under poppy cultivation increased by 18% in 2012, reaching 154,000 hectares compared with 131,000 hectares in 2011, although the estimated overall production of opium in Afghanistan decreased by 36% – from nearly 6,000 tonnes in 2011 to around 3,700 tonnes in 2012. The UN report concludes that there is a correlation between insecurity and opium cultivation that has been apparent for the past several years. Thus, the future involvement of the SCO in the stability and development of Afghanistan would show if this type of multilateralism is capable of expansion in the culturally diverse,

politically unstable, anti-Western and militarised contexts of Afghanistan.

Furthermore, the “Afghanistan” issue is closely linked to some aspects of the unresolved internal “Uighur problem” of Xinjiang, China. There were 22 Uighurs captured by NATO forces in Afghanistan in 2001 (Savage, 2013). When these men were captured in Afghanistan, the “U.S. did not list a little-known Uighur group, the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), as a terrorist organization”. However a few months later the US needed the UN approval for the Iraq war; thus, relatively unknown ETIM had appeared on the US terrorist watch list to satisfy China. Uighur detainees in the Guantanamo Bay jail were one of the most complex cases for release and resettlement, as “few countries are willing to step up and suffer financial or political reprisals from China” (Shephard, 2013). The freed Uighur detainees from the Guantanamo Bay jail who were unable to return to China for the fear of imprisonment and torture had to be resettled as far as in Bermuda in the Atlantic and Palau in the Pacific (Talmadge, 2013). These exiles were unable to support themselves financially, unable to travel without passports and necessarily cope with being far away geographically from the society and culture with which they are familiar. This resettlement policy of twenty-first century brought the Uighur people to similar biopolitical conditions of the Stalinist ethnic resettlement policy in 1940s-1950s Kazakhstan.

In reference to this case, it is not unlikely that China’s intensified interaction with the Central Asian states as part of the SCO multilateralism would involve greater socio-communicative approach of “communication, reflection, discussion, learning, and interpretation” among people-groups (Coparaso, 1992: 613). This will require greater levels of openness to politicization, reflexivity and discussion among population groups in order to alter others’ perception about China’s

policy towards the Turkic ethnic minorities, such as the Uighur, Kyrgyz and Kazakh ethnic groups, in Xinjiang and to build regional dialogue and consensus. The promotion of a cosmopolitan inclusive “Eurasian identity” for China’s “Peaceful Development” with Central Asian neighbours would require greater efforts on resolving the conflictual “ethnic discourses” and “religious discourses”.

The SCO as a multilateral organization and its member-states do not perfectly fit into the frames of liberal institutionalist expectations about shared social and political norms of democracy and human rights. However the majority of SCO states (except for Uzbekistan and Iran) accept the norms of liberal international economic order of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB) and more recently the World Trade Organization (WTO), such as commitment to private property, free markets, and restricted government role for monetary, trade and industrial regulation. Hence, despite the political limitations on democracy and human rights, the SCO still partially upholds the beliefs of liberal institutionalists that the international regimes promote cooperation in areas where there is high degree of interdependence, such as monetary and trade relations, business interaction, and sustainable development (Keohane and Nye, 1977: 53-56). This provides a solution to the “anarchical society” (Bull, 1977) in the region by introducing “the security practice of co-binding”, which enables transnational relations to be mutually beneficial despite the power politics (Deudney and Ikenberry, 1999: 181-184). In other words, the goals of the member-states of the SCO could still be achieved through international multilateral cooperation rather than through military force and security strategy regardless of socio-political norms.

More notably, the development of the SCO can conveniently fit into the contemporary notion of multilateralism of Morten Bøås and Desmond McNeill in *Multilateral institutions* (2003). This is a critical

approach to multilateralism that focuses more on the dynamic development of the system, its underlying structures, forces and processes of world politics rather than individual states. Even though the end of the Cold War represented the success of liberal democratic ideals for the Kantian "universalist tradition" of states' interaction with the potential for "democratic peace" in the international community (Layne, 1994), recent "failures of political liberalism" particularly because of the American and European hegemonic military interventions in Iraq, Libya and Syria had been reflected in the dynamics of international multilateralism development. That is, the SCO's development with its normative limitation is the reflection of the recent world events that diminished the optimism of liberal political values (Geis, Brock and Müller, 2006). The critical approach of Morten Bøås and Desmond McNeill looks at the establishment of social order that depends on the material conditions, interests and ideas of participants. In contrast, the liberal institutionalists believe that the establishment of multilateral institutions can have an independent positive effect on state behaviour. However, critical theorists agree with the neo-realists that initially power relations are part of the establishing process of multilateral institution in the particular historic context and circumstances. Nevertheless, the outcomes of this institution are not determined simply by the distribution of power among member-states, but by the dynamic development of "multilateral institution itself, which can affect how choices are framed and outcomes reached". (Bøås and McNeill, 2003: 1-9)

Furthermore, "regionalisation is an important trend in the global political economy, and it is also putting its mark on the debate about the future role of multilateral institutions" (*ibid.*: 151). The critical approach developed by Robert Cox also, similar to Bøås and McNeill, directs the discussion of multilateral engagement towards dynamic interaction and mutual influence. This interaction and mutual influence however is

between three layers: social forces of production, forms of state and world order. The forms of state influence production modes, while production modes influence social forces, as well as the world orders. It provides a “non-mainstream alternative to those who subscribe to a worldview, which emphasises social equity (across identities such as gender, race, ethnicity and class), civilisational diversity (or plurality), and environmental sustainability” (Leysens, 2008: 1-10). Thus, the multilateral initiatives of energy, infrastructural and transportation will affect the “production modes” of the region and as a result influence the “social forces” of identities or ideologies of the population.

In short, the emphasis of the SCO’s multilateral institutionalism on the non-traditional security, infrastructure, energy and economic development rather than on the democratization and improvement of human rights records is the indication of the general trend in the critical understanding of multilateralism. This multilateralism is exceptional due to the “inclusion” of states that are not generally considered as having a positive liberal institutional influence on world affairs. Furthermore, the SCO member-states as well as observers and dialogue partner states have historically accepted different contextual values and norms that affect political systems, religious affiliations, ethnic and linguistic diversity, as well as different economic production systems. Therefore these different material conditions, national interests and ideational bases of countries are reflected in the SCO’s choice of issues possible for multilateralism and regional cooperation. Thus, the importance of SCO as an alternative multilateral institution that affects the identity of diverse populations in Eurasia must not be neglected in this generation of modernizing reforms.

## **7. Conclusion**

The traumatic history of biopolitical “forced migration” of different types of people-groups to Kazakhstan in the period of 1930s-1960s brought change in the population statistics, as well as in the socio-economic conditions of the country. This was due to the industrialization drive that was mostly accomplished through the complex network of totalitarian repressive system of labour camps and enforced “settlements” of diverse ethnic groups and professional youth who migrated on the disciplinary “directives” and “orders” of the authorities. Nowadays the contemporary “Kazakhstani” identity, which was modernised through the introduction of the Soviet ideology as well as industrial system of production, is very different from the national identity of the “Kazakh” nomads and their life-system in the pre-Soviet period. Because this contemporary identity also includes the incorporation of the Uighurs, Koreans, Germans, Chechens, Russians, Ukrainians and other ethnic influences, and is linked to the possibility of a broader Eurasian identity under the SCO, Kazakhstani society necessarily confronts, accepts and goes beyond the disruption caused during its Cold War and totalitarian past. With the possible exception of China, societies in Eurasia have widely accepted that their industrial development included traumatic socio-cultural and political disciplinary measures for “forced modernization” of identities through biopolitical eviction, deportation and settlement of diverse ethnic and professional groups in the modern history.

Since independence from the Soviet Union, despite the rise of nationalism in the post-Soviet republics, President Nursultan Nazarbayev attempted a socio-political construction of “inclusive” multi-cultural and bi-lingual identity of the “Kazakhstani citizen” and thus, was successful in avoiding ethnic conflicts and any political “ideological” confrontations based on the notions of ethnicity,

nationality, religion or race. The importance of this multi-cultural approach is underlined by the growing pressure upon the SCO-member states to (1) create and promote a shared Eurasian identity and to (2) resolve the ethnicity-based resentment of the Uighurs and other people-groups that were biopolitically repressed throughout Eurasia in the modern history. The contemporary technocratic approaches at functionally linking the states and populations of Eurasia may prove helpful in resolving these identity issues, and succeed only if “inclusivity” and “equitability” are able to replace primordialism, ethnocentrism, chauvinism and other sectoral values as the bases for economic, political and socio-cultural interaction, communication and development in the region.

## Note

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