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REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION WITHIN THE SCO: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS

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Abstract. This article presents the first in-depth bibliometric analysis of scholarly literature on the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, with a particular emphasis on its role in Central Asia. Utilizing data from the Scopus database for the period 2001-2024, the study applies PRISMA-based selection criteria to ensure methodological rigor. It employs VOSviewer for the visualization of co-authorship networks, citation patterns, and thematic clusters. The findings indicate a steady increase in academic interest in the SCO since the mid-2000s, with notable publication peaks coinciding with key geopolitical shifts in Eurasia. Core publication venues include *Europe-Asia Studies*, *Central Asian Survey*, and *Journal of Contemporary China*. Citation analysis highlights a group of foundational texts that focus on authoritarian norm diffusion, regional security, and China's evolving strategic posture in Central Asia. Thematic cluster mapping identifies five primary research constellations: regional governance, security cooperation, China's foreign policy, South Asian dynamics, and energy and infrastructure connectivity. These clusters reflect a gradual diversification of SCO scholarship beyond security-centric narratives toward broader considerations of development, normative contestation, and geopolitical realignment. The study reveals a pronounced epistemic imbalance: the majority of influential contributions originate from institutions in the Global North, primarily the United States, China, Russia, and the United Kingdom, while Central Asian scholars remain underrepresented. This asymmetry underscores ongoing challenges in knowledge localization and raises questions about the inclusiveness of international relations as a discipline. Methodologically, the article demonstrates the utility of bibliometric tools in mapping the structure of knowledge production, while conceptually it contributes to debates on asymmetric regionalism and decolonizing global IR. The research calls for greater engagement with non-Western epistemologies and more inclusive scholarly participation from Central Asia itself. These findings offer important implications for both the academic study of multilateralism and the practical design of regional cooperation frameworks in Eurasia.

Key words: Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Central Asia, bibliometric analysis, regionalism, knowledge asymmetries, international relations, geopolitics, knowledge asymmetries

Introduction

In the evolving landscape of global politics, regional institutions play a growing role in shaping international cooperation, mediating asymmetries of power, and fostering cross-border integration. Nowhere is this more evident than in Central Asia a geopolitically strategic and resource-rich region navigating a complex set of relationships with regional and global powers. Among the institutions that seek to influence the trajectory of Central Asia, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) has emerged as a dominant framework for organizing economic, political, and security-related cooperation. Since its formal establishment in 2001, the SCO has expanded from a narrow security alliance into a multifaceted regional organization comprising China, Russia, India, Pakistan, and four Central Asian republics: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. While the SCO is often discussed in global policy narratives as a Eurasian counterweight to Western institutions such as NATO or the EU, its primary functional impact has been on Central Asia. For the region's smaller and less powerful states, the SCO represents a complex mechanism of engagement with major powers, a channel for regional integration, but also a vector of external influence. The SCO thus offers a crucial institutional site where the aspirations of Central Asian countries for sovereignty, security, and development intersect with the strategic ambitions of China and Russia. Despite its strategic significance, academic discourse on the SCO remains fragmented and uneven, particularly in how it addresses Central Asia's role in the organization. Existing literature often treats Central Asian states as secondary players within a broader geopolitical competition. Moreover, most studies on the SCO are conducted from a policy-oriented or normative perspective, with little effort to systematically map the evolution, scope, and structure of knowledge production about the organization and its regional dynamics.

This article seeks to address this gap by conducting a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of academic literature on the SCO, with a specific focus on how regional integration and international cooperation involving Central Asia have been conceptualized over time. By analyzing publications indexed in the Scopus database from 2001 to 2024, and using VOSviewer to visualize co-authorship networks, citation patterns, and thematic clusters, the article aims to uncover how the SCO's role in Central Asian regionalism is represented, theorized, and debated across scholarly communities.

The aim of the research is to provide a comprehensive bibliometric mapping of academic literature on the SCO, focusing on the representation of Central Asia in scholarly debates on regional integration and cooperation.

Research Question and Objectives. The guiding research question of the study is: *How has the academic discourse on the SCO conceptualized regional integration and international cooperation involving Central Asia, and what are the dominant patterns in the bibliometric landscape of this literature?*

To answer this question, the article sets out to:

1. Trace the historical development of academic interest in the SCO and its activities in Central Asia over the period 2001–2024;

2. Identify key authors, institutions, journals, and national affiliations involved in shaping the SCO discourse;
3. Map dominant thematic clusters and co-occurrence of keywords, particularly those focusing on Central Asian regionalism;
4. Assess the degree of balance or asymmetry in the scholarly portrayal of Central Asia's agency within the SCO;
5. Reflect on the implications of the current academic landscape for theorizing non-Western regionalism and institutional asymmetry.

This study offers a *novel contribution* to both international relations and regional studies by providing the first systematic bibliometric mapping of scholarly literature on the Shanghai Cooperation Organization with an explicit focus on Central Asia. While previous research has examined the SCO through geopolitical, policy-oriented, or normative lenses, no prior work has empirically analyzed the evolution, structure, and thematic distribution of academic knowledge on the SCO using bibliometric tools. This approach enables a more comprehensive and data-driven understanding of how scholarly narratives are formed, whose voices dominate, and what themes are privileged or marginalized. The article thus bridges a methodological gap and brings new empirical insight into the epistemological hierarchies that shape global discourse on regional integration.

Theoretical and Normative Relevance. The study is situated at the crossroads of international relations theory, regional integration studies, and scientometrics. It engages with critical perspectives in the field that question the applicability of Eurocentric models of regionalism to non-Western contexts [1], [2]. In contrast to the European Union model, where supranational norms and democratic conditionality drive integration, the SCO reflects a more pragmatic and flexible form of cooperation, often led by authoritarian regimes and based on sovereignty-respecting principles. This makes the SCO a proper empirical case for testing the boundaries of IR theory, particularly concerning asymmetric regionalism. In addition, the SCO's activities in infrastructure development, trade, and cross-border connectivity resonate with Sustainable Development Goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), which promotes inclusive and effective partnerships at global, regional, and national levels. Although the SCO is not explicitly tied to the UN's SDG framework, it plays a de facto developmental role in the region through its promotion of multilateral projects, digital cooperation, and energy diplomacy.

Literature review

Theories of Regionalism and Institutionalism. The study of regionalism has evolved significantly over the past several decades, transitioning from an early focus on formal institutional arrangements in the post-war West to a broader, more pluralistic understanding of regional orders in a multipolar world. The SCO, as a hybrid security and cooperation framework in Eurasia, challenges many of the assumptions embedded in mainstream regional integration theory. To conceptually frame the bibliometric analysis of SCO-related research, this section provides an overview of the key theoretical traditions in the study of

regionalism and institutionalism, emphasizing their relevance and limitations for the Central Asian context.

Classical theories of regional integration, particularly those developed in post-war Western Europe, centered on the notion that economic cooperation would spill over into political integration. Technical cooperation in specific sectors would foster habits of collaboration. Neofunctionalism, advanced by Ernst Haas, introduced the idea of “spillover,” suggesting that integration in one sector would necessitate cooperation in others, eventually leading to political unity [3]. These theories, while foundational, were developed in the context of liberal democracies with shared cultural and institutional legacies. Their applicability to non-Western regions like Central Asia is limited. The SCO, for instance, does not exhibit spillover in the traditional sense, nor does it prioritize supranationalism. Instead, it emphasizes sovereignty, non-interference, and pragmatic cooperation a dynamic better captured by later theoretical developments.

In response to neofunctionalism, intergovernmentalists like Stanley Hoffmann (1966) emphasized the centrality of national governments and geopolitical interests in shaping regional outcomes [4]. Realist approaches also view regionalism as an extension of power politics, where stronger states use regional institutions to pursue strategic goals. In the case of the SCO, such perspectives underscore the dominance of China and Russia in setting agendas and limiting the autonomy of smaller member states [5], [6]. The emergence of New Regionalism Theory (NRT) in the 1990s marked a significant departure from Eurocentric, institutionalist models. Scholars such as Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum (2000) argued that regionalism should be understood as a multidimensional process influenced by globalization, identity politics, and civil society [7]. Unlike its predecessors, NRT acknowledges the diversity of regional formations and the role of informal, non-state actors. In the context of the SCO, NRT allows for a more flexible understanding of integration, one that includes security cooperation, regulatory convergence, and discursive practices. Central Asia’s participation in the SCO can be interpreted not simply as submission to external powers but as a strategy of regime legitimation, economic diversification, and hedging behavior [8]. Closely aligned with NRT are constructivist approaches to regionalism, which emphasize how regional identities, norms, and institutions are socially constructed. Amitav Acharya’s (2007) notion of “norm localization” suggests that regional actors adapt external norms to local contexts. This is particularly relevant for Central Asian states, which have selectively embraced SCO principles such as the “Shanghai Spirit” while resisting more intrusive mechanisms of integration [9].

Institutionalist theories have also shaped the study of regional organizations. Rational Choice Institutionalism (RCI) views institutions as mechanisms for reducing transaction costs and enabling cooperation under conditions of anarchy [10]. From this perspective, the SCO can be understood as a platform that facilitates coordination on everyday issues, especially security and trans-border crime, even in the absence of trust. By contrast, Historical Institutionalism (HI) focuses on path dependence and institutional layering. Applied to the SCO, this

perspective highlights how the organization evolved from the “Shanghai Five” mechanism and reflects continuity in regional diplomacy. The routinization of summits, technical committees, and joint exercises has created a degree of institutional embeddedness, even without legal enforcement mechanisms [11]. More recently, scholars have proposed Pragmatic Institutionalism [12], which recognizes that regional institutions outside of the West often lack strong legal frameworks but perform effectively in specific issue areas. The SCO, which emphasizes consensus and sovereignty over formal integration, exemplifies this pragmatism. Emerging literature in the 2010s introduced the concept of post-hegemonic regionalism, especially in Latin America, where regional initiatives developed without clear leadership by a dominant power. While the SCO is not leaderless, China and Russia exert influence, nevertheless, it fits into a broader trend of non-Western institutional experimentation.

Simultaneously discussed illiberal regionalism, where regional cooperation reinforces authoritarian practices rather than liberal democratic norms. This framework is especially pertinent to the SCO, which often serves to shield member states from Western political conditionalities and reinforce domestic regime legitimacy [13]. Concept of multiplex world order envisions a system of overlapping regional and global institutions, without a single dominant actor [9]. In this context, the SCO represents one of many institutional platforms through which global order is negotiated. Meanwhile, scholars like Börzel (2020) advocate for comparative regionalism, emphasizing methodological pluralism and attention to regional specificities [12]. These approaches prioritize empirical rigor and call for the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods such as bibliometric analysis to assess institutional development.

The theoretical diversity described above provides a rich foundation for analyzing how the SCO has been studied in academic literature. It also offers interpretive tools for understanding why and how Central Asian states engage with the SCO, often balancing external pressures with domestic constraints. By mapping the bibliometric landscape through this conceptual lens, this study aims to reveal not only thematic trends but also underlying epistemological and geopolitical biases in how the SCO and by extension, Central Asian regionalism is understood.

The SCO in Scholarly Literature. The SCO has increasingly attracted scholarly attention as a unique institutional experiment in Eurasian regionalism. Initially formed as the “Shanghai Five” in the mid-1990s to address border security issues between China, Russia, and Central Asian states, the SCO has since evolved into a formal regional organization with a broad portfolio of initiatives encompassing counterterrorism, trade, energy cooperation, and cultural exchange. However, academic treatments of the SCO vary widely in focus, method, and disciplinary origin. This section surveys the existing literature, identifying key thematic clusters, gaps, and scholarly trends relevant to the SCO’s role in regional integration and international cooperation, particularly in Central Asia. Much of the early literature on the SCO viewed the organization primarily through the lens of security cooperation and geopolitical balancing. These studies focused on the

SCO's foundation in counterterrorism, separatism, and extremism collectively known as the "three evils" (*san gu shili*). Scholars such as Stephen Aris (2009) and Roy Allison (2008) emphasized the SCO's function as a platform for regional security dialogue, arguing that it facilitated confidence-building among former Soviet republics and China [5], [11]. Others interpreted the SCO as a geopolitical tool used by China and Russia to counterbalance U.S. influence in Central Asia, particularly in the wake of NATO's involvement in Afghanistan [14], [15]. This realist framing dominated the discourse for much of the 2000s, often reducing Central Asian states to passive objects of great power competition. However, such an approach tended to overlook the internal agency of smaller states and the broader institutional features of the SCO beyond its security functions.

A recurring issue in the literature is the under-theorization of Central Asia's role within the SCO. Most works treat the region as a "recipient" of Chinese or Russian influence rather than as an active participant in shaping institutional norms. Alexander Cooley (2012) described the SCO as part of a "dual hegemony" in Central Asia, where local regimes leverage the organization to resist Western conditionality and consolidate regime survival [6]. This view has been complemented by studies that frame the SCO as a form of illiberal regionalism [13], where cooperation strengthens authoritarian rule rather than democratic governance. While insightful, this approach risks homogenizing Central Asian states and overlooking intra-regional variation. For instance, Kazakhstan has often pursued a more multivectoral foreign policy than Kyrgyzstan or Tajikistan. Recent studies have sought to correct this imbalance by investigating how Central Asian governments use SCO membership to enhance their international legitimacy, negotiate aid and investment, and diversify foreign policy options [16], [17], [18].

A second strand of literature examines the SCO from an institutionalist perspective, focusing on its structures, procedures, and decision-making norms. Scholars such as Marcin Kaczmarek (2015) and Chien-peng Chung (2010) have noted the SCO's institutional hybridity its lack of supranational mechanisms, minimal legal formalization, and consensus-based decision-making [19], [20]. These characteristics are often interpreted either as institutional weakness or as pragmatic adaptability in a region marked by regime diversity and sovereignty sensitivity. In this regard, the SCO challenges conventional institutionalist theories that associate effectiveness with legalism and delegation. In the 2010s, scholarship began to broaden its thematic scope, examining the SCO's involvement in economic cooperation, infrastructure development, and digital governance. These studies analyze the organization's engagement with initiatives such as China's Belt and Road Initiative and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), exploring whether the SCO complements or competes with these frameworks [21]. Importantly, this literature has drawn attention to the economic and developmental dimensions of integration, particularly for Central Asia. While the SCO lacks a formal economic arm, it facilitates policy dialogues, investment forums, and trans-regional connectivity initiatives, which indirectly support economic integration.

Constructivist scholars have turned their attention to the discursive and normative dimensions of the SCO. The so-called Shanghai Spirit a set of normative principles emphasizing mutual respect, non-interference, and consensus has been interpreted as both a regional identity marker and a soft power resource [22], [23]. From this perspective, the SCO is not just an interest-based organization but also a site for norm diffusion and identity construction. Acharya's (2007) concept of "norm localization" is beneficial here, as it explains how regional actors adapt global norms to fit local political and cultural conditions [1]. The SCO's emphasis on sovereignty and development without democratization reflects such localization processes. This body of work is crucial for understanding why Central Asian states find the SCO attractive, even if they differ in capacity and alignment. Despite this thematic diversification, there is a striking lack of bibliometric and meta-analytical research on how the SCO has been studied. Most articles are case-based, normative, or descriptive, with limited effort to map broader patterns in authorship, geography, institutional affiliation, or citation networks. As Börzel and Risse (2020) argue, the field of comparative regionalism would benefit from more systematic and data-driven analyses of non-Western regional organizations [24].

Bibliometrics as a Method in International Relations. The discipline of international relations has traditionally favored qualitative methodologies, emphasizing case studies, textual interpretation, and normative theorizing. However, growing calls for pluralism and methodological transparency have opened the door to quantitative and mixed-method approaches, including bibliometric techniques [25], [26]. Bibliometrics offers a complementary lens through which to examine the intellectual architecture of IR, revealing hidden structures of influence, thematic clusters, and regional asymmetries in knowledge production. The shift toward global IR has also intensified the need to track who produces IR knowledge, from where, and about whom. Bibliometric analysis is uniquely suited to answer such questions, particularly in contexts where the dominance of Anglo-American publishing and epistemologies risks marginalizing voices from the Global South and non-Western regions.

In recent years, bibliometric methods have gained significant traction across various subfields of International Relations, providing valuable insights into the structural evolution and thematic orientation of scholarly literature. Rather than supplanting qualitative inquiry, bibliometric analysis complements it by offering a meta-level perspective on how research domains develop, converge, or fragment over time. Zürn and Faude (2013) applied bibliometric tools to Global Governance, uncovering the complex citation networks that underpin institutional governance research [27]. Lenz and Marks (2016) examined citation patterns to assess how regional studies scholars construct and contest regionalism across different world areas [28]. Such studies illustrate the versatility of bibliometric methods in capturing both structural and semantic dimensions of academic knowledge. They help reveal who dominates the conversation, what themes are most prevalent, and how scholarly communities are internally structured and externally connected. At the heart of bibliometric analysis lie several key

indicators that together enable a multidimensional understanding of research landscapes. Publication output, the number of works published within a defined scope, serves as a basic proxy for scholarly attention. Citation analysis measures the relative impact of specific works or authors by tracking how frequently they are cited within the literature. Co-authorship networks provide insight into collaboration patterns among researchers, institutions, and countries, reflecting both disciplinary and geopolitical linkages. Co-citation analysis reveals the intellectual structure of a field by identifying which sources are commonly cited together, thus highlighting schools of thought or paradigmatic cores. Keyword co-occurrence captures thematic clusters based on recurring terminology across titles, abstracts, and author-defined keywords, while bibliographic coupling connects documents sharing standard references, suggesting topical or methodological proximity. Together, these tools allow scholars to uncover the implicit architecture of knowledge production its dominant narratives and its silences. To conduct such analyses, researchers typically rely on large academic databases such as Scopus, Web of Science or Dimensions. Among these, Scopus is often preferred in the social sciences due to its broader journal coverage, including non-English language publications [29].

Despite the growing relevance of bibliometric methods, they remain underutilized in the study of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. While the SCO has received considerable attention from scholars in international security, regionalism, and Central Asian studies, most existing analyses are qualitative, normative, or policy-oriented. A bibliometric approach can address these gaps by revealing structural imbalances in knowledge production such as the underrepresentation of local or regional scholars, the concentration of influential publications in select high-impact journals, or the dominance of particular thematic framings. These findings are critical for evaluating the epistemological contours and power hierarchies embedded within the academic treatment of the SCO. Moreover, bibliometric analysis aligns with current efforts to decolonize and pluralize IR scholarship. Scholars such as Bilgin (2016) and Tickner (2013) have critiqued the disciplinary core of IR for its persistent Eurocentrism and marginalization of non-Western experiences and frameworks [30], [31]. Bibliometric methods offer a means of empirically documenting these asymmetries, thereby supporting broader theoretical and political projects aimed at reconstituting the field along more inclusive lines. Nonetheless, bibliometric approaches are not without limitations. One major challenge lies in the interpretation of citation metrics, which do not always reflect scholarly quality or originality. Disciplinary norms, reputational economies, and linguistic or institutional access barriers influence citation practices. Second, the coverage of bibliographic databases is uneven, often favoring English-language publications and journals based in North America or Western Europe [32]. This creates visibility gaps for scholarship produced in Russian, Chinese, or Central Asian contexts, ironically, the very regions most relevant for the SCO. Third, bibliometric analysis tends to focus on formal attributes of texts such as frequency, connection, and distribution while overlooking substantive content,

theoretical nuance, or normative intent [33]. For this reason, bibliometric insights should be understood as complementary to, rather than substitutive of, close textual or contextual analysis. In sum, bibliometric analysis provides a rigorous and replicable methodology for mapping academic knowledge structures. When applied to the SCO, it enables scholars to assess the scope, focus, and biases of the literature on regional integration and cooperation in Central Asia. This contributes not only to empirical understanding of how the SCO is studied but also to broader methodological innovation within the field of international relations, particularly in comparative regionalism and global governance studies. By tracing the evolution of the SCO in the academic literature, this study helps illuminate how power, geography, and disciplinary norms intersect to shape the intellectual agenda of one of Eurasia's most significant but under-theorized multilateral institutions.

Description of Materials and methods

This study adopts a bibliometric methodology to examine the structure and evolution of academic research on the SCO, with a specific focus on its role in regional integration and international cooperation involving Central Asia. Bibliometric methods are particularly well-suited for meta-analytical assessments of scholarly production, allowing for the mapping of publication trends, thematic clusters, co-authorship networks, and citation dynamics. In order to ensure methodological rigor and transparency, the study follows PRISMA guidelines (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) to document the article selection process. It relies on VOSviewer for the execution of network-based cluster analysis.

Data Source and Search Strategy

The primary dataset was obtained from Scopus, a leading multidisciplinary database that provides comprehensive coverage of peer-reviewed journals in the social sciences, including international relations, political science, and area studies. Scopus was selected for its broad geographic coverage, inclusion of non-U.S. journals, and availability of citation data and author affiliations, which are critical for the network visualizations employed in this study. The search was conducted using the following Boolean query in the Scopus advanced search interface:

TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Shanghai Cooperation Organization" AND "Central Asia") AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE , "English")) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , "ar"))

This search targeted documents that included references to the "Shanghai Cooperation Organization" and "Central Asia" in their titles, abstracts, or keywords. The search was further restricted to articles published in English, in order to ensure consistency in bibliometric indicators and accessibility of metadata. The timeframe was defined as 2001 to 2024, capturing the whole period since the SCO's formal establishment as an intergovernmental organization.

Article Screening and PRISMA Filtering. To enhance methodological transparency and reproducibility, the study follows the PRISMA framework for screening and article selection. The initial search query returned 171 documents. A multi-stage screening process was then applied, as follows:

1. Duplicate removal, articles with duplicate metadata (same DOI or Scopus ID) were excluded (n = 9).
2. Scope relevance, articles were excluded if they did not explicitly address either (a) the SCO as a regional organization or (b) its relevance to regional cooperation in Central Asia (n = 36).
3. Final inclusion, a total of 114 articles met the inclusion criteria and were retained for full bibliometric analysis.

Unit of Analysis and Data Preparation

Each of the 114 articles constituted a unit of analysis. Metadata including author names, institutional affiliations, article titles, publication years, abstracts, keywords, source titles (journals), citation counts, and references were downloaded in CSV format compatible with bibliometric software. Particular care was taken to clean and harmonize author names as well as to standardize institutional data for cross-institutional comparison. The dataset was then imported into VOSviewer version 1.6.19, a widely used tool for bibliometric mapping, which supports co-authorship, co-citation, bibliographic coupling, and keyword co-occurrence analysis [26]. All network maps presented in the results section are based on this analytical framework.

Cluster Analysis and Visualization Techniques. A cluster analysis was conducted to identify thematic groupings within the literature, utilizing three primary types of bibliometric relationships. First, the co-occurrence of keywords revealed dominant research themes and conceptual linkages, enabling the identification of central topics such as “security cooperation,” “regional integration,” “China - Central Asia relations,” and “authoritarian regionalism.” Second, co-authorship networks were analyzed to visualize patterns of scholarly collaboration across geographic regions, academic institutions, and disciplinary domains. Third, selective citation network analysis was employed to examine core-periphery structures and trace patterns of intellectual influence within the dataset. Together, these approaches provided a comprehensive view of the structural and thematic organization of SCO-related scholarship. The resulting visualizations are interpreted quantitatively and qualitatively, providing a rich picture of the intellectual architecture of SCO scholarship.

Ethical and Methodological Considerations. As this study involves secondary data analysis of publicly available bibliographic metadata, no institutional review board approval was required. However, the principles of ethical research were followed throughout, including the anonymization of individual author names in presented figures where appropriate and the acknowledgment of all data sources.

Results and discussion

To assess the intellectual foundations and influential contributions within the scholarly discourse on the SCO and its impact on Central Asia, we conducted

a citation-based analysis of the 114 articles included in our dataset. Citations remain a key metric in bibliometric research, serving as a proxy for academic impact and scholarly reception. While citation counts should not be conflated with quality or relevance alone, they offer helpful insight into which articles have most shaped the discourse. Table 1 displays the ten most cited articles in the field between 2001 and 2024. These articles have been instrumental in defining the thematic orientation of SCO-related research, particularly regarding issues of authoritarian norm diffusion, regional security, China's strategic ambitions, and institutional design.

Table 1 - Top-cited articles on the SCO and Central Asia (2001–2024)

№	Title	Author	Journal	Year	Citations
1	<i>Catching the 'Shanghai Spirit': How the SCO promotes authoritarian norms in Central Asia</i>	Ambrosio, T.	Europe - Asia Studies	2008	224
2	<i>Virtual regionalism, regional structures and regime security in Central Asia</i>	Allison, R.	Central Asian Survey	2008	201
3	<i>The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation: 'Tackling the three evils'</i>	Stephen, A.	Europe - Asia Studies	2009	95
4	<i>China's role in establishing and building the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)</i>	Jing-Dong, Y.	Journal of Contemporary China	2010	80
5	<i>China turns west: Beijing's contemporary strategy towards Central Asia</i>	Sheives, K.	Pacific Affairs	2006	53
6	<i>Who's Socialising Whom? Regional Organisations and Contested Norms in Central Asia</i>	Lewis, D.	Europe - Asia Studies	2012	52
7	<i>Central Asian and Russian perspectives on China's strategic emergence</i>	Kerr, D.	International Affairs	2010	49
8	<i>In medias res: The development of the SCO as a security community</i>	Lanteigne, M.	Pacific Affairs	2006	48
9	<i>Shanghaied into cooperation: Framing China's socialization of Central Asia</i>	Kavalski, E.	Journal of Asian and African Studies	2010	46

10	<i>The Strategic Use of Soft Balancing: The Normative Dimensions of the Chinese-Russian ‘Strategic Partnership’</i>	Ferguson, C.	Journal of Strategic Studies	2012	45
Source: compiled by the authors based on Scopus data					

The most cited publication, *Catching the ‘Shanghai Spirit’* by Ambrosio (2008), with 224 citations, is emblematic of the critical constructivist strand in the literature [14]. It argues that the SCO contributes to the regional entrenchment of authoritarian norms, particularly in its Central Asian member states. The second most cited article, Allison (2008), similarly focuses on the symbolic and regime-supporting functions of regionalism in Central Asia, introducing the concept of *virtual regionalism* to highlight the gap between declaratory rhetoric and institutional depth [8]. These two articles alone account for over 425 citations and continue to be central reference points in studies that interrogate the illiberal character of regional cooperation in Eurasia. The third most cited article, Aris (2009), addresses the SCO’s efforts to combat the “three evils” and situates the organization within the broader debate on non-traditional security governance [5]. The next tier of highly cited works, including Jing-Dong Yuan (2010) and Sheives (2006), focuses on China’s role in institutional design and geopolitical expansion, especially in the context of Beijing’s westward turn in foreign policy [34], [35]. A notable feature of the citation landscape is the temporal concentration: the majority of the most cited papers were published between 2006 and 2012, a period which coincides with the SCO’s institutional maturation and growing global relevance. Despite the proliferation of SCO research in the 2020s, no recent works have yet matched the citation impact of these foundational texts, indicating a potential lag in integration of newer research into the core of the academic debate. These influential publications are predominantly found in regional studies journals such as *Europe-Asia Studies*, *Central Asian Survey*, and *Pacific Affairs*, suggesting that while the SCO is of clear interest to area specialists, it has not yet achieved mainstream recognition in generalist IR outlets.

The temporal distribution of publications and citations on the SCO and Central Asia from 2001 to 2024 demonstrates a clear pattern of progressive growth and thematic consolidation over two decades (see Figure 1).

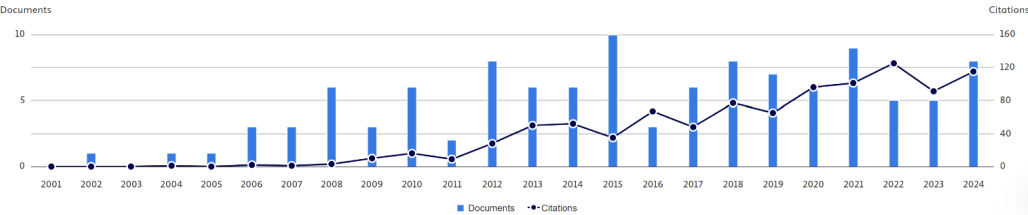


Figure 1. Annual publication output and citations on the SCO and Central Asia (2001–2024)

The early 2000s show minimal scholarly output, with fewer than three articles per year and negligible citation activity. This reflects the nascent stage of SCO-focused research, likely tied to the organization's formative years and limited visibility in global academic discourse. A gradual increase in publications begins in 2006, coinciding with the institutional consolidation of the SCO and its expansion of competencies beyond security into areas such as energy, trade, and diplomacy. The first notable spike in publications occurs around 2008-2009, aligning with the publication of several highly cited foundational texts [5], [6]. These works appear to have shaped the citation landscape for years to come. From 2010 onward, the field enters a period of steady growth, with an average of 5–8 articles per year. The peak year in publication volume is 2015, with 9 articles, which may reflect increased interest in the SCO following regional security developments and China's rising global ambitions under the Belt and Road Initiative. Citation trends also demonstrate a lagged but corresponding increase, with annual citation counts surpassing 100 from 2019 onward. The highest citation volume occurs in 2022, reaching over 120, likely reflecting both accumulated impact of earlier publications and growing attention to SCO-related themes amid shifting global power dynamics and renewed interest in multipolarity. This longitudinal pattern suggests that SCO scholarship has matured from episodic contributions into a sustained research field, gaining visibility and relevance within both area studies and international relations. It also indicates that the field is not yet saturated, offering ongoing opportunities for new contributions, especially from Central Asian perspectives.

The distribution of publications across journals over time reveals continuity and diversification in the outlets that have shaped the scholarly discourse on the SCO and its regional context. Figure 2 highlights the top-10 academic journals by volume of SCO-related publications and visualizes their temporal contributions from 2001 to 2024.

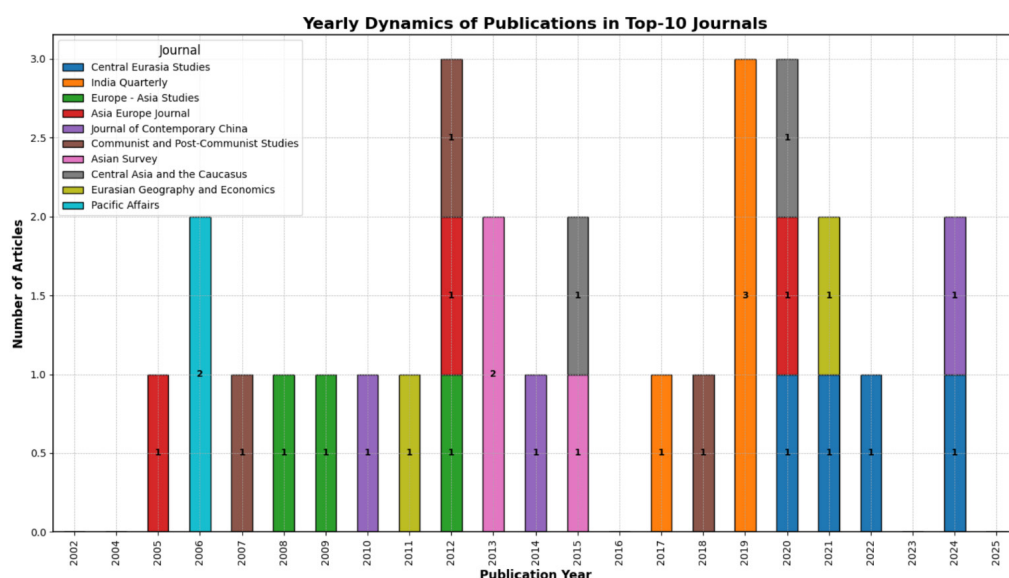


Figure 2. Yearly Dynamics of Publications in Top-10 Journals (2001–2024)

The most consistent and prolific journals include *Europe-Asia Studies* and *Central Asian Survey*, which serve as the core publishing venues for SCO-focused research. Both journals show sustained output across multiple years and are often cited in foundational debates on authoritarian regionalism and Central Asian regime dynamics. *Pacific Affairs* and *Journal of Contemporary China* also demonstrate regular contributions, reflecting the growing interest in the SCO as a platform of Chinese regional strategy and Eurasian connectivity. The peak year in journal diversity and output was 2019, with seven articles across five different journals, indicating a high point of scholarly interest and possibly linked to global discourse on China’s rising power and the 2018 expansion of the SCO. This spike includes contributions from *India Quarterly*, reflecting India’s accession as a full SCO member in 2017 and the accompanying reorientation of regional policy discussions. More recent years (2020-2023) show a moderate yet sustained pattern of publication, including new journal entries such as *Eurasian Geography and Economics* and *Asian Survey*, which suggests a gradual thematic expansion toward economics, spatial analysis, and broader regional frameworks. Interestingly, the earlier years (2001-2007) show minimal diversity in journal outlets, with publications concentrated almost entirely in area studies journals an indicator that the SCO was initially treated as a region-specific phenomenon rather than a case of broader IR theoretical interest. These dynamics illustrate the shifting disciplinary boundaries of SCO research from Central Asian political studies toward comparative regionalism, Chinese foreign policy, and international security studies. At the same time, the persistent dominance of a handful of journals underscores the concentration of epistemic authority in a relatively narrow segment of the scholarly field. This pattern has implications for knowledge diffusion and access: while specialized journals offer depth and context, broader dissemination through generalist IR journals could elevate the SCO’s visibility in global debates on multilateralism and institutional diversity. The geographic distribution of scholarly publications on the SCO and Central Asia reveals a pronounced geopolitical imbalance in authorship and academic attention (Figure 3).

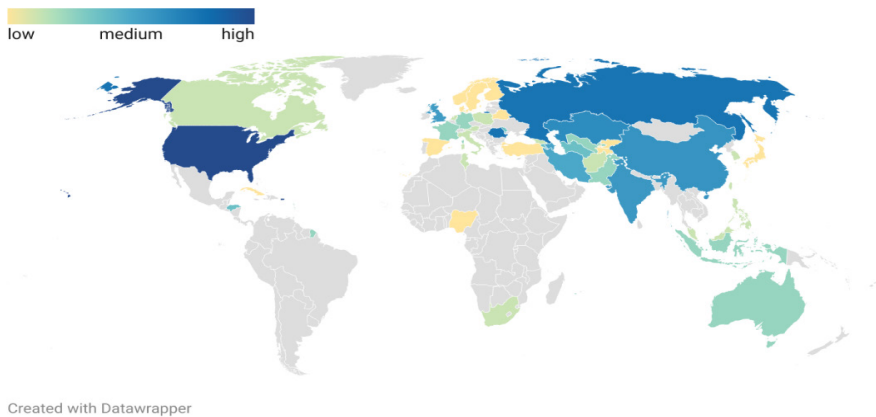


Figure 3. Geographic distribution of SCO-related publications by author affiliation (2001–2024)

As the map demonstrates, the highest publication intensity is concentrated in the United States, Russia, China, and the United Kingdom countries that dominate both global IR discourse and regional power politics. Despite the SCO's direct relevance to Central Asian states, the region remains underrepresented in terms of academic output. Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan exhibit only low to medium levels of publication activity, typically in co-authorship with institutions based in China or Russia. This reflects structural barriers such as limited research funding, language constraints, and the relative marginality of Central Asian institutions within global academic networks. China and Russia, by contrast, exhibit strong author presence, reflecting their role as founding SCO members and principal actors in Eurasian regionalism. Their dominance is reinforced by domestic think tanks and policy-oriented institutions that actively contribute to the literature, often in collaboration with Western scholars or international journals. The United States emerges as the single most active country in SCO-related research, likely due to its strategic interest in Central Asia post 9/11 and the positioning of the SCO as a counter-hegemonic bloc in Western academic discourse. This also reflects broader trends in global IR, where American institutions continue to shape research agendas and citation economies, even on issues outside their geographic sphere. Other notable contributors include India, Germany, France, Canada, and Australia, which register medium activity levels. These countries often approach the SCO through the lens of comparative regionalism, security studies, or Sino-Russian cooperation, rather than direct regional embeddedness. Figure 3 illustrates a North-South and East-West asymmetry in knowledge production. The discourse on the SCO remains externally dominated, with insufficient epistemic contributions from within Central Asia itself. This finding reinforces the need for greater scholarly inclusion and capacity-building in the region most affected by SCO policies.

Cluster and Thematic Network Analysis

To identify and interpret the dominant themes in the scholarly literature on the SCO and Central Asia, we conducted a keyword co-occurrence analysis using VOSviewer. This method groups frequently co-occurring terms into thematic clusters based on their association strength, enabling the visualization of the semantic structure of the field. Figure 4 presents the keyword network map based on a minimum occurrence threshold of three keywords. Nodes represent keywords, node size reflects frequency, and edge thickness indicates the strength of co-occurrence. Clusters are color-coded, and their interpretation follows below.

Cluster 1 constitutes the semantic and structural core of the keyword network, encompassing the most frequently occurring and centrally positioned terms in the corpus: "*Central Asia*", "*Shanghai Cooperation Organization*", "*SCO*", and "*Russia*". These keywords form the foundational axis of the literature, around which much of the academic inquiry on the SCO is organized. The dense interconnections among these terms indicate that regional governance remains the primary interpretive frame for understanding the SCO's institutional role and functional evolution. At the heart of this cluster is the conception of the SCO as a regional governance platform, albeit one that diverges from classical

liberal models of integration. Unlike the European Union or ASEAN, the SCO emphasizes sovereignty, non-interference, and regime security, aligning with what some scholars have termed “authoritarian regionalism” [14], [17]. Within this framework, “Russia” and “Central Asia” appear not merely as geographical entities but as strategic poles shaping the institutional logic and political culture of the organization. The presence of the term “Eurasia” in this cluster further highlights the geopolitical and civilizational dimensions of the SCO project. The literature frequently positions the SCO within broader debates on Eurasianism, post-Soviet space reconfiguration, and multipolar world order [8], [22]. These narratives often reflect competing visions of regionalism Russia’s ambition for a “Greater Eurasia” versus China’s BRI-driven connectivity model thus complicating the cooperative narrative with latent rivalry and asymmetry.

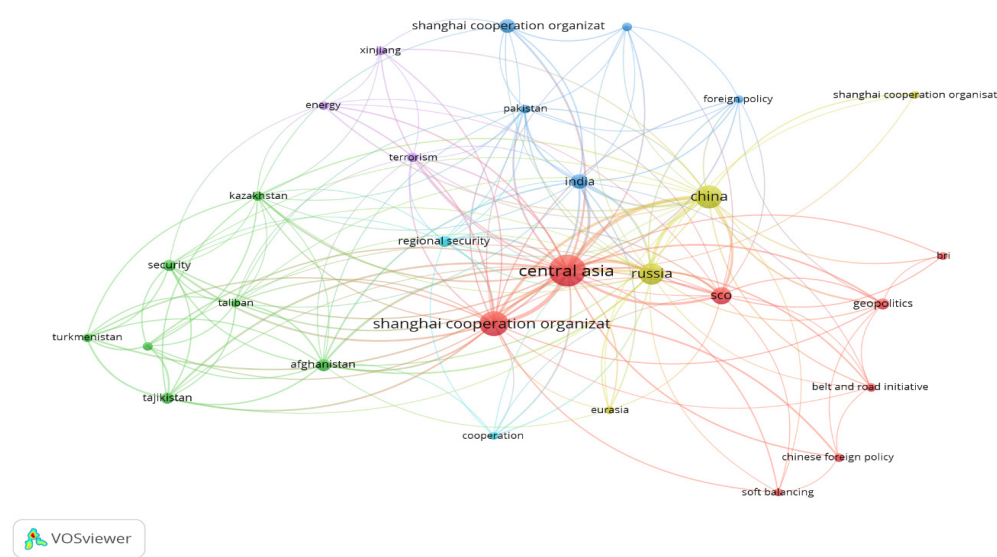


Figure 4. Keyword co-occurrence map on the SCO and Central Asia (2001–2024)
Cluster 1. Regional Governance and Central Asia (Red)

Additionally, the frequent co-occurrence of keywords such as “cooperation”, “integration”, and “multilateralism” suggests that despite critiques of its depth and cohesion, the SCO is still analyzed through the lens of international institution theory. This includes applications of both rationalist institutionalism and constructivist regionalism. However, the literature within this cluster also exhibits an analytical tension between form and function: while the SCO presents itself as a mechanism of regional integration, many studies argue that it functions more as a platform for elite coordination, symbolic diplomacy, and security legitimization than as a supranational body with binding authority [5]. The term “integration” thus appears in a contested epistemic space, where its normative appeal is contrasted with the empirical reality of limited

institutionalization. Crucially, the cluster also underscores the state-centric character of SCO governance. Keywords associated with civil society, human rights, or democratic accountability are notably absent from this semantic field. This supports the claim that SCO regionalism is primarily constructed around executive-level cooperation, with minimal societal participation and closed norm diffusion mechanisms [15]. In terms of methodology, the prominence of this cluster is not merely a function of frequency, but also of centrality in the network topology: keywords in this group serve as bridging concepts connecting to other clusters (security, China's strategy, energy diplomacy), reinforcing the idea that "*regional governance in Central Asia*" is the pivot around which other thematic subfields revolve.

Cluster 2. Security and Conflict (Green). Focus on the security-driven dimension of SCO-related scholarship, centered around the keywords "*security*", "*terrorism*", "*Taliban*", "*Afghanistan*", "*Kazakhstan*", "*Turkmenistan*", and "*Tajikistan*". The co-occurrence patterns and proximity of these terms suggest a regionally embedded narrative, whereby the SCO is understood as a mechanism of collective security governance, particularly in response to transnational threats and domestic regime vulnerabilities in post-Soviet Central Asia. At the heart of this cluster lies the SCO's foundational "three evils" doctrine: terrorism, separatism, and extremism, which has served as the normative and operational rationale for its security agenda. This concept, while officially endorsed by SCO member states, has drawn critical attention in the literature for being ambiguous and politically malleable, often employed to legitimize internal crackdowns and suppress political dissent under the guise of regional cooperation [5], [6]. The geographic specificity of this cluster is particularly notable. Countries such as "*Afghanistan*", "*Tajikistan*", and "*Kazakhstan*" are recurrently associated with security risks, whether through border instability, spillover effects of conflict, or concerns about radicalization and refugee flows. The keyword "*Taliban*" further links the SCO's security logic to the broader dynamics of South Asian conflict zones, especially after the NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan and the Taliban's return to power in 2021. These developments have renewed the relevance of the SCO-Afghanistan Contact Group and prompted scholarly reappraisal of the organization's crisis response capacity. The inclusion of "*Turkmenistan*", despite its non-membership in the SCO, reflects the regional spillover logic of security studies, highlighting how geopolitical vulnerability transcends institutional boundaries. Studies often treat the Central Asian region as an interdependent security complex, where the resilience or collapse of one state has immediate implications for its neighbors. The presence of "*security*" as both a node and connector within this cluster also points to the dominance of realist and strategic studies perspectives in this thematic strand. Much of the literature adopts state-centered, threat-oriented frameworks, often drawing on traditional IR theories such as balance of power, threat perception, and the security dilemma. While this orientation has yielded important insights into the SCO's military exercises, counterterrorism drills, and intelligence coordination via RATS, it tends to underemphasize human security, civil-military relations, and non-state dynamics.

Furthermore, this cluster reveals an enduring disconnect between security discourse and normative critique. While scholars acknowledge the operational expansion of the SCO's security apparatus, there is limited engagement with questions of legal accountability, civilian oversight, or regional arms dynamics. This reflects both the data limitations in authoritarian contexts and the normative ambivalence of the SCO itself, which promotes security cooperation while resisting international norms on transparency and intervention.

Notably, the overlap between Cluster 2 and other clusters, particularly with Cluster 1 (Regional Governance) and Cluster 4 (India–Pakistan), suggests that security is not an isolated theme, but rather interwoven with questions of legitimacy, competition, and strategic alignment. For example, China's growing security footprint in the region intersects with its economic agenda, BRI, while Russia seeks to maintain a dominant position within the CSTO–SCO nexus. In sum, Cluster 2 confirms that the SCO is primarily perceived as a security actor, but one that operates through consensual, sovereignty-respecting modalities rather than through supranational enforcement. It reflects a pragmatic model of regional security, grounded in regime survival and elite coordination rather than collective defense or normative convergence.

Cluster 3. China's Strategic Vision (Yellow). Cluster 3 is anchored in a set of keywords that collectively reflect the Chinese strategic orientation within the SCO and beyond. The dominant terms “China”, “foreign policy”, “Belt and Road Initiative”, “Chinese foreign policy”, “soft balancing”, and “geopolitics” indicate a distinct thematic field concerned with how China conceptualizes and instrumentalizes regional cooperation under the SCO umbrella. Unlike Clusters 1 and 2, which emphasize regional institutionalism and security coordination, respectively, this cluster foregrounds strategic intentionality, normative projection, and power recalibration in a transforming global order. The co-occurrence of “China” with both “SCO” and “BRI” suggests that scholarly work increasingly views these frameworks not in isolation, but as interlinked components of a broader geostrategic architecture. The presence of “Chinese foreign policy” and “foreign policy” in the same cluster points to dual layers of analysis. On one hand, there is substantial scholarship focused on the rationale and objectives of China's multilateral engagement in Central Asia (e.g., access to markets, energy security, border stability). On the other hand, a more global IR perspective examines China's use of the SCO as a soft balancing mechanism vis-à-vis Western-led institutions such as NATO, the EU, and the U.S. alliance system [19]. The concept of soft balancing, in particular, represents a theoretical bridge between realism and constructivism. It allows scholars to analyze how China utilizes diplomatic, institutional, and economic tools, including the SCO, to dilute Western hegemony without triggering confrontation. Meanwhile, the keyword “geopolitics” signals a broader discourse in which the SCO is not merely a regional arrangement but a node in global power transitions. The literature in this area often treats the SCO as a microcosm of multipolarity, where China's vision of international order, based on principles such as non-interference and infrastructure-led connectivity, competes with liberal democratic norms and

governance models. In this view, the SCO becomes a testing ground for China's evolving role as a normative power, especially in the Global South. The strategic orientation of this cluster is further enhanced by its connections to *Cluster 1* (e.g., through "SCO" and "regional integration") and *Cluster 2* (via shared concern with "security" and "threats"), illustrating how Chinese strategy cannot be separated from broader debates on institutional design and regional stability. However, it also introduces new dimensions, such as economic statecraft, discourse construction, and symbolic diplomacy [16]. An important sub-theme within this cluster is the instrumentalization of multilateralism. Several scholars argue that China's engagement with the SCO is selective and interest-driven, intended to reassure neighbors while preserving strategic autonomy [13], [34]. Unlike the EU or ASEAN, where rule-bound institutionalism prevails, China's SCO approach is often characterized as pragmatic, non-binding, and elite-centered a form of "strategic multilateralism" tailored to maximize flexibility and minimize constraint. Nevertheless, critiques within the literature also point to internal contradictions in China's SCO policy. While rhetorically committed to shared development and security, China's growing economic dominance and asymmetric partnerships have generated ambivalence and suspicion among smaller member states. Moreover, its normative discourse on "win-win cooperation" is sometimes viewed as covertly hierarchical, particularly when aligned with the Belt and Road Initiative's infrastructure dependency patterns. In summary, Cluster 3 provides critical insight into how China's engagement with the SCO reflects broader efforts to reshape regional and global governance architectures. It shows that the SCO is not just a forum for consensus-building. However, China also serves as a strategic platform through which It projects influence, manages competition, and redefines the rules of international order from a Eurasian vantage point.

Cluster 4. South Asian Dynamics (Blue). This cluster is driven by the keywords "India", "Pakistan", "foreign policy", "Xinjiang", and "regional security". It captures the growing body of research generated after the accession of India and Pakistan as full members of the SCO in 2017, a move widely recognized as a turning point in the organization's history. Their entry transformed the SCO from a primarily Central Asian Sino-Russian bloc into a broader multilateral platform that now includes key South Asian actors with historically adversarial relations. Much of the literature in this cluster focuses on India's strategic calculus, particularly its attempts to leverage SCO membership to balance China's growing regional footprint. Scholars have explored India's cautious engagement, highlighting its resistance to the Belt and Road Initiative and its desire to assert normative pluralism within the SCO framework [21]. At the same time, Pakistan's participation is analyzed through the lens of security alignment with China and its regional ambitions in Central Asia, especially regarding connectivity to Afghanistan and beyond. The inclusion of "Xinjiang" in this cluster signals the entanglement of China's domestic security concerns with regional stability issues. It also illustrates the extension of SCO cooperation into sensitive border areas, linking transnational security with internal legitimacy. This cluster thus reflects a complex web of competing national interests and

diplomatic maneuvering. The simultaneous presence of India and Pakistan introduces structural friction into SCO decision-making, particularly in areas like joint declarations, counterterrorism language, and connectivity initiatives. Nonetheless, their participation also enhances the SCO's geopolitical reach and introduces new analytical lenses, including the role of regional rivalries, nuclear deterrence, and diplomatic pluralism within multilateral institutions [17], [18].

Cluster 5. Energy and Connectivity (Purple). The fifth cluster, though smaller in scale, addresses a strategically vital theme: the intersection of “energy”, “infrastructure”, and “connectivity”. It reflects the growing scholarly interest in how the SCO facilitates, or at least aligns with, broader infrastructure diplomacy and energy geopolitics in Central Asia. Here, the SCO is not viewed as a regulatory energy body per se, but rather as a political platform that reinforces bilateral and regional energy initiatives. China's growing reliance on Central Asian energy supplies, particularly natural gas and oil from Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, forms a critical backdrop to this literature [20], [36]. These works often examine how energy deals, pipelines, and cross-border electricity grids are embedded within the broader SCO dialogue, even if not formally coordinated by the organization itself. Likewise, the inclusion of “connectivity” connects this cluster with studies on the Belt and Road Initiative, focusing on railways, roads, fiber optic links, and logistics hubs. Scholars have analyzed the SCO as a normative umbrella that legitimizes China's infrastructural expansion and reduces resistance among member states by framing such projects within a consensual, multilateral structure [36], [37]. Moreover, the appearance of “regional security” in this cluster underscores the dual nature of infrastructure: as both a development asset and a security concern. Authors have raised issues of pipeline protection, cyber vulnerabilities, and the geopolitical risks of infrastructural dependence. There is also critical attention to the asymmetric relationships formed through such projects, especially where infrastructure loans are perceived as creating long-term leverage for external powers. In sum, these two clusters expand the scope of SCO studies beyond governance and hard security. Cluster 4 foregrounds institutional adaptation and strategic contestation introduced by South Asian membership, while Cluster 5 illuminates the material foundations of regional integration, highlighting how infrastructure and energy resources shape the political economy of multilateralism in Eurasia. Together, they underscore that the SCO is no longer simply a security or geopolitical bloc; it is a multifaceted institution whose relevance now spans issues of identity, development, diplomacy, and infrastructure-led regionalism.

Conclusion

This study has undertaken the first comprehensive bibliometric analysis of scholarly literature on the Shanghai Cooperation Organization with specific attention to its role in regional integration in Central Asia. By analyzing 114 peer-reviewed articles published between 2001 and 2024 using PRISMA methodology and cluster visualization tools like VOSviewer, the study maps the intellectual structure, thematic orientations, and knowledge production patterns

within this growing research domain. The performance analysis revealed a gradual but consistent increase in scholarly output on the SCO, with notable surges during geopolitical turning points in Eurasia. Citation analysis identified a core set of highly influential publications that have shaped the discourse on authoritarian diffusion, regime security, and multilateral cooperation within the SCO. The dominance of English-language journals based in Western and East Asian academic institutions also highlights structural asymmetries in global knowledge production. Geographically, China, Russia, and the United States emerged as the most prolific contributors, with relatively limited representation from Central Asian scholars and institutions. This finding raises critical questions about epistemic inclusion and the localization of regional knowledge, aligning with broader debates in post-Western International Relations theory. Cluster and co-word analyses yielded four dominant thematic clusters:

1. Regional Governance and Central Asia exploring the SCO as a vehicle for multilateralism, regionalism, and strategic alignment in Eurasia.
2. Security and Counterterrorism Cooperation focusing on the SCO's engagement with non-traditional security threats and the "three evils" narrative.
3. China's Foreign Policy and Strategic Partnerships interrogating China's use of the SCO as a tool of normative diffusion and geopolitical balancing.
4. Energy, Economy, and Development emphasizing economic cooperation, infrastructure initiatives, and resource politics as a less dominant but emerging theme.

These clusters indicate that the field is heavily security-centric but gradually diversifying into economic and normative dimensions. They also suggest a spatial-temporal evolution from theoretical regionalism toward empirical analyses of policy, governance, and cooperation mechanisms.

The use of bibliometric techniques adds methodological rigor to the field of International Relations, offering a macroscopic view of how topics evolve, cluster, and concentrate across institutional and national boundaries. The study demonstrates how bibliometric approaches complement qualitative inquiry, providing robust evidence of citation dynamics, thematic trends, and intellectual lineage. The findings of this study generate several critical implications:

1. Epistemic Pluralism. There is a pressing need to diversify the geographic and institutional composition of SCO scholarship by promoting contributions from Central Asian scholars, particularly in local languages and interdisciplinary contexts.
2. Theoretical Innovation. Scholars should seek to bridge bibliometric insights with critical and post-colonial IR theory to unpack underlying assumptions and hierarchies in SCO-related narratives.
3. Policy Relevance. Understanding the evolving academic framing of the SCO can inform more nuanced and reflexive policy analysis, particularly concerning regional cooperation frameworks such as the Belt and Road Initiative or the CSTO.

This study acknowledges several limitations, including the focus on English-language, peer-reviewed journal articles indexed in Scopus. Future

research could incorporate multilingual sources and grey literature to expand the empirical base. Additionally, while bibliometrics reveals structural patterns, qualitative methods remain essential for interpreting meanings, narratives, and contestations embedded in SCO scholarship. In conclusion, this bibliometric analysis contributes to the meta-theoretical and empirical development of International Relations by offering a critical lens through which to examine regionalism in Central Asia. By mapping the scholarly terrain of the SCO, this study not only illuminates academic trends but also encourages a more inclusive, interdisciplinary, and theoretically grounded future for research on Eurasian multilateralism.

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ШЫҰ АЯСЫНДАҒЫ АЙМАҚТЫҚ ИНТЕГРАЦИЯ ЖӘНЕ ХАЛЫҚАРАЛЫҚ ЫНТЫМАҚТАСТЫҚ: БИБЛИОМЕТРИЯЛЫҚ ТАЛДАУ

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Аңдатпа. Бұл мақала Шанхай ынтымақтастық ұйымына арналған ғылыми әдебиеттердің алғашқы жан-жақты библиометриялық талдауын ұсынады, әсіресе оның Орталық Азиядағы рөліне баса назар аударады. 2001-2024 жылдар аралығындағы Scopus дерекқорынан алынған мәліметтерді қолдана отырып, зерттеу PRISMA әдістемесіне негізделген іріктеу критерийлерін қолданады, бұл әдістемелік қатандықты қамтамасыз етеді. Авторлық серіктестік желілерін, дәйексөз үлгілерін және тақырыптық кластерлерді визуализациялау үшін VOSviewer бағдарламасы пайдаланылады. Зерттеу нәтижелері 2000-жылдардың ортасынан бастап ШЫҰ-ға деген ғылыми қызығушылықтың тұрақты өскенін көрсетеді, ал жарияланым шындыры Еуразиядағы маңызды геосаяси өзгерістермен сәйкес келеді. Негізгі жарияланым алаңдарына Europe-Asia Studies, Central Asian Survey және Journal of Contemporary China журналдары жатады. Дәйексөздерге талдау жасау авторитарлық нормалардың таралуы, аймақтық қауіпсіздік және Қытайдың Орталық Азиядағы стратегиялық ұстанымының эволюциясы жөніндегі негізгі еңбектер тобын анықтайды. Тақырыптық кластерлеу бес негізгі зерттеу бағыттарын көрсетеді: аймақтық басқару,

қауіпсіздік саласындағы ынтымақтастық, Қытайдың сыртқы саясаты, Оңтүстік Азиядағы процестер және энергетика мен инфрақұрылым байланысы. Бұл бағыттар ШЫҰ туралы зерттеулердің қауіпсіздікке негізделген дискурстан дамуға, нормативтік пікірталастарға және геосаяси қайта құрылымға қарай кеңейіп келе жатқанын көрсетеді. Зерттеу айқын эпистемологиялық теңсіздікті көрсетеді: беделді жарияланымдардың басым бөлігі АҚШ, Қытай, Ресей және Ұлыбритания сияқты Глобалды Солтүстік елдеріндегі мекемелерден шыққан, ал Орталық Азиядағы ғалымдар аз қамтылған. Бұл асимметрия білімді локализациялау мәселелерінің өзектілігін және халықаралық қатынастар саласының инклюзивтілігін қайта қарастыру қажеттігін алға тартады. Әдістемелік тұрғыдан мақала библиометриялық құралдардың ғылыми білім құрылымын картаға түсірудегі тиімділігін көрсетеді, ал теориялық тұрғыдан асимметриялық өңірлік интеграция және жаһандық халықаралық қатынастарды деколонизациялау мәселелеріне үлес қосады. Зерттеу батыстық емес эпистемологиялармен өзара іс-қимылды кеңейтуге және Орталық Азия ғалымдарының ғылыми белсенділігін арттыруға шақырады. Бұл нәтижелер көпжақты ынтымақтастықты зерттеуге және Еуразиядағы өңірлік серіктестік тетіктерін жетілдіруге маңызды үлес қоса алады.

Тірек сөздер: Шанхай ынтымақтастық ұйымы, Орталық Азия, библиометриялық талдау, өңірлік интеграция, білім теңсіздігі, халықаралық қатынастар, геосаясат, білім асимметриясы

РЕГИОНАЛЬНАЯ ИНТЕГРАЦИЯ И МЕЖДУНАРОДНОЕ СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВО В РАМКАХ ШОС: БИБЛИОМЕТРИЧЕСКИЙ АНАЛИЗ

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Аннотация. Данная статья представляет собой первый углублённый библиометрический анализ научной литературы, посвящённой Шанхайской организации сотрудничества, с особым акцентом на её роль в Центральной Азии. Используя данные из базы Scopus за период 2001–2024 годов, исследование применяет критерии отбора, основанные на методологии PRISMA, обеспечивая высокий уровень научной строгости. Для визуализации сетей соавторства, цитирования и тематических кластеров используется программа VOSviewer. Результаты демонстрируют стабильный рост академического интереса к ШОС с середины 2000-х годов; наибольшее количество публикаций приходится на периоды ключевых геополитических изменений в Евразии. Ключевыми площадками публикаций стали Europe-Asia Studies, Central Asian Survey и Journal of Contemporary China. Анализ цитируемости выделяет корпус фундаментальных работ,

посвящённых распространению авторитарных норм, региональной безопасности и стратегическим изменениям политики Китая в Центральной Азии. Тематическое кластерное картирование выявляет пять основных направлений исследований: региональное управление, сотрудничество в области безопасности, внешняя политика Китая, динамика Южной Азии, а также энергетическая и инфраструктурная взаимосвязанность. Направления свидетельствуют о постепенной диверсификации научного дискурса о ШОС от исключительно безопасности к более широким вопросам развития, нормативных конфликтов и геополитического переустройства. Исследование выявляет выраженный эпистемологический дисбаланс: подавляющее большинство влиятельных публикаций принадлежит авторам из институтов Глобального Севера прежде всего из США, Китая, России и Великобритании, тогда как центральноазиатские учёные остаются слабо представленными. Асимметрия указывает на сохраняющиеся проблемы локализации знаний и ставит под вопрос инклюзивность международных отношений как дисциплины. Методологически статья демонстрирует полезность библиометрических инструментов для анализа структуры научного знания, а концептуально вносит вклад в дискуссию об асимметричном регионализме и деколонизации глобальных международных исследований. Работа призывает к более широкому привлечению неклассических эпистемологий и активному участию исследователей из Центральной Азии. Полученные результаты имеют значение как для академического изучения многосторонности, так и для практического проектирования механизмов регионального сотрудничества в Евразии.

Ключевые слова: Шанхайская организация сотрудничества, Центральная Азия, библиометрический анализ, регионализм, асимметрия знаний, международные отношения, геополитика, асимметрия знаний

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