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Эффективность коллективной идентичности Шанхайской организации сотрудничества и ее дилемма

Аннотация. По мере того как Шанхайская организация сотрудничества (ШОС) вступает в новый цикл развития, вопрос о том, как усилить внутреннюю идентичность и повысить конкурентоспособность, становится все более актуальным. С точки зрения четырех измерений — политической, экономической, социальной и международной идентичности, ШОС добилась определенного прогресса в формировании институциональной идентичности, однако открытым остается вопрос о том, как повысить ее коллективный уровень и усилить сплоченность и центристремительную силу организации. Сообщество безопасности, построенное по модели ЕС, является полезным ориентиром для дальнейшего развития ШОС. В настоящее время коллективная идентичность ШОС все еще находится на начальной стадии, которая недостаточна для преодоления разногласий между государствами-членами, решения серьезных проблем, связанных с растущей политической поляризацией и геополитическими конфликтами в мире, и поддержки долгосрочного благоприятного развития ШОС. Исходя из этого, ключ к формированию коллективной идентичности ШОС лежит в развитии более привлекательных общих ценностей и коллективной идентичности на основе укрепления взаимного доверия и институциональных механизмов между государствами-членами, связей между всеми элементами сообщества региональной безопасности, культивирования сравнительных преимуществ и повышения уровня его коллективной идентичности.

Ключевые слова: ШОС, коллективная идентичность, сообщество региональной безопасности, дилемма.

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The effectiveness of the collective identity of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and its dilemma

Abstract. As SCO enters a new development cycle, the issue of how to enhance internal identity and strengthen competitiveness has become increasingly prominent. In terms of the four dimensions of political, economic, social and international identity, SCO has made some progress in building institutional identity, however, how to reach a higher level of collective identity and enhance the cohesion and centripetal force of the organization, the security community built by the EU model provides a useful referen-

ce for the further development of SCO. At present, the collective identity of the SCO is still in its initial stage, which is not enough to bridge the differences among member states, meet the serious challenges of increasing political polarization and geopolitical conflicts in the world, and support the long-term benign development of the SCO. Based on this, the key to building the collective identity of the SCO lies in developing more attractive common values and collective identity on the basis of strengthening mutual trust and institutional mechanisms among member states, strengthening the ties among all elements of the regional security community, cultivating comparative advantages, and raising the level of its collective identity.

Keywords: SCO, collective identity, regional security community, dilemma.

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Formulate research questions

A hundred years of changes intertwined with the new crown epidemic have accelerated the adjustment of the international landscape, and the international community is experiencing major tests of multilateral and unilateral, open and closed, cooperation and confrontation. Since its establishment in 2001, the SCO has become an important international political phenomenon that has attracted much attention because of its geopolitical environment, membership composition, and a new concept and practice of regional cooperation. In SCO documents and statements, little has been said about going beyond limited cooperation to build the SCO identity. Facing the third decade, SCO has entered a very critical stage of development, and how to further improve the organization's positioning, enhance its effectiveness, expand the space for cooperation and achieve sustainable development has become the core concern of all parties concerned.

Based on this, the paper will take collective identity as the entry point and ask the research question: Can SCO effectively build collective identity? What is the path of its identity construction? This paper will focus on explaining the intrinsic connection between collective identity and the sustainable development of SCO, including the following four parts: (1) The existing explanation of the regional organization's identity and development dynamics. (2) The definition of concepts related to collective identity and how to promote the development of the regional organization. (3) The assessment of the effectiveness of SCO in shaping collective identity. (4) The real dilemma faced by SCO's collective identity.

Research perspectives of existing results

At present, with the increasing trend of political polarization in the world, SCO is regarded as a potentially important threat by European and American countries and is facing increasingly severe external pressure and internal tests, which urgently needs to

improve the organization's identity and competitiveness. Broadly speaking, the identity level of regional organizations can be divided into functional identity, institutional identity and collective identity from low to high [9, p. 19—46].

Firstly, functional identity perspective. In other words, on the basis of interactions and interdependence among countries in the region, functional identity is also used as a symbolic concept to highlight the regional attributes and identity markers of countries, which is clearly reflected in the formation of the European Community. Ernst Haas, a professor of international relations at the University of California, Berkeley, has proposed the concept of “organizational spillover effects”, in which he argues that the political and economic situation within one country has a significant impact on other countries, and that a community of interests is gradually formed under the impetus of market forces [12, p. 366—392] and Marc Lanteigne sees SCO as a forum for information sharing and cooperation at the political and economic levels [16, p. 605—622.]. The functional identity of the SCO is formed by the recognition of its role in maintaining security and stability in the Eurasian region and developing cooperation among member states in various fields [25, p. 69—81]. On the whole, the functional identity perspective defines SCO's identity within the regional framework of the organization and considers it to be at a relatively limited level.

Secondly, institutional identity perspective. Institutional identity refers to the identification of member states with the organization itself, which reflects the fundamental characteristics of the organization as core, lasting, unique and indivisible, and defines the organization's constitutive principles, basic mission, main functions, decision-making model and development direction [7]. Chen Xiaoding, a professor at the Institute of Central Asian Studies of Lanzhou University, and other scholars point out that, in view of the prominent heterogeneity of member states and their different stages of development, it is difficult for SCO to build a collective identity model similar to that of the European Union at present, and it should work on improving an institutional identity close to the ASEAN approach [7]. Some scholars, based on four analytical dimensions: political, economic, social and international identity, believe that SCO has made some progress in building institutional identity and formed the SCO Model with South-Central Asia as the geographical base, Shanghai Spirit as the value norm, regional issues and regional cooperation as the basic issues, and consensus as the decision-making mechanism [6, p. 91—120]. In short, institutional analysis can provide a picture of where an international organization is at a particular point in time, but it cannot indicate how and when the organization will change.

Thirdly, collective identity perspective. Collective identity is the highest level of organizational identity, which means that group members take the group's goals, norms, and behaviors as their own goals and standards of behavior. Its degree determines the cohesiveness and morale of a group, which in turn affects group performance [22, p. 38—44]. Scholars with a constructivist perspective focus on the core concept of “collective identity” [23, p. 1340.]. Thomas Ambrosio, an associate professor in the Department of Criminal Justice and Political Science at North Dakota State University, argues that a collective identity has not yet been formed among SCO member states and lacks a universal regional identity. The collective identity among SCO member states has not yet been formed and lacks a universal regional identity, but remains limited in terms of

issues. Meanwhile, Swiss scholar Stephen Aris, by illustrating the unrest in Kyrgyzstan, argues that it has once again exposed the weaknesses of the SCO's collective action capacity, poor policy coordination, and information asymmetry, which are obstacles to the SCO's advancement of regional security cooperation [18, p. 1]. However, some scholars, such as Bettina Westle, have a positive attitude toward the collective identity of the SCO, arguing that collective identity can be created through interaction and socialization [10, p. 15–36.], and suggesting corresponding suggestions for the construction of the SCO's collective identity. In conclusion, the basic view of the collective identity perspective is that the collective identity of the SCO is constrained by internal and external factors, and the formation of a deep collective identity takes a considerable period of time.

In summary, the functional identity perspective, institutional identity perspective and collective identity perspective show different research preferences when examining the SCO identity, however, the comparison shows that they share a certain academic consensus: they all agree that the “Shanghai Spirit” has been successfully internalized into the common values and behavioral norms of the member states and has become a core element in bridging the differences among member states and bringing together the organizational identity. While the theoretical perspectives based on power and institutions have not touched the essence of the development dynamics of the regional organization, the constructivist perspective has largely revealed the root causes of SCO's weak development and pointed out feasible directions. Therefore, against the background that the SCO has already achieved institutional identity, the key question is how to build a collective identity that meets both the current reality and the needs of the SCO's benign development. This paper argues that the construction of SCO's collective identity is closely related to the construction of a regional security community, and the two are mutually reinforcing [4, p. 396–397].

Collective identity: conceptual definition and community building

According to constructivist theory, collective identity involves the identification of actors with a collective identity, and the construction of a collective identity requires redefining the boundaries between self and other and constructing a common in-group identity [8, p. 9]. Nicholas J. Wheeler, professor of international relations at the University of Birmingham, notes that the SCO has spent the last decade constructing a collective identity through anti-interventionist discourses such as “decolonization” and “anti-imperialism”. However, such identity construction based on reactive responses to external threats is not conducive to the long-term development of the organization and the building of a collective identity [20, p.435]. Moreover, due to the combined effects of the psychological divide among member states, the growing strategic doubts about China's regional influence, and the lack of consensus among member states on the direction of SCO's development, the organization faces more practical challenges in building an endogenous identity. A significant number of scholars hold a similar view that SCO's collective identity not only lacks a historical basis, but also the heterogeneity of member states' history, culture, and values has led to the failure of SCO to develop “common va-

lues”. SCO faces the challenge of competitive multilateralism in Eurasia. In the complex environment of overlapping regimes in Eurasia, the SCO is seen by some member states as an option for regional cooperation, and other existing multilateral organizations in the region provide alternatives for member states in their search for security and economic development [9, p. 19–46], which to some extent weakens the SCO’s collective identity.

In view of this, the construction of an EU-style collective identity with a high degree of integration of values hardly fits into the development reality of SCO. European identity is not only a means to promote integration and EU development, but also an end of EU construction, because the core of EU collective identity itself is some norms and value structures. The goal of European integration is to build Europe not only as an economic and political community, but also as a cultural community [17, p. 30–36]. Considering that the SCO is at the initial to mid-term stage of building a community of interests, the member states prefers to build their organizational identity with institutional identity as the basic orientation, and the construction of collective identity needs to go through a rather long historical period. Even so, it is not impossible to establish a high level of collective identity within the SCO framework. In terms of collective identity construction, the organization should first strengthen its internal unity and cohesion, enhance its legitimacy, and then give full play to its organizational identity to achieve a high level of organizational cohesion and a unique dynamic model through the path of building a regional security community in the collective identity theory.

The model of collective identity used in this paper adopts Karl Wolfgang Deutsch’s theory of collective identity [15], which states that there are three layers of collective identity [22, p. 38–44], with the first layer referring to a combination of internal and external factors in which member states see each other as part of a collective/community: sharing the same ideas, norms, and values. The second tier refers to the closer relationships and mutual trust of the organization’s member states, resulting in more transnational ties and interactions. The third tier is when members of the community develop a sense of solidarity around the identity of the community and decision makers forgo war or other means of force to resolve disputes when making decisions. The process of collective identity is not immediate, but is accomplished gradually. When referring to the SCO, concepts related to norms, identity, values, and identity, are necessary components of it, and specific forms of cooperation such as free trade agreements are often established among members of the security community.

Three levels of collective identity	Standard	SCO
Shared Values	Emerging period	Yes
Mutual trust	Rising period	Conditional
Well-established institutional mechanism	Maturity	None

Some scholars point out that collective identity is a social construction, when member states form a certain understanding of the organization’s identity, this understanding, whether on the level of ethnicity, language, religion or historical memory, may become the basis of identity [19, p. 283–294], and for the SCO member states, the condi-

tion for reaching collective identity is the formation of links in history, ethnicity, language, religion and cultural similarities. The common values and norms can provide values and guidance for cooperation and identity of member states, provide a lasting impetus for the development of the organization, and elevate the recognition of member states from interest-based claims to belonging identity based on common values.

The collective identity of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and its effectiveness

Currently, the SCO has united 18 countries¹, and in the search for a collective identity, the organization's development depends to a large extent on the expansion of its regional scope. As some scholars have argued, the SCO will become a strong regional player if it covers not only security issues but also economic and social problems. Political leadership alone cannot guarantee unity or the successful achievement of set goals, so the organization's expansion requires not only advancing regional cooperation, but also increasing mutual trust.

Currently, the perception and image of SCO member states among their populations, as well as the values, identity issues, and common goals of the regional states, remain largely unappreciated, thus negatively affecting the SCO initiative in the following ways: first of all, with the development of infrastructure in the SCO region, the signs of China's "economic expansion" in the region are becoming more and more visible and widely noticed. Secondly, there is a sense of crisis of unfair territorial division, territorial annexation, and increased territorial expansion. Thirdly, with the widespread movement of labor between countries, there is a growing concern about the movement and growth of the Chinese population in Central Asia. Fourthly, the image of the political elite in the SCO is gradually distancing itself from the general population, and political leaders in Central Asian countries see SCO initiatives as generally beneficial to their countries, but the public is increasingly inclined to see them as benefiting their political and economic elites rather than improving the living conditions of the general population.

In the case of the SCO, its vast history of cooperation, self-perceptions about the organization and the perceptions of the member states about other countries, as well as the tools used by the organization to achieve new goals, do not contribute to the formation of the organization's identity. Therefore, SCO member states should embrace the concept of collective identity formation in international relations, which requires common norms (behavioral expectations, common practices and obligations), common selves (understanding of the boundaries of the community) and common values (common interpretation of values and ethics that determine behavior). In the case of SCO, these elements can be observed in the efforts to shape the organization's identity.

When the Shanghai Five Forum was formally established as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, it also constructed a framework of collective identity, trying to promote the realization of anti-colonial and anti-imperialist values, led by the "Shanghai

¹ 6 member countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, China, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan), 6 observer countries (Afghanistan, Belarus, India, Iran, Mongolia, Pakistan) and 6 dialogue partners (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Cambodia, Nepal, Turkey, Sri Lanka) respectively.

Spirit”¹, which has evolved to date. Some Central Asian countries have accepted the “Shanghai spirit” and have formed an eclectic cultural mix: the organization includes Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam. It may be more difficult to further develop common values, given the conflict and rivalry between India and China, India and Pakistan [1, p. 53]. From the perspective of a security community, which was originally established to reduce the risk of conflict among member states, avoid war, and enhance mutual trust among them, the SCO has achieved its goals. In the SCO, the strengthening of the collective identity comes from the strengthening of confidence measures, according to the document *Declaration on the Establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization* [10, p. 1], which is reinforced by the establishment of annual summits. Although the SCO is seen by Western scholars as rather divisive, with considerable tendencies toward competition among its member states, the institutional structure that already exists serves to moderate competition and avoid escalation of conflict, and has exercised its maximum organizational resilience over the past two decades.

Among them, the SCO has been more successful in building its identity against colonialism and imperialism, playing an effective role in border control, combating drug crimes and terrorism, and continuing to expand the scope of the organization after its success. The heterogeneity of SCO members and the complexity of its regional cooperation have caused the formation of the organization’s regional identity to face great challenges as well. The first element in the formation of the SCO identity is the SCO decolonization agenda, which unites the majority of SCO member states. The concept of this agenda is elaborated in several documents *in the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization* [5, p. 1], which states that the purpose of the SCO is to promote the establishment of a new international system based on respect for the preservation of national unity and national interests of each country, adherence to its own path of development, independent development of internal and external policies, and equal participation in international affairs.

These demands are therefore firmly opposed to the establishment of foreign military bases in Central Asia, and are seen as a signal from China to its SCO ally Russia that it will treat any attempts to establish new military bases and expand its military presence in the region with caution. China’s strong opposition to foreign interference in the internal affairs of states is a manifestation of its anti-imperialist policy and a positive factor in the participation of Central Asian countries in the SCO. Successive SCO summits have re-

¹ The “Shanghai Spirit” is “mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation, respect for diverse civilizations and the pursuit of common development.” It is not only the foundation of the Shanghai Five mechanism, but also the soul of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. “After the Shanghai Five mechanism successfully resolved the historical border security issues on the basis of mutual trust and mutual benefit, it gradually developed into regional security, regional economic cooperation, cultural and educational exchanges, etc. Peace and development have always been the core of the mechanism; the Shanghai Cooperation Organization” has inherited this spirit of the times, established a regional conflict prevention mechanism, made important attempts to combat terrorism, separatism and extremism, formulated common measures, played an effective deterrent role in curbing the spread of the three forces, and is conducive to maintaining the unity and security of the peoples of the region as well as peace and stability in the world. Undoubtedly, the “Shanghai Spirit” expresses the common aspirations of the peoples of the member states and corresponds to the mainstream of the times of peace and development.

ferred to these roles and reaffirmed that “differences in cultural traditions, political and social systems, values and development models developed in the course of history should not be used as a pretext to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries”.

As mentioned earlier, high-level collective identity depends on the corresponding institutional mechanism and strengthening of trust. The SCO should further clarify its organizational positioning from these two dimensions. According to scholar Lanteigne Marc, the SCO itself is a security community with an organizational structure borrowed to a large extent from ASEAN, maintaining interstate relations, mobilization patterns are very similar, and plays the role of a stable period of regional peace [16, p. 605—622]. The SCO achieved its collective identity not through the maintenance of shared values, but through two important conditions of mutual trust and institutions, unlike the EU, which has adopted a top-down approach to institutionalizing security, the public knows little about the institutional design and mode of operation of the SCO, and in 2018, the SCO member states issued the Qingdao Declaration [21, p. 1], which demonstrated the desire to continue cooperation and build mutual trust [21, p. 1]. High-level statements acted as a catalyst for grassroots institutions within the organization¹, and in 2019, the SCO hosted its largest military exercise to date in Russia, with 128,000 troops from eight SCO member states participating in the exercise, marking the second military cooperation in history between India, Pakistan, Russia and China. The regularity of the organization’s military exercises also showed from the side that the collective identity of the SCO is steadily forming.

The Declaration on the Establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) [10, p. 1] and *the Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism* expressly stated the purposes and set forth the Shanghai spirit of mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation, respect for diverse civilizations and pursuit of common development as the principles of mutual relations, as well as the principles of non-alignment, non-targeting of other countries and regions, and openness to the outside world. Scholar Wang Jinguo points out that the “Shanghai Spirit” transcends ideological and developmental differences among member states² and guarantees the realization of common interests of member states through equality, cooperation and mutual respect, and forms a new community of security and interests in the Eurasian region through joint cooperation, and contributes to the promotion of a community of human destiny. The SCO has made its due contribution to the construction of a community of human destiny [11, p. 1] Specifically, the SCO was established with the Shanghai spirit as the basic principle and value of the organization, which meets the needs of the member sta-

¹ According to organizational culture theory, all levels have an essential role to play in shaping organizational culture. The top of the organization, especially the top leader, has a pivotal role, the middle of the organization plays a key role as the key link between the top and the bottom, and the bottom members are increasingly moving from passive to active. One of the important signs of a successful organizational culture is that the top, middle and grassroots levels are all able to do their jobs around their main tasks in the organization.

² It rejects power politics and guarantees equal decision-making power for all member countries with practical institutional design, so that small countries within the organization can also enjoy the international prestige brought about by the increase of the organization's influence; it is committed to promoting the establishment of a democratic, just and reasonable new international political and economic order.

tes to maintain their sovereign independence and allows them to participate in regional affairs on a fully equal footing, facilitating the SCO member states to overcome their differences and form an identity with the organization. On this basis, the construction of a new type of regional organization provides the international community with a new model of open regional cooperation that integrates multiple cultures. The SCO aims to build mutual trust among the highly heterogeneous member states, move toward convergence, move from bilateral cooperation to collective action, and provide a boost to the formation of a regional security community.

The collective identity dilemma of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization

The construction of collective identity can neither be achieved overnight, nor can it be done once and for all, the paper will examine and evaluate the progress and shortcomings of SCO in building collective identity from four dimensions: sense of identity, expansion effect, Chinese identity and construction conditions.

First of all, there are controversies and exclusions in the construction of SCO's identity. In addition to the interaction of major powers influencing the development process of the organization, other member states as small countries can have a significant impact on the development of the SCO in the form of their strategic values, multilateral foreign policy and numerical strength of the group and frontier validators¹. As the SCO's cooperation framework has become increasingly sophisticated, the drawbacks of complex and diverse heterogeneous internal member relations have become increasingly evident, casting a shadow over the organization's internal solidarity and mutual trust and creating a greater tension between them and the establishment of a collective identity. The territorial and water disputes among the Central Asian member states have not yet been thoroughly resolved, and the factors affecting the political mutual trust of the member states have increased rather than decreased after the expansion of the organization, which may complicate the relations among the member states and expose the organization to the risk of formulization if not handled properly.

Secondly, China's current image also complicates the process of forming an SCO identity. China is largely perceived as an "alien" in the region, and anti-Chinese sentiment is occasionally expressed by politicians and the public. As mentioned earlier, suspicious sentiment is triggered by the Central Asian countries' past experience of Russian influence, while in the case of China, there is greater concern about the country's economic expansion. These issues suggest that building a regional identity for the SCO is crucial to its development. Some Western scholars believe that the economic

¹ In September 2021, the 21st meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of State was held in Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan. President Xi Jinping pointed out: "The Shanghai Cooperation Organization has stood at a new historical starting point. We should hold high the banner of "Shanghai Spirit", grasp the direction of progress in the historical trend of democratization of international relations, promote our own development in the grand scheme of common development of mankind, build a closer SCO community of destiny, and make greater contributions to lasting peace and common prosperity in the world. To this end, he put forward four new proposals: first, to take the road of unity and cooperation, second, to take the road of sharing security and danger, third, to take the road of opening and integration, and fourth, to take the road of mutual learning and appreciation."

and cultural expansion of China in the region, with its economic, political and demographic advantages, could threaten the organization's declared goal of improving the lives of the region's people. This perception has already sparked anti-Chinese sentiment among the public and politicians in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan regarding China's potential economic and social expansion [24, p. 102—118].

Finally, among the elements for achieving collective identity, the SCO has only the basic conditions for building a deep collective identity [3, p. 5], and the Central Asian countries have become important variables. Within the organization, mutual trust among member states relies on heads of state meetings and multilateral military exercises to present its basic image as an emerging security community externally, while internally, mutual trust and sound institutional mechanisms are only the basic conditions for building a collective identity, in which Central Asian affairs are the core of the SCO, and the specificity of Central Asian countries directly affects the collective identity of the SCO. Central Asian countries pursue a balanced foreign policy of major powers, and are in a position of "waiting to be sold" among major forces in Central Asia, thus weakening the degree of interdependence among member states and posed a challenge to the establishment of collective identity [26, p. 34—54].

Conclusion

The SCO is at an important point in its development when it is carrying forward and starting from the past. At present, although the construction of SCO's collective identity has achieved certain results, it is still at a preliminary stage, which has become an important obstacle to its further development. In the future, in promoting the development of the collective identity of SCO member states, the organization should actively play its own identity-building function and that of various mechanisms. At the same time, attention should be paid to the corresponding problems in the construction of SCO. Even the European Union, which has a long history of federalism and the highest degree of homogeneity, took more than half a century of development to reach the current level of cooperation and cultivate a high level of regional identity. herefore, the development of cooperation and regional identity among SCO member states in various fields must not be driven by greed for speed, otherwise they will be trapped in a big contest due to the Central Asian countries' concern about Russia's [imperial] ambitions and more reliance on balanced diplomacy, and the other member states' concern about the expansion of China's influence. The great contest is a whirlpool.

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