Chapter 1

Introduction

1. Rationale

International interdependence and cooperation have forced states to readjust their policies not only in the bilateral but also in the multilateral context. In the recent past, particularly after the end of the Cold War, international interdependence and cooperation have become more institutionalised and rule-based. In this process, multilateral international regimes have become the principal facilitators of multilateral cooperation and are going beyond the parameters set by functionalism and neo-functionalism to redefine institutionalisation of world politics, both in concept and practice. Multilateral engagement in international politics demands a commonly agreed upon set of norms and principles on the basis of which it develops a consensual pattern of international behaviour. These norms and principles direct the behaviour of states to achieve a greater common good for all states and thus institutionalize multilateralism for better international cooperation.

The present global multilateral efforts in the form of World Trade Organisation (WTO) and Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) are perceived to be favourable for developed countries. In such a context, some weaker states have been attempting to devise new mechanisms to respond to the challenges of globalisation and to meet new security threats. Moreover, the alarming rise of the United States unilateralism and corresponding decline of the intervening role of the United Nations in international problems like Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Iraq constitute a matter of serious concern for wider international community, especially for developing and underdeveloped countries. In fact, the present concern of most of the non-western countries is how to integrate with the global economy to optimize their interests on one hand and to protect their security and sovereignty on the other.

Multilateral regimes also tend to strengthen regional cooperation so as to play a more meaningful role in global multilateral processes. Multilateral management of cooperation at regional level not only increases collective bargaining power of regions by using resources complimentarily and reducing dependence on developed countries
through mutual cooperation but it also helps to preserve the independence of foreign policies of states by giving preference to solving regional problems at the regional level rather than inviting global attention, e.g., US intervention.

Given these processes, the present study focuses on China's approach towards multilateral organisations within the framework of its own national interests at the regional level, especially its interests in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). The study investigates whether China regards these organisations as means for serving its national interests or has adapted itself to the demands of regional cooperation in such a way that its very concept of national interest is redefined. The present study makes an attempt to understand China's role in the SCO and the ARF, and its understanding of these multilateral organisations. It tries to explore how China uses these organisations to address its security concerns while preventing any unwanted potential global attention.

Further, the present study is contextualised and located within the theoretical underpinnings of neo-liberal institutionalism and constructivism which provide useful explanations of structural problems responsible for China's engagement in various multilateral regimes. An attempt is also made to understand the interests of other member-states of SCO and ARF. This research is aimed at understanding whether creation of a multilateral community that could address both traditional and non-traditional security concerns of China and other member countries is feasible in SCO and ARF.

For China, which has viewed the role of global/multilateral politics with suspicion, the pace of participation in international multilateral regimes has been slow. It was only since late 1970s that China started acknowledging and accepting the importance of integration with the outside world and multilateral organizations and began joining them in the 1990s. In fact, the desire to establish a multipolar world order – for which China has been quite vocal for a long time – was one of the factors, along with economic development and peace, in leading to China's realization of the importance of multilateralism, in as much as it creates a whole new set of fora where concerns of the developing countries can be articulated.

China's approach towards regional security structures is determined not only by its traditional security concerns but also by non-traditional security threats in the
post-Cold War era. China has no immediate traditional threats to its security. In the realist-traditional concept of security, security has been linked to the military defence of the state and its sovereignty. At present, non-traditional threats are of greater concern to China’s security and are factored in its approach. Non-traditional security threats are also directed against the state, but in non-conventional forms, and from non-conventional sources such as non-state actors. Religious fundamentalism and separatism in Xinjiang, drug and human trafficking, smuggling in small arms and cross-border organized crimes, and issues like energy security are some of the new kinds of security concerns that China faces today. These are problems of a transnational nature. China shares this kind of problem both with the Central and Southeast Asian regions and is in search of new means and ways to address these security concerns.

China prefers to solve regional problems at the regional level. The logic behind this policy is to keep the US at bay which operates at a global level in the pursuit of its interests in Central Asia and Southeast Asia. China is uneasy about the US presence, especially when it has many security concerns in Central Asia and territorial concerns in the South China Sea. It, therefore, advocates a strong and credible UN system and perceives regional security mechanisms like the SCO and the ARF, guided by the UN Charter, and internationally recognized norms of behaviour as the best safeguards to this end.

Central and Southeast Asia are regions where the interests of regional powers such as Russia, China and India converge. Issues such as US military presence, terrorism, exploitation of natural resources and energy security are issues that these countries grapple with. Similarly, economic integration and problems of a transnational nature bring China, Japan, South Korea, Australia, US and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries together in Southeast Asia.

2. Literature Survey

In 1990s, several works have been produced on China’s approach towards multilateralism, its security concerns and understanding, and particularly on its
role in SCO and ARF. These writings present an evolution in Chinese understanding about multilateralism and its approach to security issues.

Much of this literature took a pessimistic view of China's role in the region. Many pointed out China's scepticism towards multilateral institutions and its reservation against security issues being discussed in these institutions. In fact, in these writings we see China's approach towards multilateralism gradually moving from reluctance to cautious to forthcoming. The discussion on China's approach towards multilateralism and security issues takes place in the background of regions of Southeast Asia and Central Asia. Therefore, they throw light upon China's relations with these regions as its relations with them run through the discussions on Chinese understanding of multilateralism and security issues in 1990s.

Bonnie S. Glaser (1993), Qimao Chen (1993) and Madhu Bhalla (1998) set the groundwork to understand how China gradually broke barriers and initiated several multilateral processes.

Gerard Segal and Barry Buzan (1994) and Barry Buzan (1993) were pessimistic about China's role in Southeast Asia. They opined that the lingering issues from the Cold War period and other security issues like territorial disputes would lead this region in becoming “an important zone of conflict in the twenty first century” in the absence of institutionalisation of security. Second, they viewed China as a hegemonic power in the region also.

In this context, Chien- Peng Chung (2000) cautions that China's understanding of multilateral institutions is utilitarian and addresses China’s national concerns rather than showing any commitment to the norms and values of global interdependence. The same criticism was reiterated by Gerald Segal (1995) who believes that \textit{econofora} is the reason for China’s entry into the international system, but economic interdependence without any political common goals may not stop conflicts from occurring. The underlying assumption is that business rivalry can always exploit lingering political contentions.

Despite these apprehensions, China's approval of the utility of multilateral institutions does not go unnoticed. Hongying Wang (2001) appraises evolution of China’s multilateral involvement and makes an attempt to examine
China’s commitment to multilateralism. He holds that China has come a long way from nominal multilateralism and its multilateral behaviour incorporates many features of qualitative multilateralism such as equality, trust, common security, and non-specificity of enemy. However, it still lacks transparency, intrusive mechanism required by preventive diplomacy, conflict resolution efforts in its understanding of multilateral involvement and lack of multilateralism as an internalized norm. According to him, multilateralism is subordinate to consideration of great power relations and to the principle of state sovereignty. Thus, multilateralism remains instrumental in pursuing national interests. In Wang’s views, China’s limited multilateral involvement is due to a variety of factors such as China’s quest for great power identity growing out of deep rooted bitter historical memories in collective national psyche, traditional Sino-centric worldview and limited influence of pro-multilateralism and internationally socialized people on foreign policy.

Kuik Cheng-Chwee (2005) posits that multilateralism has taken a complementary rather than a supplementary role to bilateralism in China’s growing multilateral involvement in the framework of its own national interests. He concedes that China has not played any decisive role in the formation of major multilateral organisations. However, China now wants to “shape the rules of the game for regional cooperation” so that it can expand its influence and maintain a stable regional environment cultivating a multipolar world. But Kuik does not explain how the regions respond to China’s nationalistic use of multilateral involvement and what sort of incompatibilities this nationalistic aspiration may create and remain counterproductive in the regions concerned.

These articles, taken together, put a neo-realist and neo-liberal spin on China’s multilateral behavior and suggest that the acceptance of multilateral organizations has been developed as a tool of nationalistic diplomacy and not as a norm. These concerns need to be appreciated. They want multilateralism to be developed as a norm. However, in their pessimistic account, they tend to overlook that states learn from experiences in international politics. In the last century, the world has witnessed two world wars, dozens of major wars, perpetual civil wars and social unrest. All these have confirmed that the model of the nation-state-centric world politics is not a complete success. In this era of
globalisation when the degree of interaction among states is very high, states are redefining their identity so that the inadequacies of the nation-state-centric world politics can be rectified. In order to maintain legitimacy of Chinese political establishment and justify one party rule in the PRC in the post-reform era, when the old Marxist-Leninist-Maoist claims of Chinese state have faded away, economic development and prosperity have been developed as a norm, not only in China’s foreign policy but also in overall Chinese society as an important component of the new ideological package of ‘market-nationalism’. This new norm is impacting Chinese foreign policy discourse in favor of multilateralism leaving the baggage of old dogmas and apprehensions arising from historical bitter memories behind.

As this study intends to locate Chinese understanding about multilateralism in the realm of security, it is necessary to have a fair idea about existing works on security issues that concern China in the post-Cold War period and its approach in dealing with them. Thus, an attempt has been made to locate multilateralism in security framework.

Michael Yahuda (2003) establishes a link between China’s concept of cooperative security which emerged in the late 1980’s and its involvement in regional security arrangements. In fact, the concept of cooperative security was pronounced at the end of Cold War to build inter-state security cooperation among neighbours on the basis of five principles of peaceful co-existence in order to meet security challenges in the post-Cold War security environment. Yahuda holds that China’s engagement in a regional arrangement appears to be intended to meet its realist concerns in the name of cooperative security, instead of taking into account the region as a whole. The aim of China’s regional security architecture seems to be to create a ‘benign security environment’ and present itself less threatening to its neighbours so that they do not become part of a US-led China containment regime.

Felix K. Chang (1996) presents a comparative account of military capabilities of Malaysia and Singapore on one side and China on the other. He avers that the gaining hold over Spartly islands is a long term Chinese objective and it will not use military force until it is convinced about all-out success. He refers to the struggle between China and some ASEAN countries over the Spartly islands as “a battle of attrition”. However, he tends to overlook the growing
economic interdependence between China and ASEAN countries and its possible mollifying effect on this “battle of attrition”.

Robyn Lim (1998) takes a hyper-nationalist position to argue that China’s involvement in the ARF is a well thought out strategy to undermine bilateral alliances of ASEAN countries with the US and establish its hegemony in the region. Contrary to this, Melly Caballero Anthony (2002) and Jose T. Almote (2002) are very optimistic regarding the ARF process. Almote finds economic prosperity as a shared value for the basis of security cooperation and while Anthony focuses on those security issues which do not affect sovereignty of any member-states for cooperation. This model of the ARF is one that China finds acceptable.

Lee Lai To (1999) underlines the general problem of distrust among the disputants of South China and views multilateral dialogue on the dispute as an obstructing factor. He indicates, however, that China has developed multilateral approach in a gradualist way. It still finds ease in bilateral interaction or in informal multilateralism or at the most formal but soft, ARF type, multilateralism.

David B.H. Denoon and Wendy Frieman (1996) detail differing explanations and future implications of China’s security policy with varying level of concern within ASEAN community. Allen S. Whitting (1997) also focuses on differences within ASEAN in relation to China. According to him, although ASEAN countries are concerned about China and are sceptical about its territorial claims, they do not support US policy on China on the issues of democracy and human rights. ASEAN countries do not regard China as a direct military threat. They believe that China will follow only political approach in advancing its territorial claims. They conceive ARF as a platform for “multilateral security dialogue” to engage China. These articles, put together, reflect useful insights into how differences within ASEAN countries in relation to China will shape future course of multilateralism in the region.

Sankari Sundararaman (1998) spells the complex economic and political scenario created after the disintegration of USSR and the consequent alleviation of the necessity of further US presence in the ASEAN region. In fact, in the post-
Cold War geo-strategic scenario, ASEAN countries wanted US to stay in the region to counterbalance Japan and mainly China, on the one hand, and “engage China and to integrate it into a regional order, thereby reducing the need for any rigidly oriented strategy of containment”, on the other. This security understanding is supplementary to ASEAN’s necessity of “ensuring the success of the economic growth and the increased desire for deriving the maximum advantage from the exploitation of such a growth”. This emergent scenario led ASEAN countries to factor multilateralism in their economic and security policies. Thus, she considers ARF as a sophisticated security structure intended to safeguard security interests of prosperous ASEAN and to engage both US and China. She argues that ASEAN is in ARF’s driver’s seat. She is apprehensive about whether ARF will be successful in engaging China, if it is driven from ASEAN’s point of view.

John Garofano (2002) makes an attempt to develop an understanding about security community from constructivist, neo-liberal institutionalist and structural realist approaches and examine ARF’s potential to become a security community. He holds that ARF has made significant departures in various areas and variables identified by constructivism and neo-institutional liberalism in the direction of becoming a security community. But this security community is in its nascent stage. It needs leaders of the region to have faith in the concept of security community for its maturation. Although Garofano is analytical, he studies ARF as a potential security community in its own right and does not discuss the interface between China and ASEAN countries.

Amitav Acharya (1992; 2001) clearly asserts that Southeast Asia as a unified security community is a distant possibility, though Southeast Asian countries are learning from their experiences. Slowly but steadily they are becoming more integrative and exploring areas of convergence with countries like China. This is one of the reasons for China acquiring a place in the ARF. Acharya (1995) visualizes a difference between security regime and security community. His understanding of security community is based on a modified version of Deutchian security community, injected with constructivism. He holds that Southeast Asia is witnessing a kind of security regime, which is lesser than security community.
Felix K. Chang views (1997) Xinjiang as a defining agent of China’s Central Asia policy, Sino-Russian relations in conflictual terms and US presence in the region to be temporary. In fact, Chang overemphasizes the role of Xinjiang in China’s Central Asia policy. However, in reality China’s security interest in Central Asia goes much beyond Xinjiang. It covers energy security and economic cooperation and is greatly influenced by the US presence in the region. By the time of publication of this article in 1997, China and Russia along with newly independent central Asian republics had stipulated a treaty in 1996 to deepen military cooperation in border regions, intended to bring about a solution to their border disputes. Thus, Felix’s consideration of Sino-Russian relations in conflictual terms in Central Asia needs more substantiation. As far as US presence is concerned, it is neither temporary nor only corporate-driven. The US presence pertains to its security vision, and is, in all probability, going to endure.

Richard J. Walsh (1993) focuses on new geopolitical scenario of the post-USSR Central Asia from Chinese point of view. He attempts to explain how the disintegration presented mixed opportunities to China where China’s economic leverage is subject to security challenges to its northeastern provinces emanating from ethno-nationalism and pan-Turkic nationalism across Central Asia. Besides, Walsh also draws attention towards how China has to deal with a number of contiguous and non-contiguous regional players in central Asia to increase and maintain its influence in the wake of sudden emergence of independent republics. Further, he points out the danger of export of conventional arms and nuclear material and technology from this region. But he does not discuss much about China’s position on this particular issue and the possibilities of multilateral cooperation among regional players.

The common thread that runs through these writings is that the notion of “peace and development” that shaped China’s foreign policy goals in the 1980s saw multilateralism acquiring adequate space in China’s foreign policy after the end of Cold War. After the harsh reality of a US dominated world, China also had to accept multilateral institutions in order to support a multipolar world. An interesting feature of the PRC’s position which emerges from some of these writings is that though China desired multipolarity, it was reluctant to embrace multilateral institutions in the early 1990s. The only possible interpretation for
this anomaly is that China aspired for multipolarity in terms of a balance of power, that is, it sought multipolarity without multilateralism.

Some of the articles that deal with the issue of China and multilateral international cooperation in Central Asia are: Shirin Akiner’s “Regional Cooperation in Central Asia, Iwoshita Akihiro’s (2004) “The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and its implications for Eurasian security: A new dimension of ‘partnership’ after the post-Cold War period” and Erlan Karin’s “The Shanghai cooperation and its implication for Central Asia”. These articles highlight the process of multilateral cooperation in the region in a very optimistic way and reject the notion that the SCO is “anti-America” or “anti-West”. Akiner is successful in highlighting the newly independent Central Asian republics’ quick adaptation to the processes of international interdependence and international organisations. She discusses how Central Asian republics have become members of various organisations and argues that the formation of SCO should be placed in this evolutionary process instead of treating it as an isolated phenomenon. The creation of SCO is not simply the outcome of a manipulation by Russia and China. It has the support of the Central Asian countries too. Central Asia is a region where the density of the convergence of interests among Central Asian Republics and China is very high. Thus, this is the perfect example of a region where a security community can evolve, leading Iwoshita Akihiro to see a role for the SCO in the future of the Eurasian community. Erlan Karim says that in the post 9/11 period, the SCO has gained more importance and it has intensified the process of multilateral cooperation. It will be the leading security organisation in security issues in the region because post 9/11 developments have made countries in the region realize the mutuality of security interests. However, Jyotsna Bakshi (2002) highlights internal divisions in SCO where Uzbekistan and Tajikistan’s tilt towards US creates constraints on the efficacy of SCO.

Can organisations like the ARF and SCO endure without any defined enemy or specified threats? To build an opinion about viability of these organisations, we can draw some insights from Robert B. Malla’s (1996) assessment of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). He predicts that even though NATO does not have any well-defined enemy or a specific threat, it will persist. He explains that NATO is no more an essentially military organisation. It
has broadened its security coverage from military defence to solving disputes, coordinating foreign and military policies. As is evident that the ARF and SCO concerns are more political in nature than military, one could legitimately conclude that they would address member states' security concerns and would also contribute in stabilizing regional security environment and multipolarise the international order with the creation of NATO-like organisations with a high organisational development and wider range of functions.

States are trying to find new ways to cope with the hegemon and to secure their interests. In this debate, one has to look at how China is responding to global security pressures and what security assurances China's neighbours expect from it. It must be assessed how meaningful these regional security arrangements of the ASEAN Regional Forum and Shanghai Cooperation Organisation are for the other small countries of the region.

A significant contribution has already been made to the study of multilateralism and multilateral organisations in Central and Southeast Asia dealing with various issues. This study intends to add a relatively new dimension to the study of multilateralism and multilateral organisations by providing a detailed research account of possibilities of emergence of transnational governance with a focus mainly on security situation in the above mentioned regions along with norms of global governance in the background of international geopolitical and strategic context.

3. Scope

The scope of the study is limited to situating the process of multilateralism in Central and Southeast Asian regions and China's contribution to, and expectation in, the security arena from such regional multilateral organisations. It attempts to test China's willingness towards relinquishing nation-centric security approach and its disposition towards a regional security arrangement, especially in the post-Cold War period. There is sufficient literature on China's security relations with Central and Southeast Asian countries. However, from China's perspective of security interaction with regional partners that intends to trace and gauge the change in Chinese
approaches dealing with national interests and China’s international behaviour, much is to be done. The study makes an attempt to fill this gap through further exploration.

4. Research Questions

The questions that this study seeks to answer are: Does China understand multilateralism as qualitative multilateralism or as nominal multilateralism? Is regional cooperation a norm or has it only utilitarian value in China’s foreign policy? How does China perceive and project its national interests in the post-Cold War world order? What constitutes China’s security in the post-Cold War era and has it evolved a shared security vision for its regional neighbours? How has China addressed its security concerns through multilateral organisations, especially through the SCO and the ARF? Does China want to manipulate these organisations to counterbalance US presence in the Central Asian and Southeast Asian regions, and thereby further extend its national interests there? How far are the SCO and the ARF successful in developing a shared security vision and correcting mutual perceptions among the member-states? What sort of security regimes SCO and ARF are creating? Does China visualize these organisations as security communities in their respective regions?

5. Hypotheses

Following are some of the hypotheses that form the basis of the study.

- China’s participation in multilateral organisations is a further manifestation of the internalization of norms of regional cooperation in its foreign policy.

- To cope with globalising security pressures, China envisages using these multilateral organisations.

- The SCO and ARF with different trajectories may contribute to the formation of Eurasian and ASEAN Security communities.
6. Chapterisation

In the second chapter, "Multilateralism: A Critique", theoretical aspects of multilateralism have been analysed. Multilateralism, multilateral international organisations and regimes, especially security regimes and security communities and their contextualisation in the Post-Cold War period form part of this chapter. Trajectory of multilateralism is traced to the Wilsonian liberalism in the beginning of the last century. This chapter highlights seminal contribution of the US in the evolution and development of the concept. In fact, what has been tried is to portray multilateralism as a product of emerging new world order after the First World War. In this period, the world order was making radical departure from earlier world order which was based on naked power struggle in terms of traditional rivalries among European nations. Going by historical logic one can argue that every world order at any point of time has contributed something novel and positively beneficial to the mankind. That goes true for the world order that started emerging in the post-First World War also. In this period, England passed baton of global leadership to America. As a prospective leader of the world US stood for multilateralism. Multilateralism was on the top of American agenda to offer to the world. American foreign policy in the years after the Second World War took up institution building in the world. Although the element of power politics vis-à-vis the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) cannot be denied in this exercise, American efforts in institution building stand out. The concern, which has come up with the demise of the USSR, is that multilateralism seems to have lost and outlived its utility in the post-Cold War period as America is seen showing scant regard for multilateralism. In this context, a natural question that arises is whether multilateralism was a product of a special context which cannot be stressed now, or it has some lasting value.

The argument made in the chapter is that although US was the first country which thought of making multilateralism a foreign policy agenda, now it has acquired a life of its own. It has transcended geographical limits. In fact, this concept appears to be a direct reflection of democracy and rule of law in politics. American unilateral intervention in Yugoslavia, Iraq and Afghanistan and off late unilateral creation of Kosovo, and America not ratifying CTBT and Kyoto Protocol indicate that principle of multilateralism needs a new lease of life. Therefore, while US appears to be disinclined towards multilateralism in international politics, developing countries
along with many European countries have become great upholders. Using historical insights one can argue that arrival of a new world order always brings collateral catastrophe, but with the adherence to the principle of multilateralism and institutional alignments and packaging of international politics, the world can circumvent any infliction of misery on human race. The whole logic of multilateralism as a reflection of democracy and rule of law can be explained by constructivist insights. Given the opportunity of sustained and uninterrupted communication and interaction, states correct mutual perceptions and do away with their mutual suspicions. Liberal understanding brings states together and constructivist insights can knit a sense of community among them.

The third chapter is on "Multilateralism and China's Traditional and Non-Traditional Security Concerns in the Post-Cold War Era". This chapter attempts to trace China's security concerns, traditional as well as non-traditional, during the post-Cold War period world order and intends to understand its attempts to adjust itself within this order and shape this order according to its security needs. The core concern of this chapter lies in examining the role China visualises for multilateralism to address its own security concerns in the post-Cold War world order. Does it get involved in regional multilateral organisations to meet its concerns in the region concerned or consider the region as a whole will also be a focus of this chapter.

This chapter tracks China's gradual adaptation of multilateralism and engagement, with and participation in, multilateral organisations in the 1990s. Also, it looks into factors forcing China to readjust its security policy vis-à-vis multilateral organisations. It, in fact, creates an interest to observe the evolution of China's security policy as changing Chinese security perceptions reflect upon China travelling a great distance from paranoid yet brash attitude in security matters to becoming a confident and sophisticated power. This chapter tries to disentangle complex interplays among larger geopolitical security scenario, China's neighbouring countries' response to its rise, and changing internal security wisdom that have occasioned smooth factoring of multilateralism in China's foreign policy.

The fourth Chapter deals with "China and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation". China's endeavour to address some of its security issues through SCO is the central focus of this chapter. The importance accorded to SCO and Central Asia in this chapter is not unfounded. In the last decade, this region has assumed great
significance in China's security vision. With resurgent Russia, this region has potential to become a new theatre of a new Cold War, if it ever breaks out. Coming out of many decades of oblivion, this energy rich region has attracted many international stakeholders along with the rise of home-grown troubles caused by non-state actors. As Russia and China are jointly asserting their influence over this politically instable and economically weak region, SCO provides ideal test case to examine genuineness of China's stated normative positions in security affairs in international politics.

"China and the ASEAN Regional Forum" is the focus of fifth chapter. The scheme of the preceding chapter will be repeated in the context of ARF in this chapter, though, ASEAN and ARF, perhaps, are the earliest forums where China ventured into the process of regional cooperation. In 1990s, China made this region its test case to check the validity and effectiveness of its Good Neighbourly Policy. In fact, in the fourth and fifth chapters what is attempted is to elaborate on whether regional cooperation in these regions is indicative of the emergence of a regional community.

In chapter six, a comparative analysis of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and the ASEAN Regional Forum is made. This chapter deals with similarities and dissimilarities in the process of regional integration, and examines in a comparative manner China's role in such a process of integration in the context of two different regions- Central Asia and South East Asia- within the framework of SCO and ARF.

Chapter seven delineates the findings and conclusions of the study.

7. Methodology

This study analyses China's understanding of regional security at four levels. At the first level, it develops an understanding of China's perceived world-order. At the second level, it examines the consistency of its pronouncements through its relation with its neighbours. At the third level, it studies the security environment in the regions. At the fourth level, it critically evaluates China's contribution to the development of regional security organisations in these regions. This study is based
upon primary sources (in English and translated Chinese works) and secondary sources. Thus, this research is a more qualitative than quantitative one. Both deductive and inductive methods have been applied, making it both analytical and empirical.