



Makalenin Türü/ Article Type : Araştırma Makalesi/ Research Article
Geliş Tarihi/ Date Received : 18.05.2022
Kabul Tarihi/ Date Accepted : 12.06.2022
Yayın Tarihi/ Date Published : 30.06.2022
Yayın Sezonu/ Pub Date Season : Bahar/ Spring

The Effects of International Organizations on The Countries Developments: The Case of The Baltic and Central Asia States¹

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Keywords:

International Organizations, Baltic States, Central Asia, European Union, Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

ABSTRACT

Membership in international organizations is maintained within the framework of the rules that states undertake by entering these organizations. The motivation of states for compliance with these rules is to contribute to the intangible or tangible power capacities of states such as economic development, solution of legal problems, balance of power, privilege in foreign policy. This study aimed to comparatively reveal the extent to which international organizations, in particular the EU and SCO, contribute to the development of their members, based on the examples of Baltic and Central Asian countries. For this, the role of these organizations in the level of economic development of the SCO member states, which were former members of the USSR, now EU member states and formerly USSR member states, has been tried to be examined. From this point of view, international organizations of which it is a member have an impact on the development of a state. Comparing the SCO and the EU in promoting economic development should not be out of the question.

Uluslararası Örgütlerin Ülkelerin Kalkınmalarına Etkileri: Baltık ve Orta Asya Ülkeleri Örneği

Anahtar Kelimeler:

Uluslararası Örgütler, Baltık Ülkeleri, Orta Asya, Avrupa Birliği, Şanghay İşbirliği Örgütü.

ÖZ

Uluslararası örgütlere üyelik, devletlerin bu örgütlere girerek taahhüt ettikleri kurallar çerçevesinde sürdürülmektedir. Bu kurallara uyum için devletlerin motivasyonu ise, ekonomik kalkınma, hukuksal sorunların çözümü, güç dengesi sağlayabilme, dış politikada ayrıcalık gibi devletlerin soyut veya somut güç kapasitelerine katkı sağlamaktır. Bu çalışma ise, AB ve SCO özelinde uluslararası örgütlerin, Baltık ve Orta Asya ülkeleri örneklerinden hareketle üyelerinin kalkınmalarına ne düzeyde katkı sağladığını karşılaştırmalı olarak ortaya koymayı hedeflemiştir. Ancak böylesi bir karşılaştırma için benzer koşullarda olan devletlerin durumlarını ele almak gereklidir. Bunun için de SSCB üyesiyken şimdi AB üyesi olan devletler ile eskiden SSCB üyesiyken, şimdi ŞİÖ üyesi devletlerin ekonomik kalkınmışlık seviyesinde bu örgütlerin rolü incelenmeye çalışılmıştır. Buradan hareketle bir devletin kalkınmışlığı konusunda üyesi olduğu uluslararası örgütlerin etkisi vardır. Ekonomik kalkınmanın desteklenmesi konusunda Şanghay İşbirliği Örgütü ile Avrupa Birliği'ni kıyaslamak söz konusu olmamalıdır.

¹ A small part of this study was previously presented as a symposium paper. For related paper, Kanat, S., Gürdal, E. "Reasons of Different Development Level Between Baltic Countries and Central Asia Countries, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Effect of EU and SCO", CIEP 2017, Isparta.

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Introduction

Today, fifteen states that became independent after the collapse of the USSR are seen in different political positions and on different economic and political levels. This difference is related to the influence of the political and economic cultures of the past as well as the functioning of the international organizations and the new world order after 1991. With the end of the cold war, when the bipolar structure collapsed, a “new world order” emerged with the United States (US) as the single superpower. This understanding of order is a function connected to a free market economy. The Baltic and Central Asian Countries saw organizations as a tool for integration into the liberal economy. Since they are already former USSR countries, the USA and Western European states considered the integration of these countries into the free market as priority policies. Both were introduced to the market economy at the same time. However, Baltic countries have been more successful in adopting the free market economy than Central Asia. Thus, they had a higher level of development. This difference is the EU’s implementation of a sustainable policy with a priority on economic integration in the Baltic countries. On the other hand, SCO’s support to Central Asian countries was weak compared to the EU’s support and integration efforts to Baltic countries.

This study examines the influence of the organizations on the states as well as the views on the collapse of the communist bloc and the emergence of a unipolar structure. The EU and SCO are seen as two organizations advocating different camps. Since these two organizations do not have the same capacity, they should not be subjected to criticism. For independent states, membership in organizations like the EU and SCO is a tool for transition to the free market economy.

The Baltic states, former members of the USSR, have made great efforts to become NATO and the EU members by seeing themselves as fully European after becoming independent. On the other hand, the former USSR members Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan in Central Asia had to maintain the historical disintegration as a member of SCO with incentives from China and then Russia. In this case, it is worth examining how the Baltic States and the four states in Central Asia can not reach the level of welfare differentiated by the influence of the organizations.

Economic and political organizations, as the greatest pillars of the free market economy, can yield various resources in the course of international relations. While the EU is trying to be a balancer for the formation of similar political and economic structures among the members, there is a structure of interest war among SCO members.

Behind the USSR, Russia has arisen, and anti-Americanism has come to the forefront, especially in favor of the creation of a multi-polar structure using the advantage of energy richness. Moreover, China’s economic upswing and its population as well as a source of military concern caused Russian and Chinese short-term alliances. Regional actors try to legitimize their politics thanks to regional organizations. Supportive policies for the members of these organizations also stem from the institutionalizing nature of the liberal economic order. In practice, however, it is not said that the SCO has adopted an institutional approach. It seems to be avoided from a supranational structure because it concentrates on strategic partnership. However, Baltic countries are more successful in adopting a free market economy and attaching high development levels than Central Asia.

This study method is qualitative research that deals with the organizational feature of the liberal order. This study is conducted to find answers to the query that which factors cause the major differences in the development level of the Baltic and Central Asian countries. Additionally, this study looks at these remarkable differences in the development levels of these two groups of countries with a special focus on the international organizations such as the EU and SCO and their abilities to shape the development levels of member countries.

The Baltic States In The European Union

The European Union gives priority to adapting to changing regional and international conditions. Therefore, the enlargement policies of the EU are one of the most important and debated issues since its foundation. The constituent agreement of the union also includes an article on enlargement and the application of new members. Article 237 of the Treaty of Rome, the founding European Economic Community of 1957, states that "any European state may apply to become a member of the Community" (Rome Treaty art. 237). The major problem is which countries could be accepted as a member of the European Union since, in EU's treaties, there is no precise and unanimously agreed geographical description of Europe. The distinction between Asia and Europe is also significant in this issue. Georgia, for example, can become a member of the EU by seeing itself as European. Another example is the fact that Greenland is an EU member between 1973 and 1985 and that it is European because of Denmark, this situation is indicating that there is no definite geographical description (Karakas, 2007: 29). As a consequence, it is clear that each Baltic state- in the text of the founding agreement of the EU- conforms to the criteria of applying to the Union and they are European.

With the end of the Cold War, the Central and Eastern European countries, which were in integration, had to comply with the Copenhagen criteria. At first, the unstable attitude of the EU to the Baltic states is seen. However, this ambiguity became positive because of the purpose of breaking Russia's influence. Western Europe gave the signals that they would accept membership of these European countries, a former member of the USSR, and then they could not step back from this process. This process has led to the EU membership becoming a member according to a rule. While the enlargement process of the EU does not welcome the membership of the former member states of the Union which are different from their own in terms of political, economic, and European identity, the Baltic states have been willing to try to join and integrate this economic deficit with the reforms (Schimmelfennig, 1999: 39).

The Baltic States became independent in August 1991 after the end of the Cold War and the breakaway of Russia became a priority in politics. The Baltic States were characterized as European and therefore had to be integrated into the EU. Thus, it was decided that some part of the budget of the European Community (EC) that belonged to the former USSR area should be allocated to the Baltic States. The continuing economic aid for the restructuring of Poland and Hungary has expanded and the decision to include the Baltic States shows the desire to harmonize this region with Europe (Öztan, 2005: 239). The Baltic States initially started to establish rapprochement with Europe by cooperating with trade agreements and then with the EU accession process. The Baltic States, which are considered to be transitional countries, have opted for resistance to the economic policies of Russia Since the 1990s, as they have felt the Western European countries behind them (Çatalbaş&Yıldırım, 2008: 143). The presence of developed countries in the nearby geographical region has provided such trustworthy an alternative to the Baltic States. However, the fact that the transition states of Central Asia are closed has become a difficult way to reach the level of development.

The Baltic States have also shown their efforts to be close to Western Europe by refusing to join the Commonwealth of the Independent States, which consists of former member states of the USSR. The Baltic States are the only non-members of the CIS during the establishment phase (CIS Charter, 1993). In this way, Baltic States wanted to set boundaries with Russia and get out of Russian influence. Membership in the EU will be the most appropriate for this.

Membership of the Baltic States in the EU caused NATO members to withdraw from Russia in the first place. The process for these three countries to comply with EU standards in economic, political, and legal terms has been met with uneasiness by Russia. Because, immediately after the end of the Cold War, a tense relationship with Russia is not desired. On the other hand, the willingness of the Baltic states to join the West, NATO's Partnership for Peace, and the tension that began between

Europe and Russia have caused the Baltic States to become prominent members of the EU (Lehti&Smith, 2003: 57). For this to happen, membership in the EU became a roadmap for the Baltic states after becoming a member of NATO. Thus, in 2002, the Baltic states were called for NATO membership negotiations (Smith, 2005: 4).

Becoming a member of NATO is an important step in the roadmap to the EU (Zaneta, 2008). In 2004, these three Baltic States were members of NATO (Lejin, 1999: 7). It is also possible to see the soldiers of the Baltic States in NATO's Afghanistan and Iraq operations to strengthen this relationship. The membership of the Baltic States to NATO is supported by the United States. Russia has expressed its discomfort in this regard. In particular, a debate has arisen over the necessity of these independent Baltic States to participate in the accounts of nuclear weapons stations. Even if Poland and the Czech republic's NATO memberships were accepted by Russia, the participation of the Baltic States in these formations has strengthened Russia's concerns (Bilinsky, 1999: 3-4). It will be seen that the West, especially the US, is trying to isolate Russia. Henry Kissinger even said that Russia could have borders in Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East, not in Europe, saying, "Russia is in, but not of Europe" (Kissinger, 2001; Krickus, 2001: 163). Therefore, Russia was described as Asian and tried to be removed from Europe and the Baltic states (Levesque, 1999: 158).

There are also theoretical approaches presenting different views on the reasons for the membership of the former member states of the USSR in the EU. There are debates between liberal and realist approaches on whether the EU should accept the Baltic states as members of the EU. In a rationalist cost-benefit analysis, the EU members do not seek selfish and instrumental benefits from being a member of the Baltic States. According to the neorealist perspective, power-based analysis is not necessary for balancing. Neorealists emphasize the "small is better" approach because of the decision-making process. Europe which is small and deep has a better function to make a decision easily. On the other hand, neoliberal perspective, meaning interest-based analysis, Baltic States' membership means the expected cost which exceeds the expected benefits for the EU. The main issue is an efficient institutional solution that ensures economic integration for the EU (Schimmelfenning, 1999: 1).

The EU makes the interest-based approach preferential as the 1999 Helsinki summit and membership in 2004 demonstrates. The Helsinki summit has been an important date for the Baltic states, which are among the 12 countries for which nominations are officially announced (Helsinki European Council, 1999). In 1997, the decision to pursue a successful enlargement process involving the European continent at Luxembourg meetings began to be adopted by the 1999 Helsinki summit. Finally, in May 2004, Baltic States joined the EU (TCDB, 2020).

The Baltic states and other eastern European countries became outsiders of the European unification due to the cold war. But the fifth enlargement of the EU is different from the other enlargements in the reunification of Europe process as it was the largest and most painful enlargement process. This enlargement also caused structural changes in the EU. Changes in the EU institutional structure and decision-making mechanism have been made due to the new participation (TCDB, 2020). These changes have caused a financial burden for former EU members. However, this expansion was deemed necessary for expected benefits.

The reason for being a painful process is the emergence of heterogeneity. These diversities come from peculiar historical, political, economical, and social heritage. Because they have a low economical situation and the most important problem of transformation from a communist society (Schimmelfenning, 1999: 5). So, the EU encourages the Baltic States to transform their social, political, and economical structure to succeed in enlargement.

After the accession of the Baltic states to the EU, relations between Russia and Europe continued to be strained. Moreover, the participation of the Baltic states in the Union has deepened

the Kaliningrad issue. Kaliningrad, an oblast region belonging to Russia, is between Lithuania and Poland. However, there is no connection with Russia. When Kaliningrad's selected manager proposes the free economic zone, the door to the closest relations with the West will be opened (Krickus, 2002: 5). The fact that an oblast linked to Russia enters such a process after the Baltic states' membership in NATO and the EU is a matter for Russia. Moreover, Washington Times claims that Kaliningrad has got nuclear weapons that are disposed of by Russia (Krickus, 2002: 6). This threat shows how important the Baltic states are to EU membership. Because the Baltic states could be the buffer zone for Europe against such a threat.

The transition of the Baltic states to Europe as a buffer emerges for Western European security. This was also used in the First World War. The region was useful for Allies in terms of national minorities. French Prime Minister Clemenceau called this region a "Condon saintaire" because of the role of a barrier between Germany and Russia (Wright, 2007: 182; Elletson, 2006: 4). Today, Baltic States has got the same situation. Especially, the Baltic states stand out as being an energy transition area and a barrier between Russia and central Europe.

The full membership of the Baltic States in the EU has also been influential in European energy policies. While the Baltic states were under the membership of the USSR, they were compromising their independence because of their energy dependency. Russia's energy trump card is the most effective tool in Europe. Since they are in the transit region after their independence, they are now starting to see themselves as the guardian of the stability of the flow of energy. In fact, in 2006, the Baltic heads of state wanted to sign a protocol on energy security, creating a summit. On the other hand, Poland was standing on a pipeline plan that would allow Russian natural gas to come directly from the Baltic Sea to Germany. In this way, the Baltic countries will be able to bypass. This plan has been criticized and it is voiced that similar to the agreement Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939 (Elletson, 2006: 1).

None of the Baltic States is a natural gas producer. Most natural gas to meet domestic demand comes from Russian Gazprom. This is a dilemma for the Baltic states. Since they see themselves in a transit region, they can move easily against Russia. The other side is Russia's other pipeline route projects (e.g. the North European Gas Pipeline). In this case, the Baltic states may suffer from cheap energy imports. After the EU membership, problems have arisen in the purchase of cheap gas. Russia has increased gas prices (Elletson, 2006:12,13).

The European Union needs Russia for energy. Despite the search for alternative energy access, the EU requires energy-rich Russia. Russia's wide geography and energy transmission routes make this dependency bigger. Therefore, the Baltic States are an important energy transit region for both Russia and Western Europe. By using this advantageous position, the Baltic States can easily enter politics, which may sometimes be open to tension with Russia. At this point, the former EU member has to go to the policy of soothing the Baltic States.

The EU has concentrated on the high corruption rate in the Baltic States that gained independence. According to the research, the Baltic States lag behind Western European states in corruption and transparency (King et.al, 2004: 329-345). Since the membership process, The EU has encouraged the baltic states to sign declarations on transparency. Estonia in 1995, Latvia in 1994, and Lithuania in 1998 signed a declaration in transition. Moreover, OECD is also the leader in fighting corruption and good governance (OECD, 2011: 3). Now, Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia is member of the OECD (OECD, 2022). It shows how much these Baltic States has grown economically thanks to the EU. The high level of corruption and bribery are obstacles to the economic and political significance of these countries and the transition period in the marketplace. Bribery incidents caused the privatization process to be particularly problematic in the EU membership process (Earle, 2000: 497). As a result,

private investments could be prevented because of corruption, but after the membership, this level decreases (Gray et al, 2004: 14).

Estonia is the country with the lowest corruption rate in the Baltic States. It is the best country to push the Soviet legacy out of the system. In Latvia, the situation is different. During the Soviet period, immigrants from other Soviet countries came to their country. This, in turn, gave the Soviet culture a lasting impression. The most common ethnic group in Latvia after Latvians is the Russians (Rislakki, 2008). This is influenced by the fact that the corruption rate is higher than in Estonia. In Latvia, the Soviet industry system was more common than in Estonia. So, after independence, it took more time to erase these heritages. Lithuania is in the middle level of these two countries (Transparency International, 2001). In sum, the corruption rate in the Baltic States was among the issues to be resolved in the EU membership process (Transparency International, 2017). Looking at the rates, it is also seen that the process of European membership negotiations and the rate of corruption are falling behind the membership (Gray et al, 2004).

Russian ethnic population in Latvia emerged as a cultural problem in the fight against corruption, while Russia used this Russian population in Latvia as a separate political pressure. After being a member of the EU and NATO, Baltic States are concerned about Russia's economic and political pressure. Just as the occupation crisis of Ukraine is with the West, the crisis has caused a new tension between the Baltic countries and Russia (McNamara, 2016). Because Russia is trying to use the Russian population, which it uses as a political tool in Ukraine, in the Baltic countries as well. In Latvia and Estonia, the second minority group is Russians. Russian minorities in these two countries are pursuing political moves that co-operate with Russia. Therefore, they are trying to create political parties to give an official qualification to anti-EU and anti-NATO rhetoric. This, in turn, forces these three EU members into democratic movements (Uhlin, 2006). In Lithuania, the situation is different. The second ethnic group after the Lithuanians consists of the Poles (TCDB, 2022). Russia is trying to use ethnic groups as a means through the Poles this time. Russia is using this Polish minority in Lithuania against Lithuania. Thus, Lithuania is the strongest anti-Russian in the three Baltic countries. As a result, Lithuania, which is a natural gas importer, is obliged to import natural minerals from Russia at a higher price than the other Baltic States (NCECP, 2016: 24). In response to this high demand, Lithuania, seeking an alternative, wanted to reduce its 100% dependence on Russia by negotiating natural gas with Norway in 2014. On the other hand, Russia has offered a discount to Lithuania (BBC, 2014). In addition to the Norwegian alternative, an agreement was signed in 2017 that began importing natural gas through the United States by ship. With this development, Lithuania is the first country to import energy sources from the USA among the former Soviet member countries (Sheppard, 2017). Lithuania is instrumental in this American support of the EU's energy dependence on Russia.

As a result of all these developments, after independence, the Baltic States are trying to apply all political, economic, and military policies to clear the Soviet heritage from their countries. NATO membership and EU membership have been the most important goals and they got it. However, the political and geographical position of the Baltic region has been influential in this. For Europe, it is seen as a buffer against Russia that it is a transitional region geographically. The EU's incentives for the Baltic region are ongoing. From the budget of the Association, economic restoration aids are made for the reforms and the agriculture sector is being tried to be strengthened. Transparency is being put to the forefront to combat corruption. Ethnic distribution is one of the biggest problems in the process of accession to the EU and after membership. Russia will continue to use ethnic elements against the EU as a means.

The Baltic States have gained political courage in the EU membership. In this regard, hard politics against Russia can easily enter. However, this tense situation is being balanced by the EU

council. The EU is not only promoting the Baltic states economically but also trying to protect them from political harm.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)

There are so many differences between the EU, which is a supra-national structure, and SCO, an international organization. SCO is looking for an alternative in the region as to its purpose of establishment and operation. China and Russia have left the disputes between them. They have allied not to engage the European Union and the USA in Central Asia.

The SCO has begun to come up with a solution to the border issues as an institutional purpose. After World War II, a share was made between the USSR and the People's Republic of China in Central Asia. After the disintegration of the USSR, only the Central Asian border neighborhood with the USSR emerged in four quarters: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Russia. Already the search for solutions that began just before the dissolution of the USSR intensified negotiations for the solution of the border problem with the increase of the border neighbor. The main purpose of China's initiatives is to provide border security to open up to the Asian market. Thus, on April 26, 1996, representatives of the border neighbors came to Shanghai to form the Shanghai Five (Denker-Karakurt, 2002: 4). The organization took the name of SCO with the participation of Uzbekistan on June 14. Thus, from this date, as a regional power, it has announced its policies with a multi-polar structure. This is particularly evident in the 2005 US Declaration on the reduction of military presence in the region (Nogayeva, 2011: 245).

As of 2017, the organization has grown with the participation of India and Pakistan. In 2021, it becomes a nine-member organization with the participation of Iran, which was previously an observer member. Thus, Iran become a full member by the approval of the other eight members, in the last membership meeting held in Dushanbe (IMFA, 2021).

SCO was created for economic relations after security issues. The issue of China's eastern Turkestan is also influential. China's concern about Uighur Turks and the weakness of Central Asia have contributed to economic and political interests. China has an effort to establish influence by organizing through SCO (Adibelli-Memmedov, 2010: 43). The Russian and Kazakh energy is another achievement of China through the influence of the SCO. Moreover, Russia is in the process of being re-active in the territory of the Former USSR through SCO in line with the same targets (Dikkaya, 2009: 294).

Russia sees preferable co-operation with China in Central Asia for the creation of regional power against the West. Therefore, the SCO is an international organization for the implementation of anti-Western policies. Even though it is in a position that can not be compared with the EU, its contribution to the formation of a regional multilateral structure can not be ignored.

The Central Asian countries, which are members of the SCO, economically had a closer relationship with the USSR. Therefore, the recovery process after independents became more difficult than in the Baltic countries. For example, Kyrgyzstan experienced a sharp decline in production in 1991. Moreover, the money in circulation in Kyrgyzstan was printed in Russia. This situation forced the country into trouble. The CIS member states were using Russian rubles. With this money coming from Russia, Kyrgyzstan owes money to Russia, thus gaining independence but there is an economic hardship. Kyrgyzstan's decision to switch to the national currency, -Som-, quickly changed its economic system. This initiative was a risky decision that must be made. After that time, production started to increase. The per capita GDP in 1991 was 16.4 Som and in 1996 it was 4094.2 Som (the US \$ 409.2) (Budak, 2000: 29,33,63).

The troubles in the post-1991 economic situation in Kazakhstan are the same as those of other Central Asian countries. Kazakhstan, an economy based on machine production, is experiencing

economic difficulties due to the lack of demand after independence. The transition to a national currency – Tenge- has begun to raise economic values through financial subsidies from the West and the operation of underground resources. The year in which it became a member of the SCO coincided with the same period in which the economic ascension passed. The two largest trading partners of Kazakhstan are the other SCO members Russia and China. After independence, Kazakhstan, which is trying to strengthen its relations with the US and the EU, has become a priority trade partner with Russia because it is the transit country for oil transportation. On the other hand, the liberal economy has been separated from other Central Asian countries in terms of the transition effort. Kazakhstan has the largest amount of privatizations (Kara-Yeşilot, 2011).

Following the independence of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan, the EU aimed to successfully pass the transition period with the TACIS program. The Baltic States have not been included in this program. Because the Baltic States are intended to enter into a special relationship with the EU (Geybullayev-Arnold, 2006: 46-47). The difference in this situation is also the reason for the difference in development between the Central Asian countries involved in SCO and the Baltic States that are members of the EU.

Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan have shown their balancing attitudes, including the SCO. It is possible to see traces of Russian political and economic cultures, which are still influenced by the region. Russia has been trying to take advantage of this and it has become a priority for China to form economic developments as a reaction against the West. On the other hand, observer participation of SCO of Iran, Pakistan, and India was indicative of possible future membership (Ari, 2010: 37). These countries, which have passed from the status of observer country to the status of a member country, will also affect the structure of the organization.

The SCO should not be compared with the EU's comprehensive policy and historical background. It can not be said that the former members of the USSR have made great progress in economic and political terms as a member of the SCO. They are trying to display a power image organized in the region with the exercises they perform in the military sense. They are trying to show that there is a force organized in the region by military exercises. It is not possible to see the institutionalism approach from a liberal perspective from SCO policies because of its international structure. In this respect, it is different from the EU. The organizational viewpoint is not actor-oriented but organizational priority and systematic organization contrast with SCO's actors and decisions in priority. As discussed in detail in the next section, the competition in the SCO and the region is a major obstacle to the functionality of SCO.

Development Factors: Central Asia Compared To The Baltic States

The change that began in the 1990s was the naming of the New World Order by US President Bush (Bush, 1990). With the end of the Cold War, liberal democracy declared victory. From a liberal point of view, the disintegration of the USSR will increase the power of institutionalization and the wars of interest will be determined by the power of economic and political organizations. The former USSR member states have tried to produce policies to find their place in the liberal economic system and have considered membership as a tool for regional cooperation based on economic cooperation. This includes the membership of the Baltic states in the EU and the membership of the Central Asian countries in the SCO. Compared with the Baltic states Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, and Central Asia with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan, the Baltic States in economic terms seem to have stronger economies. These states, which were members of the former USSR and met with the liberal economy at the same time, were chosen to reveal as much as possible the effect of the economic organizations that were members of the analysis. The 1990s were the turning point for every two states in the region. In other words, two groups of states have begun to benefit from the support of the organizations they belong to at almost the same time. EU process of the Baltic countries started in the

middle of the 1990s and SCO has also been founded at the same time. Therefore, the effects on the developed levels of the former member states of the USSR that bet should be examined. The study was conducted in the Baltic States and Central Asian countries on the level of development in the EU and SCO. On the other hand, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan have been selected because they are members of SCO.

The Liberal Economy transition has made different progress for Baltic countries and Central Asia for Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. After their independence, there is a difference in development between the Baltic region and the Central Asian region. Naturally, this difference will be assessed with success and failure in harmony with the new world order. The greatest element among the causes of this difference is the organizations.

Europe has seen Baltic nations as a buffer and has tried to harmonize them with the European Union. It was tried to be purified from the Soviet destruction. However, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan, which have experienced the transition process, have not succeeded in this process easier because they are the countries with the most united past ties with the USSR. For this, it is necessary to look at Russian influence in Central Asia and the historical policies of Europe and Russia. For example, The Russian empire ran to Asia to gain power against Europe. France even supported the Russian empire against England. The Tilsit treaty is evidence of the Russian alliance (Nester, 2013: 358). However, Russia, defeated by the Crimean War, has been forced to go to Central Asia (TCBDAGM, 2006). Russia has a long history in Central Asia than the Baltic states. Therefore, this situation, which is reflected daily, has caused the bonds to settle in the region. In terms of population, culture, language, politics, and economics, it is difficult to break away from Russia after independence compared to the Baltic states. This situation has been influential in the Central Asian countries, which have difficulties in terms of being able to exist in a liberal economy. Separately, the Baltic states are supported by the EU to eradicate the Russian past, but the SCO has not provided support to Central Asia members.

The Baltics States believed that they were capable of competing in the modern world. They were determined about independence. But Central Asian countries had some trouble with independence (McClaule, 2002: 51). Because they have more intensive relations with Russia. Their religious and cultural root were isolated nearly. After collopse of USSR, for Kazahistan, Kirgizistan, Uzbekistan and Tacikistan, Russia was an option to survive. For Central Asia, there was a single economic space to succeed market economy. But not for the Baltic States.

There are problems within the SCO regarding deepening and integration. Kazakhstan's economic situation is in a better position, while Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have lower levels of economic value. Moreover, the ethnic issues and the water issue in Central Asia affect the formation of deepening and stable policies. Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan are increasingly likely to cooperate with third countries due to the prevailing instability in the region. Security concerns are causing this (Ari, 2010: 14). The SCO does not go to the development of a mechanism to ensure inter-country harmony. On the other hand, the EU attaches importance to integration with the countries.

Central Asia has regional and ethnic conflicts. Therefore, the priorities to be resolved in the region are more than those of the Baltic States. The Baltic States have successfully engaged in Post-Soviet activities (Ubiria, 2016: 16). When Central Asia acquired their dependence, economic territories in Soviet times became state borders. So this situation caused ethnic conflicts. Because national self-awareness of the local nationalities grew (Andrei, 2010: 152).

The Baltic States are experiencing less ethnic conflict than the Central Asian countries member of the SCO. These ethnic problems in Central Asia make it difficult to integrate safely. Even as it is in the Fergana Valley, the water issue, combined with ethnic conflicts, causes the region to become unstable (Bichsel et.al., 2011: 253). The SCO's solution-oriented approach to this issue remains weak.

This is reflected in their backwardness in developmental levels. Russia and China are uncomfortable with the prominence of their ethnic and religious identities in the four Central Asian countries that gained their independence. SCO does not support the national selves of the central Asian countries. The EU is sensitive to the fact that any instability in the Baltic states will cause economic problems. thus the EU supports the Baltic states' pre-soviet history emphasis. The Baltic states, on the other hand, are European states, and it is often emphasized. The Baltic states have benefited from symbols that reflect the Baltic identity in the pre-Soviet period to excavate the Soviet legacy. This situation is welcome and acceptable by the EU. But, This situation is different for Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan in Central Asia. Although these four Central Asian countries wanted to embrace Turkish and Islamic identities to excavate the Soviet legacy, it was not possible (Ubiria, 2016: 2). The prominence of Turkish and Muslim symbols and reflections is undesirable by Russia and China, and SCO support is not even seen or even prevented in this regard.

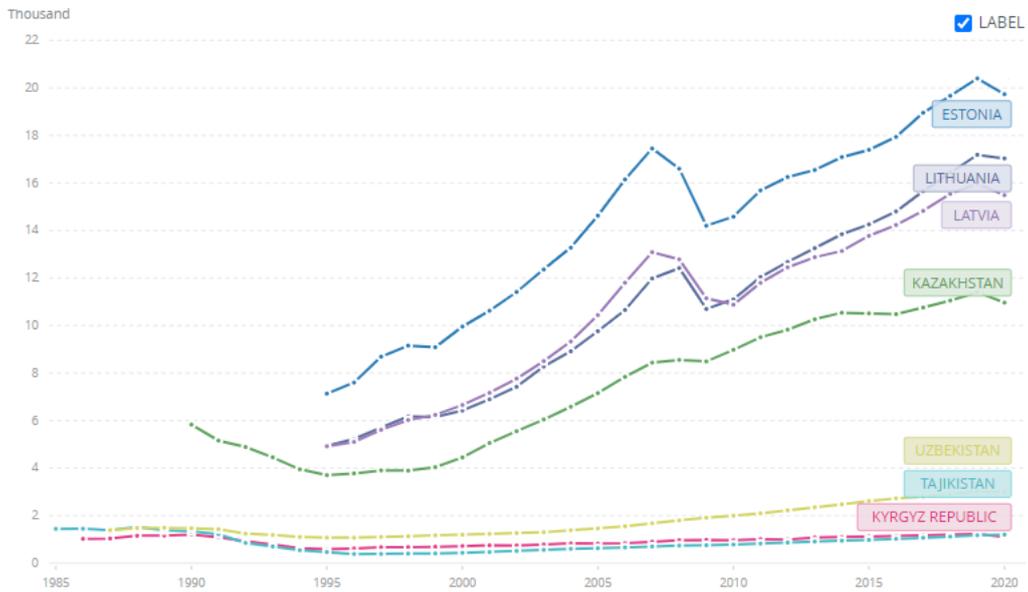
The fact that the EU is an older organization and that it has been operating in the liberal economy for many years has undoubtedly put the EU in front of SCO and even other economic organizations. SCO was established in 1996 for border security and then economic cooperation. But there is no supra-national institutional structure. This situation makes it difficult to closely follow the economic processes of member states. It is therefore impossible to compare a supra-national organization founded after the Second World War with an international organization after the Cold War in terms of experience and competence.

EU economic cooperation management profession. It is closely followed by the economic funds it provides to the Baltic states through its specialized sub-units of institutional structure. For example, there are 32,546 officers in commission-related directorates. DEVCO (Development and cooperation) has 3,119 staff (EC, 2017). In other words, the Baltic states, which are on their way to EU membership, have been followed by a professional structure, which has been influential in their economic development and being a member of the EU.

When the two organizations are compared in terms of their position in the world economy, the EU is arguably out of the question. This influences the success of the economic reforms of the Baltic states, and the better the outcome of the transition period than in Central Asia. As a single market, the EU is a major world trading power. The EU's economy measured in terms of GDP is ahead of the United States. The EU's trade with the rest of the world accounts for around 20% of global exports and imports. The EU is one of the three largest global players in international trade, next to the United States and China. Today, the EU accounts for 15% of the world's total trade. They were still ahead of the United States, which had a larger share of world imports than either the EU or China (EU, 2022). Therefore, the EU could provide a special contribution to the Baltic economically, resulting in a difference in development between the former members of the USSR. Moreover, Estonia and Latvia Lithuania have respectively become OECD members in 2010, 2016, and 2018 (OECD, 2022). This is a concrete example of this economic progress. In 2022, Estonia's GDP (37.735 US \$) and Lithuania's GDP (38.959 US \$) in OECD is better than 10 countries like Russia and Turkey (OECDa, 2022).

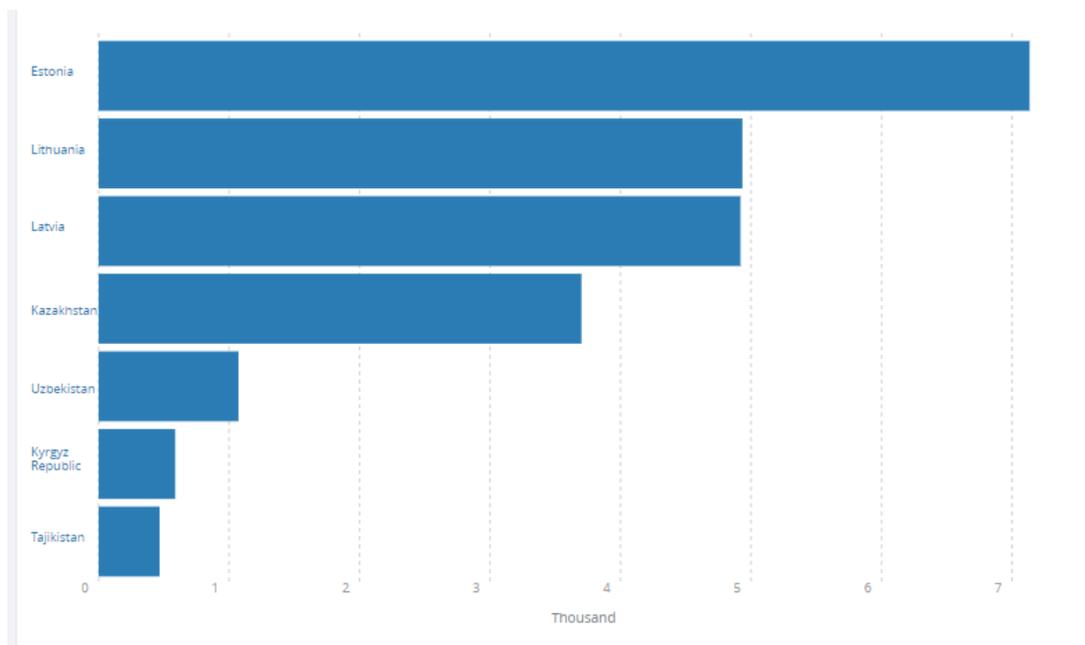
As seen in Table-1, the Baltic countries have gone up in GDP after the membership process. Economic progress has not been observed in two other Central Asian countries except Kazakhstan after being a member of SCO. In Kazakhstan, this rise is due to being an energy producer. Consequently, SCO did not make an economic contribution to its members as reflected in GDP data. The Baltic States have made economic progress since the beginning of the EU accession negotiations. This is the result of the contribution of the EU.

Table- 1: GDP per capita (current US\$). Between 1996 and 2020 Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan.

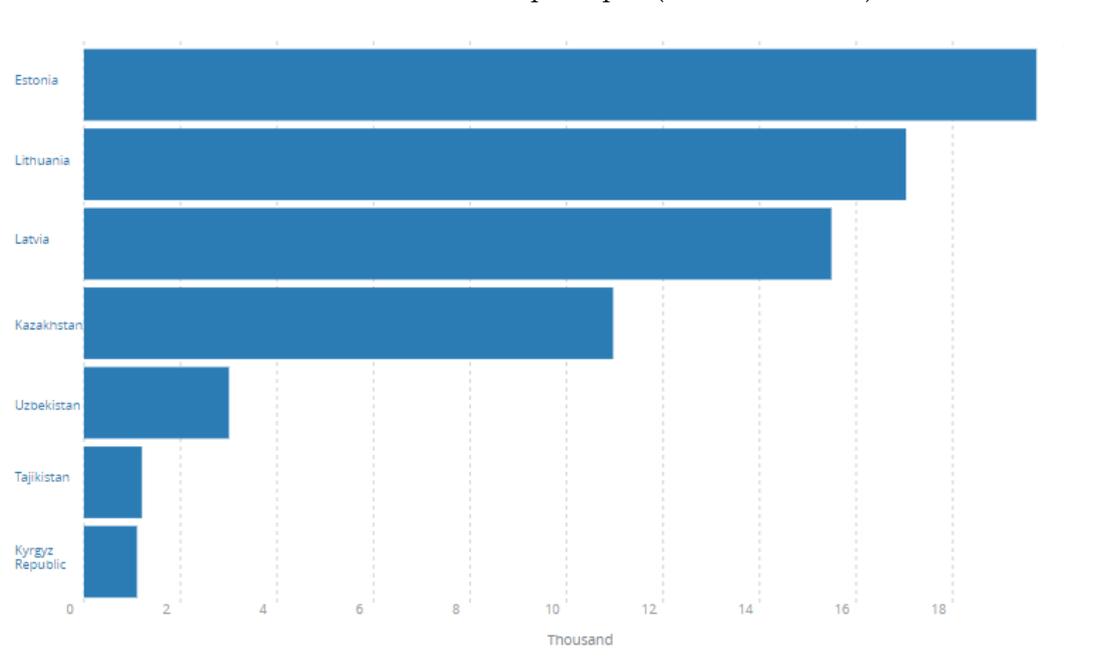


Source: The World Bank 2020

Table-2: GDP per capita (current 2015 US\$)



Source: The World Bank 2015.

Table-3: GDP per capita (current 2020 US\$)

Source: The World Bank 2020.

The difference between Table-2 and Table-3 is only the change between Lithuania and Latvia. GDP in 1995 and GDP in 2016 did not change except in these two countries. But except for the SCO members, the GDP values of the EU members have a remarkable boost after the EU membership.

Geography is also influenced by the fact that the two regions do not have the same development. Geography continues to be active in the 21st century as it is influential in world history (Scholving, 2016: 16). According to the Policy adviser of Reagan, Colin Gray, *“the political behaviour of a country is the reflection of that country’s history; and that country’s history is in great part (though certainly not entirely) the product of its geographical setting.”* (Gray, 1988: 43). Russia is not giving up on Central Asia. On the other hand, the Baltic states are just north of Europe, so they see themselves as European and it provides integration with Europe. The attitude towards the EU leads to the desire to move away from Russia. They want to use Russia’s energy concession in favor of the EU with their geography. Therefore, the EU can use this development of the Baltic states against Russia. In Central Asian countries, the geographical position is a stumbling block. Central Asian geography can not provide an advantage in maritime trade. In this case, it is possible to reach with the Central Asian energy transit road. In other words, Russia’s Soviet-era energy transmission lines are the most important market transports. Central Asian countries may have to find new allies that are not members of the SCO to create an alternative to Russia. Therefore, this will also remove the support of the SCO. Because Russia does not reinforce the liberal economy, but the policies that bind the region itself. The projects of new energy transmission lines are to be prevented by Russia, in particular in the case of the Caspian basin. Therefore, there is no contribution to economic independence for the central Asian countries as SCO. This can also be seen in the value given by Mackinder's Central Asia in the theory of Heartland, and one might think to conclude (Mackinder, 1904: 428).

There is a difference in the purpose of the establishment of the EU and the SCO. EU’s main aim is integration and economic-political unity. Therefore, Baltic States enjoy higher economic growth than Central Asia (Zielonka, 2006: 25). The SCO was formed based on border security between Russia and

China (McCauley-Chan, 2009: 15,16). The SCO has not caused a common foreign policy for all the members to solve the border problems with the purpose of the establishment. However, the EU's economic and political integration policy has revealed a common foreign policy objective and this has been reflected in the establishing agreement (EU, 2016: 28). These different origins have influenced the success of the member states' economic development.

EU members have become more successful at integration because they see threats across Europe as a common threat. However, as is the case with the SCO, it is a mutual concern among the member states. This concern is in particular the population of China and its military power. Moreover, it is a threat that dominates the region with the rising economy. This situation has brought China and Russia closer (Nogayeva, 2011: 244). This alliance is about short-term and specific issues. On the other hand, it is desired to be close to the West to balance Russia. Hence, the concern about SCO members caused the formation of the association but did not lead to progress in the level of development of the members by providing a successful integration. The fact that the SCO is seen as an instrument of Russia and China against the US in the region has also given second priority to the economic and political developments of Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan.

Central Asian countries are balancing their Western-side policies as members of the SCO, which is in Russia and China to be able to understand the region's assets. The energy resources are not directly available to the market in a stable manner. For example, this leads Kazakhstan to be unable to have an advanced economy, as it is in the Arab countries in the economic sense of energy wealth. Moreover, despite being a member of the SCO, China did not want to establish Energy Club (McCauley-Chan, 2009: 18). Because China is an energy-poor country and needs to import more and more because of its growing economy (Jude, 2013: 222). Nonetheless, the SCO is composed of three big energy-producing and exporting countries (Russia, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan) and three energy-consuming and importing countries (China, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan), which set up its Energy Club in 2007. From this point, these countries conflicting interests had to elaborate complex strategies (Rousselot, 2011: 122).

China is the largest creditor of Kyrgyzstan. 50 percent of the external debt of Kyrgyzstan is to China. They wanted to strengthen their economies to consolidate their independence. However, since this situation is due to external borrowing, there has not been a complete transition period (Zhumakunova-Abdieva, 2021: 1072-1073). This economic debt relief to China has created the danger of its penetration. Russia's fear of losing these countries on its axis has been rekindled with China. so the SCO has a much different appearance than a structure that attaches importance to coexistence.

China and Russia, which are UN permanent member states, can ensure that the SCO is effective. The number of permanent members of the UN is also two in the EU, but the presence of the United States among permanent members is in favour of the EU. Economically, Russia and China can strengthen the SCO. Russia and China are trying to direct this organization and region in their direction. Russia and China, the two permanent members of the UN, are allies of the short-term SCO. So this ally is weak and regional compared support of the USA to the EU.

More and more democratized decision-making processes and especially economic cohesion policies in the EU makes Baltic countries more successful. Progress in the EU institutional structure is ahead of the SCO. Therefore, this situation is influenced by the development of Central Asian and Baltic States. Despite having a wider area in terms of land width, SCO is weaker in function than the EU with 27 members. Having 27 members and having a more stereotyped structure in terms of history has led to the institutionalization of the EU.

Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan are in the same region but they have different economic levels. This has made it difficult to implement a common policy, while baltic countries have similar economic standards with support in the EU. The main objective of the EU is to

create a common economic space similar to each other. so economic differences are being tried to be reduced. Tajikistan's national income is one-tenth of Kazakhstan's. Only Kazakhstan is rich in energy among the Central Asian countries that are members of the SCO (ADB, 2010: 30-33). This causes the growth of economic disparities among these four countries. Moreover, the excess of ethnic diversity in Kazakhstan is negating the fact that Russia is the most economically dependent country. Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are among the weakest economies in the Central Asian countries. This difference is seen as a disadvantage compared to similar economic political and cultural constructs that the baltic states have.

In the 1990s, common trade areas such as the EU were tried to be established in Central Asia. For example, in 1994, in addition to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan also established a Central Asian Economic Community. This organization, which Russia is outside, has been formed to facilitate the harmonization of goods, services, and taxation. However, an economic market has not been established and economic alignment has not been successful. The lack of a central secretariat shows that the institutional structure is weak. Such programs, which are not in Russia and China, are especially supported by the EU and the UN (Dikkaya, 2009: 291-292). Yet they have not been effective. As a result, regional partnerships such as the SCO have begun to gain importance.

Baltic countries do not go much in the way of agreement with the third countries and members of the organizations independently of each other. But, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan can go to different memberships. This is due to security concerns in the region. On the other hand in Central Asia, there is more political organization than commercial purpose. GUUAM, [Commonwealth of Independent States](#), and SCO are these (Jonson-Allison, 2001: 7).

The media is in a critical position for liberal elements. The free movement rate and level of development of the media and non-governmental organizations are parallel concepts. Central Asia republics never had a sustained independence existence before the collapse of the USSR, unlike the Baltic States. Baltic states had comparatively easier access to nearby independent media. Moreover, they had easier contact through cross-border trade (Freedman, 2011: 5). Because the EU in principle sees such values as part of liberal elements. In this way, a more successful and organized structure is formed.

All these data are the answers to how the former USSR-member states had different development levels after independence. Organizations are influential in this development difference.

Conclusion

In this study, an analysis was attempted on the former member states of the USSR. Among these countries, the Baltic states with the EU membership and Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan from the SCO member Central Asia have had differences in the development levels. The incentives of the EU towards the Baltic states and the Central Asia policy of the SCO have been influential in the formation of these different outcomes. EU has made progress towards integration and economic similarity. On the other hand, both the rivalry between China and Russia and the regional alliance within the SCO have created a dilemma. which is also the most important factor in the instability and different levels of development of these four states in Central Asia. However, when a general examination is made, it is seen that many elements such as the concept of institutionalization-organization and conflict of interest, geography, and cultural heritage are influential in economic, political, and military development differences between the Baltic states and members of SCO in Central Asia.

The EU's integration policies with Central and Eastern Europe have caused the Baltic States to reform economically and politically. However, the security-based creation of the SCO and the unstable situation of Central Asia caused the development level of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan,

Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan to be lagging behind the Baltic countries. The SCO should continue to use its economic strength against its unipolar structure. However, advancing integration rather than controlling Central Asian countries may increase the welfare of these countries.

Baltic states' GDP level has increased after membership. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan have the same economic level except for Kazakhstan. EU's specialized economic policy provides better incomes for the Baltic States. This is because of the supranational structure. Moreover, the EU's European neighbourhood policy can restrict SCO's political area.

These two groups of former Soviet Union members are different because of the different politics of the European Union and the SCO. While the initial conditions are the same in all states economically, this change of status because of the membership of different organizations clearly shows the contribution of the organizations. Competition in the SCO is one of the most important factors for Central Asia in staying behind. EU's organizational aim is a coherent Europe.

The EU's integration policies with Central and Eastern Europe have caused the Baltic States to reform economically and politically. However, the security-based creation of the SCO and the unstable situation of Central Asia caused the development level of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan to be lagging behind the Baltic countries. The SCO should continue to use its economic strength against its unipolar structure. However, advancing integration rather than controlling Central Asian countries may increase the welfare of these countries.

As a consensus, Russia is not aiming for progress in the economic integration of the SCO. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan are affected by this. Therefore, these four countries are behind the Baltic States in terms of economic integration. Completing economic transitions following their independence will lead to strengthening ties with the West. The promotion of economic progress in the Baltic states by the EU countries is based on institutionalization, which defines EU integration and the new world order.

China's efforts to establish the SCO resulted in a short-term Russian alliance against the US rather than border issues. This creates worries among SCO members and is an obstacle to integration. The states that China and Russia want to see as SCO new members are different states. Interest war is dominant in SCO. China wants to meet the needs of the new market area in Central Asia. Increased economic capacity has led to increased energy demand. Central Asia is in a war zone. In addition, the SCO is a tool for creating a multi-polar structure against the West. Both Russia and China are allies and worried among themselves, which hampers the adoption of a permanent and integrated policy. Within the EU, increasingly participatory and democratic developments in the sharing of power and the decision-making space can prevent power excellence when compared to SCO. This has had a positive impact on the economic development of the baltic states. The ability of the SCO to become a successful organization in building a multi-polar structure depends on the ability of the members to trust their concerns.

Since the Baltic States started an independent turn, they have made great efforts to destroy the Russian identity, its habits, and culture. For this, they are more tightly embraced by their European self than before the USSR period because there is a need for another driving force to destroy an idea or culture. The Baltic states can also use their geographical advantage to use Western ideas and political and economic cultures against Russia. NATO and the EU have been the organizations that clearly show the road map of the Baltic states. The Baltic states, which have a moderate view of the American military presence, are not afraid to use the Western card against Russia. Europe is a major energy market for Russia. The fact that the Baltic states are on this transfer line also gives him political amnesty.

Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan have not come to the desired position in terms of economic and political power because of their stuck positions and the fact that Russia does

not want to reach the level of development. China sees Central Asia as a security hotspot and fleet area. Therefore, this situation prevents the integration of SCO members. Regional welfare has been adversely affected by the fact that Russia and China are confined to specific topics of interest within the SCO. While the EU was trying to apply the “United Europe” demands by taking lessons from historical results, it gave importance to joint decision-making and legal arrangement. The SCO was formed by a temporary alliance for the creation of a multi-polar structure. As a result, the long-term prosperity of Europe will have positive consequences, while the fact that there is no historical mission among the members of the SCO will continue to enforce the individual interest policies of each state.

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