CHINA'S PARTICIPATION IN REGIONAL MULTILATERAL INSTITUTIONS:
THE COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY OF SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANIZATION (SCO) AND ASEAN PLUS THREE (APT)

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work in this thesis is my own except for quotations and summaries which have been duly acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

China's growing pursuit of multilateralism in its foreign policy and its participation in the regional multilateral institution is one of the remarkable things that draw the attention of the scholars, policy markers and researchers. Further, its policy in dealing with the outside world, particularly its behavior in these institutions are uneven, meaning that China is behaving differently in different regional institutions. This becomes the puzzle to find out what are the implication factors behind this behavior, and consequently it needs to analyze why it behaves in such a way. Three objectives are set up in this research: to seek what are the key objectives of China's foreign policy; to examine China's intention in pursuit of multilateralism in its foreign policy and its participation in regional multilateral institutions and to study China's role in Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and ASEAN Plus Three (APT). At this place, neo-classical realism is the best suited theory to analyze China's foreign policy as it explains how a country adopts its foreign policy preferences by interpreting and responding the systemic pressures through the unit level. This research is based on the structured, focused comparison of cases method as it provides in setting up the research objectives, then making systemic comparison and finally accumulating of the findings. China, as a rising power, seeks to play a prominent role in a world, especially in its periphery region. Due to the existing power gap between China and the US, China believes that the multilateral approach is the only way to get its rightful place in the world. In the domestic level, the economic growth is the top priority for Chinese government as it is the key to maintain the CCP regime in power. For China, sitting at the multilateral table is not only to shape the rules of the game while it is still trying to conserve its place and influence, but also it could be the place to change the rules of the game when it becomes strong enough to challenge the existing sole superpower in the future.
# CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DECLARATION</th>
<th>ii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTENTS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CHAPTER I

1.1. Introduction 1
1.2. Problem Statement 4
1.3. Research Objectives 5
1.4. Hypothesis 6
1.5. Literature Review 7
1.6. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework 10
  1.6.1. Neo-classical Realism 10
  1.6.2. Multilateralism 12
1.7. Research Methodology 14
  1.7.1. Structured, Focused Comparison of Cases Method 14
  1.7.2. Rationales for Cases Selection 15
  1.7.3. Data Collecting 15
  1.7.4. Data Analyzing 16
1.8. Significance of Study 17
  1.8.1. Policy Significance 17
  1.8.2. Theoretical Significance 18
1.9. Scope and Limits of Study 19
1.10. Chapter Outlines 20
CHAPTER II  CHINA'S FOREIGN POLICY

2.1. Introduction 21
2.2. Determinants of China's Foreign Policy 25
2.1.1. Historical Experience 25
2.1.2. Nationalism 27
2.1.3. Ideology 29
2.1.4. National Image Building 30
2.3. Evolution of China's Foreign Policy 31
2.3.1. From 1949 to 1969 (Lean to One Side Policy) 31
2.3.2. From 1969 to 1976 (Strategic Triangle Relations) 33
2.3.3. From 1978 to 1989 (Domestic Reform, External Outreach, and Independent Foreign Policy of Peace) 34
2.3.4. Beyond 1989 36
2.4. Multilateralism in China's Foreign Policy 38
2.4.1. Part One (From 1949 to 1970s) 39
2.4.2. Part Two (From 1978 to 1988) 40
2.4.3. Part Three (From 1989 to today) 41
2.5. Conclusion 45

CHAPTER III  CHINA'S PARTICIPATION IN SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANIZATION

3.1. Introduction 48
3.2. Factors shaping China's participation in the SCO 50
3.2.1. From 1989 to 1996 (Road to the Shanghai Five) 51
3.2.2. From 1996 to 2001 (From Shanghai Five to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization) 58
3.2.3. Beyond 2001 (Strengthening the SCO) 60
3.3. Conclusion 65
CHAPTER IV  CHINA'S PARTICIPATION IN ASEAN PLUS THREE

4.1. Introduction 68
4.2. Factors shaping China's involvement in ASEAN Plus Three 70
   4.2.1. From 1989 to 1997 71
       (Target of Being an Active Regional Actor)
   4.2.2. From 1997 to 2001 75
       (Building the Image as a Responsible Power)
   4.2.3. Beyond 2001 77
       (From a Responsible Power to a Regional Leader)
4.3. Conclusion 82

CHAPTER V  CONCLUSION

5.1. Overview 84
5.2. Key Findings and Supporting Arguments 85
5.3. Future Research Implications 91

REFERENCES 94