

INTEGRATION THEORY AND THE ROLE OF THE CORE STATE IN REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

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Introduction

The performance of regional cooperation organizations largely depends on the role and behaviour of its members. If any organization does not perform well, the fault must lie with its members. The major members play a far more instrumental role in determining the fate of regional organizations. Thus, the process of regional cooperation and performance of an organization cannot be assessed objectively without examining the role and behaviour of its core member state.⁽¹⁾

India's role in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is worth exploring in order to understand the true nature of South Asian regionalism. South Asian regional cooperation is Indo-centric. India, occupying central location in the region, separates all other members from each other. In terms of area, population, natural resources, military strength, and economic development, India is the largest and most developed state in South Asia. Thus, the success of South Asian regionalism mainly depends on India's role in SAARC. IR scholars, since its inception, had believed that success of SAARC would largely depend on India's behaviour and role in it. However, no

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systematic and coherent approach has so far been developed which could help to comprehend the nature of India's role needed for success of SAARC.

Theoretical models give valuable insight for comprehending political phenomena. There exist several theories explaining regional integration process but none of them provides a comprehensive framework necessary to understand as to when and how a core state can play vital role for success of a regional organization. This paper endeavours to fill this gap. It just provides a theoretical framework needed for an objective analysis of SAARC's performance in the context of India's role in it and does not describe the process itself.

The paper is divided into four sections. The first section will give a brief overview of South Asia and the founding members of SAARC. The second contains an elaboration of the theories explaining regional integration. The third explains as to how and under what conditions a core state can influence the outcome of a regional grouping. And the fourth section carries the conclusions.

A brief overview of SAARC members

South Asia, bounded by the mighty Himalayas in the north and northwest and Indian Ocean on other sides, forms a single geographical unit, though the use of the word South Asia itself has a very short history. Most scholars argue that only the seven founding members of SAARC constitute South Asia but some also enlist Afghanistan and Myanmar in the region.⁽²⁾ The region occupies about 3 per cent of the world geographic area. It is the most densely populated region inhabited by over 1.5 billion people, i.e. about 23 per cent of humanity, but has one of the lowest urbanization rates in the world.⁽³⁾ South Asian share in the world trade and GDP is about 1 per cent and 1.5 per cent, respectively, and it is ranked among the "poorest regions in the world" where about two-thirds of the world's poor live. Its youth is reportedly "the least literate and the most malnourished in the world." Reportedly, around 450 million of the poorest people and 50 per cent of the world's illiterates live in the region.⁽⁴⁾

There exist several commonalities among South Asian countries, such as common civilization, historical experiences, culture and traditions, etc.; but it is also probably the most diverse region of the world. South Asia is, in fact, "a world in miniature." It is dissimilar in religious, cultural, racial, linguistic, political and ideological terms. Its

constituent countries have large divergences. In terms of military and political power, India is regarded as a “dominant major power,” Pakistan a “significant and reasonably cohesive middle power,” and Bangladesh “a weak and dependent middle power.” The rest of the regional states are categorized as weak small powers (Sri Lanka and Nepal) or mini-states (Bhutan and Maldives).⁽⁵⁾ Four out of seven founding members of SAARC — Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Maldives and Nepal — are categorized as the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), whereas the other three fall in the group of developing countries, India being the most developed in the region. India — inhabited by 74 per cent of South Asian population — shares about 80 per cent of regional GDP. Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal are inhabited by 13 per cent, 10 per cent, 1 per cent and 2 per cent of regional population, respectively. Their share in regional output is about 11 per cent, 6 per cent, 2.3 per cent and 0.7 per cent, respectively. The share of Bhutan and Maldives in South Asian GDP is minimal. Differences in per capita incomes of SAARC members are also large.⁽⁶⁾

The geopolitical characteristics of South Asia are unique in the world. India is the largest country of the region – even about three times larger than all the rest combined. It is the most resourceful state of the region with the potential to become one of the main industrialized countries of the world. It could contribute, through providing peace and stability, towards speeding up the overall process of socio-economic development in the region.⁽⁷⁾

Due to its huge size, large population, resources, development level, political and military power and central position in the region, it was widely believed, since the inception of the SAARC, that regional cooperation in South Asia could not make any significant progress “without full Indian participation.” The leaders of smaller states and International Relations scholars believed that “the key” to the success of SAARC rested in India’s hands. The World Bank report and UN document had also endorsed this perspective.⁽⁸⁾ It was argued that due to “Indo-centricity of the region,” the role of India was critical for the success of SAARC. Its role and attitude would determine the nature and direction or even the very survival of SAARC. It would be more so because the attitude, perception and policies of smaller states towards SAARC would also be determined by the Indian role and attitude in the organization.⁽⁹⁾

Regional integration theory

There exists vast literature on regional integration but most of it is based on Eurocentric research. The presence of different and too many factors in different regional schemes prevented development of a general theory of regional integration.⁽¹⁰⁾ One of the merits of a good theory of regional integration is that it “should be flexible enough to account for both successes and failures in the integration process, and for outcomes that fall between success and failure.”⁽¹¹⁾ However, the theories are not built *in abstracto*. They are related to the events taking place in the world. Different theories were “proposed or abandoned” with changes in circumstances over the last 60 years.⁽¹²⁾ The main theories explaining the process of regional integration include: federalism, functionalism, neo-functionalism, transactionalism, and intergovernmentalism.

Federalism

Different scholars, leaders and philosophers proposed “variously and vaguely” the European or even world federation in order to bring an end to chances of war and ensure permanent peace in the world. The early advocates of federal arrangements included, among others, Dante, the Duke de Sully, Immanuel Kant, and Robert Cecil. There existed strong European federalist movements during and after the Second World War. The desire for a European federation had prompted scholars to build theories for promoting the objective of European political integration. The federal arrangements are characterized by non-centralization, division and separation of powers guaranteed in written and rigid constitutions, and the will for unity while maintaining separate identity and territorial integrity of constituent units.⁽¹³⁾

The federalists clearly suggested their “end-product” was political union of previously independent states. They meant integration as “the merging of peoples or governmental units into a single unit.”⁽¹⁴⁾ Federalism, in the words of Mitrany, was “one of the great inventions of political theory and life.” It was adopted several times in different places where it helped unite several adjacent political units which wanted to achieve their political union for some general reasons while preserving their individual identities, e.g. the United States of America, Switzerland and Australia. Generally, federations pursue common defence and foreign policies as their main tasks for which common budgets are also provided. Federalists assumed that peoples and nations identified their needs and purposes with each other which could be achieved through common federal institutions. They also suggested the “necessary strategies and requisite behaviour patterns” required to create regional

solidarities and institutions. A federation can be formed on the basis of some common grounds among the constituent units, such as kinship or other relationship as well as a desire of unification with intention to manage most of their affairs separately. The conflicting desire to create unity while retaining identity among participating units is the essence of federation as it provides to combine unity with diversity. Federalism relies on a written and rigid constitution which provides for detailed division of powers and functions between authorities of constituent units which enjoy equal authority and status. The constitution is equipped with “an armoury of safeguards against its being lightly tampered with.” In fact, federalism has a “dual character” as it helps create a union of two separate political units as well as provides for “breaking up” or decentralization and distribution of powers in “overly centralized national governments.” Federalism provided for effective government in some areas through centralization as well as local autonomy through devolution.⁽¹⁵⁾

Functionalism

Functionalism sought to obscure sovereignty of traditional nation-states with a network of arrangements made to address specific technical or functional issues. Once transnational organizations show their significance in a technical area, states would form such organizations in other areas. It would improve efficiency and welfare in related fields, which in turn, would create demand for further cooperation in more areas — a “process of spill-over would expand the areas that could benefit from increased technical cooperation.” The process will move forward through “learning and experience” until “functional units would become more important than territorial units.”⁽¹⁶⁾

Paul S. Reinsch, GDH Cole, Pitman Potter and Leonard Wool, besides others, had focused on proliferation of global functional organizations in the nineteenth century. They believed that such arrangements could provide peace and stability in the world. Mitrany wrote on similar lines and rather more systematically. He had expressed his concern over the growing demand of sovereign equality by the rising number of smaller states which were not equal in power with Great Powers. He believed that federalism was not resistant to the needs and conditions of the modern era and there was a need “to look for a new political device.” He, therefore, proposed the functional approach aimed at combining “the will for national distinctness and the need for social integration.”⁽¹⁷⁾

Functionalism was based on its discomfort with the democratic principles, such as the right of self-determination, state sovereignty, egalitarian participation and federalism. Mitrany assumed that free social and economic contacts as well as common international control and central planning as well as international government were the natural answers to various problems of the modern era. They could effectively address the problems related to the socio-economic development and the issues arising out of the scientific-technological breakthroughs and could also help maintain world peace. However, Mitrany believed that the emergence of “new states, even without a national base” had deprived the world of these benefits.⁽¹⁸⁾

He sought to shift the focus on social issues from political ones, i.e. from those which divide to those which unite people because they were in their common interests. He claimed that functionalism would “shift the emphasis from power to problem and purpose.” The people and the states could be united through linking them together “by what unites, not by what divides.” Mitrany believed that functional “‘neutrality’ was possible, where political ‘neutrality’ was inconceivable.” Functionalism had an edge over the political approach because of its two advantages: it is easy to start at any time without waiting for a political arrangement or any other functional organization; and, any country, including the adversaries, can join a functional arrangement. Any country may or may not join any organization and even can drop out anytime. As such, functional arrangements were “at best complementary, each helping the others, and at worst independent of each other” because one functional organization could progress and prosper irrespective and independent of others. They had the virtues of “autonomous existence,” independent development and “technical self-determination.” Mitrany claimed that functionalism was featured to alleviate the problem of national sovereignty because it required just pooling not surrendering, sovereignty as much as “needed for the joint performance of the particular task.” As, at the domestic level, national governments at international level can give special powers to the states assigned with special tasks and services. Upon the successful performance of functional organizations, they will increase in number and evolve into the world government. The networking of “interests and relations” across national borders, illustrated in socio-economic fields, could be administered through functional organizations and brought under a “joint international government.” Ultimately, the political divisions and the boundaries would be “overlaid and blurred by this web of joint relations and administrations.”⁽¹⁹⁾ Initially it was believed that functionalism was appropriate for “non-controversial” welfare related matters. Later on,

Mitrany clarified that even the “most fateful” and “most controversial” global issues could also be addressed only through functional arrangements. He argued that the global problems such as those related to management of seabed, space exploration and the use of nuclear power, etc., could not be handled adequately in absence of complete “world government.” These problems need functional arrangements like the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).⁽²⁰⁾

Some functionalists had focused on regional integration in Europe while believing it to be “the indeterminate concept of ‘integration’” that would ultimately lead to global integration. They assumed that regional integration was an “intermediate stage” because a series of such regional integration schemes would culminate “into a universal union.” For instance, Frederick Schuman had advocated a functional approach to promote regional integration which in turn would help global integration, through building “peace in pieces.”⁽²¹⁾ However, Mitrany expressed his displeasure with “the regional dimension” of functionalism believing that regional integration schemes could neither ensure international peace nor solve the emerging global problems arising out of scientific breakthroughs.⁽²²⁾

Neofunctionalism

Neofunctionalism was a dominant and widely held theory of regional integration till the 1970s. It included elements of description, explanation, and prediction of regional integration process. Its popularity in the late 1950s and early '60s, demise in the '70s and renewal in the mid-'80s mirrored the success, stagnation and revival of European integration process, respectively. It had its roots in “the modern pluralistic-industrial democratic polity” of the West and represented liberal perspective of international relations.⁽²³⁾ Neofunctionalists believed that regionalism grew because of growing economic and technological problems which states could not address adequately single-handedly. Attempting to tackle these problems through regional efforts, national governments initiate functional organizations. On the success of a cooperative arrangement, the integration process becomes “self-perpetuating through a ‘spillover’ process.” Haas had explained the process of European integration by focusing on the role of non-state actors below and above the nation-states, i.e. political parties, pressure groups and supranational body. He assumed that the regional integration process grew automatically as integration in one area would “spill over” into another one which in turn would create demand for further

integration and so on. Moreover, economic integration will spillover into political integration.⁽²⁴⁾

Haas and other neofunctionalists had listed twelve variables: five as background conditions; three as conditions at the time of initiating the integration scheme; and four as the process conditions. Background conditions include: relative size of the states considering unification; rate of transaction among them; degree of pluralism in each member: extent of elite complementarity and; perception of dependence on the external world. Conditions at the time of initiation of the union are: convergence of governmental purposes to integrate; objective external pressure, and powers given to the union's institutions. The process conditions cover: decision-making style adopted by union's organs; rate of transaction among members; "the adaptability of governments in dealing with unforeseen problems and tensions," and objective external pressure.⁽²⁵⁾

Neofunctionalists argued that the main actors in the integration process were political parties, business communities and other interest groups and the supranational institutions, i.e. High Authority in ECSC and European Commission in European Communities (EC). Their actions were motivated by their self-interest. National interests groups were willing to adjust their aspirations and turn towards supranational institutions in order to advance their goals. These groups made transnational alliances to put pressure on their national governments to follow the course of actions favourable to groups' interests. Likewise, the supranational institution, motivated by its own interests, such as to expand its authority and influence in more areas, promoted integration through establishing close ties with interest groups, help making their transnational coalitions, and making their alliances with and influencing the behaviour of national officials in respective governments. The Commission had the powers to initiate proposals and policies, therefore, in order to get them approved by the Council of Ministers, it built and manipulated alliances with relevant interest groups in the member states considered supportive to launching a favourable campaign. The presence of community gave interest groups an opportunity to shift their loyalties to supranational centre whereby they could advance their self-interest. Likewise, the "Eurocrats" – civil servants working in the Commission – became more loyal to the Commission than to their respective national governments. They also built alliances with their former colleagues, i.e. bureaucrats, in their parent states to advance the agenda and expand powers of the commission. Neofunctionalists asserted that the role of national government was merely responsive. They could "accept, sidestep, ignore or sabotage the decisions of federal authorities." But due

to complexities of interests related to different issues, they could not take steps which would set bad precedents for other governments and hamper cooperation in other fields. As such they had to submit to the demands of the interests groups.⁽²⁶⁾ Neofunctionalists believed in incremental expansion of integration process which would ultimately “spillover” into political integration.

Neofunctionalists employed the word spillover in two contexts; first, functional spillover, and second, political spillover. Functional spillover resulted because different economic sectors were closely interrelated and an integrative effort in one sector could not be fully accomplished without taking certain integrative measures in a related sector. Thus, integration in one sector created demand for integration in another related sector, which on its accomplishment, created in turn, further demand and action in yet another sector and so on. Haas put it as sector integration that “begets its own impetus toward extension to the entire economy even in the absence of specific group demands.”⁽²⁷⁾ Functional spillover also takes place in another way: the “beneficiaries” of previously integrated sectors not only deter “backsliding” but also insist upon further integration; inspired by their successes, other groups demand integration in other fields.⁽²⁸⁾

Neofunctionalists such as Haas, Lindberg and Nye believed that the integration process also included an “element of political spillover” which resulted from “the process of adaptive behaviour.” It took place when sub-national interests groups and elites rationally and absolutely linked “mutually dependent, functionally specific tasks” and shifted their loyalties from their respective national governments to supranational regional institution.⁽²⁹⁾ Likewise, national actors changed the values and upgraded their expectations. However, Haas argued that political spillover was “far from automatic.” He gave precedence to “incremental decision making over grand designs” and argued that political actors could not foresee diverse consequences of their previous decisions. Thus, they were unable to adopt long-term purposive behaviour “because they stumble from one set of decisions into the next.” The policies capable of transforming the system appear gradually as a result of decisions taken due to initial concerns “over substantively narrow but highly salient issues. A new central authority may emerge as an unintended consequence of incremental earlier steps.”⁽³⁰⁾

In the 1970s, the European integration process stagnated which neofunctionalism was unable to predict or explain. Thus, Haas had to declare that “regional integration theory had become obsolete. Spillover had not proved to be automatic, and interest groups could successfully

oppose integration instead of advocating closer ties.”⁽³¹⁾ In 1986, European integration was revived with the signing of the Single European Act which renewed interest in neofunctionalism. Its proponents again emphasized the concept of spillover in the process predicting that integration in one economic area would spur integration in other related areas. It is noteworthy that neofunctionalism in the '80s was different from that in the '50s in several ways. For instance, now it accepted itself not as “the primary” but one of several theories explaining regional integration. It also started focusing on relationships between political and economic sectors. Moreover, it had abandoned its “teleological nature” as well as insensitivities towards appeal of nationalism and national capabilities, etc.⁽³²⁾

Transactionalism

Deutsch and his associates had built their theory on “the logic of isomorphism.”⁽³³⁾ They borrowed laws from the cybernetic theory and used the size of transnational transactions as main indicator of relations between nations. Their units of analysis were nations and they put more emphasis on interactions between the people, not elites, of different states. However, they had focused on bilateral arrangements instead of IOs.⁽³⁴⁾

Deutsch pioneered the conceptualization of regional integration and combined quantitative techniques and indicators with qualitative ones. He statistically analyzed the “objective trends” such as trade and flow of mail, etc., by correlating them with “the motive of elites.” Deutsch did not mean integration necessarily as “the merging of peoples or governmental units into a single unit” but as the achievement of a “sense of community” or “the common ‘we’ feeling.”⁽³⁵⁾ According to Deutsch, a “security community” includes “a group of people which has become integrated” and its members are assured that they “will not fight each other physically, but will settle their disputes in some other way.”⁽³⁶⁾ The security communities could either be “amalgamated” or “pluralistic” ones. The former comes into being when two or more independent states formally merge to form a single state with a common central government, i.e., a federal or unitary state. The latter refers to the relationship between sovereign states which maintain their “legal independence” and separate identity but enjoy cordial relations, such as between members of confederations and alliances or those having close political cooperation, e.g. the United States and Canada. Deutsch preferred pluralistic communities because they were easily achievable,

durable and “at least as effective as amalgamated ones in keeping the peace” within their members.⁽³⁷⁾

Deutsch identified fourteen conditions considered “essential or helpful” in formation of a security community. These included: compatibility of major values; distinctive way of life; strength within the core area; superior economic growth; wide range of mutual transactions; reluctance to wage “fratricidal” war; outside military threat; broadening of elites; mutual responsiveness; an expectation of joint economic reward from integration; free mobility of persons; unbroken links of social communication; strong economic ties and; ethnic or linguistic assimilation. It was found that the last two conditions were not “essential” for either form of integration and the remaining twelve were necessary for creation of an amalgamated security community. A pluralistic community needed only three of them: “the compatibility of major values relevant to political decision-making” among the political units to be integrated; “mutual responsiveness;” and, the “mutual predictability of behaviour.” According to Deutsch, the “main values” of participating states could be determined from their domestic politics. Mutual responsiveness refers to the capability and willingness of member states “to respond to each other’s needs, messages and actions quickly, adequately, and without resort to violence.” Mutual responsiveness requires appropriate attitudes and effective communication between states. Most importantly, it needs mutual trust, sympathy, and recognition of shared interests and objectives that can generate “the will to respond.”⁽³⁸⁾ Mutual predictability of behaviour implies that members of a security community “must be able to expect from one another some dependable interlocking, interchanging, or at least compatible behaviour; and they must therefore be able, at least to that extent, to predict one another’s action.”⁽³⁹⁾ However, these conditions also depend on member governments’ capacity to respond and the attitudes of their elites. The latter is influenced by mutual knowledge, “the level of compatibility” of their interests and values. The presence of the background conditions merely indicates the potential of integration and can facilitate the process but cannot guarantee that “integration will definitely take place.” These variables are also conditioned by other variables. For instance, geographical proximity can facilitate states to “communicate with each other, to respond to each other’s needs and messages, and to establish common institution” but its success is conditioned by presence of mutual knowledge, homogeneity, transactions and interactions among the units. “Mutual knowledge and understanding among people” is an essential condition for integration because without it people may not make political or social alliances.

However, mutual knowledge can only contribute positively when it is related with some favourable past memories or experiences.⁽⁴⁰⁾

Transactionalists observed that security communities had tended to develop more “around cores of strength.” The potential “core area” required for promotion of integration must be superior in terms of “economic growth with advanced techniques of political decision-making, administration, and defense.” If its ruling elites are “sufficiently responsive,” it can attract the attention of the ruling elites of weaker and less developed neighbouring states. However, the area to be integrated must provide for free movement of people and should involve frequent and all kinds of intergroup and interpersonal communications as well as high hopes for economic gains by integration. It must include significant communication links among all segments of society, “both vertically in each country and horizontally among the countries to be united.” It must also provide for “a general broadening of the elite structure.”⁽⁴¹⁾

Deutsch believed that states with high rate of transactions among them had more potential for integration. The following three types of transactions were identified as more significant: social transactions, i.e. exchange of “messages through mail, telephone, and radio;” transactions of goods and services, i.e. increased trade; and, the movement of people, in terms of increased transport links, tourism and political exchanges. Deutsch also argued that the level of integration among political units could be calculated by measuring the movement of “certain transactions” as quantitative indicators of integration among them. He claimed that “under conditions of balanced loads and capabilities,” high level of transactions between nations raised mutual interdependence, complementarity, trust and friendship which along with mutual responsiveness created a security community.⁽⁴²⁾

Intergovernmentalism

Intergovernmentalism is based on realist and neorealist assumptions: states are main actors in an anarchic international system; their primary concern is survival and security; they have preferences for their national interests and are concerned about relative gains and even distribution of benefits, fearful of loss of sovereignty and apprehensive of cheating and defection by others which prevent international cooperation. However, some neorealists believed that economic cooperation was possible and even desirable among the alliance partners as it strengthened the allies and as such the alliance itself. It was also possible when states hoped that it would not undermine their sovereignty, gains would be evenly distributed and “defection can be

effectively sanctioned.” Intergovernmentalists were optimistic about the prospects of international cooperation but they rejected the idea that the nation-state or its sovereignty was fading away. They explained the slow progress of European integration since the mid-1960s as a result of reluctance of the states to pool their sovereignty. The cut on the powers of the commission and growing importance of European Council in the European Economic Community (EEC) had set the primacy of the national governments in the integration process. These events helped rise of intergovernmentalism which asserted that national governments were the key actors in integration. The “coalition-building among otherwise independent states” was the crucial factor to determine the fate of integration process.⁽⁴⁵⁾

Hoffman argued that state structures, nationalism, external environment, national interests and preferences of the nation-states played vital role in “determining the pace and limits of” European integration. He focused on the level of national consciousness, national situations and nationalism in the EEC members. He observed a “temporary demise of nationalism” in all of the six members of ECSC and “political collapse” of European states in the post-war period. Europe not only had lost power, wealth and prestige but also had fallen under “the two hegemonies.” Despite differences in their internal situations and preferences, the national interests, as determined by their ruling elites, of all six members converged to pursue a supranational course of action. It led them to launch the ECSC. Later on, when their interests and preferences did not converge, the efforts to create European Defence Community (EDC) failed. Furthermore, with the rise of nationalism in France requiring its national consciousness to play its role as a great power in world politics inhibited further European integration in the mid-'60s. He claimed that integration moved ahead easily on issues of “low politics” but it became difficult on issues of “high politics.” He maintained that states were generally sensitive to their sovereignty and responsive to international environment. Thus, European states could not cut themselves off from the international environment and its pressures which adversely affected their behaviour towards integration.⁽⁴⁴⁾

The other intergovernmentalists also emphasized that nation-states were the dominant actors in international politics. They claimed that states gave primacy to their national interests and concluded agreements only when they expected even distribution of benefits from integration. Interstate bargaining among EC countries had shown that members were concerned about, and had striven to maximize, relative

gains in the process. As such, these were important factors to determine the stagnation or growth of regional integration. Intergovernmentalists recognized that the domestic groups, supranational institutions and spillover effects as well as global economic pressures were important in deepening European integration in the '80s. However, the "interstate bargains" were the essential conditions for growth of European integration.⁽⁴⁵⁾ Moravcsik claimed that the main sources of European integration were the states' interests. The "power and preferences" of the governments dominated the integration process. O'Brien observed that the signing of the Single European Act was the result of "the convergence of national interests" of three larger members: Germany, France and Britain.⁽⁴⁶⁾ Haggard suggested that the larger members had played crucial role in shaping "the bargaining agenda" of economic integration in the Western hemisphere and Asia, though to a lesser extent, the interests of smaller states had also affected treaties. He argued that the preferences convergence among the main partners to regional arrangements was an important factor to "facilitate the bargaining and construction of regional economic blocs."⁽⁴⁷⁾

Liberal Intergovernmentalism

Several scholars including Sandholtz and Zysman and Keohane and Hoffmann had linked domestic politics with the positions of the respective governments in interstate bargaining during treaty negotiations. However, the liberal intergovernmentalists had more systematically linked them together. They argued that economic policies had "different distributional consequences" for different internal groups. The potential losers from integration oppose it while potential winners support the process. Since the national leaders want to retain power, they take into account the interests of those who matter for them. Thus, domestic group politics influences government economic policy. It is most likely that government policies reflect the interests and "preferences of the more powerful and better organized interest groups in society." Putnam and Garrett and Lange observed that the desire of national leaders to retain power served as an important principle to guide policy making. They had their own interests and preferences which were influenced by domestic politics and interest group pressures. National political institutions determined the patterns of relationship between domestic groups as well as to decide whose interests would prevail over others.⁽⁴⁸⁾ Putnam suggested that national leaders make alliances in domestic politics to seek power and "maximize their ability to meet domestic demands and protect domestic interests in the international game." During the interstate bargaining, the respective governments take

the positions reflecting the interests of more powerful domestic groups. Such positions must satisfy the demand of and as such win “broad public support” which in turn will also “ease ratification of international agreements.” Huelshoff observed that national leaders were, at least partly, interested in protecting or rewarding some domestic groups. Thus, interstate bargaining has a link with domestic politics as the former is influenced by the pattern of interest group bargaining in the domestic politics.⁽⁴⁹⁾ Moravcsik argued that economic benefits were crucial incentives for regionalism. He maintained that macroeconomic preferences of ruling parties, commercial interests of main domestic manufacturers, “bargaining among powerful national governments over the distributive and institutional issues” accounted for the growth of European integration process.⁽⁵⁰⁾

The role of the core state in regional organizations

In the context of South Asian regionalism, which is heavily “Indo-centric,” it is imperative to explore the influence of the size and power differences among member states on the growth of regional arrangement. The literature on regional integration suggests that power distribution among members is an important variable affecting the integration process. However, scholars disagree as to how power inequalities affect the process. In the context of vast power differential in South Asia, a systematic study of the relationship between power asymmetry and growth of regionalism is essential. More precisely, it is worth exploring as to how does the largest member of a regional grouping influence the outcome of a cooperative arrangement?

There is almost a consensus among IR scholars that presence of a powerful state is crucial for the success of a regional cooperation organization. Both transactionalists and neofunctionalists observed that regionalism flourished around a big state. Similarly, realists and neorealist such as Gilpin, Grieco and Genna have also noted that the success of regional groupings requires a core state to champion the cause of regionalism. Liberal intergovernmentalists, such as Mattli, have shown that Prussia and Germany in German Customs Union (Zollverein) and EU, and Brazil and Indonesia in Mercosur* and ASEAN,+ respectively, had played important roles in the success of these

* Southern Common Market (in Latin America) presently comprising Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Venezuela.

+ Association of South-East Asian Nations

organizations.⁽⁵¹⁾ However, there is disagreement among the scholars as to what role a core state must play in a cooperative organization.

A group of scholars argue that a regional hegemon is necessary for success of a regional arrangement. For instance, Genna claims that unequal power distribution helped promote interdependence “due to ability of the preponderant power to coordinate efforts and distribute incentives to other members.”⁽⁵²⁾ Fratianni and Pattison argue that a regional integration scheme among structurally unequal states could be effective if a regional hegemonic state perceives it as helpful in providing collective good, i.e. integration agreement. The World Bank also supports asymmetric regional integration schemes among the developing states.⁽⁵³⁾ Gilpin asserts that successful political or economic integration generally requires leadership of a powerful state in the region which must have the capacity and interest in promoting regionalism, e.g., Germany, the US, Japan, Brazil and Indonesia in EU, NAFTA,^{**} APEC,⁺⁺ Mercosur and ASEAN, respectively. He maintains that Prussia had also played a hegemonic role in German Zollverein in the nineteenth century.⁽⁵⁴⁾ These views are, however, aimed at applying hegemonic stability theory at the regional level. Stakhovitz, besides others, questions this hypothesis on empirical basis.⁽⁵⁵⁾ The critics have suggested that hegemonic tendencies on the part of a core state could adversely affect the process of regional cooperation. They claim that regional groupings where some members have played “a more domineering role” could not realize the fruits of regionalism.⁽⁵⁶⁾

Most regional integration theorists agree that the core state in a grouping must accept a dominance-free cooperative arrangement under which smaller states could feel militarily and politically secure in order to make regionalism successful. Deutsch and associates had observed that “security communities tend to develop around cores of strength.” The potential core state required for promotion of integration must be superior in terms of “economic growth with advanced techniques of political decision-making, administration, and defense.” If its ruling elites are “sufficiently responsive” to their needs and messages, it can “serve as a center of attention for less developed and weaker neighboring elites.” It also requires the core state to denounce the use or threat of use of force in its dealings with smaller states, and demonstrate its commitment to peaceful resolution of mutual disputes.⁽⁵⁷⁾ Haas also

^{**} North American Free Trade Agreement, an economic and commercial bloc comprising the United States, Mexico and Canada.

⁺⁺ Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, a regional grouping of 21 countries including the US, Japan, China and the Chinese Taipei.

observed that differences in size and power “may spur integration in some economic and military task-setting if the ‘core area’ can provide special payoffs” or it accepts an arrangement wherein the smaller members could “control” its power.⁽⁵⁸⁾ Some neorealists such as Grieco and others have explained the growth of European integration process in the post cold war era as the outcome of the efforts of the smaller states, including France, Belgium and Portugal, to formulate the rules which could bind the stronger partner, i.e. Germany, “into a form of relationship that could help avoid its domination” and give them effective and equal “voice opportunities.”⁽⁵⁹⁾

Some studies have suggested that at least two regional states must play the leading role in a cooperative scheme in order to make it successful. Some realists assumed that success of a political or economic integration scheme required “one or more core political entities” which must champion this cause and exercise their influence and power to promote the process. Germany and France had provided regional leadership to promote European integration process.⁽⁶⁰⁾ William Wallace observed that a balance created between two major regional states, i.e. Germany and France in EU, Indonesia and Malaysia in ASEAN and Brazil and Argentina in Mercosur, played significant role in the success of these groupings.⁽⁶¹⁾ However, the role of the largest member, i.e. Germany in EU and Indonesia in ASEAN, was far more important than that of France and Malaysia.

Germany and Indonesia had played an instrumental role in converting their traditional rivals and perceived or real enemies, through dispelling their fears, into their trusted and willing partners in the regional cooperative schemes. Both Germany and Indonesia had willingly accepted a constructive and “low-key” role, far less than their entitlement on the basis of their “size and power,” for the success of EU and ASEAN, respectively.⁽⁶²⁾ In the post-war period, France and other Western European states were fearful of a rearmed and resurgent Germany due to its past aggressions against them. They wanted to keep it under control as well as to use its national power to serve collective European goals. Thus, France presented a supranational scheme of regional cooperation wherein some of German sovereign rights, including those on the use of its coal and steel resources, were to be placed under joint control, i.e. High Authority. The scheme was also aimed at giving France more influence than Germany in European affairs and to lay the foundation of building a “united Europe under French leadership.” Germany for various reasons accepted the scheme that included restrictions on its sovereignty. It allayed the fears of other states

and helped give a solid foundation to create a lasting European community.⁽⁶³⁾ Grieco argues that success of European integration in the post-Cold War era was made possible due to efforts of smaller partners including France to bind their stronger partner Germany, and its acceptance by the latter, in a kind of relationship that could help avoid its domination and provide them equal voice opportunities.⁽⁶⁴⁾

The role of Indonesia in ASEAN is even more instrumental. The smaller states in Southeast Asia, though motivated by different political, economic and developmental objectives, had mainly sought their place as “equal” partners with larger ones, through regional arrangement. They wanted to “rein in Indonesia,” the largest country of the region by all means, and thus to avoid the “risks of hegemony and ineffectiveness.” In response, Jakarta under Suharto had abandoned the radical policies of the past which helped ally the fears of smaller states about Indonesian domination and paved the way for building ASEAN on a solid footing.⁽⁶⁵⁾ The creation of ASEAN was “a part of package to end” Indonesia’s confrontation against Malaysia which symbolized a drastic change in “Indonesia’s foreign policy orientation, from being a revolutionary force to becoming a responsible member of a regional community.”⁽⁶⁶⁾ Jakarta had displayed “the farsightedness and political acumen” that played a vital role in normalizing the regional “politico-security environment.” It also helped members to “devise a common ground where Indonesia’s regional ambitions and consequential security concerns could be accommodated.” Jakarta even accommodated its neighbours’ military alliances with the US which promised them protection against any possible threat from Indonesia. Indonesian leadership displayed a very high degree of caution and restrained behaviour towards its smaller neighbours while dealing with regional conflicts and during crises situations. Sometimes, it even mediated and helped cool off the tension between other members. Indonesia had provided leadership primarily in the political field but never exercised its leadership through dictating policies or “through an assertive posture.” Rather, Jakarta mostly tried to build consensus among its partners on several important issues through constructive diplomacy. Indonesia had also provided the driving force in creating Southeast Asian Zone for Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality (ZOPFAN), in 1971. Quite recently, Indonesia pioneered the idea of an ASEAN Security Community (ASC), believing that it would help enhance regional peace and security and build political and diplomatic clout of ASEAN.⁽⁶⁷⁾

It can be inferred that the regional arrangement assuring “preservation of sovereignty” to smaller members creates a better

environment for regional cooperation. Positive perceptions and approach on the part of major partner encourage co-members to increase their commitment towards regionalism. For this purpose, Germany and Indonesia had even given up their territorial claims against their neighbours. They had stopped harbouring hegemonic ambitions against their neighbours which played an important role in bringing an end to mutual hostilities. Both of them had synchronized their national interests with regional ones and covered their national ambitions under regional integration schemes.⁽⁶⁸⁾

There were at least two sources of change in policy and behaviour of Germany and Indonesia: ideological and material. In the post-war era, a democratic regime was in place in Germany whose ideological outlook was quite different from that of authoritarian (particularly Nazi) Germany. The latter had a totalitarian ideology which sought to unite all German-speaking people and have the right to rule the world claiming to be a superior race. Such ambitions had no place under a democratic regime in Germany in the post-war era. Similarly, the ideological outlook of the Suharto government was quite different from that of the previous regime. Sukarno's Indonesia was revolutionary, socialist and anti-West but the Suharto regime had quite opposite ideological orientation. In the post-war era, Germany was under occupation by the allied powers and it wanted to regain its sovereignty – even with certain limitations – political prestige and status of an equal power in world affairs. This urged it to accept some reins on its national power.⁽⁶⁹⁾ There was a strong domestic source for a change in Indonesian policy orientation. When Suharto came to power, Indonesia was “virtually bankrupt” and economic recovery and development required a peaceful and stable regional political environment. It necessitated bringing an end to the policy of confrontation and improving relations with neighbours so that energies and valuable resources could be diverted to socio-economic development of the country.⁽⁷⁰⁾ Thus, these were economic compulsions which forced Indonesia to pursue regional cooperation. However, for whatever reasons, both Germany and Indonesia had renounced the use or threat of use of force, implicitly or explicitly, as stressed by Deutsch, which was an important step towards creation of pluralistic security communities. It ultimately helped successful growth of regionalism in their respective areas.

The literature on the subject shows that several factors promote regionalism. On the other hand, several conditions, if developed, certainly impede growth of regionalism. In such circumstances, some remedial measures become inevitable and under these conditions, the

role of the core state becomes far more significant for success of regional cooperation. According to Haas, these factors generally impede growth of regionalism: differences in the level of industrialization and socio-economic development; disparities in resource base and national economic planning as well as ideological divergences of the national leaders of member states; presence of strong central government, vibrant nationalism and problems of national integration in member states. The smaller and less-developed members generally resent dependence on the core state and strive to “minimize dependence on the more developed” partners. Haas termed this relationship “a disintegrative force.” He observed that increased “volume and rate of transactions” among states created a sense of interdependence. It was thought to be “positive” when its benefits were equally distributed among the partners but was interpreted as “negative” when some members perceived that they got less than their partners.⁽⁷¹⁾ In case the benefits of regional cooperation are not equally distributed among its members, it creates tension among them. Sharan claims that “full reciprocity in treatment and equal distribution of benefits are the key to success” of regional arrangements. When members of a regional organization are of unequal economic base and development level, the full reciprocity and equal distribution of gains become unattainable. The economic benefits “tend to polarize in favour of well-off members” which under these conditions “have to shoulder greater responsibility.” They have to take the lead in furthering the objectives of regional cooperation by initiating development projects through aid, trade, and investment, particularly among the less-developed members. Sometimes, they even have to make short-term sacrifices to generate development in neighbouring countries.⁽⁷²⁾ Mattli observes that both Prussia and Germany played the key role in the success of German Zollverein and EU, respectively. Both of them had played the role of a “paymaster, easing distributional tensions and thus smoothing the path of integration.”⁽⁷³⁾ A core state can promote regionalism, if its partners are satisfied with trade interdependence. It promotes institutional homogeneity and harmonization of policies such as taxation, inflation targets, international exchange and government regulation, etc. The satisfaction among partners gives credibility and confidence to the preferences of preponderant power and strengthens the integration process.⁽⁷⁴⁾ Thus, satisfaction over mutual trade relationship is also an important factor for success of a regional cooperation scheme and the core state has to play a crucial role to this end.

The role and behaviour of a core state is conditioned by several factors. The perceived utility of a regional organization for a core state is a key determinant of its behaviour towards a cooperative arrangement. If

the core state perceives a regional organization beneficial to promoting its objectives, it is likely to play a constructive role in the growth of regionalism. Otherwise, it may not take interest in promoting the cause of regionalism. The regional organizations contain both incentives and disincentives for states. The calculations of potential benefits and losses attract or distract states, particularly the larger countries, and influence their behaviour towards regionalism. Generally, the states rely first on their national capabilities to ensure their security, political, and economic interests because cooperative arrangements always put some curbs on members' "autonomy" and "freedom of action." Membership of an organization and interactions with co-members "impose differing and often unforeseeable restraints" on states' policy choices and behaviour.⁽⁷⁵⁾ Therefore, states having confidence in their resource base and size pursue independent policies and take "a very slight interest" in promoting regionalism. Under these circumstances, disparities in size and power impede growth of regionalism. The relationship with an external power can also influence the behaviour of a core state towards regionalism. Its dependence on the external power and the desire to get "out of under" can favourably influence its behaviour towards regionalism. The perception of its too much dependence on the external world or offer of some payoffs by an external power can detract it from the process of regional cooperation.⁽⁷⁶⁾ Only when state leaders find their national resources and capabilities and extra-regional linkages insufficient to effectively pursue their domestic or foreign policy objectives, are they likely to join or form cooperative organizations to meet their ends. Thus, states' calculations of their national interests play important role in shaping their decisions with regard to joining ROs.⁽⁷⁷⁾ Generally, states join regional organizations under two conditions, when they have the conviction that: their national interests would be better served through regional arrangements than unilaterally; and, regionalism would not compromise or constrain their political identity and sovereign rights.⁽⁷⁸⁾

A regional power can play either a positive or negative role in the process of regional cooperation. The presence of a powerful member is crucial in a regional grouping around which other members can "coalesce." In case the powerful member is able to "establish a balanced relationship" in the region, the chances of success of regional grouping become bright. It entails the relationship in which smaller states feel that their interests and concerns get due consideration by the larger member whose superior position is accepted by them.⁽⁷⁹⁾ Otherwise, a state being confident of its national capabilities or extra-regional linkages, particularly ties with world's major economic and political actors, may

take a slight or insignificant interest in promoting the cause of regionalism. Due to some domestic compulsions and favourable international environment, a core state may perceive change in its behaviour irrelevant and unnecessary. As such, its role and behaviour may not be favourable to the growth of meaningful regional cooperation.

Conclusion

The presence of a powerful member is an important factor for success of a grouping. It can play either a positive or negative role in the process. In order to make regionalism successful, the core member has to play a crucial role. To this end, it must: synchronize its national interests with larger regional ones; renounce the use of force, tacitly or implicitly, in dealings with its regional partners; show its sincerity towards peaceful resolution of mutual disputes; and adopt restrained behaviour in regional affairs. The core state has to accept a dominance-free regional arrangement which can assure smaller states of preservation of their national security, territorial integrity, political independence and sovereign equality. The leading state must show large-heartedness, magnanimity, responsiveness and accommodation towards the genuine needs, demands, concerns and aspirations of its partners. It must also play a role to ensure just distribution of gains of regional cooperation through: generating an urge for development in its less developed regional partners; making short-term sacrifices; promoting joint projects; creating regional economic complementarities; and playing the role of a paymaster in the cooperative arrangement. However, a state having confidence in its national capabilities and extra-regional linkages may not take interest in promoting regionalism to achieve its objectives. Rather, it can employ alternative means and national power to advance its interests. The domestic pressures and favourable international environment may induce a core state to pursue independent course of action and take insignificant interest in promoting the cause of regionalism. These findings provide a valuable framework for further research and exploring India's role in SAARC in the light of its self-image, national capabilities and interests in the region and beyond.

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