

Title of the project
Regional Peace and Security through Economic Integration: Lessons from the EU Experience

Introduction

Regional integration arrangement is a major trend with a new, genuinely worldwide economic and political phenomenon having a significant impact on various issue areas (Hettne, 2005). Since 1990s, region formation has become a fashion where almost all countries in the globe are members of at least one regional bloc (a notable exception is Mongolia). It seems that we are going to have a ‘world of regions’—though not replacing the significance of nation-states. While the number of such organization is amazingly high, the success of attaining their stated objectives is disappointingly low. Nevertheless, in addition to economic benefits, new hopes are hovering around the effectiveness of regional organizations for maintaining regional peace and security¹.

The European Union (EU) started its journey with a long-term view to ‘make another war impossible’ among European states. After half a century, it has been clear that another war among the EU states is indeed unlikely. Recalling this extraordinary success in attaining regional peace through economic integration, the EU is proclaimed as the most successful integration arrangements in the world (see Soderbaum, Stalgren & Luk 2005). As a corollary, it is also contemplated whether the EU experience is replicable elsewhere—particularly in South Asia--where decades long India-Pakistani conflict resembles the century-long Franco-German rivalry.

Research gap

Among many remarkable changes during the 1990s, proliferation of regional integration has been a huge phenomenon in the field of international political economy. Economic implications of this new development have widely been studied and fiercely debated, but analyses of their impact on political-military relations have been sparse (Mansfield & Pevehouse, 2003: 248). Mansfield (2003:232) argues that ‘there is ample reason to expect

¹ The issue of global governance through regional organizations has got new impetus when the United Nations (UN) pays special emphasis on regional organizations in managing regional conflict. See at www.un.org, news on the Sixth High-Level Meeting with Heads of Regional and Other Intergovernmental Organizations at New York on 25 July 2005.

that the growth of these arrangements will promote peace and cooperation among member states, **an important political benefit that has not been fully appreciated in debates on the consequences of regionalism**'. My endeavor is devoted to fill this gap.

This research will address two fundamental questions:

1. Whether regional economic integration promotes peace? (theoretical and empirical analysis)
2. How far the success of EU integration is replicable elsewhere, particularly in South Asia (comparative study)

Methodology

The study will take off with Kantian peace proposition in mind, then go on to introduce regional economic integration in the existing literature of trade and conflict. The study intends to incorporate a new variable called **regionally relevant dyad** (RRD) to examine how regional integration can promote peace among their member states and beyond. The second part of the research will consist of a comparative study between the EU and SAARC. This part will cover the EU formation stages during 1950s (with the formation of ECSC) and current situation in SAARC. The intention is to extract lessons for South Asia from the EU experience.

Expected outcome

The researcher expects that a statistically significant relationship between regional economic integration and peace be found. And, despite wide diversity between the two regions, the European experience will prove valuable for keeping peaceful relations among the countries in South Asia. It is also expected that this result will be valuable to extend further research in this line.

Deliverables

A working paper for garnet website and a joint article to be published in a peer reviewed journal.

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