
REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN ASIA: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ECO AND ASEAN

*ELAHEH KOOLAE**
*BAHAREH SAZMAND***

INTRODUCTION

Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) is the new form of “Regional Cooperation for Development” (RCD) established in 1964 with participation of Iran, Pakistan and Turkey. Although RCD was formed to promote economic, technical and cultural cooperation among its three member countries it mainly pursued political and security objectives. For this reason, these countries had joined the Western front and were concerned about spread of the Soviet Union’s

* Prof. Elaheh Koolae is Professor of Regionalism, Faculty of Law and Political Sciences, University of Tehran (ekolae@ut.ac.ir).

** Prof. Bahareh Sazmand is Assistant Professor of Regionalism, Faculty of Law and Political Sciences, University of Tehran

influence and communism (Koolae and Moadab, 2009). As a result, the main link between these countries was the non-declared anti-Soviet stance.

In 1967, the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established. Its members consisted of Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, and the *Philippines* in line with “Bangkok Declaration” to create a single front against spread of communism in the region. Like RCD, ASEAN was formed to promote economic cooperation and development. These two organizations never referred to their ultimate goal and stressed on economic cooperation irrespective of adopting a stance against communist influence. Meanwhile, strategic support of the great powers for the formation of this organization should not be overlooked. The United States’ efforts to form ASEAN were in the line with the country's military efforts in Vietnam War. This claim is verified by the fact that no communist government was granted membership in ASEAN. The first meeting of the leaders of this alliance was held simultaneously with the US withdrawal from Vietnam in 1976 (Shahandeh, 1998).

This paper’s key question is that why ASEAN has achieved integration while ECO has remained in early stages of development, taking into account that both organizations of ECO (RCD as its predecessor) and ASEAN were formed in similar terms in two parts of the vast continent of Asia.

The article’s hypothesis is that although the formation of both of these organizations was based on “Logic of Consequence”, ASEAN members managed to internalize norms known as “ASEAN Way” among themselves on the basis of “Logic of Appropriateness” and reach common identity, while ECO has failed to set such norms, achieve integration, and form a common identity.

The article proceeds with providing backgrounds of these organizations and examining the process of integration among

ASEAN member states in line with the hypothesis. It will then elaborate on failure of ECO in creating integration among its member states; it concludes by way of presenting a comparative analysis.

AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Studying RCD's activities and its background show that after two decades of cooperation, this organization has failed to turn into an economic organization. Meanwhile, the member countries could not expand the intended political and economic cooperation by institutionalizing their economic cooperation (Shahandeh, 1998). Reluctance of member states to overlook their special interests which is necessary for regional cooperation could be marked as the main obstacle. The three founding member states of this organization—Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey-- had relatively balanced economic developments, but Iran's rapid growth and its high foreign currency income as a result of increase in oil price, lessened integration tendency in RCD. Therefore, the organization became ceremonial functionally as well as in nature. Also the extensive red tape and bureaucracy of the organization made it devoid of its actual performance. On the other hand, not paying due attention to complementary aspects of the member states economies was a major barrier to economic cooperation growth (Safinia, 1977). Meanwhile, poor capacities of the three founding countries for development of regional trade were among the organization's problems (Islam, 1976).

Failure to identify relative capacities of each member state for developing trade relations could be pinpointed as another problem of this organization. This comes as implementation of supportive policies in member countries and dependence of their industries on global market multiplied the problems of RCD. Thus stress of each member on their national interests rather than regional interests slowed the

organization's growth. Turkey's tendency to the European Economic Union turned RCD to a ceremonial organization. Pursuing this policy by Turkey and Iran's superiority seeking tendencies in the region supported by the US were among major reasons behind RCD weakness and inefficiency. Moreover, RCD made no serious efforts to change its regional pattern of business structure and the members states mainly focused on transregional trade (Koolae and Moadab, 2009).

However, in South East Asia "ASEAN" strengthened economic relations and regional integration to counter the threat of communism in the region. Due to seriousness of this threat, five founding members deemed to temporary suspend their disputes over territorial, historical and borderline issues. Overlooking the previous problems, which was later changed to a principle and approach, could be considered as an interesting issue in ASEAN members' cooperation. Member states also attempted to tackle bilateral or multilateral problems and stress on higher objectives of the alliance, i.e. integration, ignoring problems between members and stressing on their high common goals. In other words regional cooperation became a vital priority in national issues due to ethnic ties. However, RCD three members, who have given priority to national issues over regional issues, failed to forge such a consensus despite all their slogans. In RCD zone, Pakistan had extensive relations with the People's Republic of China (PRC). Iran was pursuing policy of easing tension with the Soviet Union, and Turkey had improved its relations with this country as well. In these three countries communist movements were weaker than ASEAN and caused less concern (Shahandeh, 1998).

RCD convention lost its *raison d'être* and become passive following downfall of Iran's monarchical regime in 1979. This problem should be studied in line with ASEAN more integration due to the crisis in Cambodia and unanimous stance of ASEAN members

against Vietnam attack on Cambodia and its occupation. At the same time of the fall of the Shah of Iran, China's forces attacked Vietnam to punish the country for its raid on Cambodia and overthrow pro-Chinese Khmer Rouge regime (Shahandeh, 1998). At this time, ASEAN managed to internalize norms against Soviet Union's influence.

By the end of the Cold War, Vietnam paid more attention to ASEAN and its norms due to its withdrawal from Cambodia as well as rule of moderators who were interested in economic reform modernization. Vietnam and Laos asked for ASEAN observer membership in 1990. They signed a cooperation and friendship treaty in 1992 that led to ASEAN summit in Bali (Indonesia). They agreed to follow ASEAN norms and rules of conduct in regional relations. Vietnam was admitted as the seventh member of ASEAN in January 1995. Likewise, Brunei joined ASEAN in January 1984 shortly after gaining independence. Later, Laos and Myanmar joined the alliance in July 1997. Finally, Cambodia was registered as the tenth member of ASEAN in 1999 (Boroujerdi, 2001).

In southwest Asia the triple alliance of Iran, Turkey and Pakistan, which had lost its *raison d'être* after Islamic Revolution in Iran, was revived in 1985 after six years under the new name of Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) due to Iran's efforts during the Iran-Iraq War. But these three partners were short of strong commonalities needed to take cooperation beyond formalities. Islamic Republic of Iran with religious- ideological bases could make a front with secular and pro-West Turkey and Pakistan that was under the control of anti-Iran forces (at least opposition to Shiite and its expansion). Thus the official formalities were governing the organization until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 (Shahandeh, 1998; and Koolae & Moadab, 2009). Finally, the collapse of the Soviet Union and willingness of a number of newly independent countries, -- namely

Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and even Afghanistan-- paved the way for ECO's development (Omidi, 2009; and Koolae, 2000). Thus ECO replaced R.C.D in 1996 and the new admission requests were accepted by the founding members. As in the case of ASEAN, ECO increased its members to ten.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the absence of a robust consensus on concepts of norms, rules, principles, and procedures among constructivists and to some extent neoliberal institutionalists, these concepts have been frequently used interchangeably. Norm is defined by researchers of constructivist approach such as Wendt, Jespersen, Katzenstein, Onuf, Finnemore and Sikkink as “standards of appropriate behavior for actors with a common identity” or “collective expectations of proper behavior of a specific identity” (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998; see Jepperson, Katzenstein and Wendt, 1996; Katzenstein 1996; Finnemore, 1996; and see Klotz, 1995). Jeffery Checkel also explains norm as “common understanding of appropriate behavior of actors with a common identity” (Checkel, 1999). Jefferson, Wendt and Katzenstein explain that “...norms create our identity, regulate behavior of these identifications and determine expectations of identities and their behavior in different situations” (Jepperson, Wendt and Katzenstein, 1996).

Stephen Krasner, a renowned theorist of the international regime, considers norms as standards of behavior defined as rights and duties (Krasner, 1982). Unlike the constructivists, Krasner's definition neither includes the concept of identity, nor studies the impacts of norms on identity formation. Rather it provides limited definitions of norm characterized by their impacts on behavior of the actors. Krasner states that rules specify certain guidelines or restrictions on actors'

behavior that seem to be very close to the definition of norm (Krasner, 1982). Onuf expands the definition of norm beyond the concept of rules and considers all rules as norms, but not vice versa. In his view, both norms and rules are means of maintaining social order (Onuf, 1989).

In fact, people or governments that belong to a certain group or have a clear identity adhered to a set of principles, codes of conduct or procedures. A norm is created when each member of the group or a member with a shared identity expects other members to behave in accordance with the common rules. The important point is that these principles and codes of conduct are not general and permanent in a group and may be changed or modified based on conditions as well as political and social contexts (Hund, 2001). If an institution is supposed to be a security community, its members should be adhered to their shared norms. These norms set the codes of conduct for the members and manifest their collective identity (Hund, 2001). Constructivists thus argue that the emergence of a sense of identity among countries in a certain region is an important component of promoting regional cooperation and possibly regional integration (Terada, 2003).

One of the most important issues of the constructivist approach raised in institutional design is the “Logic of Appropriateness”. Although based on Rationalism (mainstream international relations theory) usually the first step for an institutional design is the “Logic of Consequence”. This means that based on Rational Choice Theory, actors turn to institutions for their benefits and positive functions. However, constructivists, such as Wendt, are of the opinion that “Logic of Appropriateness” could also be employed. Based on this view, instead of focusing solely on the costs and benefits, the emphasis is laid on appropriate norms. According to the “Logic of Appropriateness,” which results from internalized norms, actors change norms to a part of their identity that creates their collective

interests (Wendt, 2001).

ASEAN norms, seen as important features of a security community, have been formed due to members' relations in different periods and have set codes of conduct for regional governments and others. ASEAN Institution as a security community has its own norms, also known as "ASEAN Way" or "ASEAN Process". Those norms have secured strength and continuity of ASEAN and defeated other norms. These norms are consistent with Deutsch definition of procedure in a pluralistic security community. However, Deutsch does not specifically refer to norms in his definition. According to him, as a result of interactions, exchanges and communications between people and in a broader level between governments, procedures of a pluralistic community are established.

INTEGRATION AMONG ASEAN MEMBERS BASED ON NORMATIVE APPROACH

The aforementioned theoretical principles of ASEAN reveal that ASEAN formation was based on the "Logic of Consequence." This means that although regional governments established this organization to ensure peace and boost cooperative interactions in different areas based on the "Logic of Consequence," ASEAN continuity and expansion or integration according to the "Logic of Appropriateness" was based on norms and their internalization among members in a complicated process of social learning. The most important norms that formed "ASEAN Way" and helped the creation of a common identity and integration among members are further elaborated below.

CONSTITUTIVE NORMS (BEHAVIORAL)

There are norms in ASEAN that are considered as behavioral norms, i.e. they represent codes of conduct governing relations between members as well as their relations with other governments. These norms are the same norms of the international system that are also accepted by the newly independent ASEAN countries. They are presented in a clear and comprehensive manner in “ASEAN Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation” signed by members in 1976. These norms were accepted after nearly a decade of interaction among members. The core ASEAN norms are as follows:

- a. Non-interference in internal affairs of one another;
- b. Non-resort to force;
- c. Respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of states;
- d. Peaceful settlement of disputes (Hund, 2001; Acharya, 1992; 2001; 1998; Sopiee, 1986; Kraft, 2000; Batabya, 2000; Busse, 1999).

These norms, especially norm of non-interference in internal affairs of one another, are the main factors of maintaining ASEAN integration and its expansion. Therefore based on the “Logic of Appropriateness” these norms of the international system were welcomed by the members, changed to codes of conduct and were internalized in ASEAN.

According to Wendt’s perspective on three types of culture, namely Hobbesian, Lockean, and Kantian in the international anarchic system, while norms like norm of respect for sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs of other countries are the norms of the Lockean logic of competition, the norms of non-resort to force and peaceful settlement of disputes are included in the Kantian culture (Wendt, 2005). Thus behavioral norms accepted in “ASEAN Way” are a combination of the Lockean norms (based on the “Logic of Competition”) and Kantian culture (based on Logic of Friendship). Although in the “Bangkok Declaration” which is considered as

ASEAN founding document, there is an emphasis on norms governing the Lockean culture, later as a result of members' interaction and more understanding, norms governing the Kantian culture were gradually accepted by the members and turned to their behavioral norms. However, these norms are not unique to "ASEAN Way" since they are the same norms of the international system. In effect, procedural norms make "ASEAN Way" distinctive by means of normative guidelines and formation of a common identity among the members (Goh, 2003).

PROCEDURAL NORMS

These norms of ASEAN refer to managing conflicts and settling disputes between the member states (Buss, 1999; Goh, 2003). They are specific to ASEAN and differ from majority of votes system, legal decision-making approaches and procedures of the western multifaceted negotiations. These norms reflect decision-making process in ASEAN as well as two components of consensus and consultation. Informality, consensus and lobbying without confrontation are regarded as important decision-making features of ASEAN manifested in two norms of consensus and consultation that lead to dispute settlement (Acharya, 2000; Pathhmanathau, 1978; Narine, 1997; Kurus, 1995; Haas, 1990). These two norms reflect traditional method of democratic decision-making approach in Southeast Asian communities, particularly in rural areas of Indonesia and Malaysia in which all parties enjoy equal opportunities and reach consensus through negotiations and consultations. This method has proved to be an effective means of trust building among members as each party commits itself to the consensus (Hund, 2001; Acharya, 1992).

In fact, there is no institutional voting procedure or veto in

ASEAN and decisions are made on the basis of consensus following members' discussions. These norms set as a result of interactions between governments over decades have led to numerous meetings and frequent multilateral interactions. They also develop "institutional culture", expand institutional relationship between the members and prevent conflicts and disputes among ASEAN members (Batabyal, 2000; Leifer, 1997). According to Haacke, three different concepts could be derived from these norms. Firstly, viewing norms as tools, they could be considered as means of conflict management and trust building in ASEAN. Secondly, they present a decision making approach based on two principles of consensus and consultation. And finally, these norms along with constitutive norms (behavioral) include the basis of member states identity formation (Haacke, 2003; Acharya 2001).

With the objective of laying the groundwork for "ASEAN Way" based on constructivist approach of some scholars like Acharya, ASEAN members have attempted to act according to a combination of internalization and localization approaches. This means that, in addition to accepting and internalizing norms of the international system as behavioral norms, they made efforts to link these norms with their procedures, norms and local behavior, i.e. consultation and consensus. They also attempted to introduce a set of normative principles under the name of "ASEAN Way" (Acharya, 2004). In fact, regarding their procedural norms, these governments have attempted to act locally in a manner that differs from the West in rejecting majority of votes system and stressing on consultation and informal negotiations. ASEAN norms set a combination of traditional, social and cultural norms of Southeast Asia and norms of the international system. But these norms per se fail to show a common identity in ASEAN which could only be formed through internalization of norms among the members (Wendt, 2001).

FAILURE IN ACHIEVING INTEGRATION AMONG ECO MEMBERS

As mentioned in the introduction, the hypothesis of this article is that ASEAN member states have managed to internalize norms known as “ASEAN Way” and achieve integration and a common identity based on Logic of Appropriateness while ECO members have failed to use such a common normative approach to seek integration and form a common identity. The main obstacles to form a common normative framework among ECO members are as follows:

1. COGNITIVE FACTORS

In comparison with members of some organizations such as the Cooperation Council for the States of the Persian Gulf, European Union and ASEAN, ECO members do not have sense of belonging to a particular geographical area. For example, Turkey seeks to join European Union rather than paying attention to its Asian communication. Including Turkey in the European Union accession list has made this country pay less attention to ECO. Pakistan also is more inclined toward the Indian Subcontinent in terms of geographical and cultural aspects. Meanwhile, it seems that there are more commonalities between Iran, Afghanistan, Central Asian countries and Republic of Azerbaijan (countries that were mostly included in Iranian civilization zone) in terms of geographical and cultural-historical perspectives (Koolae, 2000; Mostaghimi and Ghavam Maleki, 2008).

This is while a legal entity independent of member states ensures credibility of an organization and makes its decisions binding. But ECO is devoid of such a feature. Admission to a rival organization or inclination toward it may be regarded as one of the reasons behind ECO’s failure in achieving organizational integration (Omidi, 2006). In terms of security-military aspects, ECO members have either

expanded their vision beyond the organization and formed coalitions and military alliances with regional and Trans- regional powers or have been limited to bilateral cooperation. There are numerous security treaties in ECO region. Countries of the former Soviet Union in Central Asia and Caucasus have signed several military and security treaties with Russia within the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Tashkent Collective Security Treaty (1992) has strengthened Russia's security ties with these Republics. Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, China and Russia established the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in 2001 (Vaezi, 2006). This comes as Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are permanent members and Iran and Pakistan act as observers. Inclination of the Republic of Azerbaijan to join European institutions such as Organization for Security Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) indicates its lack of attention to ECO. In fact, there is not a strong will among ECO member states to reaffirm their absolute commitments to the organization's norms and make it more effective.

Turkey is also a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). In addition to membership in OSCE, all countries of Central Asian and Caucasus work with NATO in programs like "the Partnership for Peace" (Partnership for Peace Programme set up in NATO summit on 10 and 11, January 1993 was a plan to encourage non-member countries to develop defense cooperation. This plan was implemented within the framework of a separate partnership programme through bilateral agreements between NATO and those non-member countries that were interested in cooperating with NATO. Central Asian countries and Caucasus except for Tajikistan were the first countries that joined the programme). This is while the Islamic Republic of Iran strongly opposes NATO expansion to the East and considers it as a threat to its security

(Mostaghimi and Ghavam Maleki, 2008). With respect to cognitive and security issues, ECO has clearly failed to put an intra-regional security mechanism in place similar to that of ASEAN. In the absence of a serious rival in the region, ASEAN has expanded its regional cooperation with the world as a separate legal institution. This explains the reason behind establishment of complementary institutions such as the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and ASEAN +3. The unanimous policies adopted by these countries in dealing with international and regional issues, such as announcing the Southeast Asia region as a nuclear- weapon- free zone, adopting common stances on political issues of the United Nations, membership in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and making efforts for peaceful settlement of political issues reflect ASEAN organizational integration. To be sure, ASEAN members have recognized the organization as an independent entity that is entitled to establish relations with other international institutions. As there is no rival organization in ASEAN region, the members do not need to declare their loyalty to the organization (Omidi 2006 and 2009).

2. LACK OF POLITICAL COHESION AMONG ECO MEMBERS

Ten member states of ECO have different political systems. Afghanistan that is currently ruled by an Islamic republic government is faced with many serious political and security problems due to presence of foreign forces. While there is an Islamic Republic government in Pakistan, military forces have always held the reins of power through frequent coups. Although democracy has returned to Pakistan since 2008, its political system is extremely fragile due to extensive activities of extremists as well as tribal and regional elements. Iran with its Islamic republic government enjoys a unique

situation in ECO due to Guardianship of the Jurist System.

In Turkey there is a Western-style democracy in place, but extreme secular trends have been moderated since “Justice and Development Party” has come to power. In Central Asian countries that were deprived of free elections for seventy years, secular republics have been established. However, it is clear that that these governments only bear the name of Republic. Two decades after Central Asian countries independence, they are still controlled by a totalitarian system. Due to lack of political cohesion in ECO, members show no tendency to political activities.

Despite apparent differences in ruling systems of ASEAN member states with democratic, monarchical, communist or military regimes, relative similarities are observed in political systems of this alliance. Democracy in the Philippines, Indonesia and Singapore, constitutional monarchy with liberal democratic institutions in Malaysia, Kingdom loyal to democracy and multiparty system in Cambodia, constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system in Thailand and Brunei to reduce power of the kings and hand over power to democratic institutions represent relative similarities in governing systems of Southeast Asian countries (Omidi, 2006). This relative political cohesion among ASEAN members has allowed the organization to sign and implement the following major political agreements:

- Bangkok declaration to establish ASEAN in 1967;
- Bali *Treaty of Amity and Cooperation* in Southeast Asia in 1976;
- The Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) Declaration in 1971, announcing Southeast Asia as a region of peace, freedom and neutrality;

- Bangkok treaty to declare the region as a nuclear- weapon- free zone in 1997;
- Drafting ASEAN 2020 vision in Kuala Lumpur in 1997;
- Bali second agreement in 2002 (Sazmand, 2009).

The most important agreements signed in ECO are economic, technical, socio-cultural, rather than political. The agreements are as follows:

Treaty of Izmir (1977), Revised Treaty of Izmir (1992 and 1996), the Action Plan of Quetta (1993), ECO Long-Term Perspective (Istanbul Declaration) (1993), Visa Facilitation Agreement (1995), the Almaty Outline Plan (1996), the ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA) (2003), the ECO 2015 Vision Document (2005) (see Koolae and Moadab, 2009; ECO 1998). In ECO 2015 vision document there is a part dedicated to drug control, combating terrorism, and organized crime. Based on the general pattern of regional integration process, while ECO is currently in the first phase (regional preferential tariff), it has defined its overall strategy based on ECO 2015 Vision Document to reach higher levels of integration (Omidi, 2009).

3. LACK OF INFRASTRUCTURES FOR ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

ECO region with high economic growth, vast and developing markets and rich natural resources, has a great potential to become an economic hub. But success in this path fully depends on boosting regional economic cooperation. Studying economic indices sheds light on some obstacles to integration among ECO member states. The most important obstacles are as follows:

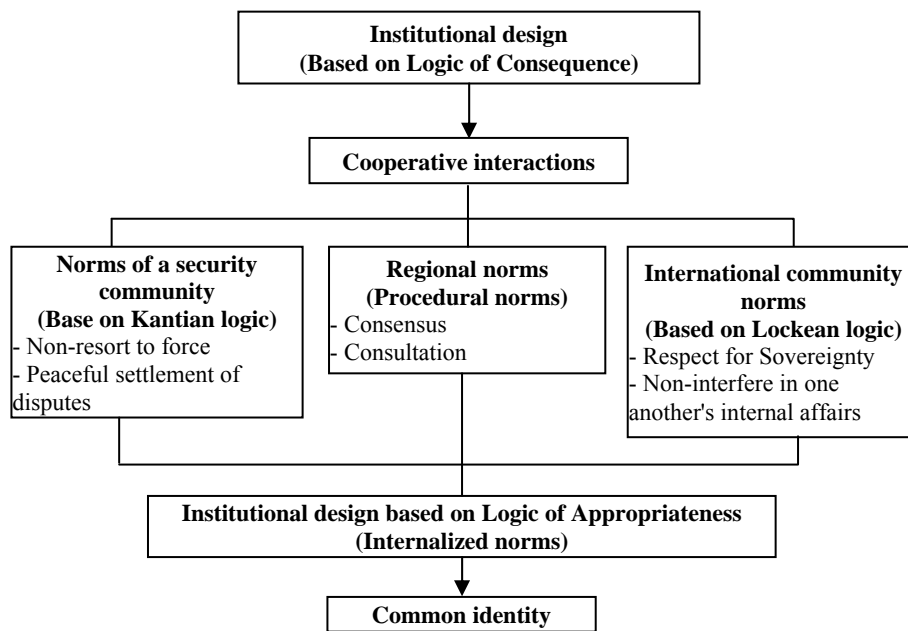
Different economic systems, tendency toward competitors' economic zones, low intra-regional trade and investment (See Mostaghimi and Ghavam Maleki 2008; Koolae 2000; Koolae and Moadab, 2009). Meanwhile, economic

integration has been materialized in ASEAN through Free Trade Area (AFTA). Intra-regional trade in ASEAN is four times as the ECO. ASEAN member states have similar and complementary economic systems. ASEAN has also attracted considerable direct foreign investment that in 2005 accounted for 3.5 percent of total foreign investment in the world (Omidi, 2009; Sazmand 2009).

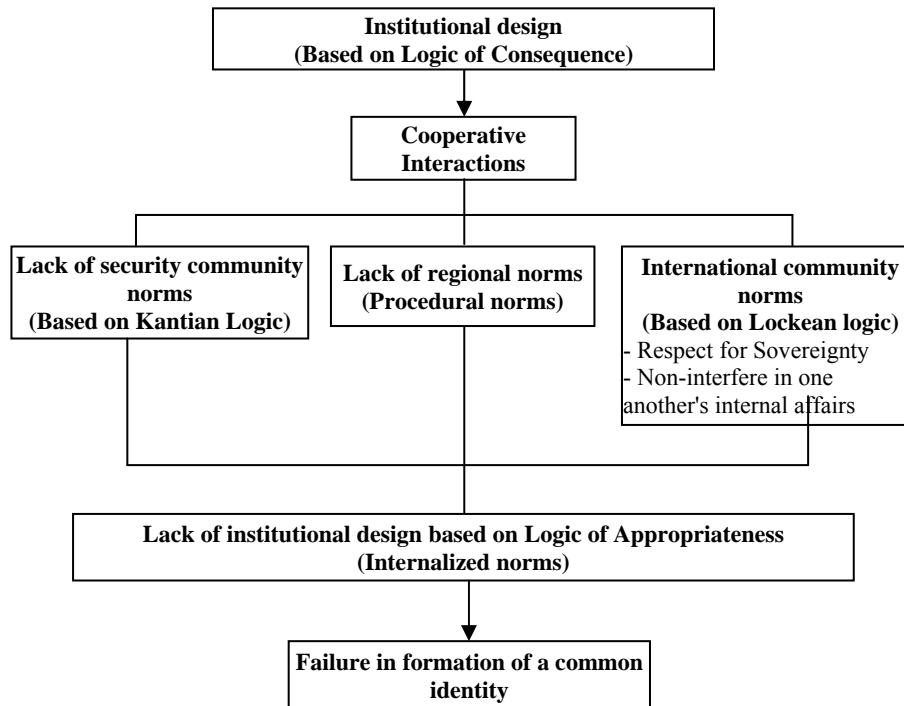
The abovementioned obstacles refrained ECO members from designing an institution based on *Logic of Appropriateness*. As a result, formation of a common identity among ECO members seems like a tough task. In fact, lack of common procedural norms among ECO members and respect for the norms of Lockean culture have distanced ECO from a secure community and dominated Lockean competitive culture instead of friendship culture of Kantian in the organization.

The following graphs show realization of integration between ASEAN member states and ECO's failure in achieving integration from a normative perspective.

Graph 1: Integration between ASEAN member states from a normative perspective



Graph 2: Lack of Integration in ECO from a normative perspective



CONCLUSION

Although many works in the form of books, articles, and reviews have been published in English on regional integration of ASEAN in Southeast Asia, there are only few works available in English on ECO in Southwest Asia. Thus the authors of this article have attempted to employ an analytical approach and conduct a comparative analysis of regional integration in Asia by means of focusing on these two regional institutions. Since the ECO obstacles to achieve regional convergence have been addressed from political and economic points of view, this article is an effort to elaborate on normative and constructivist perspectives on the emergence and sustainability of ASEAN and ECO. It also studies the reasons behind ASEAN success

and ECO's failure in achieving regional integration respectively from a normative, or, more precisely a constructivist perspective. It is fair to argue that ASEAN member states have internalized a set of norms entitled "ASEAN Way" and formed a common identity. However, ECO has failed to lay the groundwork for such a common identity mainly due to cognitive and political factors as well as lack of integration among the member states.

At the same time, the role of economic barriers could not be overlooked. In fact, one of the reasons behind the internalization of ASEAN norms lies in extensive cooperative interactions of the member states in various areas. This in turn has led to agreements and formation of proper institutional and implementation arrangements within the framework of ASEAN. While ECO member states have inked some agreements as a result of cooperative interactions, they have failed to address the issue of norms. Thus the agreements have just remained as commitments on the paper, rather than binding agreements. ECOTA agreement is a good example in this regard. Moreover adaptation and implementation of regional agreements and plans of ECO is a lengthy procedure due to slow process of decision making in the member countries, especially new members as well as political competition and conflicts among founding countries.

Low level of participation of some members or their absence in various meetings of the organization and postponement of some annual meetings due to insufficient number of attendees also need to be taken into account. Finally, it is worth noting that ASEAN enjoys a more developed and effective institutional mechanisms than ECO.

REFERENCES

- Acharya, A. 1992, "Regional Military – Security Cooperation in the Third World: A Conceptual Analysis of the Relevance and Limitations of ASEAN" *Journal of Peace Research*, 29: 1, pp. 7-21.
- Acharya, A. 1998, "Collective Identity and Conflict Management in Southeast Asia" In (Eds). Adler, E and Barnett, M., *Security Communities*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Acharya, A. 2000, *The Quest for Identity: International Relations of Southeast Asia*, Singapore: Oxford University Press.
- Acharya, A. 2001, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and the Problems of Regional Order*, London and New York: Routledge.
- Acharya, A. 2004, "Terrorism and Security in Asia: Redefining Regional Order?" *Working Paper 113*, Perth: Asia Research Centre, Murdoch University.
- Batabyal, A. 2004, "ASEAN Quest for Security: A Theoretical Explanation", *International Studies* 41: 4, pp. 350-365.
- Brujerdi, M. 2001, *Association for the South East Asian Nations (ASEAN)*, Trans. Tehran: IPIS.
- Busse, N. 1999, "Constructivism and Southeast Asian Security", *The Pacific Review* 12: 1, pp. 39-60.
- Checkel, J. T. 1999, "Norms, Institutions and National Identity in Contemporary Europe" *International Studies Quarterly*, 43:1, pp. 83-114.
- Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO)* 1998, Trans. Tehran: IPIS.
- Finnemore, M. and Sikkink, K. 1998, "International Norms Dynamics and Political Change", *International Organization* 52: 4, pp. 887-917.
- Goh, G. 2003, "The ASEAN Way: Non- Intervention and ASEAN's Role in Conflict", *Stanford Journal of East Asian Affairs* 3:1, pp: 113-118.
- Haacke, J. 2003, "ASEAN's Diplomatic and Security Culture: A Constructivist Assessment", *International Relations of the Asia- Pacific* 3:1, pp. 57-87.

Haas, M. 1990, "Asian Culture and International Relations" In: (Eds) Chay, J. *Culture and International Relations*. New York: Pager, pp. 172-190.

Hund, M. 2001, "The Development of ASEAN Norms between 1997 and 2000: A Paradigm Shift?" *Zops Occasional Papers Trier*, April, pp. 1-71.

Jepperson, P.L.; Wendt, A ; Katzenstein, P. J. 1996, "Norms, Identity and Culture of National Security" In: (Eds) Katzenstein, P. *the Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* .New York: Columbia University Press, pp: 33-75.

Katzenstein, P. 1996, "Introduction: Alternative Perspectives on National Security" In: (Eds) Katzenstein, P. *the Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* .New York: Columbia University Press, pp: 1-32.

Khorshidi, Gh. 1988, *Islamic Common Market*, Trans. Tehran: Amirkabir.

Koolae, E. 2000, *ECO and Regional Integration*, Trans. Tehran: Center for Scientific Research and Strategic Studies of the Middle East.

Koolae, E; Moadab, M. 2009, *Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Achievements and Prospects*, Trans. Tehran: University of Tehran.

Kraft, H. J. S. 2000, "ASEAN and Intra- ASEAN Relations: Weathering the Storm?" *The Pacific Review*, 13: 3 .pp. 453-472

Krasner, S. D. 1982, "Structural Causes and Regime Consequences: Regimes as Intervening Variables", *International Organization*, 36: 2, pp. 186-205.

Kurus, B. 1995, "The ASEAN Triad: National Interest, Consensus- Seeking and Economic Cooperation", *CSEA* 16.

Leifer, M. 1999. "The ASEAN Peace Process: A Category Mistake", *Pacific Review* 12: 1, pp. 25-38.

Mostaghimi, B; Ghavam Maleki, H. 2008, "Feasibility Study of Formation of Regional System in ECO" Trans. *Central Eurasia Studies*, Vol. 1, (No. 1), pp. 123-142.

Narine, Sh. 1997, "ASEAN and the Management of Regional Security", *38th Annual International Studies Association Meeting*, Toronto, Ontario, 18-22 March, pp: 195-214.

Omidi, A. 2006, "Impacts of Geopolitics in Loose Integration of ECO and ASEAN's Strength", Trans. *Geopolitics*, Vol. 2, (No. 1), pp. 123- 157

Omidi, A. 2009, *Regionalism in Asia: A Glance at ASEAN, SAARK, and ECO*.

Trans. Tehran: IPIS.

Onuf, N.; Klink, F. F. 1989, "Anarchy, Authority, Rule", *International Studies Quarterly* 33: 2, pp. 149-173.

Pathmanathan, M. 1978, *The Pacific Settlement of Disputes in Regional Organizations*, Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya.

Safi Nia, A. 1974, *Regional Cooperation for Development*, Trans. Tehran: RCD Secretariat.

Sazmand, B. 2009, *Regionalism and Common Identity in the South East Asia*, Tehran: IPIS.

Shafiee, N. 2006, "Shanghai Organization and the third Generation of Regionalism in Asia", Trans. *Central Asia and the Caucasus Quarterly*, Vol.53 (No. 1), pp. 45-62.

Shahandeh, B. 1998, "Would ASEAN be the Future of ECO Organization?" Trans. *Middle East Quarterly*, Vol.13, (No. 1), pp. 91-112.

Sopiee, N. 1986, "ASEAN and Regional Security" In: (Eds) Ayoob, M., *Regional Security in the Third World*, London: Croom Helm.

Wendt, A. 2001, "Driving with the Rearview Mirror: On the Rational Science of Institutional Design", *International Organization* 55: 4, pp. 1019-1049.

Terada, T. 2003, "Constructing an East Asian Concept and Growing Regional Identity: from EAEC to ASEAN+3", *The Pacific Review* 16: 2, pp. 251-277

Wendt, A. 2005, *Social Theory of International Politics*, Trans. By Moshirzadeh, H., Tehran: IPIS.

Vâezi, M. 2006, "Developments of Shanghai Organization and Iran's Membership" Trans, *Central Asia and the Caucasus Quarterly*, Vol. 53. (No. 1), pp. 7-32.