SAARC: United Dream Or Regional Nightmare?

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Weak institutions, norms, and domestic regimes play key roles in explaining the lack of success of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in sustaining collaboration. This paper simulates selected Game Theory interactions to illustrate how SAARC is unable to reap gains associated with being a 'regime' or an 'epistemic community'. The advantage of adopting a constructivist rather than an intergovernmentalist approach towards regional dynamics is deconstructed. Inequitable gains from cooperation, the lack of a substantial 'pivotal power', and an inability to meet the necessary preconditions for sustained cooperation are used as factors to explain states' propensity for defection.

Without an environment of peace, security and stability, efforts towards mutually beneficial regional cooperation will have little success. SAARC cannot and must not remain indifferent or pretend to be oblivious of the differences and tensions between its members.

A dream of unity has occupied the mind of India since the dawn of civilization.
--Jawaharlal Nehru

It was the prescient words of Orwell in Animal Farm that gave birth to the phrase “all evils of this life of ours spring from the tyranny of human beings.” In terms of cooperation, this ‘tyranny’ translates into selfish interest: one agent expects others to work while it reaps the resulting benefits. This is the concept of the “free ride.” Why, then, would states want to create regional entities to foster cooperation?

In order to address this question, this paper builds a framework around the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), an independent union of eight South Asian members: Sri Lanka, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan. This is not without reason: with a population of 1.6 billion, SAARC is the largest regional cooperation bloc in the world,
constituting one-fifth of the entire world’s population.\textsuperscript{1} It is this bid for collaboration that has led to the creation of a South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA), a SAARC Social Charter, a convention on fighting terrorism, and a blueprint for poverty alleviation vis-a-vis SAARC Development Goals (SDGs) alongside the likes of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Synched to these efforts is the establishment of regional institutions such as the SAARC Development Fund, the SAARC Food Bank, and the South Asian University in recent years. Despite these developments, however, a lack of common threats, base identities, overlapping goals, and an ambiguous pivotal power have been identified by many, including Bandara and Yu (2001) and Muni (2010) as dilemmas that make cooperation among these sovereign states unlikely.

Ayoob (1985) couples the creation of SAARC to a proclivity for mimicking successful regional organizations - such as the EU and ASEAN, presumably - with a fear of being ‘left behind’. However, even if we add to this premise prospects of economic integration and the appeasement of political ties, cooperation seems unsustainable. Indeed, if South Asian politics is viewed from a Darwin-Waltz perspective, weak institutions, norms, and domestic regimes play quintessential roles in explaining the lack of success of SAARC in sustaining collaboration. As SAARC approaches its 28\textsuperscript{th} year of existence, the question at hand, therefore, is not how SAARC fosters cooperation, but if it manages to do so.

I argue that misaligned strategic conceptions prevent SAARC from becoming a ‘regional’ or ‘epistemic’ community. As a result, the organization is largely captive to disputes between India and its neighbors. Due to its feeble power as an entity, I am able to apply Game Theory simulations of repeated interaction to illustrate how SAARC is neither what I deem a ‘Stag’ nor a ‘Chicken’ game. Further, the preeminent example of India-Pakistan conflict is used to position SAARC as a Prisoner’s Dilemma with Grim Triggers. In order to structure this analysis, the advantage of adopting a constructivist rather than a liberal intergovernmentalist approach towards the dynamics of the region’s players is discussed. As these actors cannot be treated as exogenously given or inferred from a given material structure, political culture, discourse, and the ‘social construction’ of interests and preferences matter a great deal indeed.

Amongst others, Bajpai (2005) iterates the main idea under liberal institutionalists, that is, the ability of cooperation to (ultimately) emerge among egoists under conditions of strategic interdependence. However

\textsuperscript{1}United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs: population division, population estimates and projections section (2013).
the underlying premise here is that cooperation is contingent upon the players’ willingness to continue the game: a feature Axelrod (2000) defines in his original paradigm. The traditional two-person iterated interaction can of course be dissected and extended to take into account factors such as non-simultaneous play, social networks for interaction, information-sharing reputation-building (Ernst Fehr), learning behavior, envy and misunderstanding, and the option to exit. Consequently cooperation may not always result, even with agents maximizing payoffs. By adopting these postulates, we can begin to identify SAARC within selected simulated interactions.

SAARC in GAME THEORY Simulations

The question here is when cooperation, which is defined in terms of SAARC as conscious policy coordination, is necessary for the realization of mutual benefits of all eight member countries. For a mutual benefit to exist, the aforementioned states must prefer mutual cooperation (MC) to mutual defection (MD). For coordination to be necessary (to the realization of mutual benefit) member states must prefer unilateral defection (DC) to unrequited cooperation (CD).

Thus three games are examined (Stag, Chicken, and Prisoner’s Dilemma) in the SAARC application because cooperation is desirable in all three, but not automatic.

SAARC as a STAG interaction

Under a Stag Game, a group of hunters surround a stag, and if all choose to cooperate to catch the stag, all will eat well. If one hunter defects to chase a rabbit, the stag will escape: the defector will eat lightly (DC), but the others will not eat at all (CD). Cooperation will be assured only if

Axelrod (2000) also using elementary game theory outcomes to iterate how large time references, repeated interaction over N periods, reciprocal capacity, a low discount rate, high levels of transparency over infinite N periods, perfect information, and a lower number of players can increase the chances of successful and sustained cooperation.

These preference orderings are consistent with the familiar games of Prisoner’s Dilemma, Stag Hunt, and Chicken.

From statements by members in SAARC Summits, such as those by Major General M. Amin Khan Bukri, that the Pakistani military is the only member that can “cut India to its proper size and dimension”, this assumption is verified. Conversely if member states prefer unrequited cooperation (CD) to unilateral defection (DC), no incentive to cheat exists. Similarly, asymmetric and symmetric deadlock games are not considered for this very same reason: we are assuming that cooperation under SAARC is desirable, but may not be successful or sustainable under given circumstances and conditions.
each hunter believes that all hunters will cooperate: in a single-play Stag, the temptation to defect to protect against defection of others is balanced by a strong universal preference for stag over rabbit. Hence, simulating this in a payoff matrix would yield the following:

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<td>Hare</td>
<td>B, c</td>
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The matrix reveals two pure strategy Nash equilibria: one that is risk dominant (D,d) and another which is payoff dominant (A,a). In this instance, it is clear that: \( a > b \geq d > c \)

The Stag Game relies on two fundamental assumptions, both of which I will refute to argue that SAARC does not fit this model, thereby cooperation between member states is highly unlikely. The first is regarding punishment: even with repeated interaction over infinite \( N \) periods, it is assumed that the ‘defector’ will lose forever (i.e. a Grim Trigger). In the case of SAARC, a defector state that does not play by the ‘rules of the game’ will be removed from the union: thereby hindering access to competitive advantages, be they technical learning through information exchange, energy development, trade and industrialization, and so on. The second assumption is regarding preferences: it is assumed that member states strictly prefer returns from SAARC to functioning independently.

Full analysis of each advantage of SAARC is beyond the limits of this paper, as such, we can focus on one in particular: trade nondiscrimination. The main issue regarding South Asian countries is lack of comparative advantages in a wide range of capital goods and advanced manufactured products. XCRA\(^7\) indices using recent UN trade data (Kemal, et. al., 2002, and Malik, 2013) indicate that SAARC countries have an almost identical pattern of comparative advantage in a relatively narrow band of commodities. While for the whole world the best option is clearly multilateral trade liberalization, Maskus et. al (2010) use a GTAP framework to model actual tariff concessions given

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\(^5\)This is a generic payoff matrix to illustrate that in a Stag Game, there are two Nash equilibria: when both players cooperate, and when both players defect.

\(^6\)The Stag Game, like the Prisoner’s Dilemma, assumes that cooperation yields the maximum pay-off under all circumstances. In the Prisoner’s Dilemma, however, both players cooperating is Pareto efficient, but the only Nash equilibrium is when both players choose to defect.

\(^7\)Export Revealed Competitive Advantages.
by SAPTA members during SAPTA-1, SAPTA-2, and SAPTA-3 to find that SAPTA would lead smaller members to lose substantially, both in terms of welfare and efficiency. This is due to identical areas of competitive advantage: causing favorable export prices in larger sectors such as India\(^8\) but inefficient resource utilization in smaller countries such as Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. Understandably this would decrease incentives to maintain coordination on the part of ‘defectors’ who may sustain tariffs to protect industries. Therefore the assumption of *punishment* is tenuous, if membership is not benefiting all countries equally: some may be strictly better off or indifferent if they do not play by the ‘rules of the game’. Certainly research by Jain and Singh (2009) has suggested so: informal trade is described as “rampant” because formal spheres are not only hindered by tariff and non-tariff factors, but by domestic policies (differentiated tax structures between countries) and transaction costs (poor infrastructure and institutions). The authors therefore conclude that the absence of synchronized fiscal policies, coupled with the presence of domestic subsidies, may continue to make informal trade remunerative.

Similarly, Panagariya (2009) uses a two-factor trade diagram to argue that SAARC is ‘trade diverting’ and ‘efficiency-reducing’, and in doing so argues that the region should promote ‘trade preferences rather than non-discriminatory liberalisation.’ SAARC is “likely to become a binding constraint” in the same vein as Mexico and Brazil’s membership of MERCOSUR\(^9\), which resulted in a virtual abandonment of unilateral trade liberalisation and rising tariffs in both countries. Mazhar (2011) concludes that intra-regional trade in SAPTA has been ‘dismal’, with intra-SAARC trade accounting for less than 5% of the total trade of the region. On a global level, the region, in total, accounts for just 1.7% of world exports, and 3% of global FDI inflows. In 2011, the share of South Asia in total Asian exports and imports was calculated to be merely 4.7% and 7.5%, respectively. Therefore the assumption of *preferences* is questionable if mutual interests under international anarchy cannot be realized.

**SAARC as a CHICKEN game**

In a Chicken Game, the temptation of unilateral defection is balanced by a fear of mutual defection. This is usually illustrated by the example

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\(^8\)India’s profit from liberalization and subsequent displacement is estimated by this model to be around 3.2 to 4.1 million US dollars.

\(^9\)MERCOSUR is an economic and political agreement between Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, Bolivia, and Venezuela established in 1991 to promote free trade.
of two drivers racing down the road from opposite directions: if one
swerves and the other does not, then the first will suffer the stigma of
being known as a chicken (CD) while the second will be known as a
hero (DC), however if neither swerve the cars will collide. The fear that
the other driver may not swerve decreases the appeal of continuing
down the road.

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<tr>
<td>Swerve</td>
<td>Tie, Tie</td>
<td>Lose, Win</td>
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<td>Straight</td>
<td>Win, Lose</td>
<td>Crash, Crash</td>
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It is interesting to note that the Chicken simulation is an anti-
coordination game, in which it is mutually beneficial for the players to
play different strategies. In this way, it can be thought of as the opposite
of a coordination game, where playing the same strategy Pareto
dominate playing different strategies: here, the shared usage of a
resource, for example, is non-excludable and represents a negative
externality. All anti-coordination games have three Nash equilibria.
Two of these are pure contingent strategy profiles, in which each player
plays one of the pair of strategies, and the other player chooses the
opposite strategy. The third one is a mixed equilibrium, in which each
player probabilistically chooses between two pure strategies. Either
case—be it a pure or a mixed equilibrium—will be an evolutionary
stable strategy, depending on whether or not uncorrelated asymmetries exist.

I believe this game is more fitting to SAARC than the Stag Hunt
because each member state values their own self-interest more highly
than that of the other players (no altruism or sharing). This is especially
the case in South Asia: Ayoob (1985) and Khosla (2007) identify a lack
of shared culture and identity between members as a dehomogenizing-deunifying factor. Khosla goes so far as to say that “where India talks

10 An Evolutionary Stable Strategy (ESS) is a Nash equilibrium strategy that is
evolutionary stable: here it is presumed that players’ strategies are biologically
encoded and heritable. As such, individuals have no control over their actions and
need not be aware of the game. It is envisioned that alternative strategies to the game
may occur through the process of ‘mutation’, but to be an ESS, a strategy must be
resistant to these alternatives.

11 An arbitrary asymmetry in a game that is otherwise symmetrical: i.e. players
do not know which role they have been assigned.

12 Interestingly, Jha (1986) argues that a common culture may not necessarily
lead to increased cooperation, so this is an unprecedented assumption on the part of
of unity in the subcontinent, the neighbors think ‘homogenization’ which they translate into ‘hegemonization’ so they emphasize dehomogenization which equals dehegemonization.” This observation by the author extends naturally to diverse political systems, whereby ‘external’ threats to SAARC emanate from partners within the enterprise. For example, ‘democratic’ India is seen to “encourage” ‘autonomist’ Pakistan and Sri Lanka both morally and materially to operate in an open, democratic polity.

These political and cultural differences may be counterbalanced by shared geo-economic gains, however, Panagiriya (1995) illustrates that this is not the case. Whilst traditionalists such as Frankel (1997) and others use empirical work based on their gravity model to argue that the proximity is, in general, an important determinant of bilateral trade around the world, only one case, South Asia, behaves against this “natural blocs” argument. Although India and Pakistan are neighbors, historically trade between the two countries has been low: estimates of Frankel and Wei (1995) indicate that trade between India and Pakistan is 70 percent lower than two otherwise identical economies. Historical political differences and quantitative and administrative restrictions have lead to what Lahiri (1998) deems “inverse regionalism”. This asymmetry is discussed by Bandara and Yu (2001) in their comparison of ASEAN and SAARC as the main reason hindering “formal and informal modalities of interaction” between South Asian members. Whilst Sinha and Mohta (2007) cite a shared geographic space as a ‘sufficient’ condition for regional unity, they argue that Nepal and Sri Lanka, as well as Pakistan and Bangladesh in particular, have been “at pains to create a sense of their separate geographic identity”. Linking this to the Chicken Game, it is quite obvious that the search for a geographic, political, and cultural identity in non-Indian terms could defer SAARC states to anti-India directions and potential conflict. Therefore mutual defection may occur before unilateral defection does.

INDIA and PAKISTAN as GRIM TRIGGERS

I believe the most appropriate model for SAARC is an iterated Prisoner’s Dilemma game, due to the prevalence of India-Pakistan political tension As in all strategic interactions, non-coordination is
assumed i.e. the shadow of the future provides the basis for cooperation, even among egoists. The example I will use within reciprocating strategy for the iterated Prisoner’s Dilemma is “tit-for-tat” in which member states are assumed to cooperate on the first move, and then do whatever the other players do on the previous move. However if the other player defects, then the state never cooperates again: this is the strategy known as ‘Grim Trigger’ and manifests itself in permanent retaliation. Inevitably in the absence of common threat perceptions and security concerns (Bajpai, 2005), which are crucial to the formation and success of regional coordination, the prospects for SAARC are not very bright. According to most analysts, including Singh (2007) and Basrur (2008) nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan, border wars, and abrupt political changes in Pakistan are major obstacles for regional cooperation. Empirical evidence negates Khosla’s cited preconditions for cooperation (the necessity that war will be abjured and mutual settlement systems created). Instead of diluting conflict, regional confrontations have directly influenced SAARC’s strategy and stymied scheduled summits in 1998 and 1999, because of a worsening of Indo-Pakistan relations due to their “tit-for-tat” nuclear tests and the military takeover in Pakistan. This is consistent with Ayoob’s (1985) argument that internal and external threats within SAARC are very diverse, and often emanate from, or are encouraged by, prospective partners in the SAARC enterprise.

**SAARC as a REGIME**

I utilize liberal tradition to define a ‘regime’ as a combination of international institutions that affects the behavior of states. The underlying assumption here is that cooperation is possible in an anarchic system of states: regimes are by definition, instances of international cooperation.

Regimes facilitate cooperation by establishing standards of behavior that signal to other members that individual states are in fact cooperating. This theory evolves from the Prisoner’s Dilemma: inevitably through repeated interaction, the Prisoner’s Dilemma is critiqued as concerning itself with absolute gains: it is in the interest of states to cooperate in the present, because in the future, other states will defect (Tit for Tat). However this outcome has occurred within SAARC in many instances: building from the analysis of the previous paragraph describing India-Pakistan tit-for-tat games. I have argued, rather, that SAARC is a more punishing game than tit-for-tat in the form of Grim Strategies. Insofar as this essay has argued that SAARC is lacking in
cooperative form, the question remains: to what extent therefore can SAARC be seen as a regime\textsuperscript{14}, if at all?

I explain this phenomenon as such: this theory presupposes a ‘supervising agent’ as being the regime itself, vis-à-vis hegemonic stability as the modus operandi. However, I question the power of SAARC to be a supervising agent because of its lack of effectiveness in punishing defecting bodies. Ayoob (1985) has reflected the need for a ‘pivotal power’ within the regional grouping, which will ‘set limits’ which neither the pivotal power nor its partners may stray from. Naturally India is seen as the preeminent power in terms of its size, population, resources, and industrialization. However, its inability to translate this into predominance results in the absence of a checking mechanism within the regime.

Machar et al (2011) stresses India must be given this predominant role, as does Singh (2007). According to the former, the presence of India’s dominance within the South Asian region is clear: it contains 74% of the region’s population, 75% of its GDP, 79% of its trade, and caters to 81% of the region’s Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flow.\textsuperscript{15} However, I question this assertion because Khosla (2007) argues that a necessary precondition for regional cooperation is an acceptance by member states of each other’s sovereignty and legitimacy. Pakistani opinion regarding the Kashmir issue, for example, is quite presumptuously a questioning of India’s sovereignty and Khosla’s preconditions regarding “pluralist security communities”. The nebulous nature of a pivotal power, coupled with a glaringly obvious lack of a mutual dispute settlement system, leaves us unable to define SAARC as a regime.

The explicitness of commitment required before a regime can be said to exist creates a related problem. Whereas focusing on ‘implicit’ regimes captures the convergence of actor expectations and may help to summarize a complex pattern of behavior, it begs the question of the extent to which state behavior is, in fact, rule-governed. Indeed, if one was to adopt a constructivist rather than a liberal intergovernmentalist approach to regime behavior, it is clear that, in this circumstance, most structural, game-theoretic, and functional theories of regimes are state-centered: presuming unified rational actors.\textsuperscript{16} As such, structural explanations, particularly the theory of hegemonic stability, attempt to

\textsuperscript{14}I use the words ‘to what extent’ to highlight the assumption that SAARC is not currently a regime, but may, according to some optimists, including Jha (1986) and Singh (1995), become one.

\textsuperscript{15}Mazhar et al. (2011) statistics are consistent with data from the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

\textsuperscript{16}Even if this assumption is relaxed to gain explanatory leverage.
show how external conditions define the possibilities of cooperation. Yet this fundamental assumption may be questioned when a liberal intergovernmentalist view is considered: the delineation of these assumed structures is bound to be arbitrary.

SAARC as an EPISTEMIC COMMUNITY

I define an epistemic community as a network of professionals with recognized knowledge and skill in a particular issue-area. Peter Haas stresses that epistemic communities help to “explain the mergence and character of cooperation at the international level” (Thomas, 1997). This theory relies on the premise that the strength of the cooperative agreements depends on the power that the epistemic community has gathered within agencies and governments. Although the members of an epistemic community may originate from various backgrounds, inter alia, they are linked by the promotion of collective amelioration and not collective gain, i.e., by their ‘normative component’.

As illustrated herein, SAARC is not very powerful in settling disputes and is more of a bystander in discordant political issues. Sinha and Mohta (2007) go so far as to argue that SAARC has not added significantly to any cooperative ventures that did not previously exist or would have happened anyway. They state that the only thing that SAARC has a competitive advantage in is holding meetings: “according to the SAARC secretariat website…there were a total of 134 meetings in just one year: 2004. Given the five day week and the fact that many meetings continued for more than one day, this means, on average, that SAARC met everyday”. Evidently meetings are important: they increase transparency of information which is defined by Axelrod (2000) as being advantageous to every strategic game described in this paper. However, while this is a necessary condition for epistemic power, it is not a sufficient one. Indeed, the Prime Minister of India, Manmohan Singh, expressed his disappointment in the sixteenth SAARC Summit in 2010 by stating: ‘the glass of regional cooperation, regional development and regional integration is half empty’ and emphasized that the region must be ‘better connected, empowered, fed and educated to achieve comparable success with other regional organizations.’

CONSTRUCTIVIST vs. LIBERAL INTERGOVERNMENTALIST approaches to SAARC

The difference between a constructivist and a liberal intergovernmentalist approach towards SAARC integration is clear, in

\[17\] Hindustan Times, 2010, April 28.
that the latter is firmly based within a rationalist ontology that takes actors’ preferences as given. The situated game-theory interactions have assumed a neo-functionalist, actor-centered approach to SAARC integration (Haas, 1958, 2001). Here, egoistic utility-maximizing actors cooperate to solve collective action problems, wherein a functional logic takes over (‘spill-over), leading to further integration. It is therefore important in this instance to consider this foundational assumption of neo-functionalism, which incorporates ideas about normative integration, the ‘upgrading of common interests’, and the shift of loyalties (identities) from the national to the supranational levels.

Here, we can describe constructivism as based on a social ontology which insists that human agents do not exist independently from their social environment and their collectively shared systems of meanings – 'culture', in the broad sense - derived from it. This is in contrast to the methodological individualism of rational choice according to which 'the elementary unit of social life is individual human action' (Elster, 1989). The fundamental insight of the structure-agency debate, which lies at the heart of many social constructivist works, is not only that social structures and agents are mutually co-determined, but rather on the mutual constitutiveness of (social) structures and agents (Adler and Kwon, 2000). Therefore the social environment in which one finds oneself, defines or constitutes the actors, as well as their identities as social beings. At the same time, human agency creates, reproduces, and changes culture through daily practice. Thus, social constructivism occupies an ontological middle ground between individualism and structuralism by claiming that there are properties of structures and of agents that cannot be collapsed into each other.

This strain of thought has important, and often overlooked, repercussions for the study of SAARC. It is here that I argue that the prevailing theories of SAARC integration – be they neo-functionalist, liberal intergovernmentalist, or ‘multi-level governance’, are firmly committed to rationalist ontology which is agency-centered by definition. However a constructivist perspective would complement rather than substitute these approaches by emphasizing that the interests of the actors cannot be treated as exogenously given or inferred from a given material structure.

One may argue that agency-based game theory simulations and a constructivist approach are mutually exclusive. Yet, such an emphasis on ideological, cultural, and discursive origins of national preferences complements rather than substitutes an agency-based rationalist account. The institutions belonging to SAARC, and indeed SAARC itself, reflect and build upon previous institutional designs and structures. The issue, therein, is not so much about path-dependent
processes and ‘sunk costs’ - as emphasized by historical institutionalism (Pierson, 1996)—but rather about the institutional effects on the social identities and fundamental interests of the actors themselves. Thus, a constructivist history of SAARC would insist against liberal intergovernmentalism in particular, while simultaneously taking into consideration the necessary ‘feedback effects’ of previous institutional decisions on the identities and interests of member states’ governments and societies.

It is important to contextualize, at this moment, that SAARC is home to 400 million of the world’s poor, whereby 30% of the region’s population live below the poverty line. To add to this dynamic, SAARC countries have low rankings on the human development index (HDI), with Sri Lanka ranking highest in 2011: Sri Lanka (97), the Maldives (109), India (134), Bhutan (141), Pakistan (145), Bangladesh (146), and Nepal (157).18 The HDI ranking is based on achievements in life expectancy, education, and real income, and as such, low HDI rankings reflect poorly on vital indicators in the region (Dawn, 2010). Although SAARC covers 21% of the world’s population, and roughly 4% of its total land area, the regime can account for just 0.25% of the world’s GNP. The per capita GNP of all the member countries combined is less than 350 US dollars (Mazhar et al., 2011). The inequality of the members means that unlike the EU or ASEAN, focus on the regime remains on developing its infrastructure and institutions, over and above the ongoing struggles, contestations, and discourses on how to build South Asia over the years. As such, we must reject an imagery of actors, including governments, as calculating machines who always know what they want, and are completely certain about the future: when one accounts the individual country’s inevitable focus on their own stakes, and their own interests.

TO SAARC OR NOT TO SAARC

In this essay, I have situated SAARC within a Prisoner’s Dilemma interaction. The reasoning behind this is based on three underlying assumptions: the first is that the gains from defection are highest for non-Indian, smaller states since they would not be strictly better off from participating in SAARC trading partnerships. Thus in order to increase the success of SAARC as a regime, these interests must be realigned adequately. The second is a lack of both a substantial ‘pivotal’ power and the appreciation of each state’s sovereignty, which goes against Taneja’s (2001) preconditions of preferential partnerships. There exists therein a

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18Of 187 countries: 2011 UNDP International Human Development Indicators
real need to realign the balance of power in this dynamic, and assign to a functional power relative expectations of cooperation and behavior. The third is an inability to fulfill necessary preconditions regarding successful regional cooperation: whether these being Khosla’s (2007) (a rejection to war, a mutual dispute system, a shared culture and common threat) Ayoob’s (1985) (ideological and political affinity) or Bandara and Yu’s (2001) (geographical advantages, trade complementarity, lack of political tension, and differentiated economic structures). Therefore, member states are acclimatized to defect and the regional entity as a whole is captive to ongoing disputes, and are unable to absorb the full transformative effects expected of regional integration.

As a result, this ‘dream of unity’ may have a long way to go.

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