

Regional Integration for the Persian Gulf: Lessons from the European Union

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Regional Integration has become one of the widely debated phenomena in International Relations, with the emergence of the European Union and the development of other regional organizations. International Relations traditionally assume the international system to be anarchic. However, there is a tendency since the latter part of the twentieth century for regions to integrate. As countries are involved in the process successfully, regional integration has become one of significant components of the literature on International Relations.

Primarily, regional integration was defined as “a process whereby political actors in distinct national settings persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities to a new center whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over the pre-existing national states” (Hass, 1958:16). The concept of “Regional Cohesion” identifies regional integration as a combination of several components. For instance, it is discussed whether integration refers to a process or end of a product (Laursen, 2008:4). As viewed by Karl Deutsch, “integration is an attainment within a territory as well as Amalgamation” (1957:5). In the general sense, “regional integration refers to unification of nation states into a larger whole. On the one hand regional integration can be described as a dynamic process that entails a country’s willingness to share or unify into a larger whole” (Soomer, 2003:1). The majority of scholars have argued that classical theories of integration had seen the integration as a process which requires many efforts to reformulate integration theory. Therefore the conceptual framework of regional integration has become one of the debatable discourses to be examined in International Relations.

In recent years, the search for peace and prosperity has become the significant feature in experiments of regional integration. Therefore, the trend towards regional integration looks at a variety of purposes and secure common interests in the fields of economic, political and security.

This paper examines the possibility of applying the European Union (EU) experience in the integration of the Persian Gulf region considering that the EU is the most successful institutional experience of regional integration and indeed is the accomplishment of the regional integration (Feng and Gaspare, 2003). The European integration is positive and still at the forefront of regional integration experiences. In that regard, this paper questions: (a) what lessons can be learned by the Persian Gulf region from the European Union experience? (b) What are the peculiarities and prospects of the integration process in the European Union? and (c) What are the conditions necessary for developing such a process of integration in the Persian Gulf region?

The paper responds to these questions from a comparative perspective to draw lessons from the EU experience for a beneficial integration in the scope of the Persian Gulf. Furthermore, the paper will attempt to identify the potentials for the Persian Gulf region to consider lessons of the EU model. In the event of this positive scenario, the study identifies a set of transferable lessons from the EU to achieve a beneficial integration in Persian Gulf region with the support of the conceptual discourse of regional integration. The concept of gradual elimination of various forms of discrimination between national economies is applied in the study to identify the means and methods for moving the Persian Gulf region from theory of integration to a practice, considering the EU experiences. As an archival based study, this paper includes several scholarly exercises in order to suggest a better regional integration in Persian Gulf region.

The paper concludes with a discussion regarding the potential of the Persian Gulf region to adopt itself into a regional integration process such as the EU. The study highlights some trigger factors that helped in creating the EU, such as motivation, convergence of interests and institutional balance of power which would help the Persian Gulf region to achieve a successful integration. Further, this paper suggest that the principle of authoritative allocation of resources and values should be applied in the integration process in the Persian Gulf region as integration is less about theory and more about practice. The study concludes that the Persian Gulf region has the potential of adopting a regional integration model such as the EU without in any way demanding to be replicated.

References

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Reading the Child in Postcolonial Sri Lankan Literature

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Background to the study

Many contemporary theorists in the fields of childhood studies and psychoanalysis have researched on the relationship between children and literature. Jacqueline Rose, Karín Lesnik-Oberstein, Erica Burman, Carolyn Steedman, and Valerie Walkerdine are among the major contributors to the field. They challenge the general assumption that the child is *true* or *self-evident*, and argue that childhood is a *construction*. This does not mean that the 'reality' of childhood is nonsensically denied, but thought of as shifting, historical, and psychoanalytical. Informed by their views, this study analyses the fiction of three Sri Lankan writers in English: Shyam Selvadurai, Carl Muller, and Punyakante Wijenaikē. The main texts for discussion are Shyam Selvadurai's *Funny Boy* (1994), Carl Muller's *The Jam fruit Tree* (1993), *Yakada Yaka* (1994), and *Once Upon a Tender Time* (1995), and Punyakante Wijenaikē's *Amulet* (1994). Situating these authors in the post-independence Sri Lankan literary scene, I argue that their works negotiate notions of