

## BOOK REVIEW

**Sarad Kumar Yadav**

*Research Scholar*

*Department of Political Science*

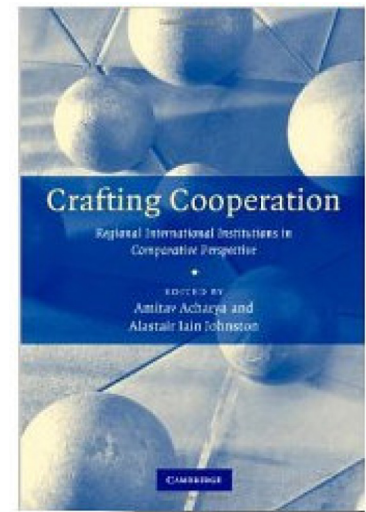
*University of Delhi*

### **Crafting Cooperation: Regional International Institutions in Comparative Perspectives.**

Amitav Acharya and Alastair Iain Johnston

#### **Citation**

<http://www.cambridge.org/us/academic/subjects/politics-international-relations/international-relations-and-international-organisations/crafting-cooperation-regional-international-institutions-comparative-perspective>



## Review

This book provides the comparative study of regional international organization in terms of institutional design and the nature of cooperation. The book highlights the similarities and differences in the efficacy across regional institution and relationship between institutional design and the nature of cooperation. The book starts with the central question, “Why does it appear that different forms of institutions develop in different regions of the world, where States generally face similar kind of difficulties in cooperation?” In this regard, the authors of the book found two puzzles, the first one being how to describe and explain any variation in the design of regional security and economic institutions across world. The second one being is the design of institution leads to the variation in nature of cooperation? Acharya and Johnston in their very introductory chapter provided an overview of literature on regional institution and argued that with the exception of European institution, regional institution have occupied a small and insignificant part of the overall theoretical literature on international institution. The Authors criticized the RDII (Rational Design of International Institution) project of the study of design features of international institution. The theory does not ask why the institution looks and acts differently. In designing an institution, the Actors are mainly concerned with maximizing the material gain, rather than legitimacy, but it's not the case, actors choose their specific design features with utility and efficacy in mind, but they are also influenced by their moral consideration. This project neglects the study of non-western regional institutions. Therefore, the authors suggested that the

effectiveness of third world regional institution must be judged by employing different yardsticks, given the differences in their political, social and economic conditions. Thus, this book goes beyond the RDII framework and provides the comparative study of regional institutions.

According to Acharya and Johnston, Institutional design includes the formal and informal rules and organizational features that constitute the institution and that function as either the constraint on actor choice or the bare bones of the social environment within which agents interact or both. Author examined that the institutional design affected by the different type of the independent variables like type of cooperation problem, number of actors, ideology and identity, systemic and sub systemic power distribution, domestic politics, extra-regional institution and non-state actors and history. The Author identified five major features of institutional design; membership refers mainly to the number of actors allowed to participate. Scope refers to the range of issues that the institution is designed to handle .the scope could be narrow, broad, intrusive, or non intrusive. Formal rules refer to the explicit and legalized regulations governing how decisions are made? Norms refer to formal and informal ideology of institution. Finally a mandate refers to overall purpose of the institution.

Yuen Foong Khong and Helen Nesadurai in their chapter on Southeast Asia, said that a group of small and middle power played a role in the creation and maintenance of many of these institutions, in particular the AEC, AFTA, and the APT. they Argued that Institutional design in ASEAN remains devoted to state sovereignty as initial preferences, which result in a high

degree of autonomy for national governments in determining domestic policy. In the case of AFTA/ASEAN, The need for collective clout to “hang together” plays an important role in maintaining the regional organization and in the case of ARF identity uncertainty is the important factor behind the emergence of institution. ‘ASEAN Way’ has remained a constant feature of ASEAN institutions. ASEAN Way derives from Southeast Asian cultural practices and sustains the domestic autonomy of ruling regimes. The principle of non-interference and search for accommodation and consensus that has traditionally guided decision-making and the behavior in the association-ASEAN way has remained a constant feature of the institution.

Dominguez, in his chapter international cooperation in Latin America, argued that the international regional institution in Americas did not have a crafting moment or a master architect. The idea of international regionalism was a response to security problems in the immediate aftermath of Spanish American independence in the 1820s. He said that the Ideational legacy, differentiated subsystem within the Americas and the relative autonomy of the continent from the global international system is the key source of institution building in Latin America. In 1980s region wide economic depression, the breakdown of authoritarian regimes and effects of the end of the cold war made changes in the international institution of the Americas and explain their characteristics. Dominguez also discussed historical rules of Inter-American institutions and said that Latin America’s first key innovation in international law was *uti possidetis juris* which turned existing administrative boundaries into international frontier after the departure of colonial powers. This rule addressed the security dilemma. The second rule, the defense of state sovereignty and international non-intervention in the domestic affairs of state. This rule became part of a Latin American crusade to contain the United States. Third rule was a commitment to activist intermediation preceding the formal establishment of the OAS. This rule evolved in South America since the 1880s as one means to sustain the peace. The fourth intuitionist rule was the laxity in implementation, signifying a gap between formal pledges and behavior. Laxity gave way to automaticity. The likelihood of regional and sub regional institutional effectiveness responds strongly to prior and independent structural and normative changes in the international system. INGO played significant role in assisting Latin America’s democratization. Changes in the preferences of actors affected how they used the institution and how they complied with their decisions. The presence of distributional problems affects the likelihood of success of international economic institution. Dominguez argued that Latin Americans have been international rule innovators. They are not just price taker. They develop the doctrine of *uti possidetis juris* a century before its spread throughout Africa,

Asia, and the former Soviet Union. They pioneered the defense of “hard shell” notion of sovereign and the non-intervention.

Jeffrey Herbst discussed the crafting regional cooperation in Africa. He argued that Regional cooperation is largely initiated in Africa to promote the security and interest of rulers, rather than the more generally assumed goals of increasing the size of economic markets, ensuring the right of citizens. African leaders have always looked to the international system as a source of domestic power. Type of cooperation is fail in Africa actually does challenge the sovereignty. African leaders cooperate when it is in interest. African leaders are extremely enthusiastic about particular type of regional cooperation, especially those that highlight sovereignty, help secure national leaders and ask little in return. These desired lead to a particular style of regional cooperation that is effective in promoting domestic interest but not necessarily a normative improvement over other paths.

In the case of NATO, Schimmelfenning explored the variation in institutional design and cooperation in post-cold war NATO. He described and categorized the elements of institutional design in NATO partnership and the new NATO in comparison to the old, cold war NATO. The fact that post cold war NATO has changed and differentiated its institutional design and exhibited highly different degrees of members state cooperation. He argued that the constant features of NATO’s institutional design (liberal ideology, high member state control, and low agent autonomy) can be attributed to the liberal identity of the transatlantic community and the hegemonic structure of its membership. He explained, these three NATOs are differ in terms of membership, scope, formal rules: control and flexibility, norms, mandate, agent autonomy,. In the post-COLD war era, NATO has become more flexible and developed an open-ended and process-oriented partnership with the countries of central and Eastern Europe. The more flexible design institutional design of POST-COLD war NATO, which allows for varying degrees of cooperation NATO members and partners. thus variation and changes in the institutional design of POST-COLD WAR NATO, the more open diffuse, and process oriented partnership and more flexible. The new NATO can be plausibly understood as functional responses to the challenges of the POST-COLD war era. In the case of institutional design and international cooperation in NATO, the identity of euro-Atlantic community that shapes both the norms of NATO (institutional design) and the extent of policy convergence (cooperation).

Barnett and Solingen’s chapter dealt with Arab League; they argued that Arab league has achieved a relatively low level of cooperation. They suggested several reasons for the relatively cooperation. First, the league of Arab states was the first regional organization established after 1945. Second, its members share a common language, identity and culture. Third, and there is

arguable shared threat in Israel and continuing suspicions of the west. Fourth, there have been expectations of joint gains from trade and commerce. They identified Identity and domestic politics is important factor for weak cooperation among Arab states and an institutional design. The domestic survival of ruling coalition is always a critical consideration in the design of the Arab league. They identified the two key variables Arabism and statist interests are critical to explain the design of the Arab league and its low level of cooperation. During the 1980s the decline of identity and the rise of international market forces, international institution pressures, new domestic coalition reflecting among other demand for foreign investment and financial assistance, and growing interest in regional cooperation outside of the Arab league as key determinants of regional institution. These changes gave the new possibilities of regional cooperation in Arab.

Jeffrey Checkel discussed the European Union experience. The author's central focus is that how institutional design affects the degree of cooperation in European regional organizations. In this regard Checkel discussed the three generic mechanism, strategic calculation, role playing and normative suasion that

can provide casual micro-foundation to arguments connecting regional institution and cooperation. Persuasion. domestic variables, the embeddedness of agents in pre-existing national norms and values play a central role in determining the degree of cooperation in European institution. European institutions in many ways –their design, effectiveness, domestic impact are different from their counterparts in other world region.

So we saw that the book dealt with different individual regional organization. Each author tried to explain that how institutional designing of organization affect the nature of cooperation and how independent variables plays an important role to determining the institutional design and nature of cooperation. This book is very useful for international organization students. The book suggested many important questions for future research like why do different features of institutions satisfy leaders with the same concerns with domestic politics. Furthermore, why do countries with different domestic political environments want the same features of regional institutions? The book represents a major contribution to theories of international institutions.