CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION: TOWARDS A THEORY OF REGIONAL COOPERATION IN SOUTH ASIA.

Theoretical discussions are not common among South Asian scholars in international relations. Not surprisingly, the "bulk of the South Asian literature on regional cooperation has failed to consciously gear itself to work within a relatively crystallized theoretical framework or to generate such a framework on the basis of local experience" (Misra, 1986, p. 134). The discussions in the previous chapters involved a review of the ideas and issues associated with regional integration in general and South Asian regional cooperation in particular. In this chapter, I propose to explore the major theoretical issues surrounding regional cooperation in South Asia. Apart from serving as a heuristic device, a theory must also be change-oriented, a point on which many liberal theories of international relations fail. There is also a kind of slipperiness to interpretations and prescriptions. For example, Rasul B. Rais says, "neither the supranational precepts of the classical integration theory nor the slice-cutting effects of functionalism on state sovereignty help us investigate the preliminary stages of community formation in South Asia" (1988, p. 60). But this does not deter him from
advocating a liberal approach of a regional nature. He says that "Only the liberalization of intraregional trade by establishing preferential trading arrangements will facilitate the development of an economic community in the South Asian region" (p. 69). The preferential trade arrangement idea which is currently gaining some ground in the SAARC forums, however, seems to be not easy to accomplish given Pakistan's tendency to see economic matters through the prism of politics. There are similar gaps in respect of the idea of South Asian Development Fund and the SAARC visa scheme.

The South Asian region barring perhaps Nepal and Bhutan has largely been incorporated into the global capitalist economy initially through colonialism and since independence through foreign assistance, loans and trade. Development in the region has neither been independent nor appropriate in that the majority of the people of the region have been overlooked in the development process. This type of subsidiary development which links into and serves development elsewhere both in the agricultural and industrial sector needs to be changed. The urban sector has benefited at the expense of the agricultural sector and the larger farmers were the net beneficiaries in the type of development that the region has witnessed. All these have led to the squeezing out of the smaller land owners and consequent landlessness and marginalization of the poor, especially the tribals dependent on natural resources as well as
women. The capital intensive model of industrialization also added to problems in a region known for its abundance of labour. This model of development has exerted pressure on the natural resources leading to stress on the environment. So any explanation of regional cooperation as well as the prescription of suitable strategies should recognize that regional cooperation in South Asia is intimately connected with the realities of development because each approach to cooperation carries with it a model of development. Western theories of regional integration as well as Marxist theories are based on a similar model of development in that both recognize the superiority of the industrial society. The Western model has already been tried in the Third World without much success. Therefore, it is necessary to search for alternative modes of regional cooperation based on alternative strategies of development.

Partha Ghosh(1989) who takes a largely Marxist approach to international relations, following the influence by the dominant strategic theorists of the region, believes that if the relations between US and USSR improve, the relations between states will improve in South Asia which seems to be not true as events did show later. In fact, it is a contradiction of the original Marxist thesis which is based on the salience of the imperatives of domestic structures. Ghosh also fails to identify the nascent role of the counter elites of the region who tend to speak for a people-based approach to
regional cooperation. Chaitanya Mishra (1986) locates the basis of South Asian cooperation at the three levels of systemic, regional subsystemic and domestic realms. It is possible to agree with him that the early attempts at regional integration were thwarted by the narrow bourgeois nationalism of the late forties and the strength of the neocolonial ties. Muni and Muni (1984) tend to combine elements of functionalism with neorealist hegemonic stability doctrine in that they emphasize on the one hand the need to progress from low politics to issues of high politics according to functional requirements, but nonetheless present a view of a region dominated by strategic and extraregional factors, factors which impede the progress of the functional logic. Agrawal, Khatri, Baral, Khanal, Misra, Samina Ahmad and a majority of the economists tend to take the neofunctional position. The excessive normativism of many of the commentators have led them to prescriptions rather than explanations (Misra, 1986, p.135). There is an undue emphasis on the superiority of the Indian electoral system especially in Muni (1984) and Baral (1988). Further, "while extraregional forces have primarily been framed in terms of the security-defence domain, the importance of the state structure has only been hinted at in the literature". (Misra, 1986, p.135). Misra takes Muni and Muni to task for their adhocism in dealing with regional cooperation. Interestingly, Muni and Muni (1984) had criticised regional integration theory for its
adhocism, especially its refusal to accommodate political and strategic variables.

Misra (1986) says that the developed world sets the pace for regional cooperation in South Asia, within the limits set by it. Its support will be forthcoming proportionate to the extent to which the nascent venture of cooperation can uphold its interests. But in the traditional Marxist fashion, Mishra concludes that regional cooperation in South Asia, in order to be real, has to pass through the stages of capitalism and finally to socialism. In his scheme the present phase of regional cooperation corresponds to the feudal stage of stagnation. Arrival of full blooded capitalism will create the dynamic forces for cooperation. Seen thus the liberalization of the economies of the region which we have witnessed in recent years is a significant step on the road to regional cooperation. And, socialism will change the quality of the forces in favour of the underclass (p.148), a scheme which does not recognize the inherent project of domination enshrined in the project of modernity. Bhargava (1986) sees many classes in operation at the level of the bourgeoisie. Countries like Sri Lanka are known for their state capitalism, recently in collusion with foreign investment. He says that "The search for objective conditions for regionalism becomes complicated not so much because of disparate internal structures, but from manifestations of psychological and philosophical subservience to capitalist imperialist..."
Interestingly, the accommodation of perceptual factors in his interpretation is more progressive. He sees the hope of regional cooperation emerging only with the rising to the occasion of the Indian bourgeoisie (p.171) which nonetheless makes his approach embedded in the same fascination with technology as the liberator, perhaps with a nationalist tinge.

Explaining cooperation in South Asia cannot be undertaken by following the purely liberal logic. First of all, the background conditions that liberal theory speaks of fail to take into consideration the structural aspects of the domestic order. South Asia has neither the type of interdependence nor of interpenetration that Europe had. Likewise, European integration was not undertaken before many of the basic needs of the people were met. We have also seen the failure of many Third World integration schemes which tried the liberal prescriptions. What is needed is a critical approach which accommodates the relevance of many variables in the explanation of regional cooperation in South Asia. Such an approach, by virtue of its post-modernist concerns, will not accept the validity of any metaexplanation. Instead, it recognizes the fact that there are plural explanations each sometimes with a voice worthy of patient hearing. The deficiencies of classical Marxism as a theory of international relations are well documented. Classical Marxist explanations believed that the domestic social factors, primarily the structure
and relations of production alone, determined foreign policy and that with the emergence of a global socialist order, there will not be any impediments to cooperation. This monocausal explanation of international relations at a time when the emancipatory project has broadened to embrace categories like women, ethnic groups, caste groups, members of the fourth world and so on, is certainly inadequate although the Marxist contribution to the emancipatory project remains the dominant point of departure for critical theory. Each of these theories has one or other deficiency, but put together in a comprehensive way, some semblance of meaning could be attributed to the processes under consideration. Here, the critical perspective that I am adopting does not intend to advocate postmodernist nihilism which is built upon a kind of pessimism. I believe that critical theory should not renounce its normative concerns for social change.

But the experimental and essentially incremental process is more suitable to South Asian states if we accept that regional cooperation can be conducted among governments alone. Parochial nationalism has undermined the possibility of engendering any salience to economic matters. All these mean that the route to regional cooperation in South Asia has to begin with the political. The political cannot improve under the present conditions and under the current political configurations. In his analysis of the early attempts at
regional cooperation in Asia. Singh (1966, p. 232), said: "The fundamental obstacle to regional integration in Asia, however, is political in nature. Every other obstacle will give way, given the political volition to cooperate with each other. The success of an intergovernmental organization depends to a large extent on the political environment in which it has its life and being". This means that the slow, fragmented and perhaps disjointed nature of SAARC activities and progress is due to these factors. In the Third World, the primacy of politics means an interpretation by ruling elites of their policies purely in terms of the survival of their regimes. For survival, a regional economic logic, even if beneficial to the state, is of very little direct help making it a subsidiary consideration to the vital issue of regime survival (Muni and Muni, 1984, p. 4). It is said that regionalism in the Third World should be studied from the angle of the political, in terms of the strategic and in terms of the external power role (Muni and Muni, 1984, p. 5). While it is possible to agree that strategic incongruity is an impediment to cooperation in South Asia, it is difficult to appreciate the role of external powers as an independent variable. A conception of security in terms of military etc., does not provide Muni and Muni (1984) any non-systemic views of explaining the phenomenon of cooperation. Although Muni and Muni are aware of the domestic factors, they do not seem to give them the required importance. Their claim that the principal objective of the Colombo Plan, Regional
Cooperation for Development (Iran, Turkey and Pakistan) and the ASEAN etc., was to generate support for the Western strategic perspective actually overlooks the support that the UN regional commissions gave to the development of the regional organizations. Further, pushing the Cold War logic as the important variable actually will look anachronistic in an era when the ephemeral nature of Cold War has become clear. Rao (1985) also dismisses any possibility of functional cooperative schemes in South Asia where political tensions are high. Here, he says that the economic factors are the dependent variable. The raison de'être of SAARC seems to be conflict reduction through economic cooperation and the slow pace is in tune with the realities of the region. It is unrealistic to attempt more binding forms of regional cooperation in South Asia under the present circumstances. It is important to note that most Third World integrative schemes which began with much fanfare collapsed and the dream of even more binding forms of cooperation in Europe is becoming difficult following the differences which arose primarily between the UK and Germany on the pace of integration and the functioning of the European Exchange Rate Mechanism which is alleged to have led to the devaluation of the sterling beyond the permitted level. The model that SAARC has adopted seems to me to be a governmentally engineered neofunctionalist model which is a contradiction in terms in the first place. In such a scenario, the expected spillover accruing from the performance of the supposedly low
political functional tasks are effectively prevented from spilling over due to the government's obstructive role. So it is a governmentally engineered model in which governments themselves tend to be having a vested interest in blocking the expected spillover.

The strategists who dominate discussions on South Asia will say that real cooperation can take place only if there is a kind of strategic consensus or a balance which is respected by each of the nations. Some of them would argue that in such a strategic theme, India should be given the position of the leading actor while others favour a more balanced form of regional posture with India acting as a generous hegemon. It is true in terms of realpolitik to say that without the active participation and leadership of India, SAARC cannot succeed.

In the writings of many neo-Marxist commentators there is a tendency to substitute the term class with domination and the Gramscian term of hegemony which means that we are now dealing with a plurality of forms of oppression which takes the teeth out of class by making it one among the many. Milliband, however, says that class analysis has the internal dynamic to accommodate other categories like domination. The dominant class in South Asian societies is certainly not homogeneous which is true of any class. This may be reflected in anything like interbureaucratic rivalry, interpolitical tussles
and civil servant versus political masters, centre-state problem etc. But the dominant classes are nonetheless agreed on certain other themes like suppression of popular movements. It may be noted that the dominant classes who are always conservative always reject reforms that are progressive. The people are ideologically and politically socialized into the existing social system. A vast array of persons and institutions including the newspapers, television, radio, cinema, theatre, parties, associations, lobbies, schools, intellectuals and other manipulators of consent, and of course state, are there to challenge and defeat the counter-hegemonic forces. The civil society has been statized in South Asia.

There is a strong resemblance between problem-solving theory developed by Burton, Kelman and others and the neofunctionalist and similar explanations of the process of integration in South Asia. Like other types of technical deterministic forms of enquiry, their ability to explain and prescribe is severely limited in the Third World where rationalist explanations based on microeconomic theory refuse to consider the issues of status, culture, structure, prestige and political and national differences. A critical theory unlike problem-solving theory does not take existing power relations for granted but calls for a critical understanding which also serves as a guide to strategic action for bringing about an alternative order. Explaining the problematique of a critical theory, Cox (1981) says, "Critical theory
allows for a normative choice in favour of a social and political order different from the prevailing order, but it limits the range of choice to alternative orders which are feasible transformations of the existing world. A principal objective of critical theory, therefore, is to clarify this range of possible alternatives. Critical theory thus contains an element of utopianism in the sense that it can represent a coherent picture of an alternative order, but its utopianism is constrained by its comprehension of historical processes. It must reject improbable alternatives just as it rejects the permanency of the existing order" (p.130). Cox says that a critical sociology of world politics must explore the possibility that actors are capable of moving beyond conventional strategies for preserving national security and international order. His call for a broadening of our enquiry beyond international relations theory in order to explain the linkages between domestic social forces state structures and principles of world politics is worthy of consideration. Following Gramsci whom Cox has employed in the context of international relations, it may be said that the central principles of international politics serve the most powerful economic and political interests in the dominant states and also provoke the major forms of opposition and conflict. Transposed within the South Asian context, the dominant interests of the Indian ruling classes are crucial for consideration.
But a deployment of classical realism for an emancipatory work has been spelled out in some detail by Ashley (1987). Cox said that historical materialism can correct realism by viewing conflict as a dialectical process which is developmental, and the dominance and dependence among classes, states and geographical areas can be included in the horizontal dimension of rivalry. Realism believes that states enjoy considerable autonomy from domestic forces which contravenes the idea that class structure has effect on the behaviour of a state. Cox (1981) calls for an analysis of the connections between power in production, power in the state and power in international relations. This method tries to locate the dialectical possibilities so that the agenda of change could be crystallized.

It is true that some of the counter elites have provided ideas of a nature that will demand international action to extricate the Third World from its incorporation into the World economic division of labour and promote peripheral development, which is welcome. From a post-modernist framework, one has to say that domination is entailed in the project of modernity itself. One of the drawbacks of the demand for a new international economic order was the absence of a clear view of an alternative world order which is capable of striking a departure from the capitalist type. Also, there is the attraction by some states for adopting a unilateral advancement plan, and the core, with its
methods of cooption. can exploit the same. This was clear in the Rio summit, where, instead of taking up the leadership of the South and exploiting the apparent differences among the industrialized countries, countries like India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Brazil were involved in presenting their personal case for a better deal (India Today, June 30, 1992). I find it possible to accept the case for a post-Marxist critical theory best amplified in the writings of British sociologist Anthony Giddens. He has called for a fusion of elements of Marxism with elements of political realism, a point which is endorsed by many commentators (cf. Brucan 1978 pp. 13; Ashley 1987, Linklater, 1990). The relation between the state and the social classes is more complex in post-colonial societies as Hamza Alavi says. He elaborates:

The cultural proposition I wish to emphasize is that the state in the post-colonial society is not the instrument of a single class. It is relatively autonomous and it mediates the competing interests of the three propertied classes -- the metropolitan bourgeoisie, the indigenous bourgeoisie and the landed classes -- while at the same time acting on behalf of all of them in order to preserve the social order in which their interests are embedded, namely, the institution of private property and the capitalist mode as the dominant mode of production (1973, p. 148).

This, he says, is reflected in Pakistan where the control of the state is not exclusively in the hands of any of the three classes. The influence and power of one is offset by the other two. Similar balancing off of one another was cited in the context of India by
Bardhan (1984). But the notion of state, in spite of being relatively autonomous, acting as the broker among various interests, actually has a resemblance with the original position of the liberals who also see the state as the arena of clashing interests although the class character of the interests is not treated.

Marxism did not see the contradiction between capitalist mode of production and the exploitation of nature. Marxism also failed to foresee the increasing capacity of the state to resort to repression in states, the development of instruments of physical violence and the struggle among nation-states all of which make the claim of Marxism as the sole claimant to emancipatory politics doubtful. Again the emancipatory project has broadened so that a transition from capitalism to socialism alone will not ensure emancipation. The problem of power, order and emancipation has to be addressed. This requires a move beyond the concerns of Marxism and realism, a project that Linklater (1990) has undertaken with considerable success.

One of the problems for any regional cooperation theory is to analyse the spatial and class dimensions. While, the dependency theorists have been particularly helpful in providing the spatial dimension of international hierarchization within the global economy basing on exchange as the dominant distinguishing characteristic of capitalism, the classical Marxists have
taken the position that class within societies based on production relations is more important. One way out is to adopt both class and the international space. The agenda of a critical theory is to simultaneously take on class as well as to engage in a philosophy of praxis which seeks to disentangle national societies from the global capitalist economy. It is here that ideas of autarchic models of production and goals of self-reliance come in. Any project based on human emancipation on a global scale whether it is capitalism or socialist capitalism is suspect as they both carry elements of suppression of culturally divergent social spaces and practices as well as the creation of numerous forms of domination.

The presumably systemic explanation that Wallerstein seeks to provide refuses to accommodate the particularities of various regions beyond his tripartite scheme of core, periphery and semi-periphery. It may be better therefore to conclude that more than the global creation of peripheries, it is the global marginalization of the nonmetropolitan peoples which should receive greater attention. Thus the scenario that emerges may be the creation of ties among fractions of the dominant classes all over the world. The traditional Marxist position would say that the analysis should start with parts of the global economy and then go on to establish the interactions rather than handing down a macro-paradigm to fit all countries. The World Systemic theorists take the obverse view. And our understanding
puts the marginalized people as the targets of emancipatory politics rather than geographical space.

Closely allied to this is the notion of nationalism. I am in full agreement with Nairn who talked about the uneven development of capitalism leading to the periphery taking up cudgels against the core in a spirit of nationalism which implicitly acknowledged the categorization of nationalism as a form of reaction against oppression. Therefore, I argue that sustainable regional cooperation can come only by weakening the state apparatuses in each of the states of the region. National recomposition may be a step in the right direction. Perhaps a weakened central government in India and the neighbouring Pakistan with effective decentralization to the lower levels will provide an answer to demands for independence. It is clear that the overarching nationalism created following the departure of the British from the subcontinent cannot be sustained for long within the current framework. Third World Marxists like Arrighi Emmanuel are ardent supporters of nationalism. Our approach, however, does not see nationalism as inherently good although it may be necessary as an immediate step. Further, nationalism itself may be the product of modernization or industrialization as Gellner argues. The problem with traditional Marxist explanations like those of Ghosh (1989), Misra, Sobhan and Bhargava is that they have not addressed themselves to the question of the basic
needs of the people of the region of South Asia. Through empowering the people in each of the states of South Asia and vivifying the civil society, it is possible to construct a scheme of cooperation based on symmetry. But there are powerful forces impeding this. As I had stated earlier, there is nothing intrinsic to regional cooperation. Cooperation is meaningful as far as it helps the people of the region. Such a thing cannot take place in conditions of existing political and economic social configurations and any regional cooperation scheme founded upon this reality will not have any positive effect on the great majority of the masses.

So, in structural terms, there is very little scope for meaningful regional cooperation in South Asia if we take current economic and political practices as the starting point. It may look vain to insist that cooperation will come as a result of the informal relations struck by the leaders meeting once a year. The nature of the state structures should be seen as the primary cause for the failure of SAARC to take root. But the creation of an organization where the leaders can meet together may provide in future some sort of an institutionlized procedure for tackling tensions among the countries of the region. This however, is a contribution, although a minimal and negative one at that.
Certain sections of the ruling elite in India are guided by a vision for India which tends to subordinate the neighbours to serve the imperial interest of India. This is an inhibiting factor as we had mentioned earlier. Although the state was constructed with a corporatist ideology, acting as the guardian of the interests of all the people living in each of the states of South Asia, it actually failed to live up to it, leading to disjunction between the ruling classes and those who were left out of the benefits of economic development. It has been argued that in Europe the triumph of a common industrial culture and the popular acquiescence thanks to the surplus extraction from the colonies actually could mystify this disjunction (Wignarajah and Hussain 1989, p.14). In the Third World dependence on international capital has led not to a spread effect but a squeezing of the population following adverse balance of payments. The ruling elites who held a nationalist position of an overarching nature are unable to sustain it any longer following assertion of ethnic and regional identities. Many of these assertions are indirect demands for economic means. Instead of satisfying them, the elites are engaged in a repression of them, or by courting external actors, sought to bolster their position, or by invoking the foreign bogey tried to divert attention from pressing domestic issues of social justice. It is possible to agree with the suggestion that the fundamental solution to these is to decentralize economic and political power in an effective way, a point which
the ruling elites do not want to concede, leading to invocation of foreign bogey and accentuation of tensions (p.15).

The adoption of alternative strategies of development may be necessary to tackle the pressing problems of the region. A basic needs strategy may warrant a non-Rostowian model of development. While basic needs idea is also advocated by conflict theorists like Burton associated with the World Society perspective, their inadequacy stems from their failure to give due consideration to alternative models of development, a theme which some peace theorists like Galtung helped develop considerably.

"At a more fundamental level, regional cooperation could be seen as cooperation among the people of South Asian states. This would involve structural changes in state structures to make them more responsive to the aspirations of the people... regimes more responsive to the aspirations of their own people were also more responsive to the aims and requirements of regional cooperation" (Wignarajah, 1989, p.17). In an overview of the situation in South Asia, Wignaraja and Hussain diagnose three interrelated crises in South Asia. First relates to the polarization of society along particularistic lines. Second is the centralized structures which have given inadequate representation to peripheries and the increasing use of force and
militarization. Third is the collapse of the model of development in that poverty, inequality, regional disparities and ecological problems continue (p. 18). Their conclusion is tinged with a post-modernist emancipatory vision which vindicates partly the crux of this essay. They say:

Sustainable regional cooperation must be based on a restructuring of the ideological, political and economic systems in each of the countries of South Asia. At the level of ideology, the deep-rooted civilizational consciousness of tolerance, humanism and freedom of belief must be tapped. At the level of politics, what is needed is a decentralization of power, and the emergence of local institutions through which the individual, whatever his social status, can participate in the decisions that affect his immediate economic, cultural and ecological environment. At the level of economics a development strategy which combines self-reliance, equity and a balance between man, nature and growth is required. Essential for sustaining such a balance is the reconstruction of a social consciousness in which greed is replaced by a concern for others, and the current fetish for commodities is replaced by a more ascetic attitude towards goods. It is when a more rational and humane system emerges in South Asian states, that the promise and potential of regional cooperation can be fulfilled. So long as the internal crisis of the state persists in these countries, regional cooperation can only be a pious declaration for the governments of South Asia and a distant dream for its peoples (p. 23-24).

This a structural view which does not have the stamp of orthodox Marxism yet whole heartedly renounces liberal strategies. The emancipatory project is couched in Gandhian and Post-modernist terms. The very domination inherent in the project of modernity is highlighted. Like peace, cooperation has a positive and a negative side to it. Negative side would stress on absence of conflict in the political or economic sense. But a positive vision
of cooperation has to be structural and long lasting. Its foundations are to be based on solid building blocks. The above approach which recognizes autonomy, participation and symmetric development is to be seen as representing a positive view of regional cooperation.

It may be noted that in SAARC, national priorities rather than regional considerations continue to determine regional cooperation efforts. The issue of regional cooperation is directly related to the extent to which the states of the region are prepared to change the objective conditions obtaining in each of these states. The absence of internal integration in many of the states of the region also does not augur well for effective regional cooperation. As Haas says: "Countries which are poorly integrated internally make poor partners in a regional integration process because of the reluctance of the leaders to further undermine their control at home" (1971, p.15). Game theoretic analyses of the South Asian situation are unlikely to be meaningful because they are concerned more with behavioural aspects than causative ones. The initial motivations of the South Asian players cannot be accounted for in game theory. The preference orderings of South Asian actors cannot be done on the basis of explanations of rational choice which have a liberal rootedness, but will have to grapple with the total situation in South Asia which has structural and predispositional components. Any undue stress on one
aspect to the neglect of the other will only lead to faulty analyses of the South Asian situation.

The bourgeoisie of the main countries of the region are not mature enough to collaborate among themselves in a bid to suppress the popular aspirations of the people either of a material or a cultural kind. Yet, it is logical to assume that class interests would have brought the ruling elites together. Instead, the lack of monolithic character of the indigenous bourgeoisie coupled with the state structures growing at the expense of the civil society has led to a situation in which the very survival of the state and the ruling elites has been made dependent on the furtherance of animosities. A broadening of the social base of the state can go a long way in laying the foundations of a meaningful regional cooperation. For, then, cooperation will have a social meaning.

Although there are counter elites in all the states with a promotive attitude towards regional cooperation, they are either a numerical minority or are not powerful enough to influence governmental thinking. Although there are fissures within the nation state in each of the countries of the region, the policy of the governments has been founded upon extreme nationalism, a situation in which functional and technocratic logic of gradual spill over and automaticity cannot succeed. In the case of South Asia, the credit for at least initiating the
discussion of regional cooperation should lie with
President Zia-ur-Rahman. The facilitating role of such
factors are not accounted for in neofunctionalist theory.
Our theoretical position does not rule out the role of
agency in the creation of regional integration schemes.
But at the same time we are aware of the structural
constraints which reduce to nought such seemingly well
meaning moves on the part of political leaders.

The portents for regional cooperation in the region
are bad as long as the outstanding issues are left
unaddressed. The official Indian position in SAARC has
been that controversial areas need not deter cooperation
in other areas. This functional logic, as we have seen,
does not seem to work in South Asia. The Kashmir issue
remains the major onus. If India takes a long-term
perspective towards the Kashmir issue and calculates the
costs of maintaining the present security arrangements,
it is only in the interest of the country to take the
initiative in resolving the Kashmir issue. Further,
defence is eating up substantial part of expenditure in
India as well as Pakistan and a solution to the problem
will go a long way in making available the peace dividend
for more useful purposes.

Following the deprivation of US aid over the nuclear
issue, Pakistan is desperately trying to come to terms
with the aftermath. Her suggestion for a five nation
South Asian summit with China, US and Russia also
participating has not been accepted by India which tends to take a globalist position to the whole issue. At a press conference in London in June 1992, the Pakistani Prime Minister remarked that "the nuclear problem will only be solved when Kashmir is solved. Even if we solve the nuclear issue, the tensions will not be resolved" and added that it was the Kashmir problem which fuelled the increased defence build up (Financial Times London, June 18, 1992).

Because the economy and the polity of the states are aligned to the Western countries, there has been added cultural gap between the rulers and the ruled. Apart from economic power and cultural distance, the ruling classes use military power as a means of domination and control. This necessitates the development of the role of NGOs to empower the rural people and to create the hospitable conditions for an alternative development. While the left provides an alternative in the theoretical sense, it is rooted in its own tensions in the first place and its model of development has the potential to create alienating conditions for the people. Again, class divisions are not so homogenous in South Asia where class intersects often with categories like caste, community and ethnic boundary. The importance of regional alliances cannot be downplayed. "Regional alliances in South Asia are particularly important because the governments of these countries often use the threat of border clashes
and inter-regional wars to justify vast defence expenditures which not only divert vast funds from development, but also divert the attention of the people from the real issues of poverty and injustice to false feelings of patriotism. Alliances between progressive forces in the region could expose such moves" (Sayid Khan and Bhasin, 1986, p.14). Unfortunately, there have been few South Asian scholars who have ventured into explanations of a structural kind where the relations between the state, its constituent social classes and the stratified world economic system are taken into account. The pure concentration on strategic relations between monolithic actors which is characteristic of the status quoist classical approaches have dominated explanations of regional cooperation in South Asia. Realist approaches by holding up the autonomy of the political refuse to address issues of social justice.

The emancipatory cognitive interest this thesis claims to show derives from a desire to alter the distribution of power and wealth in favour of the poor in the region of South Asia. I think that any real explanation of regional cooperation should address the issues of power, order and inequality. So an economically determinist approach is insufficient. We had earlier hinted at the advantage of adopting the theory of structuration of sociologist Giddens in view of its fusion of elements of Marxism with elements of realism. The adaptation of this approach to regional cooperation
projects the need for an emancipatory politics which deals directly with both the domestic and international dimensions of the states' use of violence against its own people and against neighbouring peoples. So there is need to see the state in South Asia as a central problem in international relations.

While analysis of World Systems has inherent strengths in that it pretends to be a macro-sociology, the states are central institutions in South Asia with their relatively autonomous bureaucratic-military culture and this fact cannot be fully explained using Wallerstein's framework. This is also a point of criticism by Skokpol (1977). The state especially in countries like India has a dual anchorage. It represents largely the interests of the dominant economic forces, but has also the lever to act on behalf of the noneconomic forces if need be although it seldom does. Any analysis of the prospects of regional cooperation in South Asia should bring into the fore the geopolitical competition and the rise of new centres of military power in the region. This is one of the reasons why strategic issues were examined by us in the dissertation in some detail. Strategic competition cannot be reduced to economic logic. One of the factors that we saw in the socialist systems was the consolidation of the state which is true of many Third World states also. The growth of the power of the state especially the rise of instruments of state violence in recent periods is ignored by Wallerstein as
well as the traditional Marxist scholars. It may be noted that Poulantas' analysis of the class character of the state enabled him to see state as the mediator between the fractions of capitalists who clashed over goals. The relative autonomy of the state accruing from its capacity as mediator enabled it to contain any threat to capitalism's survival posed by any faction and thus enabled it to maintain at least a semblance of cohesion. Further, it went about arresting atomistic trends within civil society by spreading symbols of national unity. It also created divisions within the working classes (Poulantas, 1975). The state uses measures of legitimation to create an overarching national political will, a national sort of ideology to make capitalism succeed. This ideology has been created in South Asia based on fears of security. Because, the constituting parts of the region of South Asia are states, some of the realist formulations need to be reckoned with. States whether socialist or classist, have certain modes of behaviour which are inherent to them.

Functionalist strategies are inadequate in South Asian context because of their commitment to the capitalist mode of social organization which ignores issues of equity and social justice. The more recent form of interdependence idea - the concept of regimes - actually demonstrates continuity with the older traditions (Linklater, 1990, p.149). Game theoretic analyses of the South Asian situation (eg. Chatterji, 1969) are unlikely to
be meaningful because they are concerned more with behavioural aspects than causative. The initial motivations of the South Asian players cannot be accounted for in game theory. The preference orderings of South Asian actors cannot be done on the basis of explanations of rational choice which have a liberal rootedness, but will have to grapple with the total situation in South Asia which has structural and predispositional components. Any undue stress on one aspect to the neglect of the other will only lead to faulty analyses of the South Asian situation.

As more people in civil societies influence and participate in cross border relationships in South Asia, change often takes place through that interaction on many levels at once rather than mainly through a linear series of government actions and responses. Further, the resolution of conflict and the solution of the complex problems between the South Asian countries are more likely if they are dealt with in the context of an overall political relationship than if they are addressed as simple technical problems requiring technical solutions. But the marriage among the civil societies in south Asia is unlikely because it has also the potential to pull down the current growth in state power. Perceptions that grow out of action and reaction with limited communication may be correct or inaccurate, but they begin to determine how parties deal with each other.
It is true that even parties locked into a hostile relationship may cooperate implicitly to avoid self-destruction.

Apart from differences in the levels of development and also perhaps size, the highly political nature of what is supposedly low political makes technical determinism inoperable in South Asia. One reason why in South Asia regional cooperation is difficult is that the state is seen as the agent of change. State is a problem in the region and its rigid structure, imperatives, domination by the bureaucracy and lack of legitimacy actually inhibit real cooperation in the region. This is not to dismiss the value of the Western theories many of which have provided us with an insight into the behavioural characteristics of the process of conflict and cooperation including the psychological components. But their causative and prescriptive dimensions are either not spelled out clearly or are couched in a language which excludes critical issues and the question of change.

This means, there is nothing intrinsically good about regional cooperation. Groom and Heraclides (1985) have shown that instead of integration, in some countries, the opposite may be seen as more developmental. Reduction of dependence on the metropolis is a component of reduction of all types of dependence. There are also possibilities of dependence on a regional
hegemon which can also lead to disintegration (Haas, 1971). Independence, autonomy, decentralization etc., are equally important values whose preservation demands that we renounce comprehensive strategies of integration and aim at cooperation with the aim of reducing national dependence.

There are three strategies for regional cooperation. The first is the liberal model based on free trade and a trickle down theory of development. This strategy has been found unsuitable in Third World settings. The second which is more progressive lays emphasis on regional production with a view to achieving self-reliance and symmetric gains from integration. This strategy makes regional cooperation a partial or sectoral one and a controlled process, controlled by the member states. But the model of development adopted continues to be similar. The third strategy which is based on a rejection of the liberal model of development looks upon people as the actors in regional cooperation. This strategy demands radical changes within each of the states of South Asia. The praxeology of this strategy would seek to locate social movements of a counter hegemonic nature committed to decentralization of social and economic power, ecological preservation, basic needs fulfillment and empowerment of the people. The model that we have proposed for regional cooperation would build on the ideas of Axline, Mytelka and Vaitos, but would go a step further and advocate a strategy which aims to make
regional cooperation attuned to the needs of the people, to alternative strategies of development. In the existing circumstances, especially given the present trends in the policies of government of India as well as the other states, such a model will look unrealistic. If we take the current political configurations as our starting point, a useful strategy is to begin with sectoral programming which, given its capacity not to injure national sentiments, is more likely to succeed in Third World situations. This approach of sectoral programming is largely the proclaimed thrust of SAARC programmes. Because of the salience of political and nationalist factors and, as a result, also strategic factors, the possibility of such low-key regional cooperation is hard to come by in South Asia. The recent economic policies of the national governments in South Asia do not augur well for self-reliant modes of regional cooperation. So, the idea of regional cooperation in South Asia remains more as an ideal and the forum provides an opportunity for the elites to meet occasionally which incidently also serves an important function of diffusing tensions in the region.