



Administrative Diplomacy: A New Framework for Regional Cooperation in Public Administration Development in Asia

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Abstract

Background: In recent decades, the landscape of international relations has expanded beyond traditional diplomacy to include new forms of cooperation in governance and public sector development. While economic and political diplomacy are well established, the concept of administrative diplomacy remains underexplored, particularly in the Asian context.

Purpose: This paper introduces administrative diplomacy as a new framework for fostering regional cooperation in public administration development.

Definition / Conceptualization: Administrative diplomacy is defined as the systematic interaction among public administrations across borders aimed at capacity building, knowledge sharing, and policy innovation.

Method/Approach: Drawing upon theories of governance networks and institutional cooperation, the paper positions administrative diplomacy as a complementary layer to political and economic integration. The study reviews the challenges of public administration in Asia, such as institutional diversity, capacity gaps, and uneven governance quality, and identifies the potential role of regional cooperation in addressing these challenges. Building on comparative experiences from ASEAN, SAARC, BRICS, SCO, ECO, and other regional bodies, the paper proposes a four-pillar framework of administrative diplomacy: (1) knowledge sharing and policy learning, (2) capacity building and training, (3) institutional networking, and (4) collaborative problem-solving.

Findings: Through illustrative cases, the paper demonstrates how administrative diplomacy can contribute to trust-building, sustainable development, and resilience against transnational crises such as pandemics and climate change.

Conclusion: Finally, the paper offers policy recommendations for governments, regional organizations, and academic institutions to institutionalize administrative diplomacy as a driver of good governance in Asia. By conceptualizing administrative diplomacy and outlining a practical framework, this study aims to enrich the discourse on comparative public administration and highlight Asia's potential to pioneer innovative forms of regional cooperation.

Keywords

Administrative Diplomacy, Public Administration, Regional Cooperation, Governance, Asia.

Introduction

In the twenty-first century, diplomacy is no longer confined to the sphere of high politics, foreign ministries, or international negotiations. The interconnectedness of today's world has expanded the scope of diplomacy to encompass economic, cultural, educational, and increasingly, administrative dimensions. While the notions of economic diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, and public diplomacy have been studied extensively, the role of *administrative diplomacy* remains relatively underexplored, despite its growing relevance for governance and sustainable development.

Administrative diplomacy can be broadly defined as the cross-border engagement of public administrations and bureaucratic institutions with the purpose of building institutional capacities, sharing knowledge, transferring policy innovations, and creating collaborative mechanisms for solving common governance challenges. Unlike traditional diplomacy, which is primarily political and state-centric, administrative diplomacy operates through networks of public servants, training institutes, regulatory agencies, and civil service commissions. Its focus is less on power politics and more on cooperation, mutual learning, and institutional trust-building.

Asia, as the world's most populous and diverse continent, provides a particularly fertile ground for exploring this concept. The region is home to advanced economies with highly developed bureaucratic systems, such as China, Japan, South Korea, and Singapore, as well as emerging economies still striving to modernize their public administration. Regional challenges such as climate change, migration, health crises, and digital transformation transcend national borders and require administrative cooperation that complements political agreements. However, mechanisms for systematic administrative collaboration in Asia remain fragmented and ad hoc.

Existing regional organizations such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and broadly BRICS, provide platforms for political and economic dialogue, but they often lack robust frameworks for administrative cooperation. Unlike the European Union, where administrative integration has supported policy harmonization and capacity building, Asian regionalism has been more cautious and fragmented. This creates both a gap and an opportunity: the absence of an established paradigm for administrative diplomacy in Asia leaves room for innovation and the creation of new frameworks tailored to the region's unique diversity and needs.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further underscored the urgency of such cooperation. Governments across Asia faced similar challenges—ranging from healthcare system overloads to supply chain disruptions—yet responses were largely national and uncoordinated. Stronger administrative networks could have facilitated the sharing of lessons, coordination of responses, and pooling of resources. Likewise, issues such as climate adaptation, digital governance, and disaster management demand transnational administrative mechanisms that move beyond political declarations.

This paper argues that administrative diplomacy provides a conceptual and practical framework for enhancing regional cooperation in public administration development across Asia. By institutionalizing mechanisms of administrative dialogue, capacity-building exchanges, and joint problem-solving, Asian countries can build mutual trust and resilience while advancing governance reforms aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Comprehensive Development Goals (CDGs).

The contribution of this study is threefold. First, it introduces the concept of administrative diplomacy as a distinct form of diplomacy that bridges governance and international cooperation. Second, it situates the concept within the Asian context, highlighting the specific challenges and opportunities of the region. Third, it proposes a new framework built on four pillars—knowledge sharing and policy learning, capacity building and training, institutional networking, and collaborative problem-solving—that can guide policymakers, practitioners, and academics in advancing administrative diplomacy.

The paper is structured as follows. Section Two provides the conceptual foundations of administrative diplomacy and differentiates it from related forms of diplomacy. Section Three discusses the regional context of Asia, outlining governance challenges and opportunities for collaboration. Section Four presents the proposed framework for administrative diplomacy, followed by illustrative cases in Section Five. Section Six highlights expected outcomes and policy implications, and Section Seven concludes with recommendations for future research and practice.

By articulating administrative diplomacy as both a theoretical construct and a practical policy tool, this study seeks to enrich the discourse on comparative public administration and open new avenues for regional cooperation in Asia.

1. Defining Administrative Diplomacy

Diplomacy has traditionally been associated with the conduct of international relations through state actors and foreign ministries. However, as globalization has deepened and governance challenges have become increasingly transnational, new dimensions of diplomacy have emerged. *Administrative diplomacy* can be defined as the systematic, cross-border engagement of public administrations aimed at exchanging knowledge, building institutional capacities, transferring best practices, and fostering collaborative solutions to shared problems.

Unlike traditional diplomacy, which emphasizes negotiations and political interests, administrative diplomacy operates through bureaucratic channels, public sector institutions, and networks of civil servants. Its purpose is not to advance power politics but to strengthen governance systems, improve administrative effectiveness, and build mutual trust between states (Kettl, 2015).

1-1. Related Concepts and Distinctions

Administrative diplomacy is closely related to, but distinct from, several other forms of diplomacy:

- **Traditional diplomacy:** Focused on interstate relations, treaties, and political negotiations, usually through ministries of foreign affairs (Berridge, 2022).
- **Public diplomacy:** Seeks to influence foreign publics and promote soft power through cultural and educational exchange (Cull, 2009).
- **Economic diplomacy:** Concerned with trade, investment, and economic cooperation (Okano-Heijmans, 2013).
- **Knowledge diplomacy / Education diplomacy:** Involves the use of academic and training cooperation to build relationships (Knight, 2019).

Administrative diplomacy differs in that its primary actors are public administrators and civil service institutions, rather than diplomats or political leaders. It emphasizes practical cooperation, policy learning, and administrative reforms.

1-2. Theoretical Underpinnings

The study of administrative diplomacy can be situated within several theoretical perspectives:

1. **Institutional Theory:** Institutions are not isolated but embedded in broader environments where they adapt and learn from others. Regional

cooperation among bureaucracies can be seen as institutional isomorphism, where organizations borrow practices to enhance legitimacy and efficiency (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

2. **Governance Networks:** Modern governance is increasingly characterized by interdependence and collaboration across borders. Administrative diplomacy can be interpreted as the creation of transnational governance networks among public administrations (Rhodes, 1997).
3. **Policy Transfer and Policy Learning:** Administrative diplomacy facilitates the transfer of policies and practices from one context to another, not through coercion, but through voluntary learning, benchmarking, and adaptation (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000).
4. **Regionalism and International Public Administration:** Comparative studies on regional integration highlight the role of bureaucratic cooperation in building functional regimes, such as the European Union's administrative capacity-building mechanisms (Olsen, 2003). Asia, however, has fewer institutionalized mechanisms, which makes administrative diplomacy a potential driver of future regionalism.

1-3. Toward a Conceptual Model

Bringing these perspectives together, administrative diplomacy can be conceptualized as a hybrid form of international cooperation that:

- Operates primarily through bureaucracies and public administrations.
- Relies on institutional learning and policy transfer.
- Builds cross-border governance networks.
- Strengthens state capacity and legitimacy in the international arena.

This conceptualization positions administrative diplomacy as an innovative addition to the broader typology of diplomacy studies, filling a gap between traditional diplomacy and transnational governance.

2. Regional Context of Asia

2-1. Public Administration Challenges in Asia

Asia is characterized by its extraordinary diversity in political systems, economic capacities, cultural traditions, and stages of administrative development. Advanced economies such as China, Japan, Singapore, and South Korea are often cited as models of bureaucratic efficiency and innovation, while emerging and developing countries in South and Central Asia face persistent challenges related to capacity deficits, corruption, and

uneven institutional development. This wide disparity creates both obstacles and opportunities for regional cooperation in public administration.

Transnational challenges—climate change, disaster management, pandemics, digital transformation, migration, and regional security—require solutions that transcend national boundaries. However, most Asian cooperation mechanisms remain politically driven, with limited institutionalized frameworks for administrative exchange and learning. This gap highlights the potential of *administrative diplomacy* as a complementary approach to political and economic integration.

2-2. Regional Organizations and Opportunities for Administrative Cooperation

Some regional organizations in Asia provide platforms that could host or strengthen administrative diplomacy:

- **Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN):** ASEAN has developed a modest but growing agenda for administrative cooperation, including the ASEAN Cooperation on Civil Service Matters (ACCSM), which promotes exchange programs, capacity building, and public sector reforms across member states (Berman, 2011).
- **South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC):** Although hampered by political tensions, SAARC provides an institutional framework for South Asian countries to collaborate on development issues, including governance and administrative training. However, its initiatives remain underutilized due to interstate rivalries.
- **Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO):** Initially security-focused, SCO has gradually expanded into economic, cultural, and administrative cooperation. It has promoted exchange among civil service academies and public administration institutions, though still at an early stage.
- **BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa):** Although not limited to Asia, BRICS provides an important platform for emerging economies—particularly China and India—to collaborate on governance modernization, digital public services, and administrative reform (Stuenkel, 2015).
- **Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO)** is a regional intergovernmental organization founded in 1985 by Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey, later expanded to include ten member states from West, Central, and South Asia. Its primary objective is to promote sustainable economic development, trade facilitation, transport connectivity, and regional integration (ECO Secretariat, 2023).

- **Asian Development Bank (ADB) and UNESCAP:** Both international organizations, though not regional treaties per se, play an important role in supporting governance capacity-building and administrative reforms across Asian states.

2-3. Gaps and Potential for Administrative Diplomacy

Despite these mechanisms, administrative cooperation in Asia remains fragmented and ad hoc:

- Programs often lack continuity and institutional depth.
- Exchange of civil servants or policy professionals is limited compared to Europe or North America.
- Political tensions (e.g., between India and Pakistan) frequently inhibit broader regional cooperation.

Nevertheless, these same conditions underline the importance of administrative diplomacy: while political disputes may stall high-level agreements, bureaucratic collaboration can advance more quietly and pragmatically. By focusing on technical issues—such as digital governance, regulatory harmonization, disaster preparedness, and public health administration—administrative diplomacy can build trust incrementally, thereby contributing to long-term regional stability.

2-4. Toward a Regional Administrative Space in Asia

Drawing from comparative experiences such as the European Union’s development of a “European Administrative Space” (Olsen, 2003), Asia has the potential to cultivate its own model of cross-border bureaucratic cooperation. Such a model would not aim for uniformity, given Asia’s diversity, but rather for interoperability, policy learning, and mutual support. Administrative diplomacy can thus serve as a building block for a more resilient and cooperative Asian governance order.

3. A Proposed Framework of Administrative Diplomacy in Asia

3-1. Pillars of Administrative Diplomacy

Building upon literature and comparative experiences, administrative diplomacy in Asia can be conceptualized around **four interrelated pillars**:

1. Knowledge Sharing and Policy Learning

- Exchange of best practices in areas such as social capital, welfare, citizen Satisfaction, digital governance, anti-corruption, public service delivery, and performance management.

- Joint research projects, comparative policy studies, and benchmarking exercises.

2. **Capacity Building and Training**

- Regional training programs for civil servants hosted by national academies and schools of government.
- Fellowship schemes, study visits, and secondments among member states.
- Development of shared curricula on governance challenges relevant to Asia.

3. **Institutional Networking**

- Formation of transnational networks of public administration institutions, civil service commissions, and ministries of administrative reform.
- Partnerships between regional centers of excellence and public policy schools.
- Role of professional and academic associations (e.g., Asian Association for Public Administration, national public administration societies) in facilitating academic–practitioner dialogue.

4. **Collaborative Problem-Solving**

- Establishing working groups on cross-border issues such as disaster risk management, climate adaptation, health crises, and digital transformation.
- Use of regional platforms to design collective responses and pilot projects.
- Institutionalizing joint task forces and shared databases for evidence-based policymaking.

3-2. **Key Processes in Administrative Diplomacy**

Administrative diplomacy is not a one-time intervention but an ongoing process that involves:

- **Dialogue:** Regular forums, conferences, and workshops among senior administrators and scholars to create shared understanding.
- **Exchange:** Structured programs for civil servant mobility, peer learning, and study missions.
- **Standardization:** Development of soft standards and guidelines for governance reforms (e.g., ethics codes, service quality frameworks).

- **Institutionalization:** Gradual embedding of cooperative practices into permanent regional structures.

These processes allow cooperation to move from ad hoc initiatives to sustainable institutional practices.

3-3. Barriers and Challenges

Despite its potential, administrative diplomacy in Asia faces several barriers:

- **Political Sensitivities:** Regional rivalries and lack of trust can restrict cooperation, especially in South and Central Asia.
- **Institutional Diversity:** Wide differences in administrative systems make harmonization difficult.
- **Resource Constraints:** Many developing countries lack the financial and human capital to engage in sustained exchange programs.
- **Fragmentation of Regional Organizations:** Overlapping mandates among ASEAN, SAARC, SCO, BRICS, and others often result in duplication rather than synergy.
- **Weak Knowledge Infrastructure:** Limited comparative research and underdeveloped regional databases restrict policy learning.

Recognizing these obstacles is critical for designing realistic frameworks of cooperation.

3-4. Role of Academic and Professional Associations

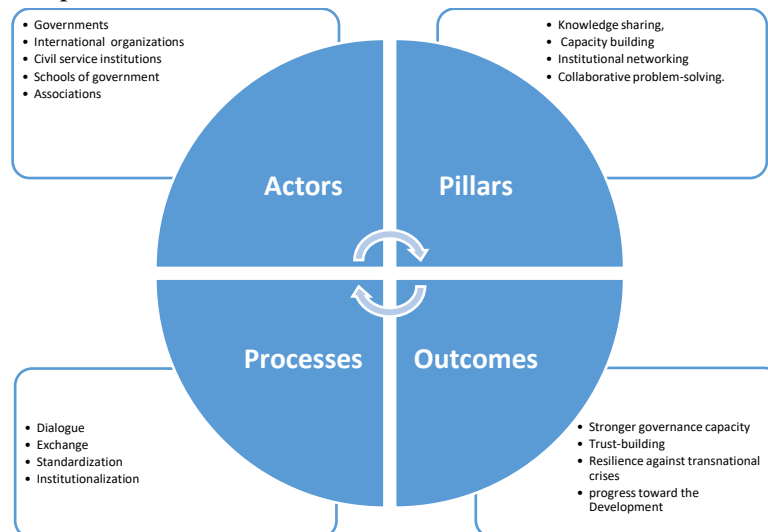
A unique advantage in fostering administrative diplomacy lies in the involvement of academic and professional associations of public administration. For example:

- The **Asian Association for Public Administration (AAPA)** has already initiated conferences and publications connecting scholars and practitioners.
- National societies of public administration—such as the Chinese Public Administration Society, Indian Institute of Public Administration, Korean Association for Public Administration, and Iran Association for Public Administration—can act as bridges between governments and academia.
- Collaborative projects between these associations can facilitate comparative research, regional training programs, and policy dialogues, ensuring that administrative diplomacy is grounded not only in political will but also in scientific evidence and professional expertise (Hou et al., 2011).

3-5. Toward a Practical Framework

Integrating the above elements, the proposed framework of administrative diplomacy in Asia can be summarized as:

- **Actors:** Governments, civil service institutions, schools of government, international organizations, and academic/professional associations.
- **Pillars:** Knowledge sharing, capacity building, institutional networking, collaborative problem-solving.
- **Processes:** Dialogue, exchange, standardization, institutionalization.
- **Outcomes:** Stronger governance capacity, trust-building, resilience against transnational crises, and progress toward the Comprehensive Development Goals.



This framework positions administrative diplomacy not only as a theoretical construction but also as a practical roadmap for enhancing regional cooperation in Asia.

4. Case Illustrations of Administrative Diplomacy

4-1. ASEAN Cooperation on Civil Service Matters (ACCSM)

One of the most prominent examples of administrative diplomacy in Asia is the ASEAN Cooperation on Civil Service Matters (ACCSM). Established in 1981, ACCSM aims to promote the exchange of experiences and best practices among ASEAN member states on issues such as civil service reforms, capacity building, and service delivery.

Key achievements include:

- Development of training modules on leadership, integrity, and public sector innovation.
- Civil servant exchange and study visit programs.
- Collaborative initiatives on e-governance and digital transformation (Quah, 2010).

ACCSM demonstrates that even in politically diverse regions, practical cooperation among public administrations can advance mutual learning and strengthen state capacity.

4-2. The Asian Association for Public Administration (AAPA)

The AAPA, founded in 2010, provides a regional academic–professional platform for dialogue on public administration. Although not an intergovernmental body, it plays an indirect but important role in administrative diplomacy by:

- Organizing annual conferences bringing together scholars, practitioners, and policymakers from across Asia.
- Publishing comparative research on governance and administrative reforms.
- Facilitating networks between national public administration societies, such as those in China, Korea, and India.

Through its activities, AAPA has contributed to building trust, advancing academic knowledge, and providing an evidence base for administrative reforms across the region.

4-3. Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

The SCO, originally focused on security, has gradually expanded its agenda to include administrative and developmental cooperation. In recent years, SCO members have initiated dialogues among civil service academies, particularly between China, Russia, and Central and West Asian states, to exchange training models and curricula. Although still limited in scope, these initiatives represent an evolving form of administrative diplomacy in Eurasia (Aris, 2011).

4-4. BRICS Governance Cooperation

Within BRICS, administrative diplomacy has emerged through joint working groups on governance modernization and digital government. For instance, the BRICS Working Group on Public Administration has facilitated policy

dialogues on digital transformation, anti-corruption, and public service innovation (Stuenkel, 2015). While not Asia-exclusive, BRICS provides India and China with a platform to exchange governance practices with other emerging powers, strengthening their administrative capacities and international legitimacy.

4-5. UNPAN, UNDP, and ADB Initiatives in Asia

Beyond intergovernmental bodies, international organizations such as the United Nations Public Administration Network (UNPAN), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have supported regional initiatives for administrative reform. Examples include:

- UNPAN Online Training Centre delivers courses and features training material on various topics in public administration.
- UNDP's regional program for capacity building in e-governance.
- ADB's governance and public sector management initiatives that fund training programs, policy research, and institutional strengthening in multiple Asian countries (UNDP, 2014).

Although these are externally driven, they often act as catalysts for regional networking and policy learning.

4-6. Lessons Learned from Case Illustrations

From these cases, several lessons emerge for advancing administrative diplomacy in Asia:

1. **Institutional anchoring is essential.** Regional cooperation mechanisms must be embedded in formal structures (e.g., ACCSM within ASEAN) to ensure continuity.
2. **Academic and professional associations complement intergovernmental efforts.** Organizations like AAPA can sustain dialogue and knowledge exchange even when political cooperation stalls.
3. **Flexibility and pragmatism matter.** In politically sensitive regions, focusing on technical issues such as digital governance or disaster management helps bypass political tensions.
4. **External partners can act as enablers.** International organizations provide funding, expertise, and legitimacy that strengthen regional administrative initiatives.

5. Expected Outcomes and Policy Recommendations

5-1. Expected Outcomes of Administrative Diplomacy

If effectively institutionalized, administrative diplomacy in Asia could yield several important outcomes:

1. Enhanced Governance Capacity

- Governments would gain access to a wider pool of administrative knowledge, reform models, and best practices.
- Civil servants would benefit from training opportunities and cross-border exposure, leading to higher professionalism.

2. Trust-Building Among States

- By focusing on technical cooperation rather than political disputes, administrative diplomacy can create channels of communication and build trust between states, even in politically tense environments.

3. Resilience to Transnational Crises

- Shared platforms for public administration cooperation would enable faster and more coordinated responses to global and regional crises such as pandemics, climate change, natural disasters, and cyber threats.

4. Progress Toward Comprehensive Development Goals (CDG)

- Administrative diplomacy can accelerate achievement of CDGs by fostering inclusive governance, reducing institutional inequalities, and promoting collaborative and comprehensive solutions.

5. Strengthening Regional Identity

- Just as the European Administrative Space helped shape a shared European governance culture, an Asian approach to administrative diplomacy could foster a sense of regional identity rooted in governance cooperation.

5-2. Policy Recommendations

To move administrative diplomacy from concept to practice, several policy measures are recommended:

For National Governments:

- Establish bilateral and multilateral Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) on civil service exchange and administrative training.

- Create national focal points or units within ministries of administrative reform or public service commissions dedicated to regional cooperation.
- Support the mobility of civil servants by funding exchange programs, joint fellowships, and professional networks.

For Regional Organizations (ASEAN, SAARC, SCO, BRICS, etc.):

- Institutionalize regional forums on public administration to meet regularly and set shared agendas.
- Develop regional databases and knowledge platforms for policy learning and best practice exchange.
- Launch joint task forces on transnational challenges such as disaster management, digital governance, and health administration.
- Provide funding mechanisms for collaborative pilot projects that demonstrate the value of administrative diplomacy.

For Academic and Professional Associations:

- Expand the role of organizations such as the Asian Association for Public Administration (AAPA) to act as intermediaries between governments and research communities.
- Promote comparative research projects on administrative reforms in Asia.
- Develop regional curricula and joint training programs in partnership with schools of government and civil service academies.
- Encourage peer-reviewed publications and knowledge dissemination focused on administrative diplomacy.

For International Organizations (UNPAN, UNDP, ADB, etc.):

- Provide technical assistance and funding for administrative diplomacy initiatives.
- Facilitate triangular cooperation by linking Asian countries with global best practices.
- Act as neutral conveners to overcome political barriers and foster regional dialogue.

5-3. Strategic Implications

Implementing administrative diplomacy will not only improve the technical effectiveness of governance but also reshape regional cooperation in Asia by adding a bureaucratic and institutional dimension. This complements

political and economic diplomacy, helping Asia develop a more comprehensive and resilient governance architecture.

6. Conclusion and Future Research Directions

6-1. Conclusion

This paper has introduced the concept of administrative diplomacy as an innovative construct and framework for enhancing regional cooperation in public administration across Asia. The idea of administrative diplomacy in Asia is not entirely new. Historically, vast parts of Asia—from China to India and Persia—shared interconnected bureaucratic traditions and administrative practices that facilitated governance, trade, and cultural exchange across empires. For instance, during the Seljuk and Timurid periods, administrative institutions drew upon Persian bureaucratic models, which were later adopted and localized across Central and South Asia (Lambton, 1980). Similarly, the Mughal Empire in India institutionalized Persian as the administrative and court language, creating a shared medium of bureaucratic interaction across diverse regions (Richards, 1993).

China also exerted a profound influence through its Confucian bureaucratic system, merit-based civil service examinations, and centralized governance practices, many of which inspired neighboring states such as Korea, Vietnam, and even administrative reforms in Central Asia (Fairbank & Goldman, 2006). These overlapping legacies of Persian, Islamic, and Confucian administrative traditions demonstrate that Asia historically experienced forms of administrative convergence that enabled diplomacy, cultural exchange, and governance cooperation long before modern concepts of regional integration emerged.

This historical continuity provides an important foundation for conceptualizing a modern Asian Administrative Space, where administrative diplomacy could build upon both shared traditions and contemporary institutional innovations.

Unlike traditional diplomacy, which primarily focuses on political negotiations, administrative diplomacy operates through bureaucracies, civil service institutions, and professional associations to achieve shared governance objectives.

The analysis highlighted:

1. **The conceptual foundations** of administrative diplomacy, drawing on institutional theory, governance networks, and policy transfer mechanisms.

2. **The regional context of Asia**, including governance disparities, the role of organizations such as ASEAN, SAARC, SCO, ECO, and BRICS, and the opportunities and challenges for cross-border administrative cooperation.
3. **A practical framework**, built around four pillars—knowledge sharing, capacity building, institutional networking, and collaborative problem-solving—supported by processes such as dialogue, exchange, standardization, and institutionalization.
4. **Case illustrations**, including ACCSM, AAPA, SCO initiatives, BRICS governance cooperation, and international development partners, demonstrating the feasibility and impact of administrative diplomacy.
5. **Expected outcomes and policy recommendations**, emphasizing enhanced governance capacity, trust-building, resilience to transnational crises, and progress toward comprehensive Development Goals (CDGs).

Collectively, these findings suggest that administrative diplomacy can act as a complementary mechanism to political and economic integration in Asia, fostering mutual learning, strengthening state capacity, and enabling coordinated responses to complex regional challenges. By institutionalizing administrative networks and engaging professional associations, countries can achieve sustainable improvements in public administration while building regional trust and identity.

6-2. Future Research Directions

Although this paper provides a conceptual and practical framework, several avenues for future research remain:

- **Empirical evaluation of administrative diplomacy initiatives:** Comparative studies measuring the impact of civil servant exchanges, joint training programs, and policy transfers on governance performance.
- **Digital and e-governance dimensions:** Investigating how digital platforms and data-sharing mechanisms can enhance administrative diplomacy, particularly for cross-border crisis management.
- **Role of subnational governments:** Exploring how provincial, municipal, or local governments can participate in administrative diplomacy, complementing national-level cooperation.

- **Institutional design and sustainability:** Identifying optimal structures for regional administrative networks to ensure continuity, adaptability, and political neutrality.

- **Cross-regional learning:** Examining lessons from other regions, such as the European Administrative Space, to inform Asia-specific approaches while considering political, cultural, and economic diversity.

By addressing these research gaps, scholars and practitioners can refine administrative diplomacy as a tool for enhancing governance capacity, resilience, and cooperation in Asia and beyond.

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