

## **Patterning the Power Structure among ECO-Countries**

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### **Abstract**

Increasing the geopolitical power and dignity of countries have brought authority, impact and will provide more benefits and extend their authority in the economic, cultural, social, and political dimensions on regional, continental and global scales. Majority of countries are looking for extended plans to increase their power, and so the measurement of national power requires calculating and evaluating components and variables in different aspects. Evaluating these factors reveal the level of national power and the determination of the condition of countries in different facets of local, regional and trans-regional levels. One of the key factors in determining the national power level of countries is to calculate their geopolitical weight. If the countries in a geographical region define their activities in the form of a regional organization, their relations and their type of actions in the regional structure will be based on their geopolitical weight. Therefore, according to the influence of power on the process of interactions, investigation of power levels and its extended changes in different geographic regions, based on the indicators and components of national power, can determine the regional power structure and the role of each Members.

ECO is a regional economic organization which is established by three countries of Iran, Pakistan and Turkey in 1964. In 1993, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan joined ECO. According to its statute, ECO will work to improve the conditions for sustainable economic development of member countries to gradually remove barriers to trade in the region. ECO's main headquarter is in Tehran, Iran. close proximity and the common history and cultures of the members and their dispersion among the four geopolitical regions including the Persian Gulf, the Caucasus, Central Asia, and the Mediterranean geopolitical region, finding the results for strategic design and expansion of geopolitical territory can be obtained which is a top priority for balancing forces in the world. The purpose of this study is to find the structure of power model among member of ECO. So the question of this research is that what is the pattern of power among the members of ECO? Accordingly, the hypothesis was designed thusly: The power pattern among the member states

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of the ECO organization is unipolar and multipolar by monotonous weight and dispersed structure.

To measure the pattern of power in the studied countries, a matrix estimation model has been used to determine geopolitical weight based on six indicators including political, cultural, social, economic, territorial, military and scientific. Then, according to the quarantine method, ECO member states are classified in different levels. Finally, by considering six fundamental parameters and a review of 127 variables, national power assessments have been conducted to determine the level of power of ECO countries and, accordingly, their geopolitical weight has been obtained. Data collection method is based on library studies (schematics, table, statistical data using) and it is also a combination of sources such as books, journals, quarterly newspapers, Internet resources, statistics, information on internal and foreign sites, and the like. All data and statistics are related to 2015 and 2016.

Based on the results, ECO member countries are generally identified at four levels of power as follows:

1. Power with regional range, including: Iran and Turkey;
2. Subordinate Regional powers, including: Kazakhstan and Pakistan;
3. Countries with national range power: Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan;
4. Weakened national powers that do not have full control over the national level: Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan;

According to the results for the countries in the power hierarchy, the power of the organization is as follows: The difference in Turkey's privileges with Iran is due to the fact that Turkey has gained more concessions in furthering its social-cultural factor. The two countries of Pakistan and Kazakhstan are on the same level as Pakistan's rivalry with India and Russia's needs for the Kazakhstan is of note. Third-ranking countries in power, such as Afghanistan have gained significant development in many indexes. The recession of Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, is because of being confined to land, and their products' similarity to each other and their neighbors.

Afghanistan, despite all its problems, has developed a lot more than the others, because of its strong political, economic, and international relations with Iran, the UN assistance and the adopted policies by the United States to stabilize the security of its bases and influence and domination which can be considered as a pressure on that country. At the end of the pyramid power, there are Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan which the main reason of their backwardness and weakness of their power is due to being surrounded by neighbors with major challenges and climatic conditions. After reviewing the position and countries geopolitical weight based on six factors, it was found that Iran scored 2,831 points in terms of national strength among the 10 member states of the eco-ranking organization which made it as a second

between 10 countries. Also, the impact of Iran on the investigated neighbors' countries is not evaluated in an acceptable level. However, these countries are considered to be traditional territories of Iran. In stark contrast, Turkey is linguistically common with some of these countries, but is still more influential in comparison with Iran, and this effect of Turkey and the lack of influence of Iran among the eco countries are due to their national strength and geopolitical weight.

**Keywords:** Economy, ECO Organization, Geopolitical Weight, Politics, Power Model.