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Pax Integrationem?

Exploring Institutional Responses to Regional Security Challenges
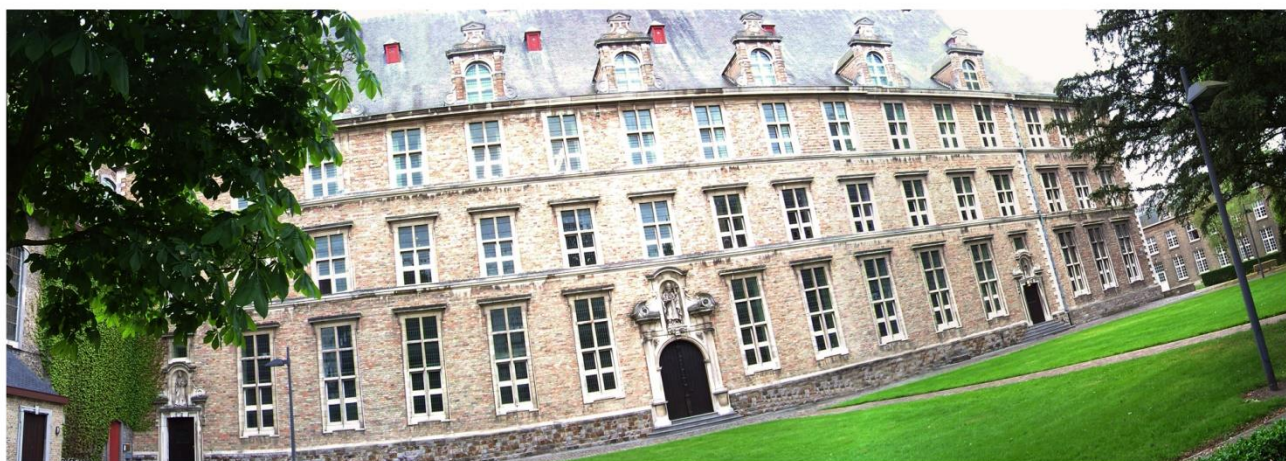
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Abstract

The research program on regional integration in International Relations scholarship has been enriched by several generations of scholars. However, the effects of regional integration projects (RIs) on peace and conflict dynamics remain largely understudied. The literature on the theme often exclusively focuses on the positive impacts of these processes, whereas the potentially negative side-effects of regional integration on peace (such as a rivalry over regional leadership, exclusion of important regional actors, and/or competition over borderlands that may belong to more than one region) tend to be critically underestimated. To what extent and under which conditions do RIs increase and/or decrease tensions and conflicts in a given regional setting? Guided by this question, this working paper shows that there are three distinctive perspectives on peace and regional integration: the logic of conflict transformation and community-building, the logic of balancing and regional autonomy, and the logic of hegemonic leadership and regional stability. Building on these perspectives, the paper argues that regional integration is not a panacea for regional conflict transformation: RIs may have both positive and negative impacts on regional security dynamics depending on the types of specific social relationships being influenced by the development of RIs.

I. Introduction

The research program on regional integration in International Relations (IR) scholarship has been enriched by several generations of scholars.[1] During the Cold War, many became interested in why states willingly gave up sovereignty for the sake of greater regional and international cooperation (e.g. Haas 1970; Nye 1968, 1971). Earlier generations of IR scholars attempted to explore drivers of these unusual processes, where regional integration was essentially seen as an outcome to be explained (thus, regional integration was largely a dependent variable). During the last decades, however, IR scholars have become increasingly keen on examining the impacts of regional integration on a plethora of important political phenomena, such as domestic preference transformation and national identity (re)formation. In this sense, the regional integration research agenda has gradually shifted to view integration as an independent variable or, in the words of Paul (2012), as a catalyst for regional transformation.

Despite this trend, the effects of regional integration on peace and conflict dynamics remain largely understudied for a number of reasons.[2] For one, there is a disconnect between "macro-scholars" studying regional and global dynamics of peace and conflict on the one hand, and "micro-scholars" focusing on local dynamics on conflict resolution and peacebuilding on the other. The conflict resolution literature tends to predominantly focus on third party interventions in conflict dynamics (e.g. preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, and peacekeeping; see Fisher 2011). Scholars focusing on a more aggregated level of analysis are often unaware of potentially fruitful insights offered by their micro-counterparts. The state of affairs is similar in the peacebuilding literature. For instance, the five-volume collection of essays on peacebuilding, edited by Chetail and Jütersonke (2014), features no entry on regional integration as a key strategy for conflict transformation; neither does the four-volume reflections on peacebuilding edited by Mac Ginty (2014).[3]

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[1] Koos (2011:91) classifies IR studies related to regional integration into three schools of thought: (a) Systemic theories such as neorealism and structural interdependence; (b) Regionalism and interdependence theories such as neofunctionalism, neoliberal institutionalism, and constructivism; and (c) Domestic-level theories such as regionalism and state coherence, regime type and democratization, and preference convergence.

[2] For a comprehensive overview of the literature on regions and regional security, see Tavares (2008: 108). Tavares is among a few who has systematically explored the linkage between regional integration and regional security. In his 2008 work, he questioned: "What are the linkages between, for example, the level of regional integration and the agents operating in peace and security? (Tavares 2008: 107)." See also Tavares and Schulz (2006) on the interrelationships between regional organizations and peacebuilding.

[3] Likewise, Diez and Tocci (2016) also find that two of the key reference books for conflict resolution (Bercovitch et al. 2009; Webel and Johansen 2012) include no major entry on regional integration. One exception was *The White Paper on Peacebuilding* published by the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform – a prime global network bringing together over 4,000 peacebuilding scholars and practitioners – which offered regional perspectives (Geneva Peacebuilding Platform 2015).

When it comes to studies explicitly aiming to address the complex linkages between regional integration and security dynamics (e.g. Peck 2001; Acharya 2012), scholars tend to implicitly presuppose that regional integration initiatives "do no harm". In this vein, the potentially negative side-effects of regional integration on peace, such as a rivalry over the leadership of such processes or exclusion of important regional actors, tend to be critically underestimated. For example, Ernest Haas (1970: 645) noted four decades ago that:

> …regional integration may lead to a future world made up of fewer and fewer units, each a unit with all the power and will to self-assertion that we associate with classical nationalism. The future, then, may be such as to force us to equate peace with non-integration and associate the likelihood of major war with successful regional integration.

This insight was echoed by Johan Galtung (1971), who equally feared that regional integration might simply reproduce classical issues of nationalism at a higher level and become a "stumbling block" which divides the world into self-organizing units. Prominent economists such as Paul Krugman and Larry Summers have also argued that regional arrangements tend to undermine the global free trade regime where higher degree of regional integration may be equated with greater international disintegration (Koos 2011, see also Mansfied and Milner 1999). As such, those interested in the positive impacts of regional integration should be equally attentive to their potential side-effects. In light of these concerns, an important question to be explored is: *To what extent and under which conditions do regional integration projects increase and/or decrease tensions and conflicts in a given regional setting*?

This short contribution does not –and indeed cannot– settle this important question once and for all. What it instead provides is an overview of contemporary theoretical perspectives which helps set the terms for further discussion. In doing so, it draws on the frameworks developed by Diez and Tocci (2016) as well as the papers presented at the workshop "Regional Integration for Peace? Comparing Integration Experiences Across Regions," convened by Marco Pinfari and Giulia Piccolino at the 3rd European Workshop in International Studies of the European International Studies Association, April 2016, Tübingen. This paper also benefitted immensely from the insights offered by the collaborative research project entitled "The EU, Regional Conflicts and the Promotion of Regional Cooperation: A Successful Strategy for a Global Challenge?"(RegioConf project).[4]

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[4] At the moment, there are few cross-regional research projects examining RIs' contribution for the positive transformation of regional conflict dynamics, which is a key focus of the RegioConf project led by Thomas Diez.

Before going into detailed discussions, a few conceptual clarifications are necessary. To begin with, the working definition of **regional integration** is a broad one, which includes both intergovernmental and supranational regional projects and takes into account economic as well as political integration processes.[5] However, the scope is limited to regional integration *projects* (hereafter abbreviated as RIs) as a *deliberate* process of institutionalizing regional relations. This paper therefore does not conceive of, for instance, a spontaneous increase in trade-sums, as regional integration - although this is often employed as a proxy of the degree of integration by a wide range of scholars.[6] A "region" here is seen as a cognitive construct which is shaped and reshaped by actors involved in regional integration processes.[7] In some cases, regional integration is precisely about redrawing political boundaries between different geographical spaces. For example, the work of Kudlenko (2016) presents an excellent example of European policymakers remaking the status of Moldova and Ukraine from "Western CIS" to "Eastern European" states.

With regard to *regional conflicts*, we follow the conceptualization elaborated by the RegioConf project. Fundamentally, conflicts are marked by the following characteristics:

- Conflict parties (or agents of peace and security) may include states as well as non-state actors, such as business organizations, criminal networks, and religious and ethnic groups;
- The *positional differences* remain over security, military, political, economic, religious, cultural, and other issues which are (perceived to be) core interests of the involved conflict parties; and
- The behaviors of conflict parties are often unregulated and no common solutions to the issues at stake are accepted by involved actors.

Adding to these elements, Diez (2012: 7) explains that *regional* conflicts display two important features:

For more information on the project, see its project webpage accessible at http://www.uni-tuebingen.de/en/faculties/economics-and-social-sciences/subjects/ifp/lehrende/ipol/research-projects/regioconf.html.

[5] Hurrell (2007: 130) distinguishes five dimensions of regionalism: (a) *regionalization* (societal integration and the often undirected processes of social and economic interaction); (b) *regional awareness and identity* (the construction of different forms of cognitive regionalism); (c) *regional interstate cooperation* (the construction of region-wide interstate regimes in a variety of issue areas); (d) *state-led economic integration*; and (e) *regional consolidation* (when the region plays a defining role in the relations between the states of that region and the rest of the world, and forms the organizing basis for policy within the region across a range of issues).

[6] A similar definition is proposed by Koos (2011: 91) where "regional integration" is a *purposeful* process promoted by regional actors while "regionalization" may be either spontaneous or deliberate process. See also Farrell et al. (2005).

[7] Broadly speaking, a region may mean (1) subnational units (e.g. the Basque region in Spain); (2) cross-border units (e.g. Caucasus); and (3) macro-units (e.g. Europe). Paul (2012: 4) similarly defined a region as "cluster of states that are proximate to each other and are interconnected in spatial, cultural, and ideational terms in a significant and distinguishable manner."

1. Prime conflict parties are regional actors such as neighboring states and/or armed groups operating within shared geographical settings (e.g. the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Kashmir conflict, the Cyprus conflict, the Chinese-Taiwanese conflict, and the Syrian conflict involving regional and extra-regional powers); and

2. Issues at stake entail regional repercussions and spill-overs, where the developments of these conflicts affect more than one actor in a given region (e.g. natural resources in the Great Lakes region and Central and South America, as well as water management in Central Asia).

Here, regional integration might be more or less effective in addressing regional *inter-state* conflicts than *intra-state* conflicts. In a globalized world with growing regional and inter-regional interconnectedness, however, any contemporary conflict entails both internal and external linkages. It is increasingly difficult to find a conflict purely confined to local/domestic settings. For these reasons, this prefers broader terms, such as security dynamics and peace and conflict dynamics, to describe the development of regional conflicts in a most generic sense.[8]

Last but not least, the notion of *positive/negative conflict transformation* deserves equally close attention.[9] Diez (2012) defines positive conflict transformation "as a reduction of the degree to which the conflict parties construct the other parties as existential threats", while there is "an increased willingness to deal with conflicts through institutionalised and regulated patterns of behavior." Here, we can benefit/ from an ongoing debate within the peace studies and peacebuilding literatures between scholars and practitioners over the concept of a "liberal peace" (e.g. Paris 2010). For liberal peacebuilders, peace is much more than a simple cession of hostility. A "genuine" peace is observed only when conflict-prone states and societies are transformed to become adherents of democratic accountability, good governance, human rights, civic participation, and other liberal values. Essentially, this resembles Deutsch's classical idea of security community, defined as "the attainment, within a territory, of a sense of community and of institutions and practices strong enough and widespread enough to assure, for a long time, dependable expectations of peaceful change among its population (Deutsch et al. 1957: 5)". Here, Nathan (2006: 279) rightly points out that

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[8] These terms reflect the theoretical insights offered by Tavares, who proposed a framework of regional peace and security cluster (RPSC), defined as "a set of peace and security relations that occur in a broad territory (region), driven by agents, operating at various levels of regional integration, who use various instruments to change the patterns of security, conflict, and positive peace Tavares (2008: 116)." Within this framework, complexities of each regional cluster can be studied by looking at: (a) agents of peace and security; (b) instruments of peace and security; (c) the security pattern; (d) the conflict pattern; (e) the positive peace pattern; and (f) the level of regional integration. See Baldwin (1997) for a more general conceptual debate on the notion of security.

[9] For an excellent overview of the debate on the legitimacy of peace processes, see Ramsbotham and Wennmann (2014).

"security community comprises a group of *people* that has become integrated, and the subject of dependable expectations of peaceful change are not states but rather the *population* of the territory covered by the community (see also Deutsch et al. 1957: 5)".[10] In this sense, what appears at a glance to be a positive transformation – stabilization and the nominal absence of violence – may well constitute a drift away from peace, if these are achieved by the crude imposition of power and compromises individual rights and freedoms.

Critics of the liberal peace thesis maintain, however, that premature empowerment of populations in fragile settings may embolden the voices of demagogic and extremist forces, which can substantially undermine precarious peace processes (see Franks and Richmond 2008; Campbell et al. 2011). Furthermore, the decentralization of power at an early stage of peacebuilding can easily make the situation spin out of the control of central authorities (see e.g. Snyder 2010).

As such, there remains a considerable gap between those who define positive conflict transformation as the institutionalization of liberal peace and enlargement of individual freedoms, and those who view peace as a more gradual process of building order and curbing violence (which may occasionally involve a "heavy-handed" approach). This section does not offer a final word on this ongoing debate, but I argue that this discussion has illuminated several distinctive *stages of peace processes*. Drawing on the works of Kacowicz (1995) and Tavares (2008), the table below summarizes these stages, where the "liberal peace" may fit best into the category of "conciliation" and "pluralistic security community".

Table 1. Stages of Peace Processes

Positive Peace Pattern (Tavares 2008: 120)	**Zones of Peace** (Kacowicz 1995: 9-10)	**Characteristics**
Conciliation	Pluralistic security community	*De-securitization* prevails among conflict parties; peace becomes self-sustaining.
Absence of violence	Zone of stable peace	*Stabilization* of conflict dynamics, although there is little or no active cooperation among conflict parties.
	Zone of negative or precarious peace	*Deterrence* and other peacekeeping instruments are central in holding peace.
Violence prone	(No peace)	*Violence* is widespread as a means to address the positional differences among conflict parties.

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[10] It must be noted, however, Deutsch essentially saw "people" as ruling political elites and statesmen (Deutsch et al. 1957: 31-32), while Nathan proposes to include the larger body of ordinary citizens (Nathan 2006: 295).

While achieving a state of conciliation may be a most desirable outcome, this is an abstract ideal-type and should not be set as a baseline in reality. For example, within the European Union (EU) - often regarded as an archetypical example of a security community - internal tensions, territorial disputes, and secessionist movements remain present. This is why this paper takes a rather conservative approach and does not fully endorse the argument put forth by Nathan (2006), that a security community should be defined by the simultaneous absence of inter-state enmity *and* of intra-state (domestic) instability. In other words, the presence of ongoing conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa does not necessarily imply that African RIs (such as the African Union) have no impact at all on regional security dynamics. Alternatively, this paper proposes that the impact of regional integration on security dynamics needs to be judged by the *degree to which* RIs help regions go up the ladder of these stages towards a fuller realization of more comprehensive peace.

Equipped with these conceptual understandings, this contribution aims to provide reference points to stimulate future debates. In doing so, it briefly examines three important perspectives on regional integration as: (1) a catalyst of transformation; (2) an instrument of balancing and emancipation, and (3) a lever of hegemony.[11] Of course, this is not to say that some RIs are power-free and others are more conflictual by default. The argument here is that any regional integration initiative is driven by a combination of these factors, and the outcome of our interest – i.e. the effects of regional integration on peace and conflict dynamics – may be co-determined by the complex interplays among and between these elements. Drawing from contemporary examples of RIs across the world, the remainder of this paper examines each of these dimensions in turn, with a final section outlining policy implications and suggesting potentially fruitful avenues for further research.

II. Integration and Transformation

The **transformative effects of regional integration** have been theorized by a number of (predominantly liberal) IR scholars, most notably including David Mitrany's (1965) functionalist approach to regional integration, Karl Deutsch's (1957) concept of security

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[11] The selection of three dimensions was informed by the debate on peace instruments, defined as "initiatives, policies, methods or processes that permit the management of threats and/or the construction of peace (Tavares 2008: 112)". Travers lists the following instruments: armed violence, balance of power, hegemony, military alliances, regional organizations (which manage regional peace and security), trade arrangements (harmonization of national policies), normative engagement and institutionalism, regional identity, and federalism/local representation. Lake and Morgan (1997: 32–33) similarly named five regional conflict management mechanisms: power refraining power (balancing), great power concert, collective security, pluralistic security community, and integration.

communities, Nye's (1971) strategy of promoting "peace in parts," and John Burton's (1972) vision for a world society. Although these approaches to regional security considerably differ, there remains a reasonable consensus that RIs can contribute to the cause of regional peace not only by simply suppressing or "freezing" pockets of insecurity, but also by deeply reshaping identities, values, preferences, and interests of participating actors in such a way that resorting to violence becomes an unthinkable policy option. This is essentially what Adler and Barnett (1998:34) termed as peaceful change, defined as "neither the expectation of nor the preparation for organized violence as a means to settle interstate disputes".

By building and strengthening regional institutions (whose material manifestations may include, among others, regional organizations, dialogue forums, partnerships, and associations),[12] RIs:

(1) change the "rules of the game" with which regional security dynamics operate;
(2) incentivize different patterns of behavior which are to be followed and emulated by other regional actors;
(3) create new normative settings in which regional actors choose their reference-points for action; and
(4) socialize the actors into the new settings, by which the incompatibilities of subject positions pertaining to regional conflict dynamics significantly diminish (or even disappear) over time.

As Kim and Lee (2016) point out, *the pacifier effect* of RIs goes beyond the concerns of physical security, but also influences the ways in which ontological security[13] of the involved actors are addressed. In other words, RIs may have a positive impact on regional relations not only because they provide security guarantees and shared access to regional markets, but also because they foster an amicable environment in which each actor feels that its own autonomy, national integrity, and ontological security are fully respected. As often argued by scholars and practitioners alike, the evolution of the EU is a living example where a RI has contributed to the gradual disappearance of deeply-rooted regional enmity, both at the level of political elites and of citizens. This is precisely why, for German Chancellor Angela Merkel, the Brexit was not only an issue of economic relations but more importantly about the question of lasting European peace (Merkel 2016).

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[12] Peck (2001) also maintains that regional institutions play an important role in regional peace and conflict dynamics by creating a milieu for dialogue, promoting and enforcing regional norms, engaging in preventive diplomacy, and assisting peacebuilding endeavors.

[13] Here ontological security is broadly defined as "a sense of continuity and order in events" (Giddens 1991: 243) that shapes and reshapes the way in which a referent object perceives and defines its interest and identity. See also Mitzen (2006).

While the role of RIs as catalysts of change entails a promising avenue for future research, the dominant narrative linking regional integration and conflict transformation faces a series of conceptual and methodological challenges. Among those are the issues of attribution and the possibility of spurious association – How do we know that RIs have an *independent* effect on the positive transformation of regional conflicts? For instance, the standard narrative claims that gradual regional integration over decades has transformed a war-torn Europe into an island of peace. This is portrayed as a consequence of the channels of routine communication and international trust generated by successive waves of European integration, increasing the predictability of interstate and transnational relationships and ultimately allowing Europe to withstand the daunting structural changes at the end of the Cold War, and manage the challenge of German reunification. However, Gorbachev clearly recalls that after decades of European integration, the U.K and France still categorically opposed German reunification in 1990, out of an enduring fear that a united Germany would pose a deadly threat to the continent (see Ikenberry 2009, Chapter 7). Only after NATO's continued presence in Germany was assured by Washington did the two regional powers (reluctantly) endorse the reunification plan, and with a further condition that German re-militarization would not be permitted.[14] In this sense, it is difficult to empirically determine the extent to which the European rapprochement was induced by regional integration. It is equally plausible that this was a result of NATO's presence that "keeps Germans down", coupled with the absence of a strong German military.

Furthermore, British and French objections to German reunification at the end of the Cold War imply that RIs may need sufficiently long time, if not centuries, to induce a deep transformation. In this sense, scholars touting the pacifying effect of European integration often tend to dismiss the fact that a number of important regional issues remain "frozen" even after decades of European integration, including the Cyprus conflict as well as the Gibraltar territorial dispute between the U.K. and Spain. In this sense, regional integration may not be about resolving conflicts and creating an island of peace, but more about reducing tensions, preventing outright confrontations, and inducing pacific management of conflicts through building confidence and predictable relationships. After all, integration does not eliminate tensions but it transforms the way in which they are managed by regional actors.[15]

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[14] As Joffe (1984) noted, "Franco–German rapprochement was crucial to the success of post-war integration, but this was only possible given the reassuring presence of the American 'pacifier'."

[15] This echoes the argument of Hurrell that "instances of regional society must demonstrate that, while conflicts of interest among members may not have been resolved (as they would have been if a regional community came into existence), norms and mechanisms have been devised (or are in the process of being devised) to manage (although not necessarily resolve) such conflicts of interest for the benefit of all parties concerned (Hurrell 2007: 132)."

Another important point is how to conceptualize the "positive" transformation towards peace. During the Cold War, a plurality of international integration scholars recognized "Eastern" regional institutions, such as the Warsaw Pact and the Comecon (The Council for Mutual Economic Assistance), as "regional integration" schemes (Haas and Schmitter 1964; Finley 1969; Mitchell 1969).[16] Arguably, the Soviet Union was the world's first supranational RI which initially began as a pact among four independent republics and gradually consolidated a more coercive style of governance.[17] A critical difference between the USSR and other European empires was the development (and imposition) of a common Soviet worker's identity shared by all citizens in the region in both the center (Moscow) and periphery. This shared identity dampened ethnic nationalism and religious extremism which had risen explosively after the collapse of the Russian Empire.[18] As Hakamada (2015) argues, Soviet regional integration contributed to the positive transformation of conflicts in the region as many regional citizens took pride in a Soviet identity widely perceived to have stood on par with the world's other superpower – the United States. True, the Eastern Bloc was primarily maintained in the shadow of Soviet force, but our perception of "the imposition of power" often involves subjective judgment calls. For instance, a plurality of Greek citizens "experienced" Brussels' brutal "imposition" of austerity plans in recent years which considerably shrunk their individual freedoms (Karyotis and Gerodimos 2014; Vasilopoulou, Halikiopoulou, and Exadaktylos 2015), while Eurocrats generally perceived the same occurrence as a rational and legitimate exercise of delegated authority. It is in this vein that the line between the order induced by integration and the order maintained by the imposition of power becomes blurred.

In a more contemporary example, the deadly regional conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh – which was "given" to Azerbaijan by Stalin in 1923 – may be effectively addressed by incorporating Azerbaijan into Russian-led RIs in which Armenia already participates – the Eurasian Economic Union and the Collective Security Treaty Organization. However, the fact that almost none of the EU policymakers are in favor of such an option implies that there may be divergent visions about what constitutes a "proper" and "positive" conflict transformation, as well as about the legitimacy of different RIs. Hence, further research may need to be sensitive to the model of peace envisioned by different actors involved in RIs, as well as how and to what extent these divergent visions can be (or should be) reconciled.

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[16] On the developments of the Soviet RIs (USSR, the Warsaw Pact, and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON), see Korbonski (1970). See also Lossan (2014) for the comparison of EU and Soviet integration models.

[17] This is evident by the fact that the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic kept a separate, independent membership at the United Nations throughout the Cold War era. For a detailed history of the making of the Soviet regional integration, see the work of E.H. Carr (1958).

[18] A similar policy was adopted by Yugoslavia as well.

III. Integration and Balancing

While RIs offer a vast potential to positively transform conflict dynamics, the existing literature often exclusively focuses on the benign side of integration mechanisms. While a plurality of integration scholars maintain that regional integration is more likely to lead to peace *within* integrated blocs (e.g. Mattli 1999; Haftel 2007), the opposite may be true for relationships *between* different RI frameworks - as well as for relationships between those included and those excluded from a particular RI. The "competitive" side of RIs and its impact on regional security dynamics thus deserves equal scrutiny.

The work of Ikenberry (2009) shows that the "regional" clauses in the UN Charter (e.g. Chapter VIII: Regional Arrangements) were primarily incorporated with the insistence of Latin American states, which reasonably feared that the new United Nations would soon turn into a "club of imperialists" akin to the League of Nations. In this sense, those who stressed the importance of regional organizations at the time hoped that a deeper institutional integration of their regions would serve to insulate them from extra-regional interferences, as well as to leave a breathing room for the creation of regional institutions that might be able to stand up for, or balance against, the unwanted imposition of a "global" authority.[19] In the words of Hurrell, Latin American regionalism hence revived an old idea that regional integration could be strategized as "a means of insulating the region from external interventionism, or, more ambitiously, of using the region as means of counterbalancing or resisting the power of the United States (Hurrell 2007: 132)".

This logic of *RIs as emancipation or balancing* is observed in a wide range of RIs, including the European integration process. In the 1960s, Charles de Gaulle pushed for a greater European unity as a strategy of countering *le défi americain*, and he single-handedly expelled the NATO headquarters from Paris. For de Gaulle, uniting Europe under a common European initiative was a means to bolster regional independence and to limit American influence in European affairs.[20] In terms of theoretical underpinnings, the dynamics of RIs and their impact on regional security may be better approached through the lens of balancing behaviors and alliance formation – an important aspect that remains neglected in the contemporary regional integration literature. As Hurrell (1995) points out, "many regionalist groupings are basically the natural response of weak states trapped in the world of strong."

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[19] Japanese Empire's Great Asian Sphere of Prosperity – which Haas (1970) saw as a RI – employed a similar logic. After the Racial Equality Treaty proposed by Tokyo was rejected by the white great powers in 1925 at the League of Nations, the Japanese Empire claimed that Asia must be integrated under Japan's imperial leadership in order to bolster the independence of the Asian race against the white colonizers. This imperative served as a justificatory basis for the Empire's invasions and annexations of its neighbors in the subsequent years.

[20] In addition, the presence of the Soviet threat served as a key driver of the European RI, which in turn resulted in the pacification of intra-European regional relations (Haas 1961).

In this regard, Lehmann's study provides rich insights into the complex dynamics surrounding Latin American RIs. While the region today enjoys a moment of relative stability (in the sense that there is no active inter-state war), a key driver of Latin American integration has been a collective desire for a greater regional independence, including the Union of South American Nations UNASUR). Lehmann contends that: "For some Latin American countries, regionalism was an instrument to shield Latin America from the influence of the U.S., seeing it as one way of rescuing or recovering some of its own autonomy (Lehmann 2016)."[21] A case in point was the impeachment of then Paraguayan President Lugo, where the American-led Organization of American States (OAS) endorsed the process as legal while UNASUR condemned it as a political coup, which demonstrated the tension between these two RIs as well as UNASUR's autonomy vis-à-vis the United States. What is more, UNASUR's objection to the impeachment process sent a strong signal to the outside world "that South American countries will police the preservation of democracy for themselves (Riggirozzi and Grugel 2015)." In this sense, ultimately, "The European Union, which includes the former colonial powers in South America Spain and Portugal, therefore is part of the system UNASUR against which the organization is defining itself (Lehman 2016)."[22]

Similar dynamics are observed in Africa, Eurasia, and the Middle East. In Sub-Saharan Africa, France strongly encouraged the institutionalization of the West African Economic Community (CEAO) as "an alternative to what it saw as a Nigeria-dominated ECOWAS and to establish a *fait accompli* in Francophone West Africa before Great Britain's entry into the EEC (Asante 1985: 76)".[23] In Central Eurasia, Russia saw external democratic influences (from the United States and the EU) as a key driver of regional destabilization and it strengthened Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) as a regional security framework to mitigate these threats (Yakouchyk and Colacicco 2015). Likewise, at the time of Bahrain's street demonstrations (inspired by the chain of events leading up to what some call the 'Arab Spring'), the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) members used their regional institutional military capacity (the GCC Peninsula Shield Forces) to help the

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[21] Lehmann is also attentive to the fact that, for others like Colombia, integration (e.g. OAS) was "a way of ensuring American influence in return for security during the Cold War."

[22] Lehmann (2016) further maintains that UNASUR represents an example of what Riggirozzi and Tussie (2012) have terms "post-hegemonic regionalism" which can be described stresses the importance of pluralism in regional integration models.

[23] ECOWAS stands for the Economic Community Of West African States, whereas the EEC denotes the European Economic Community - the direct predecessor of the EU.

troubled monarch repress the protests,[24] which they believed to be driven by an Iranian plot to implant a Shiite regime in Manama (Şen 2016:5).[25]

These competitive dynamics involving RIs have important implications for the study of the linkages between peace and integration. At times, RIs may stir regional tensions when they are aimed at taming the influence of important regional actors in a shared geographical arena. While the relationship between OAS and UNASUR is largely non-conflictual at the moment, further integration of UNASUR may create a pocket of regional insecurity if accompanied by growing ambitions to curb U.S. influence in South America. In this sense, more scholarly attention needs to be paid to RIs as a mechanism of power-projection and political exclusion.

In a similar vein, if each "integration bloc" has its own vision to be advanced at the expense of values championed by others in a shared region, there emerges a zero-sum competition for norm promotion. Indeed, this is a point often missed by rational institutionalists, who have tended to see institutions predominantly as devices for international cooperation (e.g. Keohane and Nye 1977; Keohane 1989; Keohane and Martin 1995). By the logic of cooperation, the more a region is equipped with RIs, the more stable it becomes. The case of the post-Soviet neighborhood offers a strikingly puzzling outlook in this regard: with deeper and wider involvement of European and Eurasian RIs, the region has become ever more conflict-prone, with the Ukrainian crisis being just a tip of iceberg.

In short, when the fundamental values embodied in each RI are not closely aligned, RIs may lead to international disintegration characterized by "bloc politics," which may exacerbate overall regional security dynamics. As two prominent observers noted, "the major threat is that the growth of regionalism could further weaken the multilateral system and the UN, particularly if the processes of regionalism and interregionalism create a world order based on shifting alliances between regional blocs (Thakur and van Langenhove 2006: 237)." In a worst case, RIs may even become a driver of regional conflict by setting an irreconcilable fault-line in domestic politics, as we witnessed in the Ukrainian crisis where the half of the population longed for a closer Eurasian integration while the other half opted for the European choice.[26] This demonstrated the particular importance of borderlands, which also entail a potential of becoming a bridging zone to foster an "integration of integration" between neighboring RIs.

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[24] Saudi Arabia made a significant contribution to this dispatch where more than 1000 Saudi troops were sent to the capital upon the invitation of the King of Bahrain.

[25] The recent establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) also indicates Chinese strategy to institutionally balance American-/Japanese-led Asian Development Bank.

[26] In February 2014, Ukrainian domestic opinion was highly polarized: 36 percent of the population longed for a closer integration with Russia while 41 percent advocated for a "European choice" (IRI 2015).

IV. Integration and Hegemony

Another important face of RIs is *the institutionalization of hegemony*.[27] Keohane, along with his fellow rational institutionalists, once claimed that international cooperation (which may well include RIs as a regional political and/or economic regime) could be best studied as a process driven by the self-interest of states, especially those of the most powerful members (Keohane 2005). Pedersen's (2002) theory of cooperative hegemony explains that regional institutions emerge because all regional powers aspire to develop a web of governance infrastructure, in order to maintain a "cooperative hegemony" in an area they see as a zone of privileged interest. The Regional Security Complex Theory proposed by Buzan and Waever (2003) as well as the study on regional order by Lake and Morgan (1997) explain the management of regional stability and inter-state conflicts from a perspective of regional hegemons; indeed, Lake and Morgan (*ibid*: 34) proclaim that "regional security is the collective responsibility of the most powerful states". As such, the question of regional peace is intricately linked to the presence of regional hegemony. Conceptually, to what extent can we (and should we) equate a RI with the notion of "spheres of influence"? Empirically, how can we distinguish peace underpinned by a regional hegemony from peace brought by the transformative impacts of RIs, if these two mechanisms seem to be so closely intertwined?

It may be an exaggeration to say that all RIs are chiefly driven by the quest for supremacy (see e.g. Mearsheimer 2001). Yet the impact of regional integration on peace cannot be fully understood without paying a close attention to regional power dynamics. On the one hand, hegemony may manifest itself in the form of *(intra-)regional leadership* institutionalized in particular RIs. America's "permanent commandership" in NATO and Russia's predominant role in CSTO and the EEU are examples. In the European neighborhood, "the EU has been drawing the Balkan subcomplex into the sphere of its influence and making it part of the European security community (Kudlenko 2016)," with which Brussels envisions to stabilize and integrate the troubled region as EU's "area of responsibility (*ibid*)." In the Middle East, Saudi Arabia pushes the idea of a Gulf Union as a prime means for regional integration which serves to cement Riyadh's primacy in the region, as well as to limit the ambitions of Iran (Şen 2016: 10). On the other side of the world, China increasingly exhibits a willingness to sponsor a wide range of RIs (such as the AIIB, the Silk Road Economic Belt, and the Maritime Silk Road) which will strengthen its regional influence (Kim and Lee 2016).

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[27] Hegemony entails three important meanings: leadership, dominance, and capability (Biersteker 2009). More broadly, hegemony can be fruitfully understood by the Gramscian notion, which Diez equates to the concept of normative power (Diez 2013).

While the involvement of regional great powers may not be a necessary condition for the emergence of RIs (Paul 2012: 5) any RI that lacks support from powerful regional actors would face considerable challenges to its development. A most telling example in this regard is America's categorical objection to the creation of an East Asian Community (EAC). The initial idea was proposed by Japanese Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama – known for his resistance to American hegemony in the Asia-Pacific region – as a regional integration framework to pacify the mistrust-prone relationships among China, South Korea, and Japan. While the initiative attracted significant regional support and offered a promising prospect for inducing regional peace, it ultimately failed to take off because of Washington's refusal to endorse the project on the grounds that it was allegedly designed to exclude the United States from the region.

On the other hand, *extra-regional influence* of powerful actors appears to significantly affect the ways in which RIs across the world develop over time and affect regional security dynamics. At times, what at first appears to be a local initiative of regional integration is driven by the visions and interests of extra-regional actors. For instance, the creation of the Financial Community of Africa (CFA) monetary union was largely initiated by France to foster integration of Francophone West African states (Piccolino 2016: 14).[28] By the same token, the launching of the ECOWAS Customs Union as well as the newly concluded Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between ECOWAS and the EU can be seen as yet another example of quasi-coercive European influence that serves greater regional integration in West Africa by employing a mixture of carrots and sticks (*ibid*).

At the moment, "the EU is the only global actor that actively and systematically promotes the norm and practice of regional integration around the world (Lenz 2013: 212)" as a means to address global challenges of our time. By insisting on the European model of liberal integration, however, the EU's efforts to promote regional integration at its will sometimes resembles an imposition of hegemonic authority (e.g. Hettne and Söderbaum 2005; Zielonka 2006, Hyde-Price 2006; Sjursen 2006). To illustrate, the seemingly-cooperative practice of empowering civil society actors often serves to conceal more particularist agendas. For example, Azhar (2016: 18) documents that civil society engagement within the framework of the ENP often screens and selects those civic actors whose concerns and rhetoric are closely aligned with those of Brussels, by which

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[28] The study of Grimm also found that more than two thirds of UEMOA's budget in 1998 was financed by the EU (Grimm 1999: 16).

worldviews inconsistent with the European mainstream become largely marginalized or sometimes even demoralized.[29]

Building on these insights, the degree of regional ownership – which may be most generically understood as the distribution of opportunities to voice concerns and set agendas among powerful and weaker regional actors– could be a key concept to understand the extent to which regional peace is upheld by the exercise of hegemony manifested in the form of RIs. In this regard, interestingly, the competition between RIs can be a mechanism to tame the hegemonic ambitions of powerful actors. For instance, the post-Soviet states have strategically benefitted from a "clash of hegemonies" between European and Eurasian RIs led by Brussels and Moscow. In order to reach out to a wider set of regional partners, the EU has watered down its "human-rights-first" approach in recent years, while Russia has also increasingly embraced a more legalized, multilateral, and supranational ways of promoting regional integration that gives equal opportunities for all participating states (Kobayashi 2016). In this sense, perhaps the biggest winner of the deepening competition between European and Eurasian RIs in the post-Soviet space is the group of elites of the smaller regional states, who seemed to have learned how to effectively advance their voices by playing both sides and preventing the emergence of a monopolistic integration framework.

As such, RIs led by powerful regional players do not necessarily lead to the emergence of a hierarchical regional order clustered around hegemon-sponsored RIs. *The competition between different RIs may play a constructive role in enhancing regional security dynamics* and preventing the rule of power. This may sound counterintuitive to those who believe in the superiority of international cooperation over international competition, but most of liberal policy prescriptions for constructing accountable governance, including democracy, the rule of law, and the free market, rest on the idea that checks and balances are needed to prevent the emergence of a dominant, predatory authority and to ensure greater freedom for community members. Along these lines, the competition among RIs may serve as a mechanism for taming excessive hegemonic ambition and inducing a more multilateral format of regional integration processes.

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[29] A pivotal instance in this regard was Brussels' refusal to recognize the 2006 Palestinian legislative elections won by Hamas, where the EU instead devised a Temporary International Mechanism (TIM) in order to resume direct financial assistance to the Palestinians (including Fatah) while bypassing the Hamas government.

V. Future Research and Policy Agendas

As emphasized in the introduction, this contribution by no means offers a final word on the complex interrelationships between peace and integration. Instead, it aimed at clarifying a few conceptual and methodological ambiguities inherent in the academic study of this topic, as well as to suggest potentially fruitful avenues to be explored by further research. As it is shown, there are different visions and philosophical underpinnings of international peace, among them: the logic of transformation and community-building, the logic of balancing and a quest for greater autonomy, and the logic of hegemonic leadership and regional stability. Again, these three dimensions are intricately intertwined. For instance, the efforts of Brazil and Russia to lead UNASUR and the Eurasian Economic Union, respectively, entail an ambition to counteract and constrain the influence of other powerful actors such as the U.S. and the EU; at the same time, these efforts also reveal a desire to reinforce their hegemonic positioning in their respective regions. This is precisely why differentiating *pax hegemonia* from *pax integrationem* proves to be extremely challenging.

Overall, the study contends that there are at least four important sites that deserve further investigation: (I) Relationships within a RI; (II) Relationships between a RI and excluded actor(s); (III) Relationships between RIs; and (IV) Relationships between RIs and borderlands (see Figure.1).

(I) Relationships within a RI: The impacts of regional integration on peace to date have been largely focused on *intra-regional* dynamics and regional conflicts persisting within a particular geographical setting (*Conflict 1* in the figure). Here, investigating a process of regional *disintegration* and its influence on peace and conflict dynamics may add further insights on this matter. If regional integration induces positive conflict transformation, does regional disintegration induce negative conflict transformation? By looking at how regional disintegration amplifies regional tensions, we may gain deeper understanding of how RIs can alleviate these issues in the process of integration. This also entails important policy implications on politics of exit: if regional disintegration is a driver of insecurity, a decision to exit from a RI is not a simple matter of economic losses and gains but also becomes a security concern. It is in this vein that scholars should pay closer attention to the mechanisms of disintegration, rather than dogmatically focusing on the dynamics of integration. Another important theme to be explored is to what extent the integrative mechanisms that pacify interstate relations can be applied to conflict settings characterized by hybrid political authorities and the salience of non-state actors, as is the case in the Middle East.

(II) Relationships between a RI and excluded actor(s): A RI can be strategically used as a tool of encirclement when the initiative excludes important regional actor(s). This exclusive integration can be a result of deliberate choice such as blocking membership application such as the setting of high standards for entry. In any case, the exclusion may widen an existing gulf between the integrated and the excluded, creating a pocket of regional insecurity (*Conflict 2* in the figure). Future research may shed light on openness/inclusiveness of RIs as a key determinant in analyzing the impact of regional integration on peace, while the question remains how to strike a meaningful balance between openness and membership criteria.

(III) Relationships between RIs: The interrelationships between different RIs have been an under-researched topic, not least because there are limited numbers of region-to-region dialogues at the moment. RIs operating in a shared or adjunct terrain may have conflicting interests and, in the worst case, tensions between RIs can become a driver of regional conflict (*Conflict 3* in the figure). At the same time, however, the involvement of more than one RI may tame hegemonic ambitions of powerful regional actors and empower smaller regional actors. Essentially, RIs are mechanisms of power-projection and political exclusion. In this sense, an important theme to be discussed includes how to institutionalize the rules of inter-regional competition without undermining the ownership and voice opportunities of less powerful regional actors.

(IV) Relationships between RIs and borderlands: The peculiarity of borderlands and regional frontiers needs to be taken into consideration when RIs are advanced; otherwise, RIs themselves may become a driver of regional insecurity (*Conflict 4* in the figure; see also Diez and Tocci 2016). This is perhaps the most important lesson we can learn from the Ukrainian crisis, which may have broader implications for other regions where more than one powerful actor is present. For example, a pocket of regional insecurity may emerge in Central America if UNASUR's membership and institutional initiatives expand northward in a way that ignores the interests of the United States. While borderlands are prone to becoming hot-spots of regional rivalry, they also involve significant potential as a constructive site to foster the "integration of integration" and coordination among and between different RIs. The contemporary literature on regional integration often missed this point by largely focusing on how peripheral states "become" a full-fledged member of a particular regional community. But future scholarship on regional integration needs to pay more attention to both the opportunities and challenges concerning the integration of borderlands.

Figure.1 Linkages between Integration and Regional Conflicts
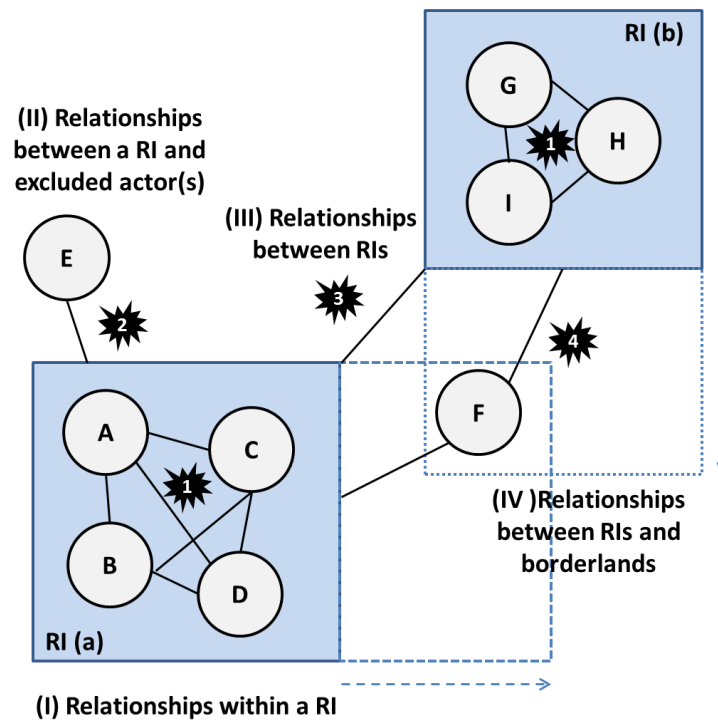
Methodologically, given the current diversity of RIs across the world (and the divergent values and worldviews underpinning these initiatives), peace induced by regional integration may not always need to be a liberal one. Of course, this is not to say that liberal peace is an undesirable option, but it is to simply state that setting liberal peace as a baseline for positive conflict transformation could be constraining, rather than enabling, future research. This is especially so because the spread of liberal democracy is, *with or without the presence of RIs*, supposed to pacify relationships among the members of an international society of democratic states, according to standard democratic peace theory. In other words, it is difficult to empirically determine if peace brought by a liberal RI is as a result of regional integration, of liberal peace, of democratic peace, or the combination of all these elements. In this sense, focusing on the gradual de-escalation of regional conflicts, both in terms of physical and ontological security, may prove to be a more fruitful avenue.

Ultimately, regional integration and global integration may coincide only when these processes are driven by a hegemonic, "universal" model. In other instances, there is an ample possibility that deepened regional integration in each world region may lead to further global disintegration, in the sense that each integrated bloc becomes a champion of its own values and models. This is a point often missed by the English School scholars, who have largely focused "on the way in which things fit together (Hurrell 2007: 135)". What happens when the models, norms, and values of a regional society of states

contradict and counteract those underpinning other regional societies as well as the international society at large?[30] As such, a more significant theme to be explored includes how the (presumed) pacifying effects of regional integration feed into the dynamics of international security and global integration, as there is no reason to presuppose the presence of an invisible hand coordinating contradictions between regional and global integration processes.

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[30] On this point, see Hasmath (2012)'s work on regional *jus cogens* (preemptory norms), that is, what happens when "regional" international law contradicts "global" international law.

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