

**How do Peace and Security Cluster Regionally? <sup>1</sup>**  
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**ABSTRACT**

The aim of this article is to comprehend how peace and security cluster at the regional level. In a globalized and interconnected world each polity engages in a wide range of different relationships with other polities. Peace and security embody one of these relations as to feel secure or to be in peace entails managing a relationship with the ‘other’. Firstly, the article explores the conceptual meaning and the linkage between peace and security. This will pave the way for the assessment of the spatial extension where peace and security relations are located. In the second part, the article introduces a regional dimension and describes schematically how peace and security cluster regionally.

**Key words:** Security, Peace, Regions, Territory, Diffusion, Threat, Violence.

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## INTRODUCTION

Over 60 years after the Dumbarton Oaks Conference, which decided to minimize the importance of regional groupings within the United Nations system<sup>2</sup>, the UN promoted, in 2006, a pioneer and meticulous study on the capacity of regional organizations to handle issues of peace and security<sup>3</sup>. This initiative by the UN Department of Political Affairs is only another symbolic indication that macro-regions are, indeed, becoming a central arena in contemporary international relations.

The overall objective of this article is to develop our understanding of the linkages that exist between macro-regions and peace and security. In a complex and globalized world that disarranges orthodox notions of space, distance, security relationships, and attainability of peace, the article aims to find reference points in the broad field of peace and security. Given this intricate reality, which is further accentuated by the end of the Cold War and the reaction to September 11, there is a need to identify the historical patterns and the conceptual anchors in peace and security that could aid us in charting this territory. The article investigates whether the regional level of analysis is an important magnetic point in this field.

Several ongoing trends in global politics demonstrate the preeminence of macro-regions in peace and security. These practices, which range widely from the mushrooming of economic regionalization<sup>4</sup> (Hettne et al., 1999-2001; Sampson and Woolcock, 2003; Söderbaum and

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<sup>2</sup> The Dumbarton Oaks provisions dealing with regional organizations (chapter VIII, Section C) reflected the superpower reluctance in granting regional agencies undue legitimacy and attributing them too much weight (see Simma, 1995:687).

<sup>3</sup> The Regional Capacity Survey of Regional and Other Intergovernmental Organizations for the Maintenance of International Peace and Security was undertaken in response to a request from the 6<sup>th</sup> High-Level Meeting between the United Nations and Regional and Other Intergovernmental Organizations, convened by the UN Secretary-General, in New York, in July 2005. The Survey was coordinated by the United Nations University (UNU-CRIS).

<sup>4</sup> From the outset it is important to clarify the distinction between 'regionalism' and 'regionalization'. The literature is not homogenous about these concepts. For some authors, as Björn Hettne and Peter Katzenstein, the conceptual differentiation of these terms is very clear. The first means the set of *ideas* and *principles* that highlight the enmeshing of units in a regional context, whereas the latter is most often defined as the *process* of regional interaction (Hettne, 1999-2001; Katzenstein, 2005). Embarking upon the same perception, Andrew Hurrell takes regionalization to mean 'the growth of societal integration within a region and to the often undirected *processes* of social and economic interaction' (1995:39. Italics added). Slightly different is Raimo Väyrynen's stance (2003:43). Although he moves along the same lines looking upon regionalization as the dynamic process associated with region formation, regionalism is understood as being based on institutionalized intergovernmental coalitions that control access to a region. This reading is not, however, universally accepted. Fishlow and Haggard (1992) sharply distinguish between regionalization, which refers to the regional concentration of economic flows, and regionalism, which they define as a political process characterized by economic policy cooperation and coordination among countries. On the contrary, Bhagwati defines regionalism as a preferential trade agreement among a subset of nations (1999). Gamble and Payne, walking on a different route, define regionalism as a state-led project, whereas regionalization is primarily taken as a societal construction (1996). As no particular classification is taken as prevalent and as all of them presuppose a degree of correctness, my suggestion is, by moving away from content/agency distinctions, assessing the etymologic nature of the words. The word 'regionalism' contains the Greek suffix 'ism', which means 'the act, state, or theory of'. Regionalism shall, therefore, be approached as the *body of ideas and*

Shaw, 2003, Farrell, Hettne and Langenhove, 2005), the emergence of regional zones of peace (Kacowicz, 1995; 1997; 1998), the regional diffusion of insecurity and conflict (Wallensteen and Sollenberg, 1998; Rubin, 2002), to the growing capacity of regional organizations in dispute settlement and peace enforcement (Diehl and Levgold, 2003; Pugh and Singh, 2003; Graham and Felício, 2006), triggered the interest over the regional level of analysis in peace and security.

The article is divided in three parts. Firstly, the overall objective is identified and the literature is schematically reviewed. Secondly, it explores the link between peace and security to unveil both their conceptual dependency and their comprehensiveness. The aim is to expound the nature of both concepts in order to facilitate our understanding of how they connect to the regional dimension. Finally, equipped with those assumptions, the article describes systematically the different ways in which peace and security cluster regionally.

## **RESEARCH GOAL**

The aim of this article is to problematize and comprehend *how* peace and security cluster at the regional level. In conceptual and practical terms security is associated to the management of threats (Baldwin, 1997), whereas peace should be conceptualized as a state attained by the successful transformation of structural<sup>5</sup> and direct violence (Galtung, 1969). One of the intriguing aspects about these concepts is that they are relational i.e. the attainment of peace and security presupposes the existence of the ‘other’, the agent(s) with whom an inimical or amicable relationship is established. This triggers the question over the spatial extension of these peace and security relationships.

Despite the increasingly globalized world, peace and security relations between different agents are necessarily bound by a physical link. Even if it is technically possible for a security and peace relationship to be established between two states located in opposite ends of the globe or, conversely, other relationships are micro-localized and involve only small-

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*definite objectives* that are aimed at the creation of linkages between social actors, whereas regionalization pertains to the *process* through which those linkages are created. Regionalization is, in most cases, directly associated to regionalism, i.e. it is caused by a deliberate intention of specific actors to pursue integration and cooperation at regional level. However, regionalization may also come about spontaneously and unintentionally with no ideology or formal intentional process behind it (see Söderbaum, 2002:5).

<sup>5</sup> According to Galtung, structural violence occurs whenever people are disadvantaged by political, legal, economic or cultural traditions or, as he puts it, it refers to any constraint on human potential due to economic and political structures (1969:183)

scale agents within national state borders, a relationship between agents has to occur within certain physical parameters.

Coupled with this, it shall not be neglected that beyond relations built upon mutual perceptions of threat or eventual use of violence, different agents can also engage in relations marked by the promotion and expansion of security and peace. Peace and security, interpreted inclusively, encompass a wide range of possible connections between different agents. Any study on (regional) peace and security ought to account for this broadness.

Despite the unequivocal necessity to understand what is the extension of the space where peace and security relations, and their spillover effects, are more intensely located, the IR literature has not yet addressed this issue in a compelling way.

Indeed, the literature on security studies tends to overlook the spatial platform of security in order to focus, for instance, on referent objects, escalations of security (or insecurity), prevention and deterrence of threats, or the meaning of security itself (Herz, 1950; Waltz, 1979; Gilpin, 1981; Walt, 1991; Krause and Williams, 1997; Booth, 2005). The emphasis in peace studies is equally on prevention and management of violence, rather than on the spatial dimension of peace (Galtung, 1969 and 1981; Jeong, 2000). Within the regional security literature two theories primordially stand out: the regional security complex theory (RSCT) (Buzan, 1983; Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde, 1998; Buzan and Wæver, 2003) and the regional orders approach (Lake and Morgan, 1997).

The first justifies the existence of regional security complexes (RSCs) on the grounds that threats travel more easily over short distances than over longer ones, i.e. RSCs derive from “the pressures of local geographical proximity” (2003:45-46). In their studies this principle is used, however, neither with major problematization nor with a definition of its scope. In a globalized world, a (in)security relationship can be established between two actors across the planet and threats can be produced without accounting for territorial proximity. Terrorism, for example, is an expression of violence that is not bound by territorial obstacles or classical realist inside-outside orientations. Is the regional level still a valid and useful framework to understand the current expressions of violence and insecurity? Does terrorism, for instance, disrupt classical regional security approaches based on threat proximity or, conversely, it

serves to vindicate the idea that the regional level is still indispensable to understand security? I will come back to this topic later on.

On the central question of ascertaining what is *regional* about security, the regional order approach presents a slightly different orientation. Lake and Morgan, postulate that a regional system is “a set of states affected by at least one transborder but local externality that emanates from a particular geographic area” (1997: 48). They built on the concepts of ‘neighborhood’ and ‘spill over’ effects to define ‘externalities’ as “costs (negative externalities) and benefits (positive externalities) that do not accrue only to the actors that create them” (p.49). A regional security system is thereby produced if a “local externality poses an actual or potential threat to the physical safety of individuals or governments in other states” (p.49). However, to accentuate the difficulty in explaining why regional security is, indeed, *regional*, Lake and Morgan argue that, “externalities are not necessarily limited in their effects to states within a particular geographic neighborhood (e.g. the US is part of the Middle East security complex) (p.50). Even though they argue that “geography might bind most members of a regional security complex together”, they also underline that “geographic proximity is not a necessary condition for a state to be a member of a complex (p.12). For this reason, even though there is an intention to associate security to *regional* complexes (following Buzan and Wæver), the regional dimension of a complex seems to be jeopardized. Likewise, Buzan and Wæver argue that Lake and Morgan’s view “not only destroys the meaning of levels, but also voids the concept of region, which if it does not mean geographical proximity does not mean anything” (2003:80).

The objective of this article is therefore theory-oriented in the sense that it points at a gap in the literature pertaining to the spatial dimension of peace and security. Besides the established idea that threats tend to travel more easily over short distances than longer ones, we need to pin down other patterns that encourage the autonomization of the regional level in peace and security practices. The interest is simply to extract the regional *territorial* ingredient that underlies peace and security relations. As argued by Buzan et al., the conceptualization of security needs to be lodged in a distinctive territorial pattern (1998:14. See also Buzan and Wæver, 2003:29).

This paves the way for the necessity to define ‘region’. In this article I will contend that a geographical contiguous area becomes a region when a significant number of agents perceive

it as such. This minimalist and physically-driven idea of region, should not prevent us from acknowledging that regions are in constant formation and construction (Katzenstein, 1996, Bøås et al., 2005). If a minimalist and fairly static idea of region is necessary to highlight the territorial extension of peace and security relations, other complementary studies should also highlight the dynamics within regions (i.e. their components and the linkages between them) (see Tavares, 2006). Driven by this premise it should be argued that some regions may have actor quality (Tavares, 2004; Hettne, 2005).

Before we explore the regional dimension of peace and security it is mandatory, however, that we pause on the structure of peace and security themselves. What is, in fact, the link between them? Does the regional dimension thread with both peace and security in the same fashion? Or should they be approached in isolation? And given that peace and security encompass a wide range of relationships between agents (from secure to insecure and from peaceful to violent), does this scaling impact on the regional level? In order to address these questions, in what follows I will concentrate on the reactive and proactive components of peace and security and on the degree of dependency between both concepts. The article contends that these dimensions are central milestones in the intersection between peace and security and regionalism.

## **LINK BETWEEN PEACE AND SECURITY**

The concepts of peace and security are characterized by complex subtleties. In the arena of international relations, where the *lingua franca* is often marked by buzz words and capturing messages, both concepts are sometimes used interchangeably without proper investigation on their adequate meaning. Even the UN Charter, probably inspired by the Preamble of the Covenant of the League of Nations Charter, uses these terms almost synonymously, as a unified formula, without pausing for reflection on their substantive conceptual value.

However, no matter how symbiotically linked they may be, they reflect a basic distinction. Security is primarily about the management of threats<sup>6</sup>, whereas peace is about the management of violence<sup>7</sup>. The first is associated to a statement of intention, a menace. It involves a cognitive and subjective interpretation derived from a latent and potential action.

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<sup>6</sup> Defined as actions that convey a conditional commitment to punish unless one's demands are met (see Baldwin, 1997:15).

<sup>7</sup> Violence is regarded broadly, as any action, performed as a link in a method of struggle, which involves the intentional infliction of death, physical injury, or other type of harm, upon an unwilling victim. For a monumental study of 'violence' see Pontara (1978).

Peace, on the other hand deals with the absence of structural and physical violence, i.e. it presupposes absence of real damage or adversely effect. Whereas a threat is related to the expression of an *intention*, violence is the *observable materialization* of that threat.

A fundamental characteristic of peace and security is the fact that both terms are relational in the sense that they are not conceptually self-sufficient. They are derivative concepts; meaningless in themselves. To have any meaning security and peace necessarily presuppose something to be secured or to be in peace, as a realm of study they cannot be self-referential (Krause and Williams, 1997: ix). Moreover, although they are used to characterize an object, they reflect a *relationship* between, at least, two objects (Buzan and Wæver, 2003:43). To be secure involves freeing ourselves from the threats that could emanate from an outside object. By the same token, in a globalized world where processes and agents are tightly interconnected, to be at peace presupposes that violence (physical or structural) would not be inflicted on ‘the other’. To Johan Galtung this relational ingredient of peace is fundamental. According to him, in the West, peace is seen as “something pertaining to relations within the in-group, and war is something referring to relations between in-group and out-group” (1981:184). This possibly derives from the Greek concept of *eirene*, which reflects and may be translated by ‘in-group harmony’.

Drawing from the relational nature of peace and security, two key dimensions should be considered: the reactive and proactive component of peace and security, and the dependency between both concepts.

### **Reactive and Proactive Components of Peace and Security**

Peace, as early as in the Roman Empire, was initially conceived as absence of direct violence (negative peace). It had, therefore, a *reactive* component, something whose existence was contingent on the non-existence of something else. In the Renaissance, even though peace was still interpreted as lack of violence, it enlarged its scope. Violence was not only related to the infliction of physical harm but also encompassed a structural component. In this wake, peace and social wellbeing could only be attained when the forces that administered economic, political and social injury were successfully transformed (positive peace).

With this background peace research has concentrated, since its formation, on classical situations of war and conflict between states, on disarmament, balance of power, détente,

arms race, causes of war (Bönisch, 1981:167; Wiberg, 1981: 115-129; Buzan, 1984:120), with a fixation on the North and the activities of the superpowers (Scherrer, 2001:10). This idiosyncrasy has possibly led, in the mid-1970s, Georg Picht to declare that although the science of war had reached its culmination, the science of peace was still non-existent (1975:45). Kacowicz has also argued that, “most of the academic research addresses the classical questions on the causes of war and the conditions for peace. However, it does not cope with the related issue of how peace is preserved or even ‘deepened’ once it is established” (1998:33). In 1981, Håkan Wiberg remarked that if peace research was to be limited to the empirical study of peace and peaceful societies, the amount of articles and research communications, published in the *Journal of Peace Research* since its first edition (1964), was a *single one* (p.113. See also Fabbro, 1978).

Notwithstanding, it could be argued that the concept is now gradually surpassing its initial reactive component. Beyond a state that is achieved when violence (direct and structural) is no longer inflicted, peace is increasingly gaining a *proactive* orientation and a life of its own. Peace can therefore be interpreted as enabling, as making something happening. By being at peace one is bestowed with the capacity to amplify and project our wellbeing. Peace research is, in fact, progressively comprehending this enlarged interpretation of peace. As Vinthagen pertinently affirms, “peace studies should be related to the study of peace, not violence” (2005:15/429).

A similar route seems to be taken by security. Since its earliest usage, security was regarded as a negation, as a state permitted by the absence of threats. As Arnold Wolfers saw it, “security after all is nothing but the absence of the evil of insecurity, a negative value, so to speak” (1962:153). During the ‘golden age’ of security (Walt, 1991:213), the field was driven by Cold War fears and narrowly equated with military power and nuclear deterrence. Ironically, the study of security put more attention into investigating insecurity, the use of military force, and management of threats (Herz, 1950; Waltz, 1979; Gilpin, 1981; Walt, 1991), rather than focusing on the positive element inherent to security. Traditionally, it has been anchored on theoretical investigations over the use and control of military force (Walt, 1991:212) and interpreted as “the absence of threats to acquired values” (Wolfers, 1952:485). As Buzan puts it, “the basic problem which underlines almost all interest in international relations is insecurity (...) when the interactions among these organizations [states] are competitive, then the problem of insecurity is compounded” (1984:111). The growing

concern with insecurity is also related to the surplus capacity for destruction, which the mechanical and nuclear revolutions introduced into warfare and the increasing tendency towards the transnationalization of violence. Also alerting us for the lack of *security* within security studies, Baldwin points out that “security has been a banner to be flown, a label to be applied, but not a concept to be used by most security studies”. He adds that, “military force, not security, has been the central concern of security studies” (1997:9). When security is regarded through these lenses, it is normally interpreted as a zero-sum concept in the sense that more security for one actor entails less security for another. This leads to situations in which a state’s efforts to increase its security reduce the security of other states (‘security dilemma’) transforming the regional environment where these competitive security relations are played into a distrustful and potentially violent one (Herz, 1950; Mearsheimer, 1992).

Unlike peace, security has, however, been resistant in incorporating a proactive component. McSweeney argues that security studies would gain an important input from “the primal relationship” between Mother and Child (1999:15), whereby the feeling of being secure is something that is transmitted. The RSCT, for instance, is mainly devoted to understanding processes of securitization inside regions, which implies that its capacity to understand relationships marked by amity, trust, and absence of threats is limited. This is a shortcoming assumed even by the authors:

“The definition of RSCs (and the general methodology of our security analysis) is based on the security actions and concerns of actors: an RSC must contain dynamics of securitization. Usually this means that the actors in the region securitize each other. But the development of a security community is marked by processes of desecuritization (...) actors stop treating each other as security problems and start behaving as friends. (...) If a centered region moves into this kind of general desecuritization, it might eventually leave the world of security altogether and thereby also the map of RSCs (...)” (Buzan and Wæver, 2003:56-57).

By focusing on insecurity rather than security, and on violence rather than peace RSCT is not fully able to integrate the broad nature and composition of regional clusters. In my view more elaboration needs to be given to the linkages between, and the transformations from, enmity and amity (or the reverse).

In a nutshell, peace and security have often focused on mechanisms to prevent violence, which led to a gross emphasis on their *reactive* component. These concepts are, thus, interpreted in a negative sense, as the ultimate outcome of a process that involved military

force, nuclear deterrence, balances of power, violent threats, and national interests. However, peace and security are, conversely, also equipped with a positive dimension, as amply flagged by social movements, associated to cooperation, inclusiveness, and amelioration of inter-group relations. This dimension of peace and security deconstructs the neorealist idea that security relations are competitive and based upon a zero-sum game. If approached proactively, the increase of security in one unit may lead to positive consequences in neighboring units. Security is, in this case, regarded as a collective public good whose consumption by one unit does not reduce the amount of the good available for consumption by others (non-rivalry). Additionally, it would be impossible to exclude any individuals from consuming it (non-excludability).

This dual nature of peace and security should not lead us to think that they represent two independent systems. Instead, peace and security should be regarded as a broad reference of values that are applied to relationships between agents. Just like a pendulum, these relationships can vary between confrontational and violent relationships to more amicable and peaceful ones. The article returns to this idea when the regional dimension is introduced.

### **Dependency**

Though security is related to management of threats and peace to the management of violence, it is not possible to conceive one without the existence of the other. Both concepts feed into each other. Threats are formulated to transform a relationship that is believed by the producer of the menace to be unfavorable. For a threat to have sufficient credibility to trigger a reaction, the receiver of the threat needs to believe that it carries the potentiality to alter the relationship to his disadvantage. Technically speaking, a threat, to justify its name, can only be generated if there is the prospect of using (direct or structural) violence. Certainly an agent might produce a threat (deliberately or non-deliberately) although it does not hold any substantial capacity to enforce it with direct or structural violence. In this case the threat is fake. Even so, it is axiomatic that the capacity to menace presupposes inevitably the (real or fake) possibility of applying violence<sup>8</sup>. A threat is not a threat without the means to threaten the other party with.

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<sup>8</sup> This does not presuppose, however, that an escalation of insecurity needs to be inevitably followed by an escalation of violence. The producer of the threat might inflate his higher capacity to use violence, which does not mean that s/he will necessarily use it.

But if it is not possible to conceive threat (or security) without incorporating the possibility of violence, could it be possible to conceptualize violence (or peace) without integrating the idea of threat? The answer is negative. Even if we in theory could conceive of, for instance, a state being violently and suddenly attacked without the previous generation or perception of a latent threat, in practice this is virtually impossible to occur. In the complex world of international relations, the use of armed force is generally preceded by mounting exchanges of threats and the internalization of feelings of insecurity (even if minimal), which ultimately reinforce the idea that violence and insecurity need to be conceptualized unitarily.

This argument can be taken further. As I pointed out earlier, the broad fields of security and peace shall not only be categorized by inimical relationships where threats and violence are produced and received<sup>9</sup> but, additionally, should also integrate the idea that the successful transformation of threats and violence endow an agent with the possibility to amplify and proactively generate more security and peace. In other words, peace and security allow to a wide range of different categorizations. If above I argued that the occurrence of a threat presupposed the possibility of using violence, would it be possible, following the same logic, to feel and magnify our security without peace? The answer is obviously equally negative. The feeling of negative and positive security is dependent to a large extent on the principle that there is negative and structural peace. To feel secure or to be able to produce security, one needs to be certain of the impossibility of physical or structural violence to be inflicted on us. The contrary also holds. So that negative peace can be enjoyed between agents they need to be enveloped by a sense of security<sup>10</sup>. This rests on the underlying assertion that security is a prerequisite for the enjoyment of other values such as prosperity, freedom, and *peace* (Baldwin, 1997:18).

The umbilical relationship between insecurity and violence can be further developed in the sense that structural violence, as defined above, could encompass the feeling of being under threat. Even if the threat does not materialize and violence is not materially inflicted (be it

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<sup>9</sup> Obviously a crucial component of the process of production-reception of threats is deterrence. There are two forms of deterrence: deterrence by punishment or deterrence by denial. The first is a strategy by which governments threaten an immense retaliation if attacked. Aggressors are deterred if they do not wish to suffer such damage as a result of an aggressive action. The latter is a strategy whereby a government builds up or maintains defence and intelligence systems with the purported aim of neutralising or mitigating attacks. This study, however, is more concerned in ascertaining whether the production-reception of a threat (be it deterred or not) has a regional geographical component than to focus on mechanisms used to stop threats (which, in this case, would not aid us in identifying the regional component of security).

<sup>10</sup> This does not necessarily entail that the attainment of negative peace is inexorably associated to the reduction of insecurity. States might threaten one another although they might not be willing to wage an armed conflict.

structural or direct violence), the mere act of threatening is, arguably, already an attack to the wellbeing of a person, and, therefore, could be considered structural violence.

The analysis of peace and security demonstrated therefore that (a) peace and security are wide and extensive concepts, and (b) they should be approached unitarily. But how does this correlate to the regional level?

### **REGIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY?**

To address the problem this study assumes that each regional cluster can be located in a scale that ranges from enmity and violence, to amity and peace. As peace and security define a wide range of different relationships between agents, inevitably regions can be characterized differently. To investigate how the broadness of peace and security are reflected at the regional level, this study analyzes the formation of *regions of insecurity-violence* and *regions of security-peace*<sup>11</sup>.

This apparent polarization is only useful for analytical and heuristic purposes. I am certainly aware that in-between this dual characterization there is a broad grey area. Nevertheless, it is analytically functional to center attention on the two extremes of the same broad reality in order to identify coherently the large territorial latitude of action of peace and security (which includes peace-security and violence-insecurity).

Bearing in mind this outline, I will concentrate first on the idea of spatial diffusion, which will serve as a catalyst to assess and describe how peace and security relations cluster regionally.

### **Spatial Diffusion**

In order to comprehend how the dynamics of security and peace shape macro-regions, one needs to associate the territorial idea of region to the notion of ‘space’. If the first is a mere territorial and physical construction, space is a concept that relates to the location of things in relationship to other things, and how things are distributed (Agnew and Duncan, 1989). Space is intimately linked to the idea of ‘distance’ – how close or far units are within some concept of space. Hence, it is not a static concept that can be simply charted by resorting to

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<sup>11</sup> Although the terms are used in combination for analytical purposes I do not suggest that regional insecurity is inevitably associated to regional violence, nor that regional security is necessarily linked to regional peace (negative and structural). Although ‘peace’ and ‘security’ are strongly related concepts, they are certainly not synonymous.

conventional tools such as grids, latitude or longitude. It is, above all, an idea that it is “constantly altered by human decisions” (Abler, Adams, and Goud, 1971:82). It is a psychological perception predicated upon a territorial basis. As Starr pointed out, “distance is important because states (or any other social units) that are close to each other, that is, are in proximity to one another, are better able to interact”. He adds that, “greater perceptions of threat or gain, or of interdependence, are ways in which proximity can generate salience. States (or whatever unit is under consideration) that are close are seen as more important” (2005:390/391). The connection between proximity and increased interaction has been widely demonstrated by the literature (Zipf, 1949; Boulding, 1962; Siverson and Starr, 1991; Vasquez, 1996).

Proximity, therefore, gives the opportunity to positive or negative interaction (Starr and Thomas, 2002). Quincy Wright, in his seminal work on the causes of war, hypothesized that the greater the distance between states the greater the possibility of war, given that in isolation “there is no basis for mutual understanding” (1942:1240). Starr and Thomas have also found out that high levels of ease of interaction across borders – greater interaction opportunities – can be related to positive Deutschian interdependence-integration effects (2005). Moreover, Easterly and Levine (1998), for instance, have shown strong tendencies for the cross-border contagion of economic policies in Africa. But besides these opportunities for cooperation, territorial proximity also provides an opportunity for conflict. This has been widely studied in the literature by Diehl, who analyzed “geography as a facilitating condition” for conflict (1991), or by Hensel in his interpretation of territory as a “context” of conflict (2000).

Space and proximity feed into the idea of diffusion. In the international system, polities are bound together through a variety of networks reflecting such things as geographical contiguity, alliance ties, and patron-client relationships (Greig, 2004:1). These ties between polities ensure that, in many instances, when two polities interact with one another they create a ripple effect that, in turn, impacts other across both time and space.

In a widely used definition, Benjamin Most and Harvey Starr define spatial diffusion as a process whereby “events of a given type in a given polity are conditioned by the occurrence of similar events in other polities at prior points in time” (1981:10). By the same token, Welsh associates diffusion to “the process by which institutions, practices, behaviours, or

norms are transmitted between individuals and /or between social systems” (cited in Starr, 1991:359). The study of spatial diffusion has been amply applied to conflicts<sup>12</sup>. Employing a series of statistical tests, Houweling and Siccama found out that outbreaks of war during the period 1816-1980 appear to have a diffusion-like pattern (1988:128-136). Arriving at similar results, Stuart Bremer after analyzing statistically the diffusion effects of 634 militarized interstate disputes over the period 1900-1976 concluded that militarized disputes tend to have a ‘spill-over’ effect within regions, but not across regions (1982). Other studies have demonstrated that diffusion of wars and militarized disputes usually takes place within a set of contiguous, and thus closely linked states (Most, Starr, and Siverson, 1989. See also Gleditsch and Ward, 2000). Braithwaite gave a new twist to this literature by focusing on the issues that lead to the diffusion of conflicts at regional level. He found out that disputes “with long durations, high levels of hostilities, underlying territorial issues, and those located in mountainous but not forested areas become more geographically spread out than those that do not share these characteristics” (2006:518).

Despite the low research output, the concept of diffusion has also been applied to positive and negative peace. For instance, O'Loughlin et al. examine the changes in the geographic distribution of political regimes from 1946 to 1994. Using an empirical measure of democracy derived from democratic and authority structures, they map and graph changes in the number and nature of political regimes to explore the spatial and temporal regularities and oddities of the process of democratic diffusion. They conclude that geographical proximity increases the number of interactions that can promote democracy or authoritarianism between countries; the closer countries are to each other, the greater the number of possible linkages through which democracy can be promoted or spread (1998. See also Starr, 1991). Additionally, Greig has shown in a notable way, using quantitative methods, that there are “high levels of spatial correlation in both the occurrence and success of conflict management [negotiation and mediation] that is distinct from the pattern of spatial linkages of international conflict” (2004:3).

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<sup>12</sup> For a remarkable historical overview of the literature on the diffusion of conflicts see Simowitz (1998).

## HOW DO REGIONS OF INSECURITY AND VIOLENCE EMERGE?

For analytical purposes this study contends that the regional level is singled out in three key ways: (i) regional reception of intra-regional threats and violence, (ii) regional reception of extra-regional threats and violence, and (iii) regional provision of threats and violence.

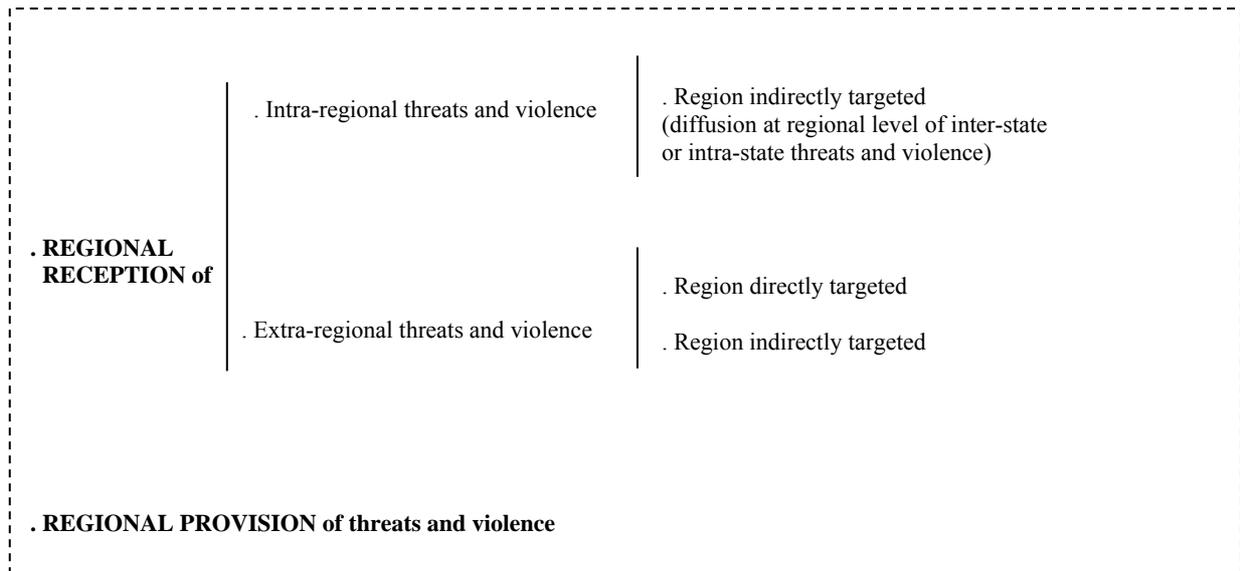


Fig.1: Regional Cluster of Threats and Violence

### Regional Reception of Intra-Regional Threats and Violence

The regional level stands out in security relations primarily as a consequence of the diffusion of inter-state conflicts or securitization of state relations (see above). This is generally the way regional clusters of security are formed. In a pre-Westphalia era, the contact between the different polities was minimal and, therefore, security was above all a localized issue with, in most cases, exclusive domestic implications. As described by Mouritzen (1995), for a long time the international system was marked by tribal and/or nomadic groups that moved over long distances; and with the geographical instability and mobility of the main actors no stable regional environment ever emerged. In an era when communication and mobility were sluggish (or inexistent), the increase or decrease of security in a feudal political entity had no major positive or negative impact on neighboring political entities. And even if two agents

quarreled and configured their security in relation to one another, since their size and capacity to export violence was minimal, this security complex would have a limited geographic importance. In Middle Age Europe, for example, war resembled banditry or ‘private’ warfare with members of the military caste of knights raiding one another’s lands and creating general insecurity (Keegan, 1993).

The Westphalian era saw the advent of the sovereign state, which paved the way for a profound alteration of this configuration. First, the centralization of authority and the demarcation between ‘crime’ and ‘war’ accompanied a growing recognition of a distinction between ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ the state, which consequently militated in favor of the state capacity to mobilize resources and, therefore, to wage war. And as security is a concept that involves a relationship between at least two agents, the formation and consolidation of states led to a securitization process that encompassed neighboring countries<sup>13</sup>. The increase in size of the possible producers of and receivers of threats<sup>14</sup> (from feuds to states), the development of new warfare equipment (introduction of gunpowder<sup>15</sup>), and the permanent settlement of those agents (from nomadic tribes to sedentary states) led to the regionalization of security. At early stages, even if security, in some cases, had a primarily bilateral component (e.g. Portugal vs. Spain), the multiplication of several bilateral security relations (e.g. Portugal alliance with England to deter Spain) led to a complex net of relations that ultimately increased the territorial stage where security was formulated. When states started to play out their security strategies vis-à-vis other states, regions of security emerged. This seems to be the underlying idea expressed by Buzan et al. that ‘threats travel more easily over short distances than over longer ones’ (1998:11). As I pointed out before, this is in fact a premise that should be extracted from the concept of ‘spatial diffusion’, which suggests that states in regions marked by militarized disputes and insecurity are themselves likely to experience

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<sup>13</sup> In order to centralize attention and to maintain intellectual coherence and cohesiveness, this article will not investigate whether the threats produced by one agent are subject to either a subjective or objective reception by the other agent. Even though I tend to agree with the idea that “securitization, like politicization has to be understood as an essential inter-subjective process” (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde, 1998:30), the focus is on the mobility and geographical scope of threats and not on the social construction of threats. Within the spirit of this study, all threats – perceived or objective – imply a relationship between at least two actors, which has necessarily to occur at a spatial level of analysis. The examination of how these threats cluster at the regional level is part of the research agenda of this study.

<sup>14</sup> Previously ‘threat’ was defined as an action that conveys a conditional commitment to punish unless one’s demands are met. This study assumes that threats can be of a military, political, social, economic, or environmental nature. Even though a rigid distinction between the different threats is not done, the study will give priority to the production, handling and reception of military and political threats. Likewise, Lake and Morgan alert that “when threats arise from more sources, take a great variety of forms, and involve change along many dimensions, measurement and analysis become much more difficult” (1997:22).

<sup>15</sup> The period from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries saw widespread development in gunpowder technology mainly in Europe. Advances in metallurgy led to portable weapons and the development of hand-held firearms such as muskets.

militarized disputes and insecurity. Most and Starr, for instance, have demonstrated with substantial empirical data, that if a war begins on a nation's border, that nation might then become involved in a new military conflict depending upon the perceived changes in the nation's vulnerability, uncertainty, risks, and opportunities that accompany the onset of the military conflict. In general they assume that the likelihood of diffusion is particularly high among states in a region because such states interact more extensively than other states (1980:936). Likewise, Hammaström and Heldt have proved quantitatively, using 'network position', that the diffusion of conflicts is higher among contiguous states (2002), vindicating the idea that violence and insecurity follow patterns of spatial clustering.

Even though the formation of clusters of insecurity is to a large extent enabled by the multiplication and diffusion of inter-state conflicts, we should not neglect that presently most conflicts are, however, internal in nature (civil wars and state failure). According to the Uppsala database (Harbom, Högbladh and Wallensteen, 2006), in 2005 there were 31 armed conflicts, all of which involve internal conditions and center either on power within the country or on control over certain regions. Even when conflicts are reputedly endemic the majority of them are, in fact, either induced by, or had an impact on, neighboring countries<sup>16</sup>.

### **Regional Reception of Extra-Regional Threats and Violence**

The analysis of the mobility of contemporary threats suggests that there are other examples where the regional level becomes salient. In some cases external threats compels states to transcend their rivalries and form regional blocks to deter them. In other cases the establishment of a regional group makes it the target of extra-regional threats. In both cases the regional levels stands out as a container of security, although there is no inevitable physical linkage between the producer and the receiver of threats (or possibly violence).

For example ASEAN was formed, to some extent, as a response to an external communist threat. Prior to the creation of ASEAN other regional institutional attempts were made. For instance, the abortive US-brokered 1955 Southeast Asian Treaty Organization was the first attempt at regional unity. Modeled after NATO, it was conceived as a bulwark against

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<sup>16</sup> The majority of intra-state conflicts have a pronounced regional component. Of the 103 conflicts analyzed by Wallensteen and Sollenberg from 1989 to 1997, strong regional dynamics and spill over effects were noted in 55 percent. Of the 14 major conflicts active in 2000, 10 directly affected neighboring states (Wallensteen and Sollenberg, 1998). This pattern, coined by the Swedish researchers as 'regional conflict complex', is re-baptized by Rubin as 'regional conflict formation', and defined as 'transnational conflicts that form mutually reinforcing linkages with each other throughout a region, making for more protracted and obdurate conflicts' (Rubin, 2002).

communism in the region. The Association of Southeast Asia formed by Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand followed in 1961, but lasted only one year before tensions in the region forced it to be abandoned. What is interesting to register is that in spite of these tensions, ASEAN came to life in 1967. The ASEAN founding members (Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines and Singapore) adopted the ASEAN Declaration, which aimed at promoting free-market principles and cooperation in the region, as well as combating the perceived communist threat. Indeed, each of the countries, except Singapore, had a local communist insurgency to deal with and for this reason China's Cultural Revolution's rhetoric was regarded as a threat to the whole region. To some extent ASEAN was, therefore, created to deter an external threat. Besides ASEAN, also Western Europe was the direct target of perceived external threats originated in the Soviet Union (Hoffmann and Laird, 1991, Ripsman, 2005).

Besides being directly targeted by extra-regional threats, the regional level can also emerge as an upshot of a related process, namely the diffusion at the regional level of an external attack not directly intended at the whole region.

In the present globalized world a threat (or a physical/structural violent attack) to the national security of one state (namely perpetrated by a global terrorist organization) generally spills over into neighboring states. Although terrorist attacks<sup>17</sup> are, in most cases, perpetrated neither by regional groups nor directed solely to a particular region, a terrorist attack on one state provokes a prompt chain reaction in other states, with whom the attacked state has strong economic, political and religious ties (and such linkages are even stronger within regions). As depicted by the terrorist attack to London on 7/7 - which led the majority of European countries to rise, within a few minutes, their levels of national alert - the sense of intra-regional insecurity increases when one state is attacked. Moreover, the economic repercussions of a terrorist attack are not contained within the borders of the targeted state. When consumers feel less safe, their spending patterns change. Businesses will alter their investment and employment plans. As a result, lack of confidence negatively impacts on national, and ultimately regional, growth.

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<sup>17</sup> Terrorism is here portrayed as an extra-regional threat (assuming that the financial resources and the top of the commanding chain are outside the region where the attack is perpetrated). However, it is obvious that terrorist attacks can be carried out by local cells relying on logistical, human, and financial resources that originate from the same region where the attack occurs. In this case terrorism should be contextualized under 'regional reception of intra-regional threats and violence'. In addition, in case a terrorist organization has a strong regional level of actorness (e.g. an organization that operates on behalf of a regional identity), terrorism should be analyzed under 'regional provision of threats and violence'.

To illustrate the diffusive impact of terrorism at the regional level, Drakos and Kutan have demonstrated with solid quantitative data that a terrorist attack in one state has an impact on tourism in neighboring states. They found for instance, that “terrorism in Greece has spill over effects, exerting a stronger impact on Turkey’s market share” (2003:638).

### **Regional Provision of Threats and Violence**

Although the autonomization of the regional level is generally encouraged by the reception of threats, regional organizations can themselves be a collective producer of threats. As this normally presupposes regional concerted ‘actorness’ and, consequently, a significant level of regional integration, it is not a common feature in global politics. Nonetheless, mainly in the economic and financial areas, regional organizations can be robust producers of threats. For example the European Union has produced threats against multinational corporations, mainly in the area of computer software (e.g. Microsoft). Threats have also been produced against extra-regional states. In 2000, transatlantic trade frictions between the EU and the US have deepened after a row over a U.S. tax scheme for exporters. In 2006, the EU has also threatened to refer India to the World Trade Organization if Delhi did not agree to remove tariffs on drinks imports.

In another notable example, the Arab League declared war on Israel in 1948 and was directly involved with the projection of violence to nullify the independence of the state. Furthermore, the Arab League has imposed an economic boycott to Israel for most of the second half of the twentieth century. The boycott prohibits direct trade between Israel and the Arab nations and is also directed at companies that do business with Israel.

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In all these cases the regional dimension is dominant. Beyond the orthodox cases, amply stressed by the literature in regional security (where the regional level is explained by the proximity of threats), this study contends that even when there is a territorial discrepancy between the producer and receiver of insecurity violence, the regional level may be equally observable, adding to the inventory of how regions become an autonomous level in peace and security.

## HOW DO REGIONS OF SECURITY AND PEACE EMERGE?

Following the line of argumentation, the regionalization of relations of amity and peace is, to a large extent, connected to a *proactive* conceptualization – defined as goods that once achieved can be boosted and magnified. Even though the formation of regions marked by amity is preceded by enmity and the amplification of peace at the regional level is normally anteceded by regional conflicting patterns, it is important to underline that some regions are indeed able to desecuritize intra-regional relations and transform themselves into arenas of cooperation and security. In this study, in a similar way to insecurity and violence, it is contended that the autonomization of the regional level in relations marked by peace comes about in various ways: (i) regional reception of intra-regional security and peace (diffusion of intra-state or inter-state peace), (ii) regional reception of extra-regional security and peace, and (iii) regional provision of security and peace.

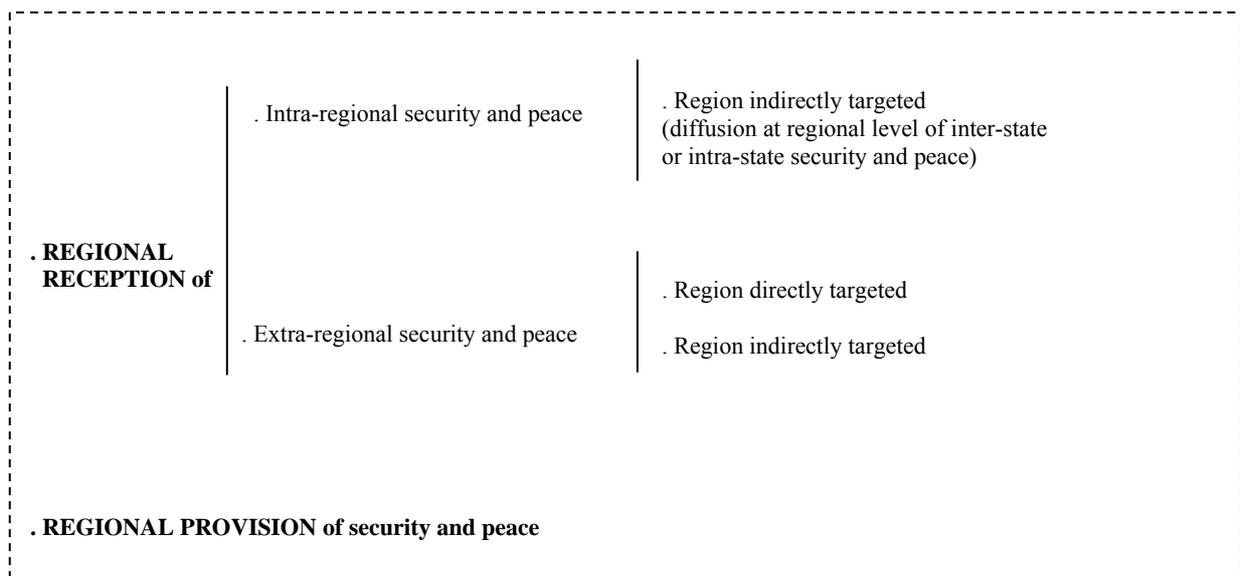


Fig.2: Regional Cluster of Security and Peace

### Regional Reception of Intra-Regional Security and Peace

Identically to insecurity-violence, the regional autonomization of peace-security is also contingent upon the emergence of the modern-state. It is with the formation and consolidation of state structures that units become contiguous and mutually dependent on one another. Given the intensification of mobility of people, ideas and goods, and the enmeshing of political entities it is not possible to attain a state of peace in isolation. Peace (positive and negative) and the feeling of security are associated to the idea of diffusion and cooperation.

As I underlined before, events in a given polity are conditioned by the occurrence of similar events in other polities, which means that a peaceful relationship between units can diffuse to other political units. This is more likely to happen between units that are territorially close. Indeed, proximity might induce countries to cooperate and share positive transaction costs that derive from their positive interaction.

In academic terms, the diffusion of peace and cooperation has also received some attention in the literature. Schrodtt and Mintz (1988) find a strong pattern of interdependence among both conflicting and cooperative events in the Middle East, suggesting that dyads in the region have a greater chance of interacting cooperatively when other dyads in the region are also cooperating. Indeed, Schrodtt and Mintz identify a bloc of states including Jordan, Iraq and Saudi Arabia, where cooperative and conflictual interaction patterns are nearly identical during their period of study. Along similar lines, Greig demonstrates quantitatively that, during the period 1950-1996, states surrounded by neighbors experiencing high levels of conflict management success also tend to experience frequently successful mediation and negotiation efforts. As he pointed out (2004:17/20):

“Not only can mediation and negotiation efforts build upon previous success within a conflict, but successful conflict management appears highly prone to diffuse to surrounding states. This finding suggests that efforts at conflict management can be conceived of more broadly, rather than merely relying upon a focus upon a pair of disputing parties, policy-makers may also seek to promote conflict management among their neighbors with an expectation that success will have a positive effect upon the pair of disputing states” (...) “although conflict diffuses in the international system, peace does too”

It has also been amply demonstrated that democracy tends to spread to neighboring countries (positive peace). Starr, for example, has shown that, between 1974-1980 and 1981-1987, there is a strong positive regional pattern of democracy diffusion in Latin America, Central America/Caribbean, Europe and sub-Saharan Africa (1991:369). He denotes that, “it is clear that many governmental transitions were not random nor free from the regional context – geographic or otherwise – within which they took place” (p.371). This is a relevant aspect for this study since democracy can be regarded as an element of positive peace given that it promotes freedom of speech, free association of individuals and equality of political participation.

The regional diffusion of good governance, sound domestic policies or internal peace is in fact a growing tendency in international relations. Positive accomplishments in one state may serve as a reference point or model to neighboring countries. This is the principle of common sharing and common learning that is behind the Peer Review practice in international organizations as the AU or the OCDE.

The Human Development Index (2006) also echoes the idea that positive peace (and lack of it) tends to cluster regionally: countries originated in the same region tend to have similar positions in the Human Development Index. In the slot of the 20 countries that score highest, 15 are Europeans. Also in the Andean Community, the HDI seems to group up by region as all states stand relatively together in the HDI: Colombia 70<sup>th</sup>, Venezuela 72<sup>nd</sup>, Peru 82<sup>nd</sup>, Ecuador 83<sup>rd</sup>, Bolivia 115<sup>th</sup>. Also more evidently, in South Asia there is a strong regional tendency: Sri Lanka 93<sup>rd</sup>, Maldives 98<sup>th</sup>, India 126<sup>th</sup>, Pakistan 134<sup>th</sup>, Bhutan 135<sup>th</sup>, Bangladesh 137<sup>th</sup>, and Nepal 138<sup>th</sup>.

Peace has, thus, a spatial component; it benefits primarily the people who live in the political sphere where its producer originates. Mendez, a subscriber to the idea that peace is a *global* issue, is too enthusiastic about the outreach of peace, when he argues, for instance, that peace in Cyprus, “enhances peace in Greece, Turkey and the Mediterranean, and it contributes to peace in the *world*” (1999:389. Italics added). The capacity to produce it and the people who can benefit from it does not extend generally further than a region. Whereas global peace is an academic chimera regional zones of peace are an emerging facet of international relations (Kacowicz, 1998; Singer and Wildavsky, 1993).

### **Regional Reception of Extra-Regional Peace and Security**

Some regions in the world, which experience high levels of scarcity or overall conflict are targeted by extra-regional agents with the goal of minimizing their structural and direct violence. Some of these external interventions (by states, regional organizations, intergovernmental institutions, or the UN) aim directly at indigenous regional organizations and normally encompass transference or deployment of resources to aid in the transformation of violence. As an illustration, in 2003 the EU decided to create an African Peace Facility and allocated European Development Funding (EDF) to the new instrument amounting to the sum of 250 million euros. The APF is meant to provide the EU with an additional instrument with which to promote sustainable security in Africa.

In other cases, the external intervention might be intended at one particular state, but it will ultimately bring about positive change in the whole region. UN peacekeeping operations are paradigmatic in this regard. The deployment of traditional or robust peacekeeping operations, which might envisage the monitoring of cease-fires, social and political reconstruction, disarmament, promotion of human rights or enforcement of a cease-fire in one specific country will likely transform in a positive way the dynamics in a region. For instance the recent deployment of a UN peacekeeping force in Lebanon following the Israel-Lebanon war (2006) certainly had broader security goals than the mere pacification of the southern part of the country.

### **Regional Provision of Peace and Security**

The third example in which the regional level stands out presupposes the emergence of a regional actor with the capacity to produce peace and security (internally or externally).

Peace (negative and positive) is occasionally treated as a *global* issue (see Mendez, 1999). This study does not challenge the idea that peace (and security) is a state (or a value), which, if produced globally, would benefit virtually everyone. This idea marginalizes, however, the crucial question of production of peace. As Olson cautioned “the desire for peace (...) for orderly financial arrangements for multilateral trade, for the advance of basic knowledge, and for an ecological viable planet are now virtually universal, yet these collective goods are only episodically or scantily supplied” (cited in Kaul, Grunberg, and Stern, 1999:14). Who is able to produce and sustain *global* peace? The only global organization, which could legally provide such arrangement, is the United Nations. But, since its foundation in 1945, the UN has proven incapable of working as a collective security organization insomuch as the national security agenda of great powers leads them, regularly, to engage in military disputes, which are incongruent with the collective security principles. Not surprisingly, thereby, the UN is consigning the responsibility to handle ‘regional conflicts’ to regional organizations (Diehl and Leppgold, 2003; Pugh and Sidhu, 2003; Graham and Felicio, 2006). In his September 2006 report, ‘A Regional-Global Security Partnership: Opportunities and Challenges’, former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan briefly sketched this growing trend: “a representative list of regional and other partners that have collaborated politically or co-deployed with the United Nations peacekeeping operations includes the AU in Burundi, Ethiopia and Eritrea, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Sudan; ECOWAS in Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone and Liberia; the EU in Kosovo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo

and the Sudan; the Commonwealth of Independent States and OSCE in Georgia; NATO in Afghanistan and Kosovo, and OAS in Haiti” (p.8)<sup>18</sup> Even though Mendez is right when he argues that “there is a danger where global interests are involved that these [regional] institutions will give priority to the region they represent rather than the interest of peace in general” (1999:397), it seems that UN is willing to take that risk and pass on that responsibility.

Based on this analysis it becomes clear that regions may have actor quality and should not be treated as mere analytical tools (unlike what is postulated by Buzan and Wæver, 2003:27). Moreover, their ability to project security does not necessarily follow geographical contiguity patterns, vindicating once again the idea that geographical proximity is not a *sine qua non* condition for regional security to emerge.

## **CONCLUSION**

The article advocates that security and peace should be conceptualized inseparably and treated in a concerted fashion, or using Osiander’s phrase, they are “closely tied together in one coherent package” (1998). Hence, given the umbilical relationship between both concepts, this article used the terms in a combined fashion. The second fundamental idea is that the analytical study of security and peace should acknowledge the comprehensive nature of these terms. For this reason, it should go beyond their reactive component, i.e. the management of threats and violence. As it was pointed out, peace and security are also loaded with a strong proactive element that needs to be taken into account.

The article laid stress on the idea that space, distance (proximity), and diffusion are important vectors in the establishment of relationships between different units. These relationships are more intense between units that are physically near, which led to the conclusion that regions are important ‘containers’ of peace and security relations. Nevertheless, it described concertedly how the regional level could equally encapsulate peace and security even if there is no proximity between the producer and receiver of threats-violence, or security-peace.

At the policy-level the findings have an empirical practical relevance outside academia, which should be incorporated by policy-makers in the conceptualization, formulation and

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<sup>18</sup> ‘A Regional-Global Security Partnership: Opportunities and Challenges’: Report of the UN Secretary-General (A/61/201-S/2006/590).

execution of sound policies. For example, the study cartographed, in a systematic way, why peace and security obey regional territorial clustering. This is an idea of vital importance to policy-makers. If peace is spatially related, then conflict management efforts aimed at improving the relationship between two states (e.g. mediation and negotiation) may be approached much more broadly than merely through dyadic efforts. If the success of mediation and negotiation demonstrates high levels of spatial auto-correlation, this suggests that efforts to improve the relationship between a pair of states that have experienced a long history of conflict need not be confined merely to that pair of states. Instead, third parties may also intervene in conflicts that are spatially related to the disputants as a means of creating a zone of peace that will, in turn, promote peace between the disputants.

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