

Failure and Theoretical Criticism of the Economic Integration as Peace Building Mechanism in the African Grand Lac Region

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Abstract

This research uses trade and economic interdependence as lenses to evaluate the limits of liberal peace theory in conflict zones. For centuries, liberal theory (Montesquieu's "soft commerce", and Kant's "democratic peace") has posited that regional economic integration is an important catalyst for peace and political stability within regions. Although the liberal framework was successful in shaping regional structures such as the European Union, Mercosur, and ASEAN after WWII; it faces both theoretical and empirical criticism from structural and dependency theorists who claim that global capitalism may contribute to underdevelopment and instability. This study will utilize these competing theories to examine why regional economic integration has been unable to create or sustain enduring peace in the African Great Lakes region. The study also illustrates the complexity of variables which prevent trade-induced stability in developing countries, through analyzing the disconnection between classical liberal optimism and reality in regional economies.

Keywords: Liberal Peace Theory; Economic Integration; Trade Interdependence; Great Lakes Region; Conflict Resolution; Structural Theory.

Introduction

Liberal theory has often been asserting and emphasizing about regional economic integration promoting peace and political stability in participating countries. This belief is fueled by the theory of "liberal peace", which was inspired by Montesquieu's "Soft Commerce" (1748) and Kant's concept of "democratic peace" (1795). After the Second World War, this great idea of this liberal belief appeared in the debate about the peaceful results of regional economic integration, namely in Europe with the creation of the (EU), in Latin America (Mercosur) and in South Asia (ASEAN). Montesquieu states in his book "On the Spirit of Laws" that the natural result of trade is peace. Because, according to him, trade brings two selected countries more countries together, and if one wants to sell or to buy, the other will also participate in the project. In an effort to achieve lasting peace, Kant focused on trade between nations and said it was the catalyst for international relations characterized by negotiations and peace.

For Kant, trade is something that binds countries and people together and in this way it is not compatible with war as a substitute. Ricardo (1817), Smith (1776) and J. S. Mill (1848) were classical economists who strongly supported free trade and emphasized the peaceful benefits of trade between nations. They were the main proponents of liberalism in politics and international relations until the end of the Cold War and the resurgence of civil wars in developing countries in the 1990s (Polachek 1980; Rose Rance 1986). Economic integration as a source of economic and trade interdependence, is considered a source of security and of stability. Proponents of the liberal or libertarian theory believe that the principles are the

same when it comes to the effects of trade on national conflicts. Open economies that are vulnerable to civil war have large internal and external trade linkages, which means that the costs of civil war are high for these countries. After World War II, it was widely accepted that regional economic integration would lead to better relations and peace between member states through economic cooperation that it generates. In classical literature, two theoretical currents meet for this purpose: the neoliberal theory and the structural theory. From the perspective of development theorists, Gander Frank, Amin and Galtung argue that, far from promoting peace between nations, Western liberalism keeps developing countries dependent on global capitalism and perpetuates the weakness and the underdevelopment of the global South, which fuels instability and conflict.

This work analyses the liberal peace theory through trade to understand why economic integration failed into Establishing and maintaining peace in the Grand lake region of African.

The liberal thesis of peace through trade

The idea that economic cooperation or economic interdependence can promote peace between nations is part of the "soft trade" thesis that was developed in the 18th century, known as the Enlightenment century, in response to the promotion of military violence which was held by royal conquests as a means of accumulating land. this dominant mercantile ideology of the 17th century, considered as an obstacle to free trade was criticized by liberals. Liberals believe that balancing interests between nations and trade is the most effective way to achieve this.¹ They therefore pushed for the elimination of tariffs, quotas and other forms of control that could interfere with market conditions, which they say reduces welfare, creates tension between countries and increases the risk of war. Liberal economists such as David Ricardo (1718) and Adam Smith (1776) were the first to extol the benefits of trade between nations and to preach the peaceful benefits of mutual trade. They therefore argue that removing artificial barriers to trade will only benefit the creation of a peaceful international environment.

While liberal economists were staunch supporters of free trade, philosophers of the Enlightenment and those of international relations preached peace through trade. It all started with Montesquieu, when he argued in *On the Spirit of Laws* (1748) that trade cures negative prejudices and tensions, and it moderates morals, which has a natural result of trade is the establishment of peace. Kant (1795) in his part did not reject the idea that nations are naturally lucky to go to war, but he argued that peace can be achieved by the political will of the people, through their morality and their reason. according to him, if nature compels men to go to war with their fellows, it binds them together, because it make them aware of what bad consequences their aggressive desires will have, which would be better to live in peace and harmony with everyone far from the use of weapons. In his argument, Kant emphasized the peaceful effects of trade between nations, which create transnational connections contributing to the stability of the system through integration. In line with these ideas, many of these authors' arguments since the end of World War II now outweigh the benefits of international trade and cooperation over the benefits of military competition and conquest. Along these lines, Rosecrance (1986) suggests that, as trade and foreign investment increased, the drive to conquer new territories by force declined. For him, the end of the Second World War meant the emergence of a commercial state that replaced the military government. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, Fukuyama (1993) goes on to argue about the end of history because, according to him, the whole

¹ Merchants and national economists knew that trade and war were mutually reinforcing. Therefore, they supported a closed trade system because they understood international trade as a free game that could enrich the other side and increase its military power in the long run

world is now free to "correct" the laws of the market. There can be no "History" apart from a series of administrative decisions without conflict and violence.

At the international level, proponents of the liberal peace theory develop a number of mechanisms that can explain how trade and other forms of economic cooperation can facilitate peace between countries. The main argument is based on the idea that economic interdependence creates mutual benefits to both parties that are worth the risk if conflicting strategies are chosen (Polashek 1980). This will increase the cost of war and the intensity of trade and other economic activities between the two friendly countries. The second argument under the term commercialization and dear of neoliberals is that it promotes communication and bonds between actors in the public and specific parts of different countries, thus creating good conditions for the establishment of political relations, cooperation between countries (Stein 2003). That is, the benefits of open trade allow producers and consumers to rely on the "normal" market and refuse to see that political interventions lead to trade conflicts that harm their livelihoods. The third method is based on symbolic theory. The third mechanism, According to Gartzke and Li (2003), conflict is the result of communication problems rather than material problems. The authors argue that war is costly and that in most cases, if both warring parties can negotiate an agreement to end the war without exhausting the costs; that agreement will be reached without going to war. Asymmetric and uncertain information about the distribution of the costs and benefits of war explains why countries go to war and how some wars are avoided. However, trade between the two friendly countries is the most important indicator of the opportunity costs that would arise from military escalation. There is little research on the relationship between international trade and internal conflict. However, according to liberals, the idea of trade and peace at the international level still prevails in internal conflicts. At this point, liberal theory offers several arguments. First, an open economy and many trade relations can be destroyed by civil war, which means that the costs of civil war are high. Thus, the expected costs associated with trade losses can deter governments in particular from engaging in civil wars (Magee and Massoud 2011).

Second, a country's foreign trade is essential to support economic development and contribute to internal peace. In fact, the improved economic conditions resulting from the development of foreign trade undermined individual incentives for violence, making it more difficult for warlords to recruit champions. For practical purposes, I would like to point out that this idea is based on Collier's theory that the root cause of civil wars is greed or theft. This is especially true for countries that rely heavily on exportable natural resources, favoring rebel groups and warlords. However, if I say that violence is driven only by greed/robbing, although in countries and regions rich in natural resources, it can be used, in my opinion, a short and simple view of reality. A civil war analyzed in terms of greed / rapacity is a conflict that does not evolve in terms of duration, place, actors and changing objectives. It can never be seen as a complex process that involves political, economic and social institutions and creates social, even tribal and national configurations. This means that the government should always be the representative of the people, always right, not the cause of civil war, but its reaction and protection. From this point of view, it is a model that tries to erase the historical, social and political aspects of conflict zones. In fact, violence in countries and regions rich in natural resources can be encouraged and financed by these resources. They enrich the warlords whose exploitation, taxation and corruption are the main problems of war. But the fact is that all wars are based on grievances and political demands.

A third mechanism through which foreign trade is hypothesized to reduce domestic conflict is that it can reduce inequality and control of government or the state by elites. This was possible because increased international trade allowed for the creation of many opportunities wealth and eliminated the need for elites

to hold on to power to acquire wealth, thus limiting the political grievances that lead to civil wars. Finally, Gleditsch et al. (2003) show that trade between two neighboring countries negatively affects civil conflicts. In fact, the extent to which a government can support armed groups in neighboring countries depends on whether it loves or hates the armed groups in that country. However, trade is a good indicator of compatibility between countries. This appears to be true, according to Gleditsch et al. , even if some research on the influence of international relations on civil wars covers the international context, the influence seems to me. (2003) assume that they may come from neighboring countries. Therefore, the degree of economic ties with neighboring countries appears to be the most accurate predictor of the costs of civil war and the incentives to resolve disputes by nonviolent means. A common hypothesis is that the greater the trade integration with neighboring countries, the lower the risk of civil war for that country. For this reason, almost all regional integration projects always involve political and security interests that aim to promote peace and stability in their regions. This is the case of the Great Lakes Region (GLR), which has experienced periods of conflict since the 1960s. In particular, Uganda, eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Rwanda and western Tanzania are countries reflecting conflicts that arose in the past and present (Gahama 2005). To these countries, which some authors call the hard core of the RGL (Chrétien 1986; Kabamba Kazadi 2000) and the relatively stable Kenya, countries behind this "core" such as Angola and the middle path must be added. The African Republic, Congo and Sudan have experienced internal armed conflicts of varying duration. After the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, armed conflicts in the GLR became bloody and regional. These wars affected the local population in the form of murders, looting, rape and population displacement. Local community initiatives focus on the management and prevention of local, national and regional problems. In 2000, the United Nations Security Council, through Resolutions 1291 and 1304, authorized the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) to promote peace, security, democracy and development in this fractured region by soldiers.² From this perspective, the creation of the ICGLR shows the recognition of the regional dimension of these conflicts and the need for joint efforts to promote peace and sustainable development in the region. In this way, the ICGLR is a spin-off and extension of the Economic Community of Great Lakes Islands (EGLS), which is seen as more than just a vehicle for solving economic and social problems. This was done not only because of the experience of these countries, but also as a way to restore peace and security in a small region³. Here it can be seen that the policies were guided and inspired by the idea that regional economic integration can promote good neighborly relations and achieve regional peace. This is evidenced by the inclusion of elements of economic development and regional integration in the ICGLR program.

According to Mwaka (2010), this is part of the old CEPGLian belief that economic exchanges and shared economic principles lead citizens, but also governments, to see the world objectively. Regional economic integration cannot be a mean to promote peace, but it cannot continue as long as civil and cross-border conflicts persist in the region. Africa would benefit from a clear focus on political rather than economic issues, which are often contentious and hampered by political interference, in contrast to the belief of the

² Through Resolution 1291 of February 24, 2000 and Resolution 1304 of June 16, 2000, the United Nations Security Council recognized that the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is a threat to world peace and security. ICGLR membership includes 11 countries: Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia, among them the right to war.

³ History of the ICGLR is available at www.icglr.org.

CEPGL and ICGLR programs, political problems are never solved, internal and external member states should focus on promoting regional economic integration and not the other way around.⁴

The contestation of the liberal thesis by realists and structuralists

There are two main schools of thought in classical literature that oppose the concept liberal of peace. Realists at the international level and structuralists at the national level. Realism was the first philosophical movement to oppose liberalism. This movement recognizes two distinct and continuous trends: realism (Morgenthau 1948) and Waltz's neorealism (1979). Morgenthau's view of the world is considered a true anthropology, which takes the political principles of Machiavelli and Hobbes and concludes that man is evil, consumed by passion and hungry for power. According to this situation, there is a constant desire among people to gain power after power, and this desire will never come the end. Unlike traditional methods, Waltz's neorealism seeks to understand the causes of war by questioning the role of states in the international system, rather than the role of the individual. Neorealism is different from the classical realism, instead of developing the anthropological hypothesis that the cause of war is human evil, neorealism develops the anthropological hypothesis of researching the geopolitical position of nations on the world stage (Cartonn and 2011). From this perspective, Waltz's neorealism is a systemic approach that suggests that the threat of governments is based on global atrocities rather than human evil. In both cases, realist reject the idea of a simple peace. Regarding the peace of between states, realists attack liberal peace theory on two fronts. First, for believers, relations between sovereign states represent competition and rivalry, with each state trying to protect and strengthen its political and military power. They support their views by arguing that power is unevenly distributed in the international community and that countries are driven by force. Realists truly believe that governments are legitimate and seek to advance their national interests, sometimes involving the use of force. Therefore, they see trade as a tool that serves the ultimate goal that every nation pursues: the constant search for power and security. Realists argue that trade is an asymmetrical and unbalanced relationship that does not benefit either partner.⁵ From this perspective, realists believe that trade and other forms of economic cooperation increase rather than decrease the risk of conflict between states (Barbieri 2002) and that trade conflict can result in an armed and bloody.⁶

When it comes to civil wars and internal conflicts, the structuralists reject the concept of peace. According to this philosophy, open trade and inequalities created by the world are the main mechanisms that lead to civil wars. As in today's Third World, structuralists argue that development made possible by trade is not equal, and that conflict arises through distorted information, emotions, and class conflict and economic crisis. This is especially true for the countries that rely on primary commodities. For this purpose, Hegre et al. (2003) find that countries that export only primary products benefit from trade openness in terms of it reducing the risk of civil war, because trade openness almost always leads to an increase in inequality that can escalate into armed conflict. In addition, according to structuralist, the penetration of international trade into peripheral economies leads to the exploitation of local human resources and natural resources and the shifting of profits to imperial centers, leading to poverty, inequality and injustice. Exporting raw

⁴ ICGLR, Regional Action Plan: Economic Development and Regional Participation, February

⁵ For example, realists argue that Japan and Germany relied heavily on resource-supplying countries in the 1930s, leading to conflict

⁶ Although in international humanitarian law we distinguish between internal armed conflicts and civil wars, I use the terms "internal conflict", "civil war" and "iwi-conflict" according to Singer and Small (1994) loosely to show.), a civil war in which 1,000 people died.

materials to poor countries does not create skills and the economy remains resource-driven. Finally, ties are created between local authorities and foreign interests, a situation that increases income inequality in poorer countries. Of course, the mining economies of these countries prioritize local and regional interests linked to global market players and geopolitical logic. From this perspective, the mining economy is an opaque and conflict economy that is likely to increase social, ethnic and territorial problems. It is a situation that can disrupt society and eventually lead to civil war.

Historical conflicts between countries in the Great Lakes region of Africa have contributed significantly to the lack of economic integration and efforts to maintain peace in the region. These problems are deeply rooted in the region's colonial history, internal conflicts and unresolved territorial disputes fueled by mistrust and mistrust between close friends. The Great Lakes region of Africa has been the scene of numerous armed conflicts and ethnic violence since the colonial period in. Political rivalries and power struggles, which often exacerbated historical divisions between different ethnic groups, led to conflicts that persist to this day. These past conflicts have left deep scars on society and have contributed to maintaining an atmosphere of mistrust and mistrust between countries in the region. Unresolved territorial disputes are another major source of historical conflict in the Great Lakes region of Africa. Border disputes and territorial claims between neighboring countries have led to frequent armed conflicts and political crises, hampering efforts at regional cooperation and economic integration. These regional conflicts lead to a conflict of interests between countries in the region and difficulties in creating cooperation mechanisms. In addition, political and military conflicts in the past have hampered efforts to promote peace and stability in the Great Lakes region of Africa. Conflicts over the control of natural resources, trade routes and strategic territories lead to military conflicts and change the relations between regional actors. These political and military conflicts undermine mutual trust between neighboring countries and make it difficult to establish sustainable economic cooperation.⁷

The divergent interests of regional actors in the African Great Lakes region are a serious obstacle to economic integration and the promotion of peace in the region. These differences in goals and priorities between countries made it difficult to coordinate development policies and strategies and hindered regional cooperation. Countries in the Great Lakes region of Africa have different economic, political and social conditions, which are reflected in different development programs. Some countries focus more on economic growth, others on food security, poverty reduction and environmental protection. These priorities make it difficult to develop a unified vision of regional economic integration. The problem of natural resources in the Great Lakes region of Africa is caused by conflicts and conflicts between neighboring countries. The region's natural resources, including rare minerals, oil and gas, are fueling interest and pressure to manage these resources. Disputes over access and use of these resources often lead to conflicts and regional conflicts, undermining economic cooperation and peacekeeping operations. Trade disputes and cross-border trade barriers hinder economic integration in the Great Lakes region of Africa. Tariff barriers, tariff restrictions, complex customs procedures and insufficient transport infrastructure limit trade between the countries in the region and hinder economic growth and job creation. These trade disputes have exacerbated tensions and conflicts between regional actors and limited economic cooperation.

Persistent economic inequality in the African Great Lakes region plays a major role in undermining peace and stability in the region. These differences in access to resources and resources create social and political

⁷ 7. In the context of trade and armed conflict, this approach is adopted by Hegre, Oneal and Russett

problems, conflict and instability, and difficulties in promoting coexistence and peace. First, it is important to emphasize that economic disparities in the Great Lakes region of Africa are deep and wide. The disparities in income and wealth between the different population groups are stark, with a minority of the wealthy living in poverty alongside the majority of the population. These differences are exacerbated by different economic policies, high levels of corruption and socio-economic structures. In addition, unequal access to resources and economic opportunities also contribute to fragile peace in the Great Lakes region of Africa. Ignorant and vulnerable people are often excluded from economic and social development, leading to frustration, injustice and protest. Inequality in access to education, health care, employment and basic services deepens socio-economic disparities, undermines social cohesion and increases conflicts and conflicts.

Economic integration in the Great Lakes region of Africa has not eliminated these structural inequalities. Despite efforts to boost regional trade, investment and economic cooperation, the benefits of economic integration have not been distributed fairly among the various economic and social actors. Persistent inequalities continue to fuel public discontent and frustration, undermining efforts to consolidate peace and stability. The structuralist idea that international trade is a cause of inequality and civil war is shared by dependency theorists. The latter, however, base their argument on a totally different perspective, namely the historical perspective of the domination of the periphery by global capitalism, which began in the colonial period.

Dependency theory: a profound challenge to the liberal thesis

In addition to the classic literature, dependency theorists argue that the weakness and underdevelopment of the Global South is the result of historical relations that have developed between two socio-economic units at a given time, namely one becoming a dependent state. In doing so, the dependency theory in its most extreme form poses a major challenge to economic peace theory, with dependency theorists arguing that it is not an ideological tool that serves the needs of developing countries and their peoples. (Gander Frank 1979; Amin 1974). For these theorists, developing countries occupy a place of dependency in relation to global capital. As a result, the authoritarian system, which is far from promoting peace, continues to keep developing countries in political and economic subordination, with the most important economic conditions, decisions and policies implemented in southern countries being influenced by the national economy.⁸ For the proponents of this theory, poverty, political instability and weakness in the countries of the South are the result of past practices initiated by the countries of the North, which are the economic dependence of the countries of the South. The decline of military forces, violence, poverty and corruption are not inevitable aspects of political development, but the result of dependence on imperialism.

Economic dependence can be seen in a variety of contexts, including trade dependence, technological dependence, and the ability of foreign interests to exploit domestic economic resources. In the first part, theorists show that trade in the global capitalist system is very different and beneficial to developing countries. Samir Amin (1974) states in this context that capitalist countries have the right to decide on different and unequal terms of trade with the countries of the South and from this point of view global markets work against these countries. Thus, it seems that the inhibition of accumulation in the South and the widening of the gap between the economies of the South and the North can be explained by various transfers that imply the expansion of the world of the system of capital production.

⁸ However, the explanatory variables are not displayed bivariately or bivariately, making it difficult to show their magnitude

G. Frank (1979) points out that control of developing countries lowers the prices of agricultural products and other basic products sold by Third World countries compared to the prices of industrial products sold by developed countries. This will lead to a deterioration in terms of trade, disadvantaging third world countries and paying tariffs on products imported from developing countries. This theory is reinforced by the separation of the economies of the South. The center's needs have been met since colonial times. It restricts the movement of money from one economic sector to another in the surrounding region, leading to the fragmentation of the economy in the south. Another type of trade dependence results from what is called international specialization, where the countries of the South are condemned to export raw materials and agricultural products, all of which contribute to the economies of the countries of the South.

Samir Amin argues that the main mechanism of differentiated pricing lies in the structure of labor costs. On this basis, he analyzes the exchanges between developed and developing countries and notes that the exchange is different since the price of labor on the product is lower than on the other side, as it is today (Amin 1974). For Samir Amin, the large number of workers in the Global South is not accidental, but a natural result of the politics in power. The local ruling class is always linked to the central ruling class, profiting from the exploitation of their own land and the creation of an "unemployed proletariat", so that wages fall and, at a certain level of productivity, the quantity supplied rate. International expertise that prevents southern countries from simply exporting raw materials will be sent to another addiction disease. It is the control of the interests of foreigners in the use of national resources. This type of dependence has led to instability and military conflicts in many African countries. This type of dependency can be seen in many SSA countries⁹, where many companies are engaged in the development and export of natural resources (timber, oil, minerals) originating from the North and serving the landed interests of elites (Kibanda Matungira 2013).

In the case of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a historical perspective on mining conflicts shows that Congo's bilateral and multilateral partners are taking advantage of the collapse of the Congolese government to expedite the acquisition of unauthorized concessions. It contains typical properties to ensure future results. This policy does not in any way encourage foreign investment in the development of the given country, but foreign powers and their companies of countries are expanding their activities to the places where the earth lives and steals the sky. However, as a result of this type of dependence, the combination of distributed costs, production strategies, growth policies and labor policies is largely determined from the outside. In fact, the authorities of dependent governments cannot foresee, control and direct economic activity in a prescribed direction. In these situations, policies that authorities consider by controlling economic factors such as prices, financial policies and interest rates do not achieve the desired results. The explanation for these counterarguments is that most of the economic conditions on which this country depends have been determined from outside. In this situation, it is impossible to fulfill the desire of the authorities to eliminate poverty among the population and reduce regional economic differences. Thus, as long as external relations are maintained, dependent economies are doomed to instability and underdevelopment, thus locking the affected countries into a cycle of tyranny and dependency that feed off each other.

For the Democratic Republic of Congo, the dominance of foreign interests in the use of national resources is well illustrated by Kankwenda (2005), who refers to this situation as "predatory politics".¹⁰ With this

⁹ Rwanda now speaks English but has not yet been "liberated".

¹⁰ We can take Dr Congo as an example because because of the national culture it is difficult to accept the concept of free settlement according to the principles of the common market

neologism, Kankwenda wants to criticize the international system for the use of natural resources, which operates in the commercial system of development, the creation of political systems and their types of support, and mainly a strategic view of the interests of external powers. The author mentions this robbery. To achieve this, Kankwenda identified various international actors, including political, military, economic-military and methods of intervention, as well as various types of sales of products and services developed by Masu. The first category of actors are mostly Western powers, either as governments or as bilateral partners. According to the author, there is no competition between these great powers, which sometimes leads to conflict situations and the escalation of armed conflicts in the participating countries, often promoting organizations and political actors with the aim of creating predatory states. Although the context of the Cold War often justified this kind of cronyism, Western powers were able to intervene in this process and loot large, sometimes strategic assets, many developing countries have, I still regret it. The second category of actors are international financial institutions (IFIs) and other multilateral financial institutions such as the Bretton Woods institutions and the European Development Fund. The predatory system of these attackers is a fund of "fake projects" that are the subject of technical studies of their services or design companies funded by them. In many cases, these actors also remember their participation or decision in the selection of a Western company or a group of Western companies responsible for the implementation of the project. But this is how debts benefit these companies (through good contracts), moneylenders and local pirate leaders at the expense of the country and its people. In addition, the economic and financial support of MFIs always determines the financial support of other actors of the first stage, which shows the nature of cooperation between the first and second actors. All this clearly shows that the debate on the policy of peace through trade is far from over. In the next section, we perform an econometric analysis to determine whether bilateral trade in the GLR can prevent the occurrence of civil wars or vice versa. Civil wars damage regional trade.

In conclusion, The theory of peace through trade states that interstate and economic cooperation between states is a source of peace and stability among states. Regional economic societies are usually established in different areas to bring peace to areas affected by armed conflicts. In RGL, the idea is that economic integration and joint development projects will enable countries to live comfortably since the creation of CEPGL. The inclusion of the project "Regional integration and economic development" in the main program of the ICGLR is presented today in special actions issued by international organizations, because the conflicts in the region are driven by the greed and looting of the interested parties. However, the results of the econometric analysis show that bilateral trade in GLR does not have a significant impact on the risk of civil war. On the other hand, civil wars seem to be a serious obstacle to trade between countries in the region. This means that disputes are preceded by trade, and without other formal dispute resolution mechanisms, economic integration cannot be effectively organized in order to stabilize the region. In fact, economic inclusion programs have failed in the very problems they were meant to solve. This can be easily seen in the manner of division and mistrust that has developed over the years between Zaire and Burundi on the one hand and between Burundi and the government in Kigali on the other. Old demons seem to be resurfacing and there will be trouble between Kigali and Dar es Salaam. Problems and controversies arose in regional integration programs as soon as they were first implemented. This will undermine the authority of Mwaka, who revealed in 2010 that if political unrest and hatred in the village are not resolved, they risk a return to the common cause and a shift of responsibility to member states and to each other. In fact, as Kabamba pointed out, in the Great Lakes region of Africa, we are not talking about nations, but about political leaders, the military and the elites who rule certain regions (Burundi, Congo, Kenya, Uganda,

Rwanda, Tanzania). Contingency policy focuses on maintaining military control and the financial means to maintain it. It is easy to understand that in this situation we are dealing with individuals or groups of people, who are not concerned with the justice of the state, but with the stability of the region. This means that economic theories and realism are no longer valid and the real purpose, that is, the process of regional economic integration aimed at promoting peace and stability in the borderlands. The internal and external political and security issues of the member states must therefore be resolved before promoting regional economic integration and not the other way around. Rather than relying on magical methods of economic integration and trade to resolve internal and cross-border disputes, regional agreements should provide formal mechanisms and tools to address security issues that threaten member countries. Finally, although regional economic integration aims to contribute to stability and peace in the RGL, it needs to be conceptualized differently to adapt to the region's specific circumstances. In particular, inclusion from below and gender characteristics can be used to support intimacy. between countries and their people. In fact, small cross-border trade is an important area in the GLR in general, especially between Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda. However, the majority of these informal traders are women, who, according to an International Alert study, represent 74% of traders at the four border crossings. From this perspective, integration agreements and agreements related to them must include gender aspects at all levels and all actors involved in their implementation must be aware of the specific problems of women. This will make men aware of women's issues and empower women to protect their rights. In particular, given the leading role of women in cross-border trade and relations between nations, the CEPGL Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, Goods and Capital takes into account the challenges unique to women traders.

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