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The UN Security Council From The Perspective of World-Systems Analysis¹

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ABSTRACT

In this study, the function/role of the UN Security Council in the world-system is examined. In the theoretical framework, World-Systems Analysis has been used. Besides, dialectical/historical materialism is preferred in the study. The primary objectives of this study can be claimed as: First, it will be questioned how the UN Security Council plays a role in maintaining the status quo at the systemic level. The second is researching whether the UN Security Council is an important mechanism in core-periphery relations. The main conclusions are as follows: The structure of the UN Security Council has changed after Russia's and China's integration into capitalism. Therefore, Russia and China should be evaluated as a part of the "center". Thus, the UN Security Council can be defined as "center" holistically. Within this context, the UN Security Council is a functional tool that controls the periphery. The structure and role of the UN Security Council are under severe criticism and might undergo a serious reform process.

Dünya Sistemleri Analizi Perspektifinden BM Güvenlik Konseyi

Anahtar Kelimeler:

Merkez,
Yarı-Merkez,
Yarı Çevre,
Çevre,
BM Güvenlik Konseyi

ÖZ

Bu çalışmada dünya sistemde BM Güvenlik Konseyi'nin işlevi/rolü incelenmektedir. Kuramsal çerçevede Dünya Sistemleri Analizi kullanılmıştır. Ayrıca bu çalışmada diyalektik/tarihsel materyalizm tercih edilmiştir. Çalışmanın öncelikli amacı şu şekilde ifade edilebilir: İlk olarak sistem seviyesinde BM Güvenlik Konseyi'nin statükosunu koruyarak nasıl bir rol oynadığı incelenecektir. İkinci olarak BM Güvenlik Konseyi'nin merkez-çevre ilişkilerinde önemli bir mekanizma olup olmadığı araştırılacaktır. Temel sonuçlar ise şu şekildedir: BM Güvenlik Konseyi'nin yapısı, Rusya ve Çin'in kapitalizme entegrasyonu sonrasında değişmiştir. Bu sebeple Rusya ve Çin "merkez" in bir parçası olarak değerlendirilmelidir. Böylece BM Güvenlik Konseyi bütüncül olarak merkez şeklinde tanımlanabilir. Bu bağlamda, BM Güvenlik Konseyi, çevreyi kontrol eden işlevsel bir araçtır. BM Güvenlik Konseyi'nin yapısı ve rolü ciddi eleştiri altındadır ve BM Güvenlik Konseyi'nin önemli bir reform süreci geçirmesi söz konusu olabilir.

¹ This study is based on the doctoral dissertation of the second author (Ege Demirel, Uluslararası İlişkilerde Güç Kavramı Kapsamında Birleşmiş Milletler Güvenlik Konseyi, KKÜ, S.B.E., 2021).

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Introduction

The United Nations (UN) draws attention as an important actor with its performance and role in the world-system since its establishment, therefore, many studies have been carried out about the UN. In these studies, researchers have tried to analyze the UN according to the different theoretical perspectives. For example, according to Liberalism, the UN is considered an organization that increases cooperation in the international arena, focuses on absolute gains instead of relative gains in international relations, and contributes to peace and security at the international level. On the other hand, Realism considers this organization as a tool used for the balance of power. In this study, the organization is examined from the World-Systems Analysis perspective in the context of the UN Security Council. It is foreseen that important conclusions and determinations about the UN Security Council can be reached with the analyzes to be made in terms of World-Systems Analysis.

In this respect, it is especially important to examine the UN Security Council resolutions and sanctions in terms of World-Systems Analysis. Besides, the UN Security Council will be analyzed in the context of legitimacy. The main argument of this study can be summarized as follows: The UN Security Council is one of the intervention tools that enables the core to maintain its dominant role in the capitalist world-system.¹

Herein, some critical points, argued by Samir Amin, should be mentioned briefly. Amin claims that some institutional tools play an auxiliary role in the center's ability to control the periphery. These institutions can be expressed as follows: in the economy, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB), and the World Trade Organization (WTO); in terms of military, NATO (Amin 2004: 25). In this study, it is claimed that the UN Security Council is among these institutional mechanisms. Therefore, it is concluded that the UN Security Council has been transformed into an intervention tool by the center politically, economically, legally, and militarily through its powers and duties.

In addition, it should be emphasized that the transformation of the UN Security Council into an institutional control tool is a phenomenon that can be observed after the Cold War. Since, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the People's Republic of China (China), which were socialist states during the Cold War, could prevent the interventions of the center. However, due to the fact that Russia integrated into the capitalist system following the collapse of the USSR and China's reconciliation with capitalism starting from the Deng Xiaoping period after Mao Tse Tung, the UN Security Council also underwent a significant change. Thus, Russia and China as the central countries have begun to evaluate the UN Security Council as a tool for the exploitation or control of the periphery. In addition, China and Russia need institutional mechanisms at the international level to achieve the "center" status. In this context, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) can be considered as noteworthy initiatives. The UN Security Council has become an institutional tool from the perspectives of China and Russia.

At this point, it is necessary to state the objectives, theoretical framework, and method. Two main aims are determined in this study. First, the role of the UN Security Council in maintaining the status quo as an instrument of systemic control and supervision is examined. It is worth remembering; here that systemic control and the function of supervision play a very important role in preventing the

¹ From the Marxist perspective, it is known that the UN is an instrumentalized factor in terms of capitalism. (See: Kelly-Kate S. Pease, *International Organizations Perspectives on Global Governance*, Routledge, New York, 2019, p. 76-87). However, in this study, the semi-core category is used for China and Russia. Therefore, it differs from other studies. In addition, it should be emphasized that in the study, first of all, Amin's perspective is taken into consideration. Besides it should be noted "semi-core" is firstly used in that study: Ege Demirel, Yükselen Güçler Miti: Brezilya Örneği, 3. Siyaset Bilimi ve Uluslararası İlişkiler Kongresi, Trabzon, 12-13 September 2019.

international system from being changed by radical and shocking developments such as the French Revolution or the collapse of the USSR. Since, even if the status quo cannot be maintained, the UN can sustain the stability of the international system thanks to possible controlled reform. Second, the argument which is the UN Security Council is a means used in center-periphery relations will be tested. As explained in the study, China and Russia, which differ from the semi-periphery, are close to the core/center because of many important features (for example, being a part of nuclear oligopoly and permanent membership in the UN Security Council). For this reason, considering the ineffective performance of the Elected Members, the UN Security Council is examined as a center in the light of the activities of permanent members.

In terms of the method, dialectical materialism and historical materialism are preferred, as in the Marxist approaches. It should also be emphasized that the level of analysis is the world-system. There are two main reasons for determining the world-system as the level of analysis: the focus of World-Systems Analysis is the world-system, and the UN has a significant role in the world-system.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of the study is based on World-Systems Analysis. Considering the arguments, and theses of the theory, it is thought that World-Systems Analysis is the most explanatory scope in terms of the subject among social science theories. In the context of World-Systems Analysis, especially the arguments set forth by Immanuel Wallerstein and Samir Amin form the theoretical focus of the study. From this point, Wallerstein's analysis of core-semi-periphery-periphery and Amin's analysis of triad/collective imperialism are especially important for the study.

The modern world-system has revealed a structure that will embody almost all national communities and states globally. In this respect, the modern world-system also includes a single global economy. This global economy encompasses international trade, international capital flows, the production of transnational corporations in many regions/continents, and many economic relations within states and locally. Therefore, the modern world-system is not just about international relations. Politically, the modern world-system can be characterized as an inter-state system. It is observed that some states compete with each other, and some form alliances with each other (Chase-Dunn, Inoue, Neal, Heimlich 2015: 151).

In terms of the above-mentioned factors, the phenomenon of sovereignty is evaluated differently from this perspective compared to classical sovereignty approaches. Economic activities in the world-system prevent state sovereignty from being evaluated within a single "sovereignty" phenomenon. Therefore, "sovereignty" cannot be interpreted in the same way in terms of core, semi-core, periphery, and semi-periphery. The core intervenes to the periphery and semi-periphery by making use of many intervention tools. In this context, the international institutional intervention mechanisms (IMF, WB, WTO, and NATO) mentioned by Amin are crucial. Likewise, the UN Security Council has become an intervention tool due to the existence of the semi-core. For this reason, these tools make it hard to maintain sovereignty in terms of semi-periphery and periphery (see: the US invasion of Iraq and NATO's intervention in Libya).

On the other hand, the core cannot control the semi-core in the same way by making use of these tools. There have been some intervention attempts for this. To illustrate, after the intervention in Crimea, Russia encountered critical sanctions. However, Russia cannot be taken under control as it is for peripheral/semi-peripheral countries. This argument shows that Russia is more powerful than the semi-periphery/periphery politically, militarily, and economically. In this respect, it is very important that Russia possesses nuclear weapons and is a permanent member of the UN Security Council. Likewise, China is trying to be put under pressure by the core in the context of human rights and democracy (e.g., Hong Kong and Uyghur issues). China, like Russia, can respond to the interventions

of the core. So, China is more powerful than semi-periphery/periphery in politics, economy, and military, just like Russia. Besides, China also has nuclear weapons and is a permanent member of the UN Security Council. As a result, the semi-core's sovereignty is stronger than the semi-periphery and periphery.

In addition, the UN Security Council has an effect that strengthens the peripheral status of peripheral countries. Hence, these countries cannot defend themselves in the light of the arguments such as invasion or violation of international law when the interventions are carried out by the UN. Nonetheless, these countries can defend themselves in terms of international law when they are invaded/intervened without the UN's authorization. Thus, the UN Security Council also functions in terms of the legal basis of domination of the periphery. On the other hand, this makes the periphery more open to interventions. Thus, in this case, the periphery's sovereignty is damaged.

At this point, it is necessary to mention the importance of the theory on the subject. World-Systems Analysis has important explanatory arguments about the UN Security Council. In this context, topics such as systemic control tools and center-periphery relations are very important for evaluating the UN Security Council. For example, the theory functions as an explanatory role in examining the effects of institutions such as the IMF, WB, WTO, and NATO in the international system, explaining the inequalities between states and analyzing how the UN Security Council is evaluated by the center.

In this regard, the UN Security Council has two principal functions. The first is to play the role of a tool in the center's exploitation of the periphery by functioning as an international control and supervisor instrument. The second is to contribute to the sustainability of the status quo (i.e., capitalism) as a structure that ensures the balance of power among the permanent members. Herein, it should be reminded that the USA, UK, and France are the core countries. However, Russia and China are also trying to become an alternative center in the world-system for the periphery through state capitalism. Therefore, considering the ineffective performance of the Elected Members, it is possible to consider the UN Security Council holistically in the center-periphery relations.

At this point, it should not be ignored that states can also intervene without the UN's authorization. These interventions do not have a legitimate basis and are more costly economically. For example, Russia's interventions in Georgia and Crimea and Turkey's intervention in Cyprus occurred without UN approval. As a result, these states have even faced sanctions or embargoes. Therefore, there will be economic and legal costs of interventions without the UN's authorization. Apart from this, interventions made through the UN can have legitimacy grounds for the countries that intervene in terms of the manufacture of consent; however, manufacturing consent does not occur in the interventions made by the states themselves.

On the other hand, as Wallerstein mentioned, the world-system has lost its balance. Now with Wallerstein's words, there is a stage of global anarchy. In this respect, he claims that there is a structural crisis. For this reason, Wallerstein argues that the world-system cannot continue with its current structure in the next 25-50 years. At this point, Wallerstein, who reminds us that order construction always takes place after the chaos, predicts that a new order will be adopted (Wallerstein 2003: 4).

In this respect, the control tools of the core are significant. In that, the core has been strived against to prevent "anarchic" tendencies and movements. IMF, WB, WTO, and NATO are more critical tools in this particular. In addition to these tools, the UN Security Council has now been added thanks to the semi-core. These intervention tools are helpful elements in preventing anarchic movements and developments to destabilise international system. In particular, the UN plays a functional role in legitimacy and cost-sharing. The core tries to hamper the anarchic tendencies about

protecting the five important monopoly areas (science and technology, weapons of mass destruction, natural resources, media/communication, and finance) stated by Amin. On the other part, the antisystemic movements (Arrighi, Hopkins, Wallerstein, 1989) have been observed between whiles. In addition, there is a rivalry between the core and the semi-core. From this point of view, it can be asserted that there is a hierarchical structure in the world-system in general. However, traces of the phenomenon of anarchy are also observed.

At this juncture, it is necessary to emphasize some points regarding the importance of NATO and UN Security Council interventions for the world-system. Both the NATO and the UN interventions allow the center to benefit from concepts such as diplomacy, legitimacy, and multilateralism. Thus, these organizations play a role in ensuring obedience and manufacturing consent in the world-system. Besides, these interventions also reduce the financial burden of the military. In short, peripheral and semi-peripheral countries, which are members of NATO and the UN, are contributing to the interventions in the periphery financially, militarily, and in terms of legitimacy.

On the other hand, it should not be overlooked that the UN Security Council also offers a critical advantage for the semi-core. First, the semi-core has the chance to prevent the interventions of the core, thanks to its permanent membership and veto power. Since China and Russia are politically, economically, and militarily strong compared to the periphery, they can prevent interventions. However, thanks to the UN Security Council, these countries have the chance to hamper possible interventions much earlier. Secondly, the semi-core can also benefit from the UN Security Council's interventions to the periphery, just like the core. For example, Russia took advantage in the issues such as Syria and Crimea. On the other hand, China and Russia did not prevent the intervention by abstaining from the intervention in Libya. Therefore, core and semi-core benefit from the UN Security Council concerning the interventions.

Therefore, it is crucial to maintain control and dominance over the periphery. Since events that may cause revolutionary results in the periphery will also destabilize global accumulation (Kowalewski 1991: 71). To maintain the stability of the world-system, antisystemic movements/revolutions in the periphery must be removed. For this reason, interventionist policies and intervention tools come to the fore.

WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF WORLD-SYSTEMS ANALYSIS THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL'S PERFORMANCE

In this part, the UN Security Council will be analyzed according to the theory's arguments and the world-system. For this reason, some important points will be emphasized in terms of World-Systems Analysis. Then, findings and inferences will be stated.

It is observed that the UN Security Council mainly functions within the framework of the permanent members' actions and policies in terms of their geopolitical, geoeconomic, and national interests, rather than ensuring collective security. Therefore, it has been seen that the UN Security Council is perceived as a balance of power instrument. Besides, the UN Security Council's performance has proved this argument, as can be seen from the establishment of the UN. However, since the post-Cold War era, it is not possible to evaluate the UN Security Council only as a balance of power instrument. Hence, as stated before, during Russia and China's integration into capitalism, the UN Security Council has also performed to play a more important role in center-periphery relations.

In this context, according to the World-Systems Analysis, the UN Security Council can be analyzed as an instrument that exploits (or at least controls) the periphery. This argument should be

evaluated with the responsibilities given to the UN Security Council in the UN Charter (UN 1945). Hence this provides a crucial opportunity to the permanent members in the interventions to the periphery/semi-periphery. Permanent members may intervene in various ways on the periphery/semi-periphery with the claim of maintaining international peace and security. In this respect, it is possible to raise the claim that the UN Security Council functions as an exploitative for the periphery/semi-periphery in terms of its authority and legitimacy.

Western permanent members' (the USA, UK, and France) performance and perspective on humanitarian intervention/responsibility to protect lead to inferences confirming this determination. In this regard, these states are criticized because of regime change initiatives and gain-oriented approaches (e.g., the US, UK, and France's actions on Libya and Syria in the UN Security Council). Likewise, it is criticized that the activities such as peacekeeping/peacemaking/peacebuilding are not carried out within the economic development or transition to democracy, as the liberals asserted. For this reason, it should be emphasized that changing the political and economic policies of the countries or reforming/revolting the government through external intervention will cause a violation of international law. The principles of self-determination and non-interference in internal affairs are crucial in this regard.

At this point, based on Antonio Gramsci's views on hegemony (Gramsci 1971), it is possible to argue that the UN Security Council has a role in ensuring obedience and consent in the system. In this context, it can be argued that the UN Security Council enables legitimacy to the permanent members. Thus, it is ensured that UN members consent to the Security Council's resolutions and sanctions. The consent is manufactured by the UN members' compliance with resolutions and sanctions. In addition, the UN Security Council's monopoly on the use of force (except for the right of self-defense) matters in forcing in terms of deterrence. It should be emphasized here that the permanent members are part of the nuclear oligopoly. This monopoly upholds permanent members' power of coercion.

From Samir Amin's perspective, it can be asserted that the UN Security Council plays a role in the institutional tools used by collective imperialism (Amin 2004). Although this situation is not valid, when the USSR was a member of the UN Security Council during the Cold War, it is valid for post-Cold War. Because the existence of Russia, which is integrated into capitalism after the USSR, and China, which transitioned to market socialism (i.e., state capitalism, which can be for Russia) after Mao, causes the UN Security Council to be evaluated from this perspective.

In this case, the USA, the United Kingdom, and France represent the center. Besides, Russia and China, which are semi-core countries, do not pose a problem with capitalism. Thus Russia and China represent the status quo, even though they conflict with the center. As a result, when controlling the periphery/semi-periphery, the permanent members benefit from the UN Security Council. In this respect, the lack of representation of the periphery/semi-periphery in the UN Security Council is a serious problem. For example, Syria hasn't had power in the decision-making process. Thus, Syria can't affect the decisions to be taken by the permanent members for herself. Although preventing intervention in Syria thanks to Russia ensures that Syrian leader Bashar Assad remains in power, and even if it is an important gain for the Syrian government, Syria's dependence on Russia is increasing. In this context, it is necessary to mention the general framework in terms of World-Systems Analysis, before expressing detailed theoretical analyzes on the concept of semi-core about Russia and China.

As Immanuel Wallerstein pointed out, the core is where the profit and surplus-value in the world-system are collected. Despite that, the periphery is the region that loses the surplus value and profit. Thus, the core improves the conditions of production by concentrating the capital in itself, and the difference between itself and the periphery is expanded (Wallerstein 2004: 23-41; Wallerstein 1979: 1-36; 66-92). In addition, Wallerstein claims that there are countries/regions that he describes as semi-

periphery (Wallerstein 1979: 96-97). These countries/regions are more developed politically and economically than the periphery. However, semi-periphery could not compete against the core (Wallerstein 2011: 347-357). Therefore, the semi-periphery does not have the instruments and capacity of control like the core. As a result, the semi-periphery cannot control the developments and decisions at the systemic level. On the other hand, it is seen that some arguments have been put forward about the semi-periphery within the framework of the concept of rising powers. Therefore, some clarifications should be made to this end.

Recently, some researchers have focused on a new power category called rising powers. This category includes BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), and countries such as Indonesia, South Korea, Mexico, and Turkey. These countries have recently come to the fore with the rapid increase in economic growth rates and their increasing activities in the political and cultural fields. In addition, it is seen that the rising powers are trying to play a more active role in the international system by trying to be effective in international institutions and regional organizations. Besides, these countries can be qualified as regional leaders. Therefore, the increasing importance of geopolitical position is a crucial indicator for being a rising power. For this reason, the countries need to interact with their regions (Tank 2012: 1,3). However, when evaluated in a systemic context, it can be claimed that the concept of rising power is not functional in many respects. Hence, the concept of rising power should be analyzed from a systemic and theoretical perspective.

First, it is seen that the effectiveness of the center and the institutional mechanisms under the center's control have decreased compared to previous periods. This situation indicates that the center has problems in regulating the world economy. On the other hand, it is mentioned that new powers come to the fore. These powers have not reached the capacity to change the system. In the light of these, the situation can be evaluated as a transitional stage. At this point, when talking about new powers, it should be warned that "state capitalism" should not be ignored. Because some states characterized as "rising powers" adopt state capitalism (*e.g., China and Russia*)². It is observed that these states are attempting to regulate in areas such as trade, capital, the flow of services, and the mobility of labor at the global level (Dos Santos 2011: 45).

Within the above-mentioned context, considering the findings and inferences from the study, the current situation can be evaluated as the crisis of the order established after World War II. Thus, the problems faced by institutions such as the IMF, WB and WTO, which have crucial roles in the system, are important indicators in this respect. However, some steps are being taken to overcome the problems. For example, the efforts to strengthen the G-20 are significant in this regard. In addition, the quests for the UN reform, in the focus of the UN Security Council, are another noticeable development. In this new period, which can be identified as a transitional stage, it should be also mentioned that the G-7 made an opening on the emerging powers from Russia and the Third World. Apart from this, the acceptance of BRICS³ as part of international finance is due to the need for a realistic vision to adapt to the new era or changing order (Dos Santos 2011: 46).

However, it should be noted here that the emerging powers do not have the systemic control instruments (IMF, WB, WTO, and NATO) as in the center, and they cannot change/transform the system in terms of politics, economy, and military. In addition, it can be asserted that the concept of emerging powers will reach incorrect results to characterize the countries. For example, China and Brazil have significant differences in many respects. It is not suitable to classify these countries as

² Emphasis mine.

³ Dos Santos stated the "BRIC". Because South Africa was not a member of BRIC when the study was published. For this reason, S has been stated as italic.

emerging powers. Apart from this, another serious problem is the analysis of emerging powers with an economic focus. In this sense, elements, which are political, economic, military, and, systemic should be analyzed holistically. For this reason, it is more appropriate to classify the emerging powers within the framework of World-Systems Analysis. From this point of view, for example, Brazil, India, and South Africa are typical semi-periphery countries. However, Russia and China differ from these countries. Therefore, it is necessary to provide some essential explanations about these countries.

As it is known, Wallerstein added the semi-periphery category to the core-periphery analysis. Because semi-periphery, unlike the periphery, has shown a certain degree of political and economic development, and thus it is separated from the periphery category. In addition, Wallerstein claims that semi-periphery is a political/economic factor that can play a significant role in the world economy (Wallerstein 2011: 347-357). In the light of this perspective, it is possible to bring the semi-core category to the agenda for Russia and China. Since, Russia and China are close to the core rather than semi-periphery in terms of many features. Therefore, the evaluation of these countries with the semi-periphery category will lead to misleading results. On the other hand, the reflections of the policies and actions of China and Russia, which act just like core, are also seen in the UN Security Council. As in the case of the USA, the UK, France, China, and Russia also consider issues such as international security and peace from a geopolitical and geoeconomic perspective. At this point, why the term "semi-core" should be used for Russia and China must be explained. The features that make these countries close to the core can be briefly listed as follows (Demirel 2021: 139-140):

1-Russia and China, unlike the semi-periphery, have permanent membership and veto power in the UN Security Council like the USA, the UK, and France, which are core countries.

2-Russia and China have nuclear power as core countries. Russia and China are part of the nuclear oligopoly, so these countries are separated from semi-periphery. On the other hand, it should be stated that some countries such as India also have nuclear weapons. However, in terms of the UN and international law, nuclear activities of these countries are not legal as permanent members are. In addition, comparing the nuclear power capacity of the permanent members with countries such as India, it is understood that the permanent members are superior.

3-Russia and China are applying state capitalism by offering an alternative to the capitalist world-system under the control of Western core countries. This situation shows that Russia and China may create a different center for the periphery/semi-periphery.

4-Russia and China adopt alternative political management styles against the liberal democracy implemented by the core. For example, China claims to have implemented a revised new socialist model compatible with capitalism, which she described as market socialism. Russia, however, adopts a different political management style, which she describes as a sovereign democracy⁴. Thus, from a political point of view, Russia and China offer an alternative model to the semi-periphery and the periphery.

5-Russia and China are significant regional powers. It is observed that they have more autonomy because of their increased activities within the near abroad. In this respect, Russia's increasing military power and its concrete achievements militarily (2008 Georgia, 2014 Crimea, Syria since 2015) draw attention; China, on the other hand, has reached the level to compete with the USA

⁴ From the Russian perspective, this concept is used to define an understanding of democracy that focuses on stability and order and is based on respect for conservative values. (See: Fatma Aslı Kelkitli, "Rusya'nın Egemen Demokrasi Modelinin Orta Asya Devletleri Üzerindeki Etkisinin Analizi", *Marmara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilimler Dergisi*, Volume 6, Number 2, 2018, p. 170; Vladislav Surkov, "Commentaries on the Discussion of 'Paragraphs pro Sovereign Democracy'", *Russian Studies in Philosophy*, Volume 47, Number 4, 2009, p. 85-96).

through its economic successes and scientific-technological developments. Thus, China has shown its effectiveness and the leading role both at the regional and the global level.

6-Russia and China compete with the core in space, unlike the semi-periphery. In this field, Russia and China are making significant investments in space.

7-Russia and China compete with the core in media. USA [Associated Press (AP), Cable News Network (CNN), Voice of America (VOA), New York Times], United Kingdom [British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Reuters, The Guardian], France [Agence France-Presse (AFP), Le Monde] and, Germany [Deutsche Welle (DW), Der Spiegel] have many crucial media corporations in this field. On the other part, Russia [Russia Today (RT), Sputnik, Telegrafne Agentsva Sovietskova Soyuz (TASS)], and China [China Xinhua News Agency, China News, People's Daily] also have important media corporations. Thus, it is seen that the semi-core tries to reflect their perspective against the core to be effective at the international level. Since, in the global age, media and news sources are very critical tools in terms of soft power. Besides, as we know, media and news sources are very significant, especially proclaiming the arguments in the international community.

On the other hand, some features prevent Russia and China from being described as core countries (Demirel 2021: 141):

1-Russia has not yet reached a level that can compete with the core countries in the economy.

2-Although China comes to the fore in terms of the economy, she is insufficient militarily against NATO and the USA.

3-Russia and China do not have the economic and military institutional control mechanisms that the core has. That is to say, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) could not compete against the IMF, WB, WTO (even if Russia and China are member Countries in WTO, the organization is controlled by the core), and NATO.

4-Despite the recent cooperation between Russia and China, there is also a competitive situation. This situation is a factor that prevents these countries from reaching their core status.

In the light of the data and findings of the study, the semi-core status has been tried to be explained. Besides these, it would be appropriate to state some significant indicators. For this reason, import-export data, gross domestic product data, population values, geographical sizes, natural resource reserves, and military power capacities of these countries -which are also used when measuring the power index of countries- should be mentioned.

First of all, when the economic indicators are evaluated, assessing the gross domestic product is an important factor. According to 2019 data, China is the 2nd in the world with 15.27 trillion dollars (1.USA-22.32 trillion dollars, 3.Japan-5.41 trillion dollars). Russia is in 11th place with 1.66 trillion dollars (IMF 2019). When the export and import figures are analyzed in the light of 2019 data, China is the leader in the export ranking in the world with 2216 billion dollars (2nd USA-1553 billion dollars), and China second place with an import amount of 1740 billion dollars. (1.USA-2361 billion dollars, 3.Germany-1135 billion dollars). On the other hand, the export and import data of Russia, the other semi-core country, are as follows: There is an export amount of 353 billion dollars (14th) and an import amount of 238 billion dollars (19th) (Indexmundi 2020).⁵

⁵ Indexmundi pointed out that the data has been prepared in the light of the data of the CIA Factbook 1 January 2019, unless otherwise stated.

Second, another significant factor is military power. According to the military power index, Russia ranks second in the world after the USA (0,0606) with a score of 0.0681 (0.001: perfect ratio/the best score) (GlobalFirePower 2020). The number of active military personnel in Russia is 1,013,628 (5th), and it ranks 2nd in the power index of the air force with 4163 points. Looking at the ground forces, Russia has 12950 tanks (1st), 3860 rocket launchers (1st), 27,038 armored vehicles (3rd), 6083 Self-Propelled Artillery Systems (1st), and 4465 towed artillery (1st). In the naval power index, Russia ranks 3rd with 603 points (1st DPRK, 4th USA) (GlobalFirePower 2020). According to the military power index, China is in 3rd place with a score of 0.0691 (4. India 0.0953) (GlobalFirePower 2020). The number of active personnel is 2,183,000 (1st). It is in 3rd place in the power index of the air force with 3210 points. Military equipment for the land forces is as follows: 3500 tanks (7th), 2650 rocket launchers (2nd), 33,000 armored vehicles (2nd), 3800 Self-Propelled Artillery Systems (2nd), and 3600 towed artillery (4th). It ranks 2nd in the naval power index with 777 points (GlobalFirePower 2020).

Finally, population, geographical size, and natural resources should be mentioned. Russia ranks first in the world in an area of 17,098,242 km². In terms of population, it ranks 9th with 142,122,776 people. As for natural resources, Russia has 80.000.000.000 barrels of proven oil reserves (8th). 10.580.000 barrels of oil production/day (1st) and 3.225.000 barrels of oil consumption/day (5th) are made (GlobalFirePower 2020). Apart from oil, Russia also has natural gas, which is another important and strategic natural resource. In this area, Russia is the world leader in terms of reserves (The Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF) 2020). While China ranks 4th with an area of 9,596,961 km². China is the 1st country in the world with 1,384,688,986 people. On the other hand, China has 25,620,000,000 barrels of proven oil reserves (13th). In addition, China makes 838,000 barrels of oil production/daily (7th) and 13,500,000 barrels of oil consumption/day (2nd) (GlobalFirePower 2020).

As the data show, regarding the center-periphery issue, Russia and China more resemble core than the semi-periphery. Because it is understood from the economic, military, and human indicators that Russia and China are among the leading countries in many fields. In some data, they can even compete with the core countries. For example, Russia's military capacity and China's import-export data are concrete indicators in this respect. It should also be reminded that these countries are members of the G-20, which comprises the 20 most developed economies. Apart from that, Russia, whose membership was frozen because of Crimea, is a member of the G-8. Finally, the BRICS, which includes Russia and China, is an important organization in terms of economy and politics (Demirel 2021: 143).

As determined according to some basic features and numerical data, a reassessment should be made about Russia and China from a center-periphery perspective. These countries are characterized as semi-core. Thus, the UN Security Council could be analyzed holistically as a core/center. As emphasized before, the UN Security Council functions as a tool for the center to control the periphery and increase the effectiveness of the center in the system. Russia and China, which are semi-core countries, have a similar perspective with the USA, United Kingdom, and France, which are the core countries. In this context, the UN Security Council can be analyzed concretely through the policies and actions of the permanent members.

ANALYSIS OF THE PERMANENT MEMBERS IN THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD-SYSTEMS

In this part, the permanent members will be discussed in the theoretical context. First of all, the USA and the UK will be examined. This is due to the fact that, theoretical evaluation of these members will enable significant findings. When the situation of the USA in the UN Security Council is examined, it is seen that there are important issues that can be evaluated from the perspective of World-Systems Analysis. Though, first, a point about the world vision of the Liberal approach should

be mentioned: While there is a direct hegemonic power in liberalism; in neoliberalism, there is an international system created through international regimes (Bozdağlıoğlu & Özen 2004: 76).

In this respect, it is necessary to compare the hegemonies of the UK and the USA. The British Empire applied directly to the colonial method in early capitalism. Therefore, the periphery is exploited within the framework of a relationship of domination by making use of military means, which is a part of coercion. It is possible to say that this was an effective factor in the failure of the League of Nations (LN), which was an institutional mechanism created to provide control at the systemic level. Because Britain and France, the two leading members of the LN, could maintain control over the periphery based on their colonial past and coercion (Demirel 2021: 368).

On the other hand, the USA benefits from the institutional framework to manufacture consent. Thus, she prefers indirect methods when exploiting the periphery/semi-periphery. Therefore, there is an indirect exploitation perspective through the IMF, WB, WTO, and NATO. In addition, the UN Security Council is also a substantial instrument for the USA in the domination and control of the semi-periphery/periphery. That's why it was possible to carry out military operations within the UN by reducing the costs, using a legitimacy factor, and consent factor in the control over the periphery. In this sense, for example, the initiatives in the UN Security Council in the Gulf Wars and the Libya intervention in 2011 stand out as crucial, palpable facts (Demirel 2021: 368).

From the perspective of World-Systems Analysis, the UK makes use of the UN Security Council and its veto power to provide control and supervision over the semi-periphery and the periphery. For example, the attempts made by the UK and the USA to ensure the legitimacy in the UN Security Council during the 2003 invasion of Iraq and the efforts for the Libyan intervention in 2011 stand out as concrete and crucial indicators in this context.

Democracy and humanitarian reasons came to the fore both in the invasion of Iraq (Roth 2006) and in the intervention in Libya (Hehir & Murray 2013). Despite this, in reality, the invasion of Iraq and intervention in Libya are concrete examples of imperialist interventions. The core attacked both Iraq and Libya⁶ because of the oil reserves, which are a crucial and strategic natural resource for the core, and because of these states' geopolitical and geostrategic importance. The aim is to control the oil resources of these countries and to take control of strategic places against powerful rivals such as Russia and China. In this context, the UK fulfilled its duty as a core country. Considering that, after the interventions in Iraq and Libya, there were no positive developments in terms of humanitarian issues or democracy. In a nutshell, these interventions are made for the needs of the core in terms of the core's political and economic purposes. As a core country, the United Kingdom is one of the beneficiaries of these interventions (Demirel 2021: 394-404).

At this point, an important point regarding the UK should be stated: Despite the loss of power since World War II and the world hegemony lost to the USA, the UK can be effective in international relations thanks to its permanent membership. Thus, it is possible to say that permanent membership functions as a power multiplier for the UK.

Another important permanent member is France. First, it is possible to assert that France, just like the UK, can be an active power in international relations thanks to its permanent membership. Since, with World War II, France suffered a significant loss of power, and its colonies became

⁶ At this point, it can be asked why Russia and China, especially in Libya, abstained and did not prevent NATO intervention through veto. Because of the semi-core's relations with the Arab League and China's relationship with Saudi Arabia can be evaluated as significant factors (see: Orkun Sürücüoğlu, "Koruma Sorumluluğu: Darfur krizi ve Libya Müdahalesi Çerçevesinde Bir Değerlendirme", *Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, Volume 19, Number 4, 2018, p. 604).

independent states. In this respect, it can be argued that the permanent membership status is a crucial gain for France.

First of all, France has the chance to be active in decisions on international peace and security, thanks to its permanent membership and veto power. In this respect, just like other permanent members of the UN Security Council, France benefits from its permanent membership status while implementing imperialist policies and actions. In this respect, France used permanent membership in terms of interventions to the periphery and to ensure the legitimacy of the domination relationship established over the periphery. To put it concretely, France benefited from its permanent membership status during the events such as the Suez Crisis, Algeria's independence process, and the Libyan intervention (Demirel 2021: 404-412).

After the permanent members in the core, it is necessary to mention the analysis of the semi-core countries (i.e., Russia and China). First, when Russia is analyzed, it would be appropriate to focus on some important issues from a theoretical point of view. As it is known, Russia experienced a re-establishment phase after the collapse of the USSR and the state mechanism was restructured. During the Boris Yeltsin period, Russia tried to realize the policies and actions for the transition to liberal democracy and capitalism. In this period, it can be argued that Russia regressed from its superpower status to almost semi-peripheral status. Although Russia is a permanent member of the UN Security Council and has nuclear capacity, the political and economic crisis in the country has created serious problems. Thus, Russia could not take full advantage of its power resources. For example, it was not effective enough in the disintegration process of Yugoslavia and the intervention in Kosovo in this period.

However, in the Vladimir Putin era, it is observed that Russia has experienced a very significant recovery process. In this regard, certain events especially can be emphasized. First of all, the high incomes obtained from the export of raw materials and the completion of integration to the capitalist system brought Russia to the fore in the economy. Second, Putin's uninterrupted involvement in the administration has revealed a stable state administration. In addition, resolving the Chechen problem, even by military means, is a crucial gain in terms of political unity. Thus, it was possible for Russia, which solved its internal problems, to play an active role in foreign policy and international relations. Third, Russia asserts to be a great power again in this period. In this sense, Russia has an active role in regional and international issues. Therefore, the permanent membership in the UN Security Council has played a very functional role. For example, Russia has made significant gains in Syria and Crimea, thanks to permanent membership. Fourth, the military power put forward in the solution of Georgia, Syria, Crimea, and the Chechen issue reminded that Russia is still a very effective power in the military arena. Fifth, Russia's active role has emerged through institutional and bilateral relations with international cooperation initiatives. BRICS, CSTO, EEU, CIS, and SCO are critical instruments in this sense (Demirel 2021: 377-378).

Under the light of these factors, Russia has a position closer to the core rather than semi-periphery. Besides, Russian initiatives in space and media are other substantial features, as stated before. However, Russia, to become a core country, needs some tools to create an alternative for the periphery. Undoubtedly, membership of the UN Security Council and veto power are very significant in this regard. From Russia's point of view, thanks to the UN Security Council, it is possible to develop relations with peripheral/semi-peripheral countries. The UN Security Council offers crucial opportunities for Russia to emerge as a serious alternative in the competition with the center for semi-periphery/periphery. In practice, this situation has been observed in the Syrian issue. It is a fact that it is impossible for Syria to resist the intervention of the core without Russian support and assistance. Therefore, Russia uses the UN Security Council to compete with the permanent members (USA-UK-

France), which are part of the core. Thus, the UN Security Council is a critical instrument to protect its political and economic gains and ensure the exploitation and control of the periphery/semi-periphery.

A similar assessment can be argued for China. First, after China transitioned from the socialist economic model to market socialism/state capitalism during the Deng period, through which substantial economic developments have been experienced. In the process, China began to come to the fore as an important actor in the capitalist world-system. Many factors, such as export-import data, economic growth data, and production indices, have supported this argument. In addition, depending on the economic power, it can be stated that China has become a leading country in terms of high value-added products and scientific-technological aspects. In this context, the performance of Chinese universities, Chinese scientists, and Chinese technology companies provides serious data. Likewise, improvements in space studies can also be considered in this context.

Apart from the developments in the economy, it is seen that China stands out. In this sense, China has become an important military power regionally and globally by increasing its military power. In addition, China, like Russia, is making investments in the media area and trying to establish effectiveness in the presence of other countries through soft power. Besides, China is trying to promote relations with neighboring and semi-peripheral countries by making use of its economic and military power. Thus, it presents an active profile in international relations. Therefore, institutional cooperation efforts in the international arena have also been one of the essential Chinese foreign policy tools. In this context, BRICS and SCO are leading platforms. In addition, the permanent membership in the UN Security Council plays a crucial role in China's relations with semi-peripheral and peripheral countries. For example, China can affect the results of the UN Security Council's resolutions for the advantage of her allies. Thus, China can be effective in peripheral and semi-peripheral countries.

CONCLUSION

In this part, based on the theoretical framework, the inferences and outcomes have been discussed. First, following the end of the Cold War, the structure of the UN Security Council has changed. In this context, Russia, integrated into capitalism, took place in the UN Security Council instead of the USSR. Besides China, since the Deng period, integrated into capitalism. These developments have had impact on many developments and actors in international relations.

Within this scope, there has been an essential change in the UN Security Council. Thereafter, the UN Security Council comprises the core capitalist countries such as the USA, UK, and France, and semi-core capitalist countries, which are China and Russia. From now on, China and Russia have adopted policies, which make up pragmatist strategies and focus on material gains like the other permanent members. This outcome has caused semi-core to act only on the axis of own geopolitical and geoeconomic interests when deciding an issue related to semi-periphery/periphery comes to the fore in the UN Security Council.

This situation has a significant impact on the semi-periphery/periphery as well. Since, all permanent members have been part of the capitalist world economic system. From one point of view, Russia and China can offer an alternative to the imperial or hegemonial relation model. From another point, from the perspective of all permanent members, it is easier to prevent or control the reformist/revisionist movements that may occur in the semi-periphery/periphery.

Another essential issue is legitimacy. The legitimacy has a binding element through the resolutions of the UN Security Council. It is possible to evaluate legitimacy as an element of the consent of the world-system. In addition, the UN Security Council's monopoly on the use of force

(excluding self-defense) and sanctions show coercive power. Besides, the core/semi-core has an advantage over the semi-periphery/periphery regarding the General Assembly. Although the General Assembly does not have binding decision-making authority, it is an influential body on the members in the normative context. In this way, the core/semi-core can benefit from the permanent membership position. For example, the core/semi-core decides in the General Assembly by making some promises to the periphery or by threatening the periphery, thanks to its permanent membership and veto power. In this sense, the UN Security Council's resolutions and sanctions are crucial means.

As a result, it can be predicted that the status quo powers will make efforts with reformist moves to maintain the stability of the system and maintain their position. For example, it is possible to gain time by negotiating with the G-4 countries. However, as in the French Revolution; or the October Revolution, revolutionary forces/antisystemic movements can bring about a necessary transformation in the system by threatening the status quo. In this context, dissatisfaction with the increasing mass opposition to neoliberal policies in Latin America (e.g., the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela and the *piquetero* movement that emerged as a reaction to neoliberalism in Argentina) and even in central countries in the core (e.g., Yellow Vests Movement and environmental movements) are significant events. In addition, some countries such as North Korea (and potentially Iran), apart from the permanent members, have nuclear capacity is another important factor that threatens the system. Besides, terrorism and civil wars revealing events reminiscent of the Middle Ages (e.g., ISIS) is another systemic blockage point.

Therefore, inevitably, the effects of these cases on the world-system will also affect the UN. From this standpoint, it is possible to argue that the current structure of the organization, which is the shadow of the Security Council, cannot be sustained in the long term. This structure will change because of the revolutions/transformations, which were effective at the systemic level that had previously occurred in the world-system. For example, the disappearance of the LN is a palpable case in this context. It would not be a surprise that the UN faced a similar result.

To summarize, the findings of the study can be briefly as following points: It is observed that the UN Security Council can play the role of control and supervision at the systemic level through its powers and duties in the UN Charter. For this reason, UN Security Council's resolutions and the UN Charter VI/VII sections are of critical importance. Its duties and responsibilities within this framework allow the core/semi-core to maintain the status quo and control over the periphery/semi-periphery. In this respect, the argument that the UN acts within the framework of the main purpose of ensuring peace and security in the international arena is baseless. As revealed in the study, it is understood that the systemic function of the UN is to ensure that the core/semi-core maintains the status quo and establishes the balance of power between the core and the semi-core.

On the other hand, from the perspective of World-Systems Analysis, the USA, UK, and France are the core countries. However, within the framework of this article, it is argued that the same argument can be enlarged to contain the other permanent members. Since, as stated in the study, it is not appropriate to evaluate these countries within the semi-periphery/periphery classification. China and Russia are close to the center in many respects. Therefore, it is claimed that the concept of semi-core should be used to analyze the policies and actions of Russia and China correctly. Thus, it is possible to consider the UN Security Council as a center holistically. The reason why China and Russia are evaluated as "potential" core/center countries. The main features expressed in the study and the empirical data presented in the military and economic context, support this argument.

In this sense, there is a significant rivalry between the status quo and revisionist powers. This rivalry emerges in three different ways: The first rivalry occurs between the semi-core and the core countries in the UN Security Council. Second, as observed regarding antisystemic movements, there

are significant resistance movements in and around the semi-periphery/periphery. For example, the reactions to neoliberal policies in Latin America are concrete indicators in this context. As mentioned earlier, social movements like the Bolivarian Revolution (Venezuela) and the piquetero can be evaluated within this framework. In addition, indigenous movements in Mexico and Bolivia and the rise of the left in Latin America in the 21st century are other considerable indicators. In terms of the core, the Yellow Vests Movement (France), the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) in the USA, and during Jeremy Corbyn's leadership of the Labor Party in the UK are noteworthy cases. The third is the G-4 group's (Germany, India, Brazil, and Japan) desire for permanent membership in the UN Security Council.

Thus, it is understood that there is a problem of legitimacy and a crisis of governance in the world-system. Under the light of these facts, findings of the study, and the theoretical inferences, as Wallerstein states, there may be chaos and anarchy in the world-system. For this reason, it is possible to encounter a structure focused on wars, conflicts, and irregularities. In these circumstances, there can be two options: First, it could be an essential reform process for the UN. Second, the UN may disappear just like the LN. Although it is not possible to make a definite prediction at this stage, it can be asserted that the UN cannot continue with its current structure for a long time.

Finally, the study's contribution to the literature should be evaluated. It is seen that the UN is analyzed with three methods when the UN studies are examined. First, many studies are about technical information related to the UN; second, there are studies on the history and performance of the organization chronologically; third, there are analyzes within the scope of international law and legitimacy. However, this study aims to contribute by analyzing the theoretical framework of the UN Security Council based on World-Systems Analysis. Herein, especially, some points should be highlighted.

First of all, in this sense, the concept of semi-core should be stated. This concept has been put forward to reach more accurate inferences with the evaluations about Russia and China. A better analysis of the policies and actions of the two essential permanent members is very crucial in terms of determinations and arguments about the UN Security Council. On the other hand, Amin's theoretical approach includes institutional mechanisms that enable the center to establish control over the periphery. In these mechanisms, the IMF, WB, and WTO in the economy and NATO in the military are the institutional mechanisms that the center benefits. In this study, it has been tried to contribute to Amin's perspective by claiming that the UN Security Council is also an institutional mechanism used by the center due to the existence of the semi-core. It should be remembered that the UN is a coercive or control factor, according to the Marxist approaches (Pease, 2019). However, in this study, the analysis framework is adopted over the concept of the semi-core. Besides, it should be added that the UN Security Council is examined in center-periphery relations, considering the central potential of the semi-core.

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