

SECURITY APPROACHES OF REGIONAL POWERS IN A UNIPOLAR SYSTEM (Sayfa 37-55)

Sibel BÜLBÜL PEHLİVAN
sibelbulbul85@hotmail.com
5383025259
0000-0003-4729-685X

Abstract

The power capacities of the states and the distribution of these capacities are important in determining both the polarity of the system and the characteristics of the countries in terms of being a superpower, great power, and regional power within the anarchic structure of the international system. Within the framework of the regional policies of the superpower, the security threats of the countries in the region are defined, and in order to combat these threats, it is emphasized that the internal threats are more important for the security of the regime within the framework of the characteristics of the regional powers. The features of a state such as competing allegiances, monarchical state structure, being a rentier state cause the security of the regime in that state to be more important and prioritized than the security of the state. In this category, it is necessary to evaluate the state with a different approach than the alignment and bandwagoning strategies used by the classical approaches for the security strategies of the superpowers and great powers. This article examines a range of local conditions and motivations regarding the security behavior of states, especially regional powers, that have not been adequately discussed in the literature. In addition, it is aimed to strengthen the argument by explaining what is effective in determining the alliance relations of regional powers, unlike the great powers.

Introduction

This study is an analysis on the security policies of regional powers. It has been argued that these states determine their security policies by being affected by which factors, especially in a unipolar international system. It is a general assumption that the distribution of power in the international system is instrumental in determining state behavior. In addition, the influence of the unipolar system in determining the state behavior of the states other than the superpower is emphasized. What kind of environment does the unipolar system create for regional powers? For regional powers, what are the factors that determine state behavior apart from the system? Therefore, first of all, the system, the structure of the system, the units and interaction types have been introduced with the deductive method, and starting from the general assumptions, the transition to the specific assumptions has been made. In this context, first of all, the international "system" is considered as the whole area in which sovereign states interact with each other independently under a certain structure (Holsti, 1967: 27). In addition, while expressing the similarity and continuity of the results of the effects between the system states, it has been emphasized that in this respect, it is separate from the "structure", the main component of which is the distribution of power and anarchic order. The state, as a unit responsible for ensuring the safety of its people in the international arena, is considered as a structure that has a "monopoly of using legitimate violence" (Weber, 1978) against those who do not obey the rules in the field of national policy.

The first part of this study consists of the state behavior in the unipolar system, and the second part, regional actors. In the literature, regional powers is defined as a unit which is a part of a region that can be defined by its own identity, have a strategic position in the region, have high military, economic, demographic and political capabilities, integrated into the region and play a role in determining the security agenda of the region, and have the ability to form or break alliances in the region (Akdoğan, 2018: 191-192). Since such actors are part of a camp in the bipolar system, their foreign policy preferences can generally be shaped by the camp's preferences and can adopt a stable stance. For example, during the Cold War, the security policies of regional powers such as Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Poland were generally shaped around the alliances they were in and showed similar characteristics. However, in multipolar international systems, the cornerstones of security policy, such as the alliance preferences of regional powers, could change according to the structure of the system. Having the chance of a large number of alternative allies may require more variable security policies, not disciplined and stable relations. For example, throughout the 19th century, the alliances of the Ottomans and Europe were going back and forth between England, France, Russia and Germany.

However, unipolar systems can have very interesting results for regional powers. First of all, there is only one active global actor for alliance relations, and the regional policies of this global actor are very important for regional powers. All countries in the region have to observe their relations with the superpower, global actor, and determine their interstate relations and security strategies accordingly. It is important whether the global actor adopts status quo or revisionist policies in regional policies. If the global actor adopts revisionist (restorative or expansionist) regional policies, the superpower becomes the main threat to the countries in the region, and in this case, regional powers are forced to adopt status quo policies. Again in this case, the countries of the region develop alliance relations with as many countries as possible among themselves. Considering that it is impossible for regional powers to balance the superpower, the regional powers follow a policy of appeasement with both diplomatic and alliance relations, even when bandwagoning strategy is required.

Although the international system is an effective factor for the state behavior of regional powers, it is not the only determining factor. Regional actors also have to consider the security policies of other actors in their own regions. The aggressive or defensive intentions and initiatives of the regional countries also affect the security strategies of the regional powers, thus shaping the alliance relations. When the global power implements a passive engagement strategy as a regional policy, that is, when there is no global power with active field initiatives in the region, the main threat to the countries in the region is shaped according to the intentions of other actors in the region. In the absence of global power in the region, regional powers want to be the dominant power in the region, and for this, they develop alliance relations in the region against the main threat in line with their intentions. Because with the developed alliance relations, there are purposes such as using the deterrent of power as the more dominant party in the balance of power, sharing the costs and managing the perception of being seen as a regional power by being able to make and break alliances.

Finally, regional powers have to evaluate their own domestic policies and security priorities, because there are some features of regional powers stemming from their structures. In the context of the Gulf states, most of the regional powers are governed by a monarchy. In these

countries, there are alternative loyalties to the loyalty to the state, state revenues are shared by a group due to the rentier state practices, and the state structure does not allow large segments of society to express themselves. For such states, their internal dynamics become a threat to the state. Especially for some regional powers, the security of the regime takes priority over the security of the state and the people of the country. For many regional powers where the security of the regime is important, internal threats take priority over external threats. Because the primary target of internal threats is the regime. Threats to the regime are also prioritized depending on the geographical proximity to the regime, its dynamics, the strength of the threat and the interrelated external threat. In these countries, internal threats are a very useful soft power tool for foreign competitors. Generally the rival state supports internal threats and weaken its power by increasing the number of threats to the state.

To summarize, the security policies of a regional power emerge within the framework of fine calculations made at three different levels: system, region and domestic politics. As such, the main claim of this study is that the internal structures of regional powers in the unipolar system should be taken into account as a factor that determines state behaviors and security strategies. In these states, the priority in alliance relations is the security of the regime. In the case of global power adopting revisionist policies, regional powers have to exhibit status quo policies and develop alliance relations with each other. If the superpower is the main threat, regional powers develop alliance relations at a level that minimizes the internal and external threats. In this case, the most appropriate method to combat the threat is the omnialignment against external threats interrelated with internal threats, rather than bandwagoning the superpower. Thus, internal threats and interrelated external threats, which are the main threats to the security of the regime, are suppressed, the number of threats are minimized and it is easier to focus on the main threat. In the unipolar system, when the global power adopts a passive engagement policy, focusing on the goals and policies of the regional powers is the factor that ensures security. First of all, an alliance is formed with external threats interrelated to internal threats, the security of the regime is ensured and the main threat is focused. In the article, balancing strategies used by states to ensure their security are examined in two stages. The first phase involves determining the appropriate level of analysis and unit, while the second phase focuses on what is the real dynamic behind the alliance for balancing. Classical approaches argue that the main motivation of great powers in state relations is capabilities or threats. In the article, which discusses the main factor determining these relations for regional powers, the importance of internal structure and politics is emphasized. The foreign policy of the regional powers, unlike the great powers, is shaped by the domestic policy. Discussions on balancing theory have mostly focused on whether external or internal factors are more explanatory of state behavior. States generally tend to either avoid or often counterbalance power and threat. In this article, it is emphasized that the local characteristics and policies of the regional powers are the main motivation behind the balancing strategy. The main motivation for regional powers to define a security strategy and to engage in a coordinated security behavior by forming an alliance is examined.

1. The Systemic Dimension of the Security Policies of the Regional Power

As a sovereign unit, the state is considered as a unit that has the authority to decide how to fight the threats it encounters in terms of its internal and external security, and state behavior

has been examined in a unit-centered manner (Waltz, 1979: 82; 88; 93). States are reconsidered as units that have to live in an environment where there is no one responsible in the international arena as the main actor in the anarchic structure of the international system (Waltz, 1979:96). The decision makers of the state, on the other hand, have been included in the system as units pursuing national interests as rational actors (Waltz, 1954). In this context, it is seen as the duty of the state leader that all leaders, regardless of their political persuasion, can survive in a competitive environment and ensure inner peace while trying to manage state affairs. For the states that are responsible for providing national security, the security strategy are considered as ensuring their own security, even at the expense of the security or insecurity of their neighbors, and in this context, the relationship between states are associated with the power struggle between states in a process where they try to benefit from each other. In this case, one of the states should not be more dominant than the other and the international balance should not be disturbed by the defeat of the weak state. Thus, states try to maintain the balance of power by forming various alliances with each other in order to maintain the international balance and ensure their security (Carr, 2010; Morgenthau, 1985).

In this context, states are called regional powers or great powers according to some dynamics that determine the power capacity of states in the international system, such as population, geography, wealth, industry and military capacity. A system in which there is only one global superpower and there is no counter great power at the global level is defined as a unipolar system. In this system, it is difficult to create counter-balancing policies due to the power hierarchy and the possibilities of balancing the superpower. This situation affects the behavior of states and complicates the alignmentsto balance the superpower. Two different dimensions of analysis emerge when looking into state behavior in the unipolar system: the unchanging characteristics and possible variations in policy given these. To understand the behaviors of states, the superpower needs to evaluate both the policy alternatives of the secondary states and the internal threats to many of the regional powers. Power capacities of states and their ability to use this power determine the position of that state in the system and open up space for that state to use power. The limits presented by unipolarity to the system give priority to superpower in many areas. However, especially for regional powers, state behaviors are shaped according to the deep or passive engagement of the superpower's regional policies. First of all, the characteristics and structure of the system is emphasized, and then the effect of the structure of the system on regional powers are mentioned.

1.1. The Nature of the Unipolar International System and the Capacity Distribution of the States

One of the most important factors determining the relations of states with each other is the capacity distribution among the units that make up the system in international relations. If anarchy is accepted as the structure of the system, sovereignty is considered as a regulatory forceby classical approaches, and it is alleged that the main determinant of the relations of states with each other is the distribution of capacity and the amount of power (Waltz, 1979:97). Because classical approaches give information about the distribution of power between states, who will manage and determine the system (Gilpin, 2010: 29). In the international system where the power hierarchy is concerned, the states with the highest total power are considered as a very important factor that determines the number of poles, the structure of the system and the relations between states (Waltz, 1979: 93). The amount of power that states have, affects both global and regional

power distributions. The power capacities of the states shape their positions in the power hierarchy. This shows that the global threat perspective is an important determining factor in the alliance relations formed in the face of threats.

When the anarchy of the structure of the system is considered as the independent variable and the change in the power capacity in the system as the dependent variable, the status of the states in terms of capacity is used to explain the changes in the system. In this context, the way to understand the security strategies of states in the international system is to (1) know whether the structure of the system is unipolar or bipolar, (2) whether the state subject to the study is a global power or a regional power, (3) if it is a regional power, dimension of its relationship with global power, (4) the relationship of the global power with the powers in the region, and (5) the determination of the values that the regional power primarily wants to protect. Waltz's (1993: 44-79) claim that states' positions in the international system are sufficient to explain some of their attitudes in combating threats can be evaluated in this context. In other words, it is not possible to understand "who a state is", and "what that state and states do", without knowing the polarity of the current international system and what its status is (Harknett and Yalçın, 2012: 499-521).

Capacity distribution is associated with the amount of power that states have (Waltz, 1967: 97). Although the states are similar to each other in terms of their functional characteristics and sovereignty in international politics, the fact that states are different in terms of power capacity in general reveals a power hierarchy (Gilpin, 2010:29). While the state or states with the highest total power capacity in the international system are global powers, the state or states with the most power in certain strategic regions are also regional powers (Akdoğan, 2018: 191-192). The measurement of the capacities of states is determined on the basis of concrete material power elements. This allows states to define threats based on power capacity. According to Waltz, in order to reveal their power capacities, the geographical extent, population, military power, economic prosperity, political stability and technological development of the states should be examined (Waltz, 1967: 131). In order to define the power of the states, different new titles are added in addition to this definition. These are divided into measurable sub-headings such as economic welfare levels, defense expenditures, military capacity and military qualification, growth rate, strategic position of the state, strategic resources and political stability (Akdoğan, 2018: 44-45).

According to William Wohlforth, the "Unipolar Threshold" is when a state is so powerful that there is no possibility of an anti-hegemonic coalition. The United States has the world's largest economy (about 60 percent larger than second power) and appears to have by far the strongest military force. US military spending is more than the rest of the world combined with the extra expenditures included (Investopedia, 2016; SIPRI, 2021)). Despite the difficulties in Iraq and the downturn in the US economy, the US has a large margin over other major powers. Given the United States' ability to move freely in the air, oceans, and space, there is no possibility of victory over any other country (or existing coalition) itself in terms of combat power. In short, America's combat capability shapes the perceptions, calculations, and possibilities available to all other states as well as to other international actors. Therefore, the existence of great powers in the international system have the capacity and opportunity to use power over other states. In this case, the most important factors that determine the security strategies in the foreign policies of a

regional power are the regional power distribution, especially the global power distribution, and the power status of both states within the framework of this distribution.

One of the most distinctive features of the superpower is its potential power and the superiority of using this power over the world states. This brings about the inability to resolve any global conflict without being involved in that process. In this context, the existence of a superpower in a region sometimes poses a threat, sometimes provides security and sometimes a conflict for countries. The absence of global power in the region results in the perception of each of the states as a threat to the other and affects both global and regional relations. As a result, the presence and absence of the superpower in the region also affects the security policies of the states, their alliance relations, that is, their foreign and domestic policies. In this context, when these features are taken into consideration, the USA stands out as a superpower after the Cold War. The USA is presented by Niall Ferguson as an example of global leadership. The USA's establishment of an advanced global organization and an intervention network that affects every region of the world after the Cold War has made it a global leader (Ferguson, 2010: 18-32). This global leadership of the USA includes military, political, economic and worldwide technological leadership (Modelski, 2010: 1419-1420).

2. The Relation of State Behaviors of Secondary States with Superpower in a Unipolar System (Regional Dimension)

Although there are multiple factors that determine the behavior of states, these priorities for powers other than great powers start with internal threats and continue with external threats. The regional policies of the superpower and the intentions and targets of the regional powers determine whether the global or regional attitude of external threats is more threatening. Therefore, the attitude that determines the behavior of a state is first of all the appearance of the balance of power within the system. The aim of the states within the system is to maintain the balance of power or to turn it in their favor (Waltz, 1979: 126). This can be seen as a balancing act not only against external forces, but also against internal rivals. States increase their existing power to rebalance any change in the balance of power, this is called internal balancing. States that do not have sufficient capacity to increase power, on the other hand, choose the method of forming alliances or alignment to balance the power-increasing state, thus balancing, and sometimes this can be bandwagoning a powerful state (Wendt, 1999). The existence of internal threats, especially for states other than superpowers and great powers, requires a different balancing strategy which is omnialignment.

Although states determine their policies according to the policies of the superpower, it is insufficient to explain the defensive and aggressive state behaviors against the superpower. "Although the international structure provides opportunities and constraints that significantly shape state behavior", "does not completely determine it" (Mastanduno, 1997: 52). In other words, if the theories that determine the balance of power or explain the state behavior were constructed according to the static positions of the units in the system, they would be insufficient to explain the differentiation in the state behavior in the system. The system would be determined only by the status quo and revisionist policies of the superpower, and even when the superpower adopts revisionist policies, the states would prefer bandwagoning due to the impossibility of

balancing the superpower, or they would not make any attempt to disrupt the status quo when it is adopted status quo policies. When we analyze the initiatives of the states in the international system, it is seen that they ignore this even though they know that they cannot balance the superpower.

Although states know that they cannot balance the superpower, their attempts to balance lead us to the fact that different conditions are involved in explaining state behavior. The impossibility of balancing the secondary states, with the states of the Middle East Region, especially in the face of the revisionist policies of a superpower like the USA, shows that there are different reasons behind the balancing dynamics. When the concentration of power in the region threatens the interests of the regional states, states try to balance the policies of the superpower by making various initiatives. These balancing policies are not meant to oppose and compete with the superpower. This emerges with different methods such as forming various alliances for secondary states, minimizing threats other than superpowers, and taking initiatives desired by the superpower. Due to the nature of unipolarity, secondary states have to maintain their status quo and do not make revisionist initiatives with few exceptions. Thus, Christopher Layne (2004: 106) states that "the inequality of power deters others from challenging it" In other words, while the superpower has the opportunity to pursue both revisionist and status quo policies, secondary states have to adopt status quo policies in general. Secondary states should adopt status quo policies, especially if the superpower adopts active policies in the region.

The power given to the super power by the unipolar system also makes it difficult for the secondary states to form an alliance against it. Therefore, the secondary states tries to prevent the transformation that may occur against them and to ensure that the transformation progresses in their favor. Despite these efforts of the secondary states, their efforts may be insufficient in the face of the active strategies of the superpower. After all, secondary states may have to side with the superpower, even if they don't want to, or they may choose not to. In this case, the existence of a more priority threat or the possibility of developing different inventories to manage the transformation is revealed for the secondary states. It emerges especially when the priority of their internal threats is in question for the Middle Eastern countries and when they adopt policies of suppressing the superpower. Secondary states generally use the diplomatic bargaining method to manage the transformation. In this case, the superpower is in the decisive position of the bargain and determines the conditions under which the secondary state will take action and the scope of its commitments (Snyder, 1997: 3). In the unipolar system, in the face of the threats to the interests, the superpower has its own interests at the center in the alliance relationship. For secondary states, the main determinant in alliance relations is primarily the regional policies of the superpower. The purpose of secondary states is to minimize the number of threats to their interests. Therefore, the priority is to balance external threats interrelated with internal threats and then focus on the main threat. Thus, secondary states have to take into account both their internal threats and the positions of secondary states when trying to balance or suppress the superpower.

2.1. Structural Characteristics of Regional Powers in a Unipolar System

The regional powers that emerged towards the end of the Cold War Period gained the ability to act with the loosening of the system and began to gain power in their own regions. In Martin Beck's (2006: 1-9) study, in which he explains the criteria that make up the regional power.

These criteria are; (1) being part of a region that can be defined by its own identity, (2) how it reflects its own image as a regional power (ideological structure), (3) having a strategic position within the region, (4) high military, economic, demographic, political ideological capabilities, (5) being well integrated into the region, (6) setting the security agenda of the region, (7) taking an active role in regional and global forms, (8) being seen as a regional power by other powers in the region, and (9) forming alliances and ability to break alliances. If we define it only from a realist perspective, we need to focus on the military, economic, demographic, political and ideological capabilities that make up the material dimension of power. Although regional powers do not have the ability to use the amount of power they have as much and effectively as superpowers and great powers, it can be said that they have the ability to resist against superpower, great powers and regional powers (White, 2010).

Buzan and Wæver (2003: 32) focus on the distinction they make between superpowers and great powers, as well as their effects on regional power to define regional power within the framework of the Regional Security Complex Theory. Although the influence of regional powers is great in their own regions, it is not taken into account at the global level. Regional powers should be analyzed using a multi-layer system. These levels of analysis; (1) the regional power's relationship with other powers in the region; regional level, (2) relations between regional powers; the interregional level and (3) relations between states outside its territory; global level (Nolte, 2007: 9). Finally, what we also defend in the study and put it at the center of the study (4) the internal threats of the regional powers and the external threats associated with these internal threats-national level (David, 1991).

In this context, the security strategy analysis of a regional power should be evaluated with the presence of an external threat that supports both internal threats and internal threats. The interrelated threats are the factors that support the primary alliance relationship for the regional power. For regional powers, a multi-dimensional analysis is required, it is necessary to evaluate security strategies at the national, regional, global and interregional levels. In the post-Cold War period, the regional powers in the Middle East Region were identified as Saudi Arabia, Israel, Turkey, Iran, Iraq (until 2003) and Egypt (Akdoğan, 2018: 50-51). Looking at the regional powers in question, if some generalizations are to be made; It is seen that they stand out with their features such as (1) a large regional population, (2) a high GDP, (3) strong conventional armed forces, and (4), in some cases, nuclear weapons.

3. Internal Factors Affecting the Security Policies of the Regional Power

While analyzing the international system, it is thought that important political actors and domestic processes should be included in addition to the international system. In other words, it is argued that state behavior can be better explained if the conditions in the international system and the opportunities and constraints offered in domestic politics are evaluated together. In this context, state behavior is affected by international developments, state structure, how decision makers interpret events, and the reactions of leaders and people, and depends not only on international dynamics outside the state, but also on actors and various processes within the state (Taliaferro, 2009: 3). In theory, new approaches relate the security of the international system to ensuring the security of a nation, that is, balancing an emerging domestic threat with its relations with foreign alliances (Frisch, 2011). When we examine the evaluations in general terms, it is stated that classical approaches are explained by centering superpowers and great powers, in

addition to the approach that interstate relations are centered on external threats, including internal threats, internal processes and the concerns of the state leader, and by adding state structure, competing allegiances and economic features as sub-titles of these, state behaviors are tried to be interpreted as regional power-centered.

In our classification based on power capacities, especially in the Middle East region, there are some features that distinguish regional powers from superpowers or great powers, and these features often have an effect that shapes their relations between states within the system. Regional powers; (1) competing allegiances, (2) state structure, and (3) economic characteristics are the main factors that distinguish them from other countries. These features make it constantly confronted with internal threats. The structural features of the regional powers, where the prevalence of internal threats are intense, are due to the fact that they have been exploited by the great powers for years and that the effects of external powers in their organizations do not give the country an identity of belonging. Because most of the regional powers are created as an artificial structure rather than a coherent unit (Clapham, 1985: 8). This both affects the state structure of regional powers and causes them to face constant internal threats. The factors that cause the internal threats of the regional powers to take precedence and more than the external threats;

3.1. Competing Allegiances

Many of the regional powers are identified with ethnic, religious or regional groups rather than with a state identity. This is the most important factor preventing the formation of national consciousness of regional powers (Thomas, 1987: 2). This narrow pursuit of self-interest prevents the formation of a national consciousness and causes constant competing allegiances. In the states that have these characteristics, the state of conflict between the permanent opposition and the established regimes continues. The reason for this is that the tension between the regime and the opposition and the continuity of their relations stem from the pressure on the opposition rather than the conflict between them. It is seen by the states that the most important thing is to eliminate the opposition structures, not to find a common idea by establishing a dialogue with the opposition structures. These states are structures that keep power at their centre, with only a group of representatives in the capitals. Management consists only of state representation in the hands of members of a particular group. This weakens the legitimacy of state leaders and puts the survival of state regimes at risk.

The absence of the identity of belonging of regional powers, and the artificial foundation of the state have created a situation that requires groups to adhere to interests other than national interests and to strive for these interests. Individuals identify with ethnic, religious, or regional groups rather than with the state. While this situation causes individuals to strive for limited interests, it also prevents the formation of a national consciousness, unity and solidarity. Even as the nationalism belonging to their own country borders is rising rapidly in the world, structures that do not have a deep-rooted foundation cannot find a place for themselves in the structures that are identified with ethnic, religious and regional groups, and they have to take shelter behind their own ethnic and religious groups. In particular, regional powers, instead of overcoming the differences between these different groups, generally centralize all power to a certain group, and in this case, they perpetuate segregation and conflict. In this case, the leadership becomes just another competitor in the power struggle within the state (Harknett, 1997). However, while

leadership should be a respected, elite and representative authority, it becomes a part of the power struggle. This situation causes the leader to face constant threats and the existence of unrest and uprisings within the state.

The leaders of the regional powers have been in power mostly by force, and they try to suppress their people with the power they have in order to stay in power. The fact that state leaders were not elected leaders of the country deprived them of legitimacy, resulting in the public seeing them as a competitor rather than leaders. Since these countries lack legitimacy, they are constantly faced with threats (Alagappa, 1987: 4-6). Voices against the system within the state increase as the state separates the society, and the polarity of the state becomes more evident. The leaders of these countries control much more wealth and power when compared to other groups in the region. For the people who are not represented administratively, the gap between them increases as the state leader also holds the economic power. Leaders and certain groups have so much control of the state that the state, as a vulnerable mechanism, is forced to determine policies according to the interests of the leader and leading groups, not its own interests. The people feel that they are not represented, they are marginalized every time they express their opinion, the revenues of the state are in the hands of a single group, and in this case, the system faces a serious public threat.

Since state leaders do not give up their attempts to maintain their wealth, influence and power, they fiercely resist attempts against the security of their own regimes. Because the result of any loss of power in regional powers results in loss of life (Clapham, 1985: 39-43). Therefore, most of the leaders of these countries are involved in international politics as states ruled by authoritarian rule, and the leaders of these states can sometimes be more aggressive to protect their positions than the state leaders who are elected. Again, in these regimes, political decisions are taken by a single person or a narrow group. Elite individuals and groups often care more about their own interests than the country when determining national and international policies (Migdal, 1974). Under these conditions, there is always a separation between the state and the people, and the competing allegiances of the state leader and the competing allegiances of the people bring the regional powers face to face with an existing and possible internal threat.

3.2.State Structure

The state, which has absolute authority within its borders, is sovereign, and in foreign policy, the state is the only entity with absolute sovereignty. Therefore, even though the domestic and foreign policy of a state feed and shape each other, they are considered and evaluated independently of each other. Contrary to the hierarchical structure in the domestic politics of sovereign states in the international system, there is no higher authority in the international system to carry out this structure and determine the relations between states. This explains the anarchic structure of the international system, and the survival and continuity of the regime becomes the most basic purpose of the states to ensure their own security. The state, which wants to ensure its security, acts in pursuit of power, constantly wants to increase its power and struggles in the international system (Birdişli, 2014: 29). States build the state on sociological, economic, political and religious foundations in order to gain legitimacy over their people and in the international system, and it is of great importance that this foundation has a basis that covers many fields and that their legitimacy is accepted both on their people and in the international system. The best examples of such states are seen in the Middle East region.

Considering the monarchical state structures in the Middle East Region, according to Michael Herb, the permanence of monarchical state structures is tied to dynastic solidarities, and it is thought to have little connection with the virtues and snares of centralization. Basically, Herb considers it sufficient to form a small and loyal core congregation of intertwined people to run a Middle Eastern state (Herb, 1999: 9). In this context, according to Nicholas Van Dam, in monarchies, it is the family that allows this narrow regime coalition to be channeled, and family conflicts turn into constructive rivalry patterns. With this discourse, he emphasizes the characteristics of Middle Eastern monarchies in general (Dam, 1996: 1). Daniel L. Byman and Jerrold D. Green (1999: 2) talk about the "divide and rule" measures while describing the secret of the survival of some monarchies in the Middle East Region, one of the most unstable regions in the world, and some of the strategies they use to maintain internal stability. If we make a generalization, in order to avoid the centralization trap, Middle Eastern countries tried to hold on to their monarchical structures by avoiding both political and social pluralism. Especially in Saudi Arabia, the authority given to the state leader by the Wahhabi teachings and the belief in being loyal have been brought to the fore too much, and it has often been claimed that there has been strict judgments and distance from religion in intellectual disagreement.

Although the policy of divide, rule and most importantly alignment seems costly for state leaders, in fact, it is easier for regional powers, whose internal threats decrease, to fight external threats. The main threat to these states is considered not to be invaded by foreign armies, but to spread foreign ideas (Fresh, 2011: 179). The state leader has to balance between external and internal needs to ensure the continuity of the regime. The most important reason for this is that the leader of the state, which constitutes the security area of the domestic regime, can easily provide reasons that give legitimacy to transfer state resources to an external threat. Thus, it can justify all kinds of defense expenditures. In states governed by a monarchy, state leaders prefer to establish permanent alliances with foreign powers, especially to combat this dilemma.

3.3. Being a Rentier State

Another feature that distinguishes regional powers from other countries is their economic structures and the characteristics of this structure. Most of the regional powers, known as rentier states¹ are states that derive most of their income from a natural source. To give an example from the Middle East Region; These countries are classified as rentier states because their economy is based on oil and natural gas exports. In rentier states, the people are not subject to taxation and receive income only from natural resources and do not produce anything. Therefore, due to the fact that these societies are not subject to taxation, the people do not demand democratization and development, and even if they do, their demands are not met (Gray, 2011). Thus, the regime and the people cannot reconcile, and the social order and social demand do not coincide.

While the natural resources, geopolitical positions and multicultural structure of the Middle East Region should be an advantageous situation for the countries in the region, they put them in a disadvantageous position due to political, economic and socio-cultural reasons, forcing the countries to struggle. Instead of a strong and institutional political infrastructure, strong economy and rich cultural structure with its advantages, the Middle East Region stands out with

¹Developing countries that rely on natural resources for a large part of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) are called "rentier states".

its authoritarian-oppressive administration, uneven income distribution, high unemployment rate, dependence on a single source of production, and ethnic conflicts that continue at the micro level. Despite this, Middle Eastern states find some political, cultural and religious solutions to compete with other countries in the global economy in order to preserve and maintain their existing economic structures.

In today's world, where change and transformation take place very rapidly at the global level and the cultural, economic and political processes of the states are greatly affected by this change and transformation, the institutionalization of the state structure in the Middle East Region has not made any progress in areas such as the freedom of the people, the rule of law, and the establishment of a fair system, and with the addition of the injustices experienced in the distribution of incomes, the state and the society have become distant. Due to the fact that only one group benefits from the revenues obtained from natural resources, the distance has widened further and this has led to the emergence of internal threats. With these features, regional powers differ from the great powers and superpowers with liberal economies, and this creates a source for the existence of their internal threats. Because, in addition to features such as competing allegiances and monarchical state structure that reveal the internal threats to a society, the rentier state feature of the economic structure also increases social demands.

Most importantly, interrelated threats pose an urgent security challenge for states that maintain power under these three conditions. In other words, alliance relations, which are seen as bandwagoning or balance of power, can also be considered as a omni-balancing attempt that requires multidimensional evaluation. This causes international, regional and local factors to be evaluated separately as threats, and a separate condition arises in dealing with potential threats. Legitimate state leadership generates new competing allegiances. The absence of a unifying national identity often requires regimes to use force to stay in power. This means that the political institutions, history and laws of the state cannot serve as new sources of legitimacy.

When there is a disagreement about the basic nature of the state, the foundations of the regime are weakened, and the continuity of the regime is ensured only by force and coercion. In addition, the existence of internal threats becomes an even more serious problem due to the weak nature of some regimes and the monopoly of the state as a source of power, influence and wealth in many political systems. The fact that the state monopolizes wealth and is a single-source rentier state also causes threats to the regime to arise from its internal structure. Given these effects, the absence of political and economic institutions dedicated to influence for non-state actors leaves state control highly desirable and often resorting to violence for its sake (Harknett and Yalcin, 2012: 112-153).

State Behaviors of Regional Powers

Many countries of the world are evaluated in the regional power class. However, there has not been enough theoretical work on these countries to analyze their policies and strategies in international relations. The common opinion of many thinkers is that the relationship between the balance of power and security is also a valid theory for alignments among regional powers (David, 1991: 233). In an international system in which the balance of power is considered as an alignment that ensures security, it is necessary to take into account some distinctive features while examining the foreign policies and security strategies of the countries that we have categorized as regional

powers. Understanding the regional and global policies and relations of regional powers also plays an important role in analyzing the course of international politics (David, 1991: 233).

It is important what the main factor is that pushes states to adopt a common decision against a security problem and to form alliances and coordinated security behavior (Modelska, 1963). David Steven, who first proposed the omni-balancing theory, focused on the effects of external and internal factors on balancing, shed light on us with a new method that shapes alliance relations (David, 1991: 233-257). In this context, it is predominantly argued that the primary determinant of balancing is a state's assessment of its position relative to other states in the international system. The most traditional of these explanations focuses on the distribution of abilities as the critical variable (Waltz, 1979; Morgenthau, 1985). It is argued that the primary motive for the balancing strategy is to balance against the potential or actual aggregation of power (a state or group of states). Balance-of-power theory argues that states will form alliances with other states to counterbalance the rising power in the face of the supremacy of foreign power. Balancing is seen as a counterattack by states against the threat of domination or destruction by the rising power, out of fear of failure. The determinants of balance arise from the anarchic nature of the international system, which requires states to resist any actual or potential external threat to their survival. The primary motivation is to secure the continued existence of the state. For many of the regional powers, this is seen as equivalent to the security of the regime. According to Kenneth N. Waltz, most states provide greater security by alignment (Waltz, 1979: 126).

There are also thinkers who oppose such approaches with a second set of explanations focusing on the importance of domestic policies and structures in the foreign policy of the state (Waltz, 1979: 121-122). In this context, the fact that Peter Katzenstein and G. John Ikenberry see the state structure as an important variable that creates both constraints and opportunities for the competing actors in the policy-making process shows that different determinants of foreign policy should be included in the process (Ikenberry, 1988). In Robert Dahl's society-centered statements, the effect of foreign policy makers is not limited to the balance of power and threat. Dahl sees policy behavior as a reflection of the preferences of the dominant group or actors struggling against other groups or actors to influence the policy-making process (Dahl, 1962). Unlike Walt and Waltz, these approaches explain alignment as an outcome based on the ability of an actor or group to organize effectively in policy so that its interests prevail over others. These thinkers emphasize state structures as important intermediate variables in the policy making process. It is thought that domestic politics shapes foreign policy. Both community and state-centered approaches consider alignment decisions primarily driven by internal political incentives and risks (Ikenberry, 1988: 2019-243).

The main concern of states is that a group or a state gains superiority in a way that disrupts the balance. Therefore, the emergence of a hegemonic power ultimately poses a threat to the survival of other states. External threats force states to form alliances and develop common methods to combat threats (George, 1962: 2-3). Although it is not always possible to explain alliances between regional and great powers with a common threat perception and balance of power, there are also considerations that take into account a common value (David, 1991: 234). Because otherwise, the harmonious cooperation established by states with similar political systems for the balance of power must be continued (Wolfers, 1965: 29). However, if the alliances established in the international system are taken into account, a continuous change and

restructuring, not continuity, can be noticed. This can be used to describe the alliance relations of not only great powers but also regional powers in general terms (Walt, 1990: 13-14). What should be emphasized in particular is that since regional powers have different priority threats arising from their state structures, it is not possible to explain alliance relations with generalizations, since these threats differ them from great powers.

The most important factor to ensure harmony and rebalance of regional powers is closely related to who the regional power leaders are. The rational decisions taken by the leaders are decisive for the stability and survival of the state. Because most of the regional powers consist of governments whose legitimacy is not dependent on the people for the stability of the state governed by the monarchy. Therefore, the stability and security of the regime in such countries is more dependent on the absence of internal threats than external threats. The inclusion of the internal threat in the alliance process is related to the duration of the state leader's stay in power. In other words, the interests of the state leader take precedence over the interests of the state. In this case, it can be said that it is possible to ensure the security of the regimes against the internal threats, which are the primary threats, only by alignment with the external threats, which are the secondary threats (David, 1991:236). For a state leader who prioritizes the survival of the regime, an internal rebellion, uprising and formation against himself is more serious than external threats. Internal threats therefore require states to adopt certain external alignments. However, according to David, the existence of internal threats alone is not sufficient to explain the alliance relations of states. In this context, the existence of external threats to the survival of the state in an anarchic international system should never be ignored. In this context, according to David, the international balancing attitude of a state is determined by the interaction between the structure of the system and the distribution of internal threats (David, 1991).

By adopting an argument in line with their findings, David, Waltz and Walt concluded that the natural tendency of states would be to move away from the primary threat they face. Only David differs from Waltz and Walt in their thoughts that the main determining effect of alliance relations for regional powers is internal threats. David's work recognizes that in many countries the political process lacks legitimacy for the majority of the population. Institutional approaches assume that the local competition of democratic states takes place within the state through institutions and within the legal framework. In particular, these states are classified as democratic states. For these states, influencing the decision making process can be routinized and even the decisions are legitimized with many allegations. However, in many countries where the public is not involved in the policy-making process, this may not be possible, especially in regional powers. Pluralist and institutionalist approaches generally explain theories by centered on superpowers and great powers, and ignore the feature of the state and economic structures of regional powers to determine internal threats and external alliances (Walt, 1988; Waltz, 1979). Because pluralist and institutionalist approaches do not take into account the intensity of the threat posed by coups, revolts and revolutions. In such societies, "domestic politics" has a very serious importance. A local environment with potentially high internal security threats will have to produce a very different form of politics than the state in a local environment where security is not an issue. If security is insufficient for the continuation of regimes in such countries, domestic politics becomes associated with international anarchy. The consequences, structural features and difficulties of this situation require new strategies. This requires reinterpreting traditional

domestic policy and institutional approaches from a different perspective than conventional approaches.

If balancing is done in response to internal threats, it doesn't have to be in a specific region or just one alignment. A regime may also seek an international alignment to suppress a direct and urgent internal security problem. For balancing, it must be the product of the balancing or internal bandwagoning dynamics. In this context, the inclusion of primary internal threats as a variable to explain the state behavior of regional powers is seen as an important contribution. However, responses to interrelated threats are analytically different from responses to primary external or primary internal threats. Responses to interrelated threats require what we call international alignments that use a unified strategy to deal with mutually fueling internal and external security challenges. Balancing is assumed to be driven by a balancer or majority reaction, which has the two most common dynamics, against the most immediate threat to the security of a country or regime (external, internal or interrelated (Schroeder, 1994).

The survival desires of regional power leaders are also at the top of this hierarchy of problems. Balancing is done against the primary internal enemy by cooperating with the secondary external enemy (Keohane, 1986: 163). Therefore, state leaders legitimize their alliance relations and policies and present them to the society. This situation is expressed as the rational calculation behavior of state leaders. In omnialignment, states, as unitary actors pursuing national interests, expand the security zone by considering internal threats as well as focusing on external threats and capabilities.

Conclusion

As seen in the literature discussions above, classical approaches have not focused much on the main reason behind the state behavior of regional powers. Regional powers have also been tried to be evaluated with the analysis perspective of great powers. At this point, the article makes an important contribution to the literature in terms of emphasizing the necessity of focusing on the local characteristics and policies of regional powers in order to understand their security strategies. Specifically, it is argued that the state behavior of regional powers is not a reaction to an external threat or internal reconciliation, but rather the existence of both external and internal security problems that reinforce each other. The structure and characteristics of the system, especially for regional powers, are as effective as the structure and features that distinguish states from other states in determining the relations of states with other states. It is necessary to determine the priorities and basic motivations of a monarchical state struggling with its own internal threats in combating external threats. States try to balance their policies with each other for their security. In addition, if these states are regional powers, they have to shape their foreign policy according to the main motivation in domestic politics in order to balance their domestic politics due to their state structure. Alignment assessment in the security strategy of states is examined in two steps: First, determining the appropriate level and unit of analysis; Secondly, the determination of the real dynamics of alliances. In this context, classical approaches argue that capabilities and/or threats are the primary explanatory variable of states' alliance relations throughout the international system. Although the primary factor that determines the state behavior of regional powers can be generalized with capabilities and threats, global powers and

regional powers differ from each other in terms of the type and characteristics of the threat. As such, the main claim of the study;

The alliance relations formed by a state, which is a regional power in a unipolar system, in the context of its security strategy against existing threats, depend on the regional policies of the superpower, the strategic goals of the regional states and the internal threats of the state.

In this context, while classical approaches obtain many consistent arguments in explaining the alliance relations of superpowers and great powers and analyzing state behavior, they are insufficient in explaining their multifaceted relations with each other, especially due to the dynamics of regional powers. However, analyzing the state behavior of regional powers, which have almost two-thirds of the international system, will make it easier to understand many alliance relations within the system and will make serious contributions to political science. In particular, it is necessary to examine the state behavior of other states that are not considered as superpowers and great powers, and to reveal the factors that affect them due to their position in the system. Due to the structure and conditions of these states, the existence of threats is evaluated at the global, regional and national level. In this context, it can be said that;

The alliance relations of regional powers emerge with the existence of both external and internal security threats that strengthen each other.

In countries where the security of the regime is more important than the security of the state and both external and internal threats are equally prioritized, the omnialignment strategy emerges as an inevitable strategy. The internal threats and external threats interrelated to internal threats of countries with characteristics such as competing allegiances, monarchical state structure, rentier state economic model require the omnialignment strategy. In our study, which generally emphasizes the necessity of a multidimensional approach to the alliance relations of regional powers, the main aim is to emphasize that the most important factor determining the relations between states is internal threats. In this context, the most important factor determining the alliance relations of regional powers, where the security of the regime is seen as the security of the state, is their internal threats.

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