

The Effect of Glocal Systemic Polarity on Regional Stability

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Abstract

This study is about the effect of *glocal systemic polarity* on regional stability. Studies on polarity and stability often focus on the relationship between global systemic polarity and stability or regional systemic polarity and stability. In these studies, it is assumed that the global systemic polarity structure penetrates all regions of the world at the same rate or the regional systemic polarity operates independently from the global systemic polarity. However, these assumptions lead to some gaps in the explanation of the relationship between polarity and stability. This study attempts to fill this gap by introducing the concept of *glocal systemic polarity*. This concept argues that in the relationship between polarity and stability, global systemic polarity has different degrees of influence on regions, and these different degrees affect regional stability. Therefore, it argues that in all global systems, regions on which a pole-state or pole-states develop hegemonic relations by themselves are stable, or regions on which a pole-state cannot develop hegemonic relations alone are unstable. This claim will be tested by looking at the regional distribution of the conflicts' intensity that occurred between 1947 and 2020 in the world.

Keywords: System, glocal system, polarity, stability, conflict

Glokale Sistemik Kutupluluğun Bölgesel İstikrara Etkisi

Öz

Bu çalışma *glokale sistemik kutupluluğun* bölgesel istikrara etkisi hakkındadır. Kutupluluk ve istikrar üzerindeki çalışmalar genellikle global sistemik kutupluluk ve istikrar veya bölgesel sistemik kutupluluk ve istikrar arasındaki ilişkiye odaklanmaktadır. Bu çalışmalarda, global sistemik kutupluluk yapısının dünyadaki tüm bölgelere aynı oranda nüfuz ettiği ya da bölgesel sistemik kutupluluğun global sistemik kutupluluktan bağımsız işlediği varsayılmaktadır. Ancak, bu varsayımlar kutupluluk ve istikrar arasındaki ilişkinin açıklanmasında bazı boşluklara yol açmaktadır. Bu çalışma *glokale sistemik kutupluluk* kavramını ortaya atarak bu boşluğu doldurmaya çalışmaktadır. Bu kavram, kutupluluk ve istikrar arasındaki ilişkide, global sistemik kutupluluğun bölgelere etkisinin farklı derecelerde olduğunu ve bu farklılığın da bölgesel istikrarı etkilediğini



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savunur. Dolayısıyla, bütün global sistemlerde, kutup-başı devlet ya da devletlerin tek başlarına üzerinde hegemonik ilişki geliştirdiği bölgelerin istikrarlı veya bir kutup-başı devletin tek başına üzerinde hegemonik ilişki geliştiremediği bölgelerin istikrarsız olduğunu iddia eder. Bu iddia, dünyada 1947-2020 tarihleri arasında meydana gelen çatışma sayılarının yoğunluğunun bölgesel dağılımlarına bakılarak test edilecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sistem, global sistem, kutupluluk, istikrar, çatışma

Introduction

The effect of the polarity of the international system on stability at the global level is one of the most discussed topics in the literature. In this context, studies from the neo-realist paradigm focus on the stability of the international system at the main level and the stability of regional systems at the intermediate level. These studies are generally examined on which of multipolar, bipolar and unipolar systems produces relatively more stability or instability. At the global level, in general, the concept of stability is tried to be examined by comparing the multipolarity of the system that caused the First and Second World Wars, the bipolarity of the Cold War Era and the unipolarity of the post-Cold War period. In addition, at the local level which is the regional level, polarity of the local or regional system and its effect on regional stability are examined according to the relative distribution of the powers of the main regional actors against each other. All these studies aim to find a relationship between polarity and stability and explain this relationship between these two concepts.

However, there is a gray zone in the literature that needs to be explained in regard to the effects of global systemic polarity on global stability and regional systemic polarity on regional stability. While discussing the effect of global systemic polarity on stability, it is assumed that all pole-actors, regardless of systemic polarity, can penetrate every point of the globe. However, this assumption fails to explain the inability of global systemic polarity to reflect its projection on regional levels in many parts of the world. The projection of the unipolar system in the European regional system and the Middle East regional system appeared differently after the Cold War. The United States, which is a polar actor, tends to penetrate many regional areas with the effect of being a global power. This penetration is felt intensely in the European continent and although this continent has a multi-polar structure, the regional system still produces stability. However, in the Middle East regional system, which is another multipolar region within the same global system, has less area of influence by the United States in comparison to Europe due to the Russian influence. Therefore, the Middle Eastern region cannot produce stability.

Another common issue in regional stability studies is the fact that the impact of regional dynamics on regional polarity is overly taken into consideration. When the effect of the relative distribution of power capacities of regional actors on regional stability is evaluated, it becomes difficult to explain the causes of regional conflicts. In today's Middle East, can the amount of influence imposed by regional powers such as Iran, Israel, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye in the emergence of the Syrian civil war be considered independent of global actors such as United States? Or can the war between Ukraine and Russia be explained by regional dynamics alone? In other words, could Ukraine, which did not feel the support of the United States, have the will to act independently in the region despite the existence of Russia?

As seen above, there are explanatory gaps around the concept of stability in both global systemic and regional systemic approaches. This gap in theory will be attempted to be filled with the concept of glocal systemic polarity. Glocal systemic polarity will be

used to explain the effect of systemic polarity at the global level on regional stability, regardless of the number of systemic polarity at the regional level. Nevertheless, this concept does not express the mutual interaction of global and local polarity as in the dictionary meaning. The concept of glocal systemic polarity reflects the extent to which global pole-actors can project power and influence over regions. In this framework, the concept claims that global systemic pole-actor or actors cannot establish absolute effectiveness in every region of the globe and will only contribute to stability in regions where they can establish absolute effectiveness. With the secondary data analysis method to be used to obtain the data necessary to test this claim, the data obtained by other researchers will be reprocessed in accordance with the purpose of the study. Afterward, the number of regional conflicts obtained by secondary data analysis method will be compared with the number of effective global pole-actors in that region. In this way, the relationship between regional stability and glocal systemic polarity will be tried to be revealed.

Global and Regional Systems

In the literature, polarity is defined according to the number of the great powers in the system (For a useful guide to the various approaches and debates on polarity and power, see Waltz K. N., 1964; Wohlforth, 1999; Hopf, 1991; Walt, 2009). Therefore, the distribution of capacities among the actors in the system should be measured to determine the polarity in the system. However, military power capacity, economic capacity, population and land area should be taken into account (Waltz, 1979, as cited in Hopf, 1991, p. 478). In this respect, a unipolar system is a system in which the power capacity of a single state is significantly higher than the state or states with the closest power capacity. Similarly, a bipolar system is a system in which the power capacities of the two states are close to each other in the system, but the power capacity of these two states is significantly higher than the other states in the system. Finally, the multipolar system is explained as a system in which three or more states have similar power capacities. These descriptions are used for system analysis on a global scale. In the light of these explanations, it can be seen that different polarity features have emerged in the international system in different periods of history. From the mid-17th century, when the nation-state system emerged, to the mid-20th century, a multipolar structure prevailed for a long time (Wohlforth, 1999; Kennedy, 1987). In this process, although the names of the great powers that formed the multipolar structure changed from time to time, it has always been more than two great powers that determined the character of the system. For example, the United Kingdom, France, Ottoman Empire and Russia made the system multipolar in the 17th century, later on, England, France, Germany and Russia dominated world politics in the 18th and 19th centuries. By the 20th century, new great powers such as the United States and Japan had emerged (Wohlforth, 1999; Kennedy, 1987). After the World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union, which stood out among the other great powers that were worn out, formed the bipolar system as two superpowers. This system, which continued throughout the Cold War era, evolved into a unipolar system in which the United States was the sole superpower after the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 90s.

These aspects of systemic polarity are also valid in regional systemic structures. Similarly, in regional systems as a sub-level of analysis, the level of power capacities of the actors existing in the region with respect to each other explains the polarity of the regional system. In this respect, regional polarity is defined by the distribution of power in a regional system in terms of military capacity, in other words, by the number of regional powers. In the bipolar world of the Cold War Era, the United States and the Soviet

Union were influential in the international system thanks to their power capacities over the entire globe. Simultaneously, in Europe, it can be said that Germany, France and the United Kingdom pioneered the multipolar structure of the European Continental System. Similarly, the Middle East System can be considered as a multipolar system, since the power capacities of the countries of this regional system such as Israel, Iran, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Turkiye are close to each other.

If it is looked at the two different analysis levels independently of each other, during the Cold War period, while there is a bipolar system at the global analysis level, it can be seen that there is a multipolar system in two different regional systems at the regional analysis level. But, although there are two different examples of polarity at two different levels of analysis, how correct is it to consider the polarity feature at the regional system level differently from the polarity feature at the global level? It is not correct. To evaluate with an example: in the Middle East Regional System, the regional pole states' own power capacities will not be sufficient in their struggle to expand their autonomy. Because even if they are considered as pole-states in their region, these states can be considered as small states on a global scale. Therefore, regional states ally with global systemic forces and lure them into the region to balance against imminent threats both within the region and within the country. Such alliances are more probable, especially if these global systemic forces are far from the region, because geographic distance limits their ambitions and prevents them from attempting to invade territory (Walt, 2009, pp. 111-120).

Although the behavior of regional states in the regional system has been tried to be explained above, on the other side of this phenomenon, the behavioral models of the polar states of the global system emerge. Global polar states also have a desire to increase their autonomy on a global scale, just as regional states want to increase their autonomy in their regions. A super or global power is a major power or regional power in regions outside its own region (Fox, 1944, as cited in Ross, 2004, p. 268). While super or global power has established complete supremacy or dominance in its own region, it seeks to prevent the emergence of a rising rival in other regions. Because in remote areas, the power capacity is significantly eroded. Therefore, a superpower is one of the regional powers within other regions (Mearsheimer, 2001, as cited in Ross, 2004, p. 268). Thus, "the regional balance of power is not autonomous but heavily depends on the number of great powers in the international system, and on the type of regional involvement (competitive, cooperative, or hegemonic) in which the great powers engage." (Miller, 2004, p. 240). For example, the United States and the Soviet Union, representing the two poles during the Cold War, followed a more hegemonic and interventionist policy. This situation directly affected the autonomy of regional polarity. In the unipolar system that emerged after the Cold War, the only superpower, the United States, was more interventionist in some regional systems, while it was more collaborationist in other regions. Because, the pole-state can throw the responsibility on various regional powers to avoid the attrition of shaping and managing the system, and get free riding (Walt, 2009, p. 99). In this framework, global pole-states will wish to intervene in many regional systems on a global scale to the extent that their power capacities and possibilities allow. This situation pushes the global pole-states to find allied states in these regional systems that they can control for themselves.

When the behavior models of both global pole-states and regional pole-states are evaluated in this way, it is thought that the position of a regional pole-state vis-à-vis other states in its region cannot be independent of global pole-states. While this is the case, in regional system-oriented discussions, regional polarity is generally considered independently of systemic polarity (For a useful guide to the various approaches and debates on polarity and power, see Buzan & Wæver, 2003; Lake, 2009; Stewart-Ingersoll

& Frazier, 2012). The problem of generalization in systemic approaches here turns into a problem of reduction. Regional polarity definitions are generally made according to regional power distribution. Perhaps the reason for this is the desire to consider the region as an independent research focus separate from the system. However, the reduction problem here may lead to erroneous conclusions in the assessments between regional polarity and stability. The current Syrian problem cannot be handled only through regional forces and dynamics. In this issue, we see the consequences of systemic polarity, perhaps even more than regional polarity. Hence, the systemic power or powers are seen as a part of the regional system, as a complement, without being included in the regional security complex. These non-regional forces are considered as penetrating the region (Buzan & Wæver, 2003, as cited in Lake, 2009, p. 35). In this respect, while focusing on the relationship between polarity and stability, it is necessary to consider firstly the distribution of power at the global level and then the regional projections of this distribution of power. Therefore, the concept of *glocal systemic polarity* is more functional in understanding the effects of global powers on regions and the consequences of these effects on stability.

Glocal System

The concept of *glocal system* refers to both the global and regional levels and looks at the impact of polarity on stability from both levels together. So, the primary purpose of this research is to produce the concept of glocal system for a better explanation of the effect of the global system on the regional system. The glocal system is a hybrid system level that emerges as a result of the interaction of the global system level and the regional (local) system levels. Another aim sought to be achieved with this new conceptualization is the effect of polarity in glocal systems on regional stability.

The international system is too big for a single state to control the entire globe in today's conditions. There are many exceptions to the fact that polar states can control the whole system in both unipolar, bipolar and multipolar systems. In bipolar and multipolar systems, in regions other than those in which each pole-state provides autonomy, either other polar states in the system provide autonomy or there are areas under the control of regional powers that none of these polar states in the system can control. In unipolar systems, since there is no other polar state, it can be seen that regional powers provide autonomy in areas where this single pole-state cannot provide autonomy. Therefore, the existence of polar states does not mean that each area in the international system can be controlled by these states with absolute autonomy. In this global systemic competitive environment, every pole-state does not have the capacity to spread its power to every area of the globe. Thereby, these states, which have global power capacity, need to calculate the regional density of their power capacities in line with their strategies. When considered in this context, many regions of the world are either under the autonomy of a single global actor, or places for a struggle to increase the autonomy of two or more global actors, or under the influence of regional power or powers that cannot be influenced by any global actor. While this is the case, it is necessary to determine the spheres of influence of global actors by dividing the international system into sub-systems. With an analysis made in this way, the effect of the glocal system on regional stability can be better analyzed, as is the similarity of the polarity of the international system on the stability of the international system.

In the social sciences literature, the concept of glocal is derived from combining the concepts of global and local, and is used to understand global and local dynamics together. What is generally meant by this concept is the mutual construction of globalization and localization (Robertson, 1995, p. 30). Robertson, using the concept of

glocalization to understand global and local dynamics together, argues that there can be no global without the local (Robertson, 1995, pp. 28-29). In this sense, glocalization indicates the coexistence of the universal and the local in social, political and economic systems (Blatter, 2013). However, this mutual interaction and construction situation used in the definition of the glocal concept is different from the definition of the glocal concept to be used in this study. Although the concept of glocal expresses the mutual interaction and construction process in social sciences, in this study, it will be defined as the effect and domination of the global system on the regional system rather than the mutual interaction of the global system and the regional (local) system. Because the neo-realist paradigm, that this study has, has a power-centered approach. This approach also assumes the relative power distribution of a global power over a regional power or powers.

The glocal system is a system that emerges with the distribution of global systemic pole-actors on a region, regardless of the polarity of the regions. Possibly, a global system can be unipolar while a regional system can be either unipolar, bipolar or multipolar. Another possibility, the global system may be bipolar, while the regional system may be unipolar, bipolar or multipolar. One more final possibility, the global system might be multipolar whereas the regional system can be both unipolar, bipolar or multipolar. Which of these possibilities will be valid in a regional system is directly proportional to the capacity of the global pole-state or states to penetrate a region. In other words, while the global system has a bipolar feature, the polarity feature in any part of the world may not have the same feature of a bipolar system. How a bipolar global system will reflect on a region is dependent on the power intensity of these two polar states over that region. Sometimes this power intensity results in favor of one actor, and the glocal system becomes unipolar. Sometimes this power intensity remains at such a level that both actors cannot establish hegemony in the region alone and the glocal system becomes bipolar. The struggle of global pole-states to penetrate these regions with each other may cause instability in the region. If any of these actors achieve hegemony in any of these regions, the region will stabilize.

In this context, the global system can be divided into many sub-systems. For example, the Americas, a subsystem of the global system, is a glocal system. Latin America and the Caribbean, which are located in the Americas, are also glocal systems. Similarly, the Continent of Europe is a glocal system. Moreover, the regional distributions within this continent, such as Western Europe and Eastern Europe, are also glocal systems. In these glocal systems, the hegemonic presence or absence of a single global pole-state determines whether the glocal system can be stable. According to this explanation, in this study, these sub-systems will be evaluated at the continental analysis level and sub-levels consisting of sub-continental regions. Studies on the stability of the international system are mainly evaluated through conflicts. In this context, empirical studies on which polarity feature of the international system is more stable show that the probability of conflict increases with the increase of the number of poles. Similarly, in the context of the glocal system, in this study, the relationship between the number of conflicts occurring in continents or sub-continental regions and the number of global forces that have an effect on the regional system will be revealed. In order to reveal this relationship, the relationships between the continental and sub-continental regions and the number of conflicts will be compared in the data part of the study.

Polarity and Stability

Much of the discussion on polarity and stability focuses on the level of the international system. The reason for this focus is the assumption that the power of the

global systemic pole-state or states have an equal influence on all regions. Studies focusing on the relationship between regional polarity and stability are relatively few. However, the consequences of polarity on stability are more visible at the regional system level. For instance, the regions of South East Asia and the Middle East became the battleground of the two superpowers during the Cold War. Therefore, the states in the regional system are more affected by the results of this struggle. In addition, while discussions of polarity and stability at the international system level remain more abstract, focusing on the issue at the regional level is important in terms of testing whether the relationship between polarity and stability exists. In today's unipolar system, few great states other than superpowers can produce influence outside the regional system in which they are located. In fact, the superpower cannot reflect its power to all regions, and it engages more in some regions with a selective approach. For example, the United States, which is the only superpower today, had to change the distribution of its absolute power in the global level according to the level of threat. It has shifted its power density from the Middle East region, which it reflected highly against the Soviet Union threat during the Cold War, to the Asia-Pacific region against China, which began to emerge as a new threat.

The stability of a system is defined in terms of the continuity and peacefulness of the system. This situation is theoretically closely related to the structure of the system, in other words, polarity (Waltz K. N., 1964, p. 887; Ikenberry, Mastanduno, & Wohlforth, 2009, p. 21). So, there is a causal relationship between polarity and stability. This relationship operates according to the abundance or scarcity of power components and material resources (Midlarsky, 1988, as cited in Midlarsky & Hopf, 1993, p. 179). However, the question of which polar structure is stable remains controversial. The traditional view argues that the multipolar structure is more stable. Because there are several powers in this structure, the uncertainty is high and this uncertainty pushes the big powers to act more cautiously. In addition, alliances are more flexible in this structure and change frequently. This makes the arms race less fierce (Deutsch & Singer, 1964, as cited in James & Brecher, 1988, p. 32). In these discussions before Waltz, the view that multipolarity is stable was defended (Waltz K. N., 1964, p. 881). According to this traditional view emphasized by Waltz, the multipolar structure is the status in which states are equal and the status of equilibrium between states, and thus is more stable. In this structure, the emergence of the threat is prevented. However, if the forces are equal, none of them may want to lead and take responsibility. Because taking responsibility is costly. The other problem arising from the equality of powers is the difficulty in making decisions. When one party takes a different path, the decision-making structure can become clogged and the partnership can deteriorate. Therefore, a real partnership may not occur when the powers are equal. Because alliances require strong and superior leadership. Hence, first among equals does not emerge, and multipolarity may not produce stability.

Besides, Waltz rejects the traditional view, arguing that the bipolar structure is more stable. Waltz attributes that the bipolar structure is more stable for several reasons. First, the two poles have interests in maintaining the global order and have the capacity to maintain that order. Second, in this structure, there is less risk of miscalculation of capacity and intentions. Third, emerging crises can be prevented more easily before they turn into wars. Finally, in this structure dominated by two dominant powers, the less ability of other states to destabilize the system makes the bipolar system more stable than other systems (Waltz K. N., 1964, pp. 882-887).

With the emergence of the unipolar structure after the Cold War, the debate on the relationship between unipolarity and stability began. In these discussions, Wohlforth argued that unipolarity is more stable. According to him, there is little competition for

prestige and security in a unipolar structure. The capacity of the leader state eliminates hegemonic competition and reduces the competition and risks arising from the balance of power. So, unipolar system is more peaceful (Wohlforth, 1999, p. 23). According to the view that argues that a unipolar environment is unstable, stability at the system level means that the system maintains its basic characteristics. That is, a single power cannot dominate the system, most of the members of the system continue to exist, and large-scale warfare does not occur (Deutsch & Singer, 1964, pp. 390-391).

In a unipolar system, in a region where global power establishes hegemonic relations, there is a unipolar structure even though there are many regional powers. In a multipolar region, the hegemonic approach of global power means that it dominates this region politically, economically and militarily. This type of relationship means very little space for action for regional powers. This structural situation will limit the competition between regional states and minimize conflicts. In the event of any conflict, the global power will intervene within the framework of the hegemonic relationship. The claim that unipolar structure and hegemonic behavior produces more stability is also seen in the regional system examples of the United States-Latin America and Russia-Central Asia.

In the bipolar system, the great powers engage in competitive balancing acts at regional levels. Because the strategic location and economic importance of the regions produce results for global competition. Balancing at the regional level occurs through regional power alliances. These alliances include diplomatic support, economic and military aid. Regional powers also use these aids to balance other regional powers. Thereby, in the regional system, great power competition increases the autonomy of regional powers (Miller, 2004, p. 241). This produces less stability than the hegemony of the single major power over the region. Because in a competitive environment, regional powers have the opportunity to act more autonomously. At the very least, regional powers can engage in revisionist behavior against their regional rivals, relying on the existence of the great power they are allied with. The Arab-Israeli wars and conflicts that continued almost throughout the Cold War period are the best examples of this situation.

It was stated above that multipolar structure produces more instability than unipolar and bipolar structures. It can theoretically be argued that the multipolar structure will also produce more instability at the regional level. The existence of more than two central great powers and their incompatible behavior produce uncertainty and confusion in the regional system. The increase in the number of pole-states makes it difficult for states to predict each other's strengths. This difficulty leads to calculation errors and thus behavioral errors. In addition, since the multipolar structure provides states with more space for maneuver in foreign policy, it makes it difficult for states to trust each other. Because states can easily break agreements and move to the other side. This probability and possibility situation reduces trust among states and increases uncertainty. Also, it is more difficult for a great power to come forward as a system regulator in a multipolar structure. This increases uncertainty and instability. In this structure, when a rising power threatens the stability of the system, other powers may follow a policy of shifting the responsibility to someone else. In this case, the threatening rising power becomes unbalanced and paves the way for the emergence of regional wars (Waltz K. N., 1979). The great power struggle that spread from multi-polar Europe produced countless destructive wars and conflicts for all regions of the world in the course of centuries, from the 15th century to the Second World War.

In summary, since a great power's hegemonic relationship with a particular region limits the autonomy of regional powers, regional stability will be ensured in favor of the great power. On contrast, the rivalry of two systemic powers in a regional system may allow status quoist or revisionist behavior of regional powers. It can be predicted that this situation may produce unstable results in the region, depending on the number of

regional powers. The effect of multipolar glocal systemic structure on regional stability will be more negative. In this structure, since the regional powers are more autonomous and the management of the regional system is more uncertain, revisionist behaviors resulting from the emerging vacuum and regional polarity, and thus instability, will be more visible. These arguments will be tested by analyzing data showing the regional distribution of conflicts that took place all over the world between 1947 and 2020.

Conflict Data

Data analysis of global instability has many challenges. There are nearly 200 states all over the world and different interest groups within these states. Therefore, it is difficult to reach the accurate data of the number of each instability sample in such a large universe. If we divide the discipline of international relations into two groups, just like in natural sciences, we can divide it into two as theoretical studies and applied studies. There are very important literature studies on stability in theoretical international relations. In addition, it is of great importance to find scientists and research centers that conduct applied studies on the data required to test these theoretical studies. In this context, the data required for testing the theoretical part of this study were obtained from the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset Version 21.1 of the Uppsala Conflict Data Program created by the Peace and Conflict Studies Department of Uppsala University in Sweden (Uppsala University Department of Peace and Conflict Research, 2020). The raw data created by the center covers the conflicts that took place in the world between 1946 and 2020. However, these data were reprocessed according to certain criteria in order to use them in accordance with the purpose of the study. For this reason, the duplicate *Conflict ID* numbers have been removed because the conflict with the same *Conflict ID* number in the *Conflict ID* column used by the Center for each independent conflict continues for consecutive years. In this way, the number of conflicts with the same *Conflict ID* number arising from the following consecutive years was reduced to one and the number of individual conflicts was obtained. However, in the Center's data, two different dates were used for the onset of conflicts, and the reason for the distinction was that at least 25 deaths due to conflict within a year were considered as the limit. The *Start Date* is classified as the date the conflict started, and the *Start Date 2* is the date on which the conflict started, in which at least 25 people died within a year. This research will proceed on the *Start Date*, regardless of the number of deaths from conflict. Another issue used to reprocess the raw data is the regional definitions used in the classification of the conflict zones. The Center classified the regions where the conflicts took place as Africa, Americas, Asia, Europe and the Middle East. This research, on the other hand, classified the regions where the conflicts took place into 4 different continents as Africa, Americas, Asia and Europe (Conflict data for Antarctica and the Australian continents are not available in the Center's data table.), and regionally into 21 different categories according to the sub-continental regional classification of the countries in the CIA database (Central Intelligence Agency [CIA], 2021). In addition, in countries that are parties to some conflicts, such as Russia and Türkiye, which have lands on two different continents, the locations of the conflicts were labeled according to which continent or subcontinent they fell within these countries. Finally, in order to diagonally compare the number of conflicts that took place in the bipolar Cold War Era (1947-1991) and the unipolar Post-Cold-War Era (1992-2020), the starting dates of the conflicts were accepted as 1947 in the data table.

Another point in the analysis of the data is the problem of how to fill in the concept of instability while using it. Because the concept of instability has a very wide range of meanings. Therefore, "instability is also measured by more inclusive criteria. For this,

criteria such as the frequency of the war in a certain period of time, how many poles participated in the war in order to measure the size of the war, the continuity of the wars, the severity of the war measured by the war deaths in proportion to the populations of the states participating in the war are examined." (Hopf, 1991, s. 476). From this point of view, it is a reality that can be accepted by everyone that the First and Second World Wars were the wars that caused the greatest instability in history. In addition, a very long list such as economic crises in the world or in any country, social events, uprisings and coups in a country can be evaluated under the concept of instability. However, this study will examine the concept of instability as armed conflict, which is a method of using force. Hence, although it causes instability, coups, which are an instrument used by powerful states to overthrow the governments of small states in order to control the internal affairs of small states with which they have a conflict of interest, will also be ignored in this study. Armed conflicts, which will be accepted in this study as an example of instability, have also no similarities. Some conflicts can end in a few days, while others can last for years. Some conflicts affect certain parts of a country, while others may affect a whole country or a region. Intensities of some conflicts can be realized within the framework of small-scale conflicts, while some conflicts can take place with heavy weapons with high destructive power. The classification that Uppsala University's Department of Peace and Conflict Studies used in its data is a plausible method that can be used in determining the typology of conflicts in this sense. In this context, the Center evaluated conflicts under four different categories. The first of these is the type of conflict between a state and a non-state group called *extrasystemic*, which takes place outside the state's own territory. The second category is the type of conflict that takes place between states called *interstate*. Thirdly, it is the category of conflict within a state, between that state and conflicting groups without the military support of other states, conceptualized as an *intrastate*. Finally, *internationalized intrastate* is a form of conflict within a state, between that state and conflicting groups with the military support of other states. All of the conflicts in the Center's data table were evaluated under these four categories, and this study will remain faithful to the Center's conceptualization of conflict in this sense.

Table 1. Distribution of Conflicts by Region Between 1947 and 2020

1947-1991			1992-2020			1947-2020		
Continent	Sub-Continent	Sum	Continent	Sub-Continent	Sum	Continent	Sub-Continent	Sum
Africa	Central Africa	13	Africa	Central Africa	8	Africa	Central Africa	21
	Eastern Africa	15		Eastern Africa	11		Eastern Africa	26
	Northern Africa	13		Northern Africa	5		Northern Africa	18
	Southeastern Africa	2		Southeastern Africa	1		Southeastern Africa	3
	Southern Africa	9		Southern Africa	2		Southern Africa	11
	Western Africa	16		Western Africa	14		Western Africa	30
	Total	68		Total	41		Total	109
Americas	Caribbean	5	Americas	Caribbean	0	Americas	Caribbean	5
	Central America	8		Central America	0		Central America	8
	Northern America	1		Northern America	2		Northern America	3
	Southern America	9		Southern America	1		Southern America	10

	Total	23		Total	3		Total	26
Asia	Caucasus	4	Asia	Caucasus	7	Asia	Caucasus	11
	Central Asia	0		Central Asia	2		Central Asia	2
	Eastern Asia	7		Eastern Asia	0		Eastern Asia	7
	Middle East	21		Middle East	11		Middle East	32
	Northern Asia	1		Northern Asia	0		Northern Asia	1
	Oceania	1		Oceania	0		Oceania	1
	Southeastern Asia	32		Southeastern Asia	4		Southeastern Asia	36
	Southern Asia	21		Southern Asia	8		Southern Asia	29
	Total	87		Total	32		Total	119
	Europe	Central Europe		1	Europe		Central Europe	0
Eastern Europe		0	Eastern Europe	5		Eastern Europe	5	
Southeastern Europe		5	Southeastern Europe	6		Southeastern Europe	11	
Southwestern Europe		1	Southwestern Europe	0		Southwestern Europe	1	
Western Europe		2	Western Europe	0		Western Europe	2	
Total		9	Total	11		Total	20	
All		Total	187	All		Total	87	All

In this new data table, which emerged as a result of the reprocessing of the data of the Uppsala University Peace and Conflict Research Department, it is seen that a total of 274 conflicts occurred in the world between 1947 and 2020. It is seen that 187 of these conflicts took place between 1947-1991, the 44-year Cold War Period dominated by the bipolar system. The remaining 87 conflicts took place in the 29-year post-Cold War period dominated by the unipolar system. In order to test which of the two periods is more stable, another unipolar period of about 15 years must pass in the international system. Therefore, it would not be correct to reveal the period in which global stability was greater in the light of the data in this table alone. Such a comparison is not in the aim of this research anyway. In addition, the most unstable continents between 1947 and 2020 are Asia with 119 conflicts and then Africa with 109 conflicts. Afterwards, the most stable continents are Europe with 20 conflicts and then the Americas with 26 conflicts. However, there is a significant gap in the number of conflicts between the two most unstable continents and the two most stable ones.

When the sub-continental regions are examined, it is seen that the conflicts are concentrated in certain sub-continental regions of the continents. When the continents are evaluated according to the intensities of the conflicts, the conflicts in the Asian Continent are concentrated in South East Asia, the Middle East, South Asia and the Caucasus Region. Compared to the 1947-1991 period, the intensity of the conflicts in the Asian Continent decreased significantly in the 1992-2020 period. The region with the greatest decline is South East Asia and South Asia regions. In the African continent, which has the second density, it can be said that the regional distribution of conflicts is almost close to each other, but the conflicts intensify in West Africa, Central Africa and East Africa,

which we can call the middle belt of Africa. Thirdly, conflicts in the Americas are concentrated in South America and Central America, respectively. Considering Europe as the last and most stable continent, only 20 conflicts took place in a total of 74 years, 80% of which took place in South East Europe and the Eastern Europe Region. The remaining 15% are *intrastate* conflicts in the two western states of the Continent, the United Kingdom and Spain.

Evaluation and Conclusion

When the explanations made in the theoretical part of the study and the data obtained in the data part are compared, it is seen that there is a significant relationship between the number of conflicts occurring at the continental or sub-continental system analysis level and the number of global actors in these sub-systems in the context of the glocal system concept. First of all, considering the data on the continental system level, both in the bipolar system of the Cold War Era and in the unipolar system of the post-Cold War period, the number of conflicts in Europe and the Americas, where the influence of the United States is high, is relatively less than in other continents. On the continent level, the number of conflicts is relatively high in both global system periods in Asia and Africa, where many global or regional actors are active. This shows that at the continental system level, as the study claims, glocal systems in which global actors have full influence on their own are more stable than glocal systems in which more than one global actor competes to establish an influence on the continent. Continents are very large areas in terms of surface area, and regardless of the continents in general, certain regions are more unstable than other regions. So, evaluating the continents in parts within themselves will further strengthen the claim of the study, and measuring the effect of the glocal system on the stability of the subcontinental regions will yield healthier results. Therefore, in the following paragraphs, the relationship between the number of conflicts in this sub-level and the number of global actors will be considered in more detail.

At this level, when the African Continent is taken into consideration, the conflicts that took place in 1947-2020 took place in Central Africa, East Africa, North Africa, South East Africa, South Africa and West Africa sub-continental regions. The biggest feature of the continent that distinguishes it from other continents is that the decolonization of the majority of the states existing here took place in the 20th century. However, even though they are independent states in terms of international law, there is no stable environment due to the continuation of the influence of the Western European ex-colonial states in this geography. In both the bipolar and unipolar era, the continent has not been under the influence of a single dominant global power. Sometimes, some regions remained unstable under the influence of the conflicts that emerged as a result of the struggle of the United States and the Soviet Union, and some other regions remained unstable due to the inability to establish absolute autonomy over these countries as a result of the re-influence struggle of the Western European ex-colonial states in this geography. In particular, the efforts of France to establish full autonomy, mainly in West Africa and the western part of North Africa, and the United Kingdom, mainly in South, Central and East Africa, and their failure to do so, increased the number of conflicts in these regions and consequently increased instability.

Contrary to Africa, the situation is very different in the Americas. The second most stable continent. The northern part of this great continent, North America, which is also considered two different continents along with South America, is a subcontinental region of stability. The most important reason for this is the global power of two different system periods between 1947 and 2020, existed in this region. Therefore, thanks to the capability given by this global power, it has full influence in its own region and has not left any

autonomy gap that will create an environment of conflict. Besides, the most unstable regions of the continent are South America, Central America and the Caribbean regions, respectively. Despite the fact that the United States has tried to be the protector of the American Continents since the Monroe Doctrine, the reason for most of the conflicts that took place in these regions is that, during the Cold War, the Soviet Union sometimes supported the opposition groups against governments supported by the United States in the countries of the region in order to increase its effectiveness in these regions, and sometimes it tried to break the influence of the United States by supporting the governments that were on its side against the United States. Sometimes civil wars were started by arming opposition groups, and sometimes these Soviet-supported states, which were threatened by the United States, were turned into enemies and a conflict environment was created against these states together with other states in the region that were given political, economic and military support by the United States. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the influence of the United States in these regions increased and the conflicts were almost zero.

In Asia, the continent with the highest number of conflicts, it can be seen that there are many different conflict centers in many different sub-regions due to the size of the geographical area of the continent. When these sub-regions are listed according to the number of conflicts, the region with the most conflict is South East Asia, followed by the Middle East, South Asia and the Caucasus. The most stable regions are North Asia, where Russia, which is both a global power in the bipolar system and a regional power in the unipolar system, exists, and Oceania, which is part of the Western bloc led by the United States, and therefore the region where the influence of the United States is intense, and Central Asia, where Russia's influence is very intense. As can be understood, these three regions are sub-regions in which the unipolar glocal system exists. In addition, another remarkable point in the table is that the number of conflicts in East Asia, South East Asia and the Caucasus changed significantly after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The number of conflicts in the Caucasus, which was under the influence of the Soviet Union in the bipolar system, nearly doubled in a shorter period as a result of the loss of Russian power in the region after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the attempts of the Western states under the leadership of the United States to increase influence in the region. A similar relationship is also observed in the East and South East Asia region. Again, during the Cold War period, the number of conflicts in these regions was high due to the intensity of the Soviet Union and the United States' influence. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia's influence in the region decreased due to the transformation of global power distribution into regional power distribution. This has led to a significant decrease in the number of conflicts in the regions. In the Middle East and South Asia regions, a relatively intense conflict environment continues due to the inability of a single global power to be effective. Although the Soviet Union, which was one of the polar states of the Cold War Era, was dissolved in 1991, the successor Russian Federation, although not global, in the unipolar system of the post-Cold War period, continues its regional influence as a regional actor in many regions where it was active during the Cold War period. In this context, the Middle East and South Asia regions appear as regions where Russia maintains its influence.

Finally, when the European Continent is considered, it is seen that the Continent has the most stable continental feature, and when evaluated in the context of sub-regions, it is seen that the conflicts are concentrated only in certain regions throughout the continent, even a little. Three-quarters of the conflicts on the continent take place in the east of the continent. Again, an interesting data in the table is that the Eastern Europe region, where there was no conflict during the Cold War Period, has a quarter of the total conflicts in the Continent after the collapse of the Soviet Union. As it is known, during the

Cold War, Continental Europe was controlled by two global powers, the West and the East. The continent was under the control of the United States in the west and the Soviet Union in the east, and in this context, both sides were stable in the direction of the conflict as there was absolute dominance of a single global power in both regions. However, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, during the transition period when the influence of the Soviet Union decreased and the influence of the United States began to increase, conflicts occurred and the stability in the region deteriorated. Today, stability in the region has increased as the United States has turned the region into a unipolar glocal system by increasing its dominance in the region. There is still a struggle for sovereignty between the United States and Russia in Ukraine in the region, and this struggle has resulted in Russia's military intervention in eastern Ukraine. In the South East Europe region, which is the most unstable region of the continent, several conflicts occurred anomaly during the bipolar system period. However, the most meaningful reading among these conflicts emerged with the disintegration of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, another Socialist union that was dissolved together with the Soviet Union. This Federal State, which took its power from the Soviet Union of the bipolar system, could not continue its existence and dissolved with the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Due to the vacuum that emerged as a result of the disintegration, the newly emerged states went to war with each other and the stable environment in this region was restored with the intervention of the United States in the region.

In this study, the concept of glocal system was put forward theoretically. With this concept, the points where the neo-realist theory is inadequate in the regional system approach have been tried to be explained. At the same time, the effect of the glocal system concept on the stability of the systemic polarity in the continental and sub-continental regions has been tried to be measured empirically. In the light of the data obtained, it was found that the regions with unipolar features are significantly more stable than regions with bipolar or multipolar features in the continental and sub-continental regions examined at the glocal system analysis level.

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Özet

Bu çalışmada, global sistemik kutupluluğun bölgesel istikrara etkisi incelenecektir. Global sistemik kutupluluk ve bunun istikrara etkisi uluslararası ilişkiler literatürünün en fazla üzerinde tartışılan konularındandır. Sistemdeki kutup-başı devletlerin sayısı, sistemin kutupluluğunun tek mi iki mi yoksa çok-kutuplu mu olduğu hakkında bize bilgi verir. Sistemin bu özelliklerinin global ölçekteki çatışma sayılarına etkisi üzerinden hangi kutupluluğun daha istikrarlı olduğu sorunsalı üzerine tartışmalar yapılmaktadır. Bunun gibi benzer kutupluluk ve istikrar çalışmaları bölgesel sistemik kutupluluk üzerine de yapılmaktadır. Bir bölgedeki bölgesel sistemik kutupluluğun bölgedeki istikrar üzerine etkilerine bakılmaktadır. Ancak burada karşımıza çıkan soru bölgesel sistemik kutupluluğun global sistemik kutupluluktan bağımsız düşünülüp düşünülemediğidir. Global ölçekte, sistem ister tek-kutuplu olsun ister tek-kutuplu olmasın (iki-kutuplu ve çok-kutuplu sistemler aynı kategori içerisinde değerlendirilecektir.) uluslararası sistemde çatışma sayıları kürenin dört bir yanına eşit dağılmamaktadır. Yerkürenin Afrika ve Orta Doğu gibi belli bölgelerinde çatışma sayıları görece olarak diğer bölgelerine göre daha fazla görülmektedir. Buna mukabil, Avrupa ve Latin Amerika gibi bölgelerdeki çatışma sayıları da görece olarak diğer bölgelere göre daha az görülmektedir. Çatışma sayılarının fazla ya da az olduğu örneklem bölgeler incelendiğinde ise Avrupa ve Orta Doğu gibi bölgesel kutuplulukları benzer özelliklere sahip olmalarına rağmen çatışma sayıları biri çok az biri

de çok fazla olan bu bölgeler bölgesel kutupluluğun istikrar üzerindeki etkisini yeterli bir şekilde açıklayamamaktadır. Dolayısıyla teorik tartışmalarda gri alanlar bulunmaktadır.

Bu çalışmada, yukarıdaki paragrafta belirtilen bölgesel istikrar ve/veya istikrarsızlık konusunda global veya bölgesel kutupluluk yaklaşımlarının yeterli açıklayıcı güce sahip olmadığı düşüncesiyle Glocal Sistemik Kutupluluk kavramı teorik anlamda açıklayıcılığı kuvvetlendirmek için ortaya atılmaktadır. Bu kavram, kutupluluk ve istikrar arasındaki ilişkide, global sistemik kutupluluğun bölgelere etkisinin farklı derecelerde olduğunu ve bu farklılığın da bölgesel istikrarı etkilediğini savunur. Dolayısıyla, bütün global sistemlerde, kutup-başı devlet ya da devletlerin tek başlarına üzerinde hegemonik ilişki geliştirdiği bölgelerin istikrarlı veya bir kutup-başı devletin tek başına üzerinde hegemonik ilişki geliştiremediği bölgelerin istikrarsız olduğunu iddia eder. Mesela bir global sistemin üç farklı özelliği vardır. Sistem tek, iki ya da çok-kutuplu olabilir. Bununla birlikte bir bölgesel sistemin de benzer üç farklı özelliği olabilir. Bu benzerlikler glocal sistem düzeyinde bir matris olarak düşünülürse global sistem tek-kutuplu iken bir bölgesel sistem tek, iki ya da çok-kutuplu olabilir. Veya global sistem iki-kutuplu iken bölgesel sistem tek, iki ya da çok-kutuplu olabilir. Bir diğer olasılık da ise global sistem çok-kutuplu iken bölgesel sistem tek, iki ya da çok kutuplu olabilir. Bu dokuz farklı alternatif olasılığın hangisinin daha fazla istikrar ürettiği meselesi ise bir ya da daha fazla global gücün bu bölgelere ne kadar nüfuz edebildiğiyle ilgilidir. Tek-kutuplu bir global sistemde, kutup-başı devlet tek, iki veya çok-kutuplu bir bölgeye nüfuz edebiliyorsa bu glocal sistem istikrar üretir. Global gücün bölgedeki devletler üzerindeki etkisi bölgedeki devletlerin birbirleri ile çatışma riskini azaltır. İki ya da çok-kutuplu bir global sistemde ise eğer global aktörlerden herhangi biri bir bölge üzerinde tek başına nüfuz sağlayamıyorsa bölgedeki çatışma sayıları bir önceki modele göre daha fazla artacaktır ve bölge istikrarsızlaşmaya doğru gidecektir.

Global güçlerin bölgelere nüfuz derecelerine göre ortaya çıkan bu istikrar ve/veya istikrarsızlık durumu belirli mekanizmalara göre işlemektedir. Global kutup-başı gücün bir bölgeye hegemonik ilişki kurduğu bir glocal sistem istikrar üretecektir. Çünkü bu yapıda, bölge devletlerinin hareket alanları daha kısıtlı olacak, dolayısıyla bölgede revizyonist davranışlardan ziyade hegemonun peşinden gitme eğilimleri daha yaygın olacaktır. Diğer yandan, global kutup-başı aktör veya aktörlerin bir bölgeye hegomonik ilişki kurmadığı glocal sistemlerde istikrarsızlık ve çatışma eğilimleri daha yüksek olacak ve bölge istikrar üretemeyecektir. Çünkü bu yapıda, güç boşluğu ortaya çıkacak ve otonomisini artırmaya çalışan bölge veya bölge dışı güçler bu boşluğu doldurmak için daha etkin olmaya çalışacaklardır. Bu durum bölge içinde rekabet ve çatışmalar üretecek, çatışma ve savaşlara varan dengeleyici davranışlar üretecektir.

Çalışmada ortaya atılan argümanların test edilebilmesi için de 1947 ve 2020 tarihleri arasında yerkürede meydana gelen çatışmaların bölgesel dağılımları incelenecektir. Hem iki-kutuplu hem de tek-kutuplu bir sistemi de kapsayan bu tarih aralığında, hem global sistemin kutupluluk özelliğine hem de kutup-başı devlet ya da devletlerin sınırları belirlenmiş kıta ya da kıta-altı düzeydeki bölgelere nüfuzuna göre çatışma sayılarında anlamlı bir değişkenlik olup olmadığı bulunmaya çalışılacaktır. Bu amaç doğrultusunda, gerekli olan verilerin elde edilmesinde kullanılacak ikincil veri analizi yöntemi ile başka araştırmacılar tarafından elde edilen verilerin çalışmanın amacına uygun olarak yeniden işlenmesi sağlanacaktır. Sonrasında da ikincil veri analizi yöntemi ile elde edilmiş olan bölgesel çatışmaların sayıları o bölgedeki etkin global kutup-başı aktör sayısı ile karşılaştırılacaktır. Bu sayede, bölgesel istikrar ve glocal sistemik kutupluluk arasındaki ilişki ortaya konulmaya çalışılacaktır.