TOWARDS A NEW STRUCTURE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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A. INTRODUCTION

Interdependence becomes more and more important concept in international politics and more scholars are interested in this concept. At least, it became significant enough to be discussed by many political scientists. Two famous neoliberal institutionalist political scientists made it the title of their seminal book and started their book as “the world has become interdependent.” It is generally speaking that the world became a global village or the world without borders because of the interdependence in economics, politics, communications and human transactions.

Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye describe interdependence as mutual dependence and reciprocal effects and relationships among countries. Rosecrance defines the term as a relationship of interests such that if one nation’s position changes, other states will be affected by these changes. According to Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, it is “the increased national sensitivity” to foreign economic changes. Hayward Alker admits interdependence as a social relationship among two or more international actors considerable in their interactions. According to John Spanier, “interdependence is the linking of states to one another, the formation of transnational economic, social, technological and political bonds.” Spanier recognizes interdependence as “a modernized form of the utopian school’s assumption of a harmony of interests.”

For the leading neorealist Kenneth Waltz, interdependence is largely a relative conception, not an absolute. He claims that interdependence is declining in today’s world, at least for leading countries. On the contrary, interdependence is increasing in every sphere of human and state activities for all kinds of states. Rosecrance also opposes Waltz’s perception. He claims that “Waltz admits that interdependence is merely a reflection of the number of great powers, but it is also a product of economic shortages and...
Especially after the Cold War, the world entered into a new period. Many dramatical changes occurred in almost every sphere of life including relations between states and other international actors. The number of non-territorial transnational and international actors rapidly increased besides nation-states such as multinational corporations, transnational social and ideological movements, and international organizations (both intergovernmental and nongovernmental).

Nations are no longer able to solve their problems and serve people adequately for a better life only by themselves. The world problems such as insufficient natural resources and energy, oil prices, the Third World debt, overpopulation, poverty, shortages of food and environmental problems can be solved only at the global or at least larger regional level. All these concerns direct the focus of studies on international politics to international regimes. As Spanier says, “economic and technological forces will bind states together, national frontiers will be irrelevant for economic cooperation. Interdependence will have tamed states, drawing in the ‘sharp teeth of sovereignty.’”

In this paper, I analyze the influence of interdependence on international politics and on international relations theory. In the first section, I examine the process of interdependence in four different issue areas: economic, political and military, social, and ecological interdependence. Changes in these four fields are being evaluated. Then I discuss the influence of interdependence on international relations theory.

**B. INTERDEPENDENCE IN ISSUE AREAS**

In this section, I examine interdependence in four different issue areas: economic, political and military, social, and ecological fields. By including these four fields, I intend to demonstrate the influence of interdependence in its totality, that is in every aspect of international transactions. Interdependence in these different areas sometimes affect each other, but mostly interdependence can be observed in each of these fields independently. Therefore, I analyze interdependence under four different titles in order grasp the full picture.

1. Economic Interdependence

John Gaddis says that “no nation can maintain itself apart from the rest of the world for a long time. Because the prosperity of a nation depends upon the prosperity of others.” For instance, the United States, the only superpower in the world, cannot control its own economy without the cooperation of its main trading partners such as Japan, Germany and the
United Kingdom. “Each state’s economy is hostage to [those of] others, that is the real meaning of mutual vulnerability.”\textsuperscript{11} All countries are vulnerable to outside developments more than ever. States lost a certain level of their sovereignty, especially in economic sphere. Spanier quotes from John Mearsheimer saying that “interdependence allows states to compel each other to cooperate on economic matters, much as mutual assured destruction allows nuclear powers to compel each other to respect their security. All states are forced by the others to act as partners in the provision of material comfort for their home politics.”\textsuperscript{12} That is, all states benefit from being interdependent on each other since interdependence deters them to act unilaterally and discourages them to be aggressive. Governments are compelled to find collective solutions to international problems. Also, the emergence of an integrated capital market changed economic relationships among countries. It made the movement of capital easy and fast throughout the world.

As Spanier points out “the growing interdependence made the Western economies more dependent on one another and states become more vulnerable against these close interconnections.”\textsuperscript{13} He gives an example for the effects of economic interdependence. During the 1980s, Japanese firm Toshiba sold the American machinery to the Soviet Union and the United States Congress punished Toshiba by prohibiting selling its products in the United States. But American companies such as AT&T, IBM, and General Electric, which were dependent on the products of Toshiba, lobbied against the legislation in favor of Toshiba and eventually succeeded to abolish the legislation.\textsuperscript{14} Similarly, Japanese companies play an important role in decreasing effects of protectionism of technology in their country due to their technological dependence on other countries.

In both examples, we can see effects of non-governmental actors on nation-states’ foreign and domestic policies. Multinational corporations have different interests from national interests of their countries and they mainly try to maximize their profits. They may and do oppose their national governments. MNCs contribute to the internationalization of the world market and naturally world politics. The rise of global multinational enterprises created an organizational revolution in international economy and in its implications on nation-states. There are many multinational corporations that have more gross national product (GNP) than many states. Even in the early 1970s, there were 41 MNCs which were ranked among 100 entries of the world states and corporations which have the biggest GNP income.

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Economic integration undermined the sovereignty of the nation-state. According to Koizumi, "the nation-state continues to play an important role in protecting national interests in the international economic arena. However, when the world economy has become as interdependent as it is today, there is no justification for nation-states to continue to concern themselves exclusively with the wealth of the nations. The concern should be 'the wealth of humankind,' which requires cooperation and coordination of economic activities at the global level." 15

Technological change increased the interdependence among developed countries. Technological change is rapid and consequences of changes are not anticipated. Information exchange and electronic communication is very sensitive among nations. Furthermore, agricultural interdependence has become part of interdependent international economy. Growing need for agricultural products, declining production level, defective international agricultural labor market and effects of international capital market increased the sensitivity of this sector. Especially in the less developed countries millions of people face real starvation. This situation creates a moral dimension of agricultural economics.

2. Political and Military Interdependence

Political interdependence is a natural result of economic and ecological interdependence. Governments are increasingly engaged in negotiations to protect the natural environment, to liberalize trade and to establish new principles for international transactions. Nation-states are not the only powerful international actors anymore. Non-governmental international actors play a very significant role in world politics. Many international organizations have greater influence on international politics than many nation-states.

Nelson admits that "security which is defined in military terms and use of force, is no more a guarantor of peace and prosperity. Security is not only capacities of states alone, but also the ability to abate threats without the use of force." 16 The post Cold War period requires a new definition for national security. The old assumptions and foundations related to the security do not fit with new realities and developments.

The communication revolution made it impossible for any state to deny its citizens knowledge of what is going on in other countries. This situation created new conditions in international politics. The process of the collapse of the communist dictatorships is an example of political interdependence influenced by the communication revolution. Political changes in one country created a domino effect on others and eventually
most socialist regimes went down. The control of people by authoritarian governments became very difficult.

The United Nations has become a major player in international relations. The collective security approach is becoming essential for the security of nation-states. The liberal political philosophy reemerged in international scene as dominant tradition. According to this approach, the global peace can be secured by the freely flow of ideas, goods, services and peoples internationally. Paul Ekins points out that “security acquired through weapons is zero-sum good: one side’s greater security is another’s increased vulnerability.”\(^{17}\) This will not bring a final peace to the world. The world community is aware that weapons (conventional, nuclear, biological and chemical) are a big threat to the world. They cause insecurity, mass poverty, environmental destruction, and endless conflicts between nations, ideologies, civilizations and religions. The United Nations system tries to change this understanding by initiating policies of offering peaceful solutions to main international conflicts. The UN’s role in international negotiations increased compared to the Cold War period.

Recent changes in international system will direct security from national dimension to the collective security. We witness the global efforts in this direction such as the United Nations’ Independent Commissions which are led by Brandt (international economic development, financial flow from the North to the South, and the global political economy), Palme (security through mutuality of interests, civil security threatened by ecological and economic decline and the global arms race), and Brundtland (sustainable development, over-consumption, the global environment). Security of national states depends not only on military security but also economic prosperity, social equity and ecological stability. Ekins quotes from Vaclav Havel saying that “the perspective of a better future depends on something like an international community of citizens which, ignoring the state boundaries, political systems, and power blocs, standing outside the high game of transnational politics.”\(^{18}\)

Sovereignty is not absolute and complete conception today because of interdependence. Even though there is a non-symmetrical relationship between the two sides, industrialized countries are dependent on raw materials of the Third World (Remember the political consequences of the increase in oil prices in the West in the 1970s) and the Third World countries are dependent on manufacture, goods, and aid of Western countries. The importance of nation states is declining and non-state actors are gaining influence in international politics. Informal and formal transactions increased
rapidly in every field of political life of states. Today, no nation-state thinks about its security by itself in Europe. Almost every European nation-state thinks its security in the context of the European Union or the Western European Union. Collective rather than individual security understanding gained and is still gaining currency in the world.

3. Social Interdependence

Many social elements such as ethnic heritage, religious belief, linguistic preference and the minority groups oppose the overall social policy of the state. There is no nation in the today’s world that entirely protected from effects of social changes taking place elsewhere in the world. This situation caused the difficulty of preserving the sovereignty for states. Since life styles are diversified, value systems are spread and individuals have more cultural freedom than before, states face the loss of sovereignty. The communication revolution provides the flow of ideas freely all around the world. New developments affected authoritarian governments, since they cannot prevent ideas from entering their countries.

Richard Falk admits that “the present system of nation-states has such a high degree of tolerance for violations of human rights, that these rights could be protected only if a new system of world order, not based on the nation-states, were established,” because of the use of force in international relations is the highest obstacle to moral behavior for states. It means the denial of humanity in international politics. The promotion of human rights may make the nation-state and its main instrument, the use of force, anachronistic in future.

Growing human rights concern and sensitivity of social developments are decreasing the sovereignty of nation-states. Human rights will soften the rigidity of non-intervention in domestic affairs. In future, most likely we will witness more interventions because of human rights violations. Human rights violations are a moral harm, a sense of discomfort for countries rather than the loss of economic interests or a threat for its security. Even though some claim that nobody can expect that human rights will take an important place in foreign policy, human rights is increasingly becoming an international matter despite its weakness in international politics. Furthermore, some countries, especially Scandinavian countries, are taking human rights into consideration in their foreign policy behaviors.

Interactions among world communities created global interests in which the world community is concerned about. These global interests should be taken into account in evaluating actions of states and those of
other international actors. According to Brown, the most significant world interests are survival of human being, reduction in humiliation of humankind, conditions for health for all peoples, protection of citizen rights, maintaining of cultural diversity and protection of environment.

Koizumi explains three factors for educational interdependence as relations between units about the world system, based on reciprocity and with responsibility of keeping future generations. We are also witnessing a cultural interdependence in today’s world. Koizumi considers both positive and negative dimensions of cultural interdependence that it can easily be turned into cultural conflicts. The world’s integrated social life may lead to harmony or conflict. Most countries try to restrict the migration into their country. It will be a bigger problem in future all around the world like in Western European countries. Therefore, countries have to coordinate in their migration movements and other problems since many countries face terrorist attacks, ethnic riots, trade defects, labor disputes, oil spills, acid rains and pollution.

4. Ecological Interdependence

The integration of economic life enhanced chances of industrial pollution that spreads across national borders. Environmental shortage in caused by population growth, harmful human activities, and inequality in the distribution of resources. Ecological problems have substantial effects on economic development. The term “sustainable development” shows the impact of environment on economic planning since environmental concerns require a new structure for agricultural policies, energy use and industrial production. Developed countries take into attention environmental policies of less developed states when giving bilateral and multilateral aids.

No individual state has the capability to control and to solve environmental problems for the benefit of his country and all other peoples. Ecological problems are one of the “four p’s” of Kenneth Waltz, which requires the common management. 1987 Montreal Protocol and 1992 Rio Conference are concrete steps which are taken by international community for ecological issues. Interdependence requires global management of ecological problems such as the protection of the world’s atmosphere and ozone layer, acid rain, pollution, waste disposal, and the warming of the earth.

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Environmental degradation such as soil desertification and the rising sea level cause population displacement which brings many economic, social and political problems. Most likely we will meet environmental refugees besides political and economic refugees in near future. Agricultural land is decreasing in quality and amount. Food output is decreasing also. Climate changes, declining farming and forestry, and depletion of water supplies influence agricultural production besides many other elements. When we add high population growth rate, we will face a threat to ecological security. Because all these factors are related to starvation and malnutrition, health problems, economic stalemate and political conflicts, population growth is one of the main environmental issues. Providing jobs, housing, food and health care is becoming more difficult for most countries. Wrong policies of countries, inappropriate technologies and ineffective institutions contribute to this problem.

Environmental interdependence requires that states should cooperate with each other for the common interests. Because of overall effects of actions, sovereignty of states is declining in this area as well. For instance, when Turkey tried to build up a nuclear plant in its own territory, many organizations from green movements protested and they prevented the establishment of the plant due to environmental concerns. Turkey nowadays faces a similar problem. Many non-governmental organizations oppose Turkey’s plan to build a dam in Hasankeyf, a historical place in the southeastern part of the country, claiming that it will destroy many valuable parts of history.

C. THE EFFECT OF INTERDEPENDENCE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY

Paradigm changes in international politics mostly emerge after global hegemonic wars and the assumption of this approach is shaped by the conclusion of the war. Charles Kegley points out that “there are fashion in everything; the study of international politics is no exception.” Therefore, the environment of international politics has a substantial effect on the theory of international relations. The transformation of the new environment has not ended yet, but tendency seems to require the decreased importance of the realist approach. Criticisms against realism and neorealism increased and became popular (fashion) in recent years. Global trends created dissatisfaction with the realist perspective.

The realist approach, which explains the world system in the shade of the Cold War, does not fit with the new structure. Neorelaists do not
accept any rule, norm, mutual expectation, principle or practice independent of states and their capabilities in international regimes. Neorealism is a positivist theory and it is very extremist in this sense since it ignores the human being’s subjectivity. The knowledge of social sciences cannot be value-neutral. The assumption of the subjectivity of international politics is far reaching. Politics is not a technical subject.

Theories of international relations are shaped by the nature of humankind, the environment of the world system and the need of individuals and societies. In past, zero-sum game or adversary game was the focus of high politics. Traditional state system is based on zero-sum relationship. In today’s world, states should play cooperative games to reach their objectives because of the dominance of interdependence. Today, gain or lose is not relative, but absolute. The need will divert international politics from power politics to welfare politics and from reel-politik to moral-politik since humanity shares a common destiny more than ever. Traditionally in international politics, alliances are made against a common threat. For instance, NATO was established by the countries that felt a direct threat from the Soviet Union and its allies. In past, this general principle was almost always implemented by states to ensure the balance of power, but today states face global problems and thus common threats. There is no opposite side for these problems and all states must cooperate to solve these problems since they influence all states.

Moralism increased after changes in international relations. As Koizumi explains “science has failed to replace religion as the source of normative ethics because of the basic presumption that science is value-free.” This is a defect of realism, because it tries to become scientific. With ignoring human subjectivity, natural scope of international politics and changes or potential changes in the world, realists try to shape international politics based on their subjectivity and according to interests of their side. Politics has never become value-free. As mentioned by Hoffmann, “the brand of realism declares that moral behavior in international affairs is impossible... The ethics of a statesman is/must be the ethics of responsibility and ethics of consequences.”

According to Modelski, “the finiteness of world resources demonstrates that the fact that the only self-sufficient unit of human organization is world society and in the age of globalism, interactions create every kind of interdependence.” Modelski also claims that “geocentric politics” should replace ethnocentric politics. And this new approach will abandon the nation-state as the only model of political organization. Unlike
Waltz, Modelski admits that the "world order cannot be so simple, because simplicity equals vulnerability. Complexity means adaptability." As a result, the modern world system must have functional complexity.

As Smouts says globalization has changed the main principles and provoked a structural crisis in international politics. Ruggie does not give a chance to realist theory in future. According to him, realism does not offer an adequate explanation of international structure. Keohane and Nye claim that "neither modernist nor the traditionalist approach can explain all situations by itself." With this explanation, they accept the complexity of international system. They recognize an asymmetrical interdependence as a source of power and demonstrate two dimensions, vulnerability and sensitivity, for this complex system.

Kegley proposes six assumptions for long-term developments in international system: reemergence of a multipolar system, increasing influence of non-state international actors, a new wave of national disintegration, the continuing internationalization of national economies, the widening gap between the rich and the poor, and the deterioration of the global eco-system. Low politics is becoming high politics. States have less control over the new forms of economic structure. Since the difference between domestic and non-domestic is blurred, national standards of health and safety, social safety and integrity of national culture will be almost impossible. The following statement of the President of the United States explains the current world system very well: "There is no longer division between what is foreign and what is domestic -the world economy, the world environment, the world AIDS crisis, the world arms race, they affect us all."

D. CONCLUSION

International politics has three dimensions: conflict, competition and cooperation. So far much of this cooperation occurred in the context of adversary relations with forming alliances. However, today we are witnessing common world interests. Cooperation is essential not because of adversary relations, but because of the common threat which may be caused by any harmful activity of any state. All societies in the world are developed in the framework of global interdependence. Global interdependence became an important factor which places all spheres of human life. Koizumi perfectly explains that "the nation-state has become too large for cultural life too small for economic life. It is a necessary consequence of the fundamental
conflict among culture, economy, and polity as the interdependent yet different spheres of human activity."

Economic power is about to suppress military power. Transnational forces will connect nations together in an interdependent network. Anarchical international system may be replaced by another type of system. New institutions and systems are needed for new international structure created by intensive interdependence and transnational organizational revolution in world politics. Non-state actors such as international organizations and multinational corporations challenge and weaken the nation-state centric system of international politics. The long-time "Westphalian temple" is about to be destroyed by these new developments. A more complex structure is about to occur. For instance, recent changes permitted the United Nations to play a more significant and active role in international relations. Recent changes made the UN more relevant for the world politics. At least, the transformation of the UN peace-making power and the restructuring of the Security Council are widely discussed.

The new era started after the collapse of the Cold War brought a new form of competition between forces of integration and those of fragmentation. On the one hand, through globalization and internationalization, nations are increasingly integrating and becoming interdependent. Integration terminates barriers in politics, economics, technology, culture and religion. On the other hand, there are fragmentative forces in this new era such as micro-nationalism, cultural and religious separatist movements. However, this fragmentative tendency searches only for diversity in the interdependent world system. It does not aim to counter the globalization process or interdependence.

The growth of population and technological change gathered peoples together in a complex interdependency in environmental, economic, political, social and cultural spheres. Increasing labor mobility and liberalized immigration policies brings not only economic integration but also cultural diversity and political fragmentation. Immigration policies cause problems in Western Europe and in the United States. As a result, we observe that changes in economics, politics, technology, telecommunication and moral sensitivity in the world are affecting every area of human life including international politics. According to this new structure, theory of international relations needs a new approach with new regulations.
NOTES

2 Keohane and Nye, Power and Interdependence, p. 8.
4 Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, Contending Theories, p. 139.
5 Hayward Alker in Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, Contending Theories, p. 139.
6 Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, Contending Theories, p. 54.
9 Spanier, Games Nations Play, p. 584.
11 Spanier, Games Nations Play, p. 479.
12 Quoted in Spanier, Games Nations Play, p. 479.
13 Spanier, Games Nations Play, p. 478.
14 Spanier, Games Nations Play, p. 478.
18 Ekins, A New World Order, p. 63.
19 Koizumi, Interdependence and Change, p. 87.
23 Koizumi, Interdependence and Change, p. 149.
24 Koizumi, Interdependence and Change, p. 139 and 141.
25 Waltz describes four main global problems that “require the concerted efforts of a number of nations:” poverty, population, pollution and proliferation. See Waltz, Theory of International Politics, p. 209.

27 Koizumi, Interdependence and Change, p. 112.


30 Modelski, Principles of World Politics, p. 267.


33 Keohane and Nye, Power and Interdependence, p. 4.

34 Keohane and Nye, Power and Interdependence, p. 11.

35 Kegley, Neoidealism Movement, p. 140.


37 Koizumi, Interdependence and Change, p. 89.