

# A SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVIST PERSPECTIVE ON THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS: ANALYZING THE UN'S NORM-PRODUCING AND SOCIALIZING FUNCTIONS ON THE CASES OF CIVIL WAR AND GLOBAL TERRORISM \*

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## Abstract

The increase in both quantity and quality has made international organizations an undeniable component of the modern international system. Although the individual interests of states create important problems in the realization of the common interests on which the organizations are based, mainstream approaches that see organizations as only the tools of states ignore the important roles they play in the international system. In this context, the study, based on the assumption that international organizations have a fundamental role in the development of the normative dimension of the international system, aims to develop a more comprehensive approach to international organizations from the perspective of social constructivism. The study suggests that international organizations have a role that enables and limits the relations between international actors with their norm-producing and socialization mechanisms. This asserted hypothesis will be explained with examples of the norm-producing and socialization activities of the United Nations (UN) in combating civil war and global terrorism.

**Keywords:** Social constructivism, International organizations, The United Nations, Civil war, Global terrorism

*Uluslararası Örgütlerin Rolüne İlişkin Sosyal İnşacı Bir Yaklaşım: BM'nin Norm-Üretim ve Sosyalleşme Fonksiyonlarının İç Savaş ve Küresel Terörizm Örnekleri Üzerinde İncelenmesi*

## Öz

Hem nicelik hem de niteliklerindeki artış, uluslararası örgütleri modern uluslararası sistemin yadsınamaz bir bileşeni haline getirmiştir. Devletlerin bireysel çıkarları, örgütlerin dayandığı ortak çıkarların gerçekleştirilmesinde önemli sorunlar yaratsa da, örgütleri sadece devletlerin araçları olarak gören geleneksel yaklaşımlar, onların uluslararası sistemde oynadıkları önemli rolleri göz ardı etmektedir. Bu bağlamda, uluslararası örgütlerin uluslararası sistemin normatif boyutunun gelişiminde önemli bir role sahip olduğu varsayımına dayanan çalışma, sosyal inşacılık açısından örgütlere daha kapsamlı bir yaklaşım geliştirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma, uluslararası örgütlerin sahip oldukları norm üretme ve sosyalleşme mekanizmaları ile uluslararası aktörler arasındaki ilişkileri mümkün kılan ve sınırlayan bir role sahip olduğunu ileri sürmektedir. İleri sürülen bu hipotez, Birleşmiş Milletlerin (BM) iç savaş ve küresel terörizmle mücadelede uluslararası norm-üretimi ve sosyalleşme faaliyetleri örnekleri ile açıklanacaktır.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Sosyal inşacılık, Uluslararası örgütler, Birleşmiş Milletler, İç savaş, Küresel terörizm

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## **A Social Constructivist Perspective on the Role of International Organizations: Analyzing the UN's Norm-Producing and Socializing Functions on the Cases of Civil War and Global Terrorism\***

### **Introduction**

The rapid increase in the number of international organizations and the strengthening of their role in the formation of international politics have made them undeniable "realities" of the international system (Stein, 2008: 50). This reality had brought up the question of what the effect and role of organizations are in the system and had led to the development of a strong organizational literature after the 1960s. In this debate, mainstream theories that prioritize states, demonstrate a narrow-minded and superficial approach towards international organizations and their role in international politics. In this context, realism and its variants argue that international organizations cannot be more than the "tools" of states and that these structures can be defined as only "intervening variables" in international politics (see: Mearsheimer, 1994). On the other hand, liberalism and its derivatives, which argue that organizations can have a key role in overcoming the trust problems between states, ignore the profound effects of organizations on both international actors and the international system and ultimately explain them with only the "interests" of states (see: Keohane, 1984). Social constructivists took a position in favour of organizations in this debate and argued that organizations and the institutions they are based on have a central role in the formation of the social environment that shapes the identity and behaviour of the states (see: Wendt, 1992; Johnston, 2001, Barnett and Finnemore, 2005).

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In addition to these theoretical studies, the developments such as; NATO's survival despite losing its vital purpose with the end of the Cold War, the UN's more active involvement in international politics with the removal of super power rivalry over it, significant deepening and enlargement steps in the European integration process which had fundamental political problems, the accession of China which has been seen as a new hegemon to the World Trade Organization (WTO), gave the impression that the debate over the organizations resulted in favour of them in the practical field, too.

However, there are strong claims that this glorious process of organizations has come to an end and that the multilateralism on which organizations are based has entered in a serious crisis (see: Mearshemeir, 2019; Wade, 2011; Patrick, 2015; Ikenberry, 2015). The US' Iraqi invasion by ignoring the existing international law and the UN Charter, as the same manner Russian's Georgia and Ukraine operations, the non-interference of the UN to the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars, and the inadequacy of the World Health Organization (WHO) in the fight against the Covid pandemic raised robust criticisms over the success of the international organizations. It is possible to observe the strongest reflections of these criticisms in the political arena in the negative attitude of the Trump administration towards the UN (CNBC, 2016), NATO (Barnes and Cooper, 2019) and WHO (Cohen et al., 2020).

In this context, the old debate about the role of organizations in the system, which was thought to have ended in favour of organizations in the 1990s, has come to the fore again. Thus, there emerged strong realist reactions claiming that international organizations are insufficient actors which merely reflect powerful states' individual interests and are far from ending conflicts between international actors and maintaining global governance (see: Vreeland, 2019; Mearshemeir, 2018; Prakash and Dolsak, 2017; Dadush, 2014;). Against these reactions, the liberal approach, which sees organizations only as beneficial actors in obtaining the individual material interests of the states, also falls short. The mainstream approaches in the discipline of international relations, realism and liberalism, which focus directly on the state and state behaviour in their analyzes, ignore the changes that organizations make in the environment in which all international actors are involved, and the impact of these changes on actors. However, since the end of the Second World War, international organizations have an undeniable role in the formation of an institutional basis that enables, limits and regulates the relations of actors in the international system.

The role of organizations in the institutionalization of the system has been analyzed in detail by social constructivists in previous studies. On the other hand, although organizations are seen by constructivists as key actors in the construction process of international politics, there is no clear consensus among them about their roles (Jung, 2019: 7). Constructivist studies in this field focus

on the roles of organizations in the process of either producing new norms or adopting norms by actors (see: Finnemore, 1993; Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998; Checkel, 2005; Johnston, 2001). In addition, these constructivist studies mainly focus on successful institutionalization examples such as the EU (see: Checkel, 2005; Koslowski, 1999) or non-security issues such as education, or human rights (see: Finnemore, 1993; Risse et al, 1999). In general, there are also criticisms that social constructivist studies do not adequately focus on security cases, which is one of the main issues of international relations (Park, 2018: 152). In this context, this study, which aims to develop the social constructivist literature on the role of organizations, is striving to have two main contributions to the current literature. First of all, this study will evaluate the norm production and socialization functions of organizations together and will try to reveal how these two functions are effective in the context of change both in the structure of international system and in the identities and behaviours of international actors. The second contribution of the study is the attempt to enrich the existing constructivist literature with the case studies over civil wars and global terrorism. So, it will evaluate the inferences obtained from the theoretical discussion in the context of civil war and global terrorism, which are among the most important security issues on the agenda of the international community in recent years.

In this vein, contrary to the argument that international organizations are just the “tools” that reflect states’ interests, the main hypothesis of the study is that with their norm producing and socialization mechanisms, international organizations have a deeper role in international politics. The study, which draws attention to the existence of ideational elements in social structures, would argue that, contrary to the materialist approaches of mainstream theories, the international structure has a normative dimension and that international organizations have created a deep and complex process of change affecting both the system and actor’s behaviours by strengthening this dimension. In order to test this hypothesis, the study would implement a case study method in which the United Nations System would be analyzed. It would be argued that with its norm-producing and norm-socialization mechanisms the UN has been the central player in the normative dimension of the international system and has a fundamental role in the institutional change of the whole system.

The study would be organized under three topics. In the first section, the theoretical background of the study which rests upon social constructivism would be explained. In the second topic, the theoretical understanding about the normative change and the role of organization in this process would be analyzed. In the last topic as a case study, the UN’s role in the normative change of the international system would be discussed based on the issues of civil war and global terrorism.

## **1. The Social Constructivist Promise in Explaining International Organizations**

Before evaluating the role of international organizations, it is necessary to mention the advantages of the social constructivist approach on which the study is based on explaining them. The major advantage offered by social constructivism in this sense is its perspective that opens a more comprehensive space for "change" in the international system, unlike mainstream approaches. Despite the fact that with the new developments and innovations, the realm of change has been growing gradually in the international system, the mainstream theoretical approaches in international relations discipline, realism, and liberalism, have a narrow understanding about the structural change (Wendt, 1999: 4), since they assume that the social structures and institutions have a static nature (Arts, 2000: 516). For instance, realist writers define international politics as a recurring power struggle between states, thus arguing that nothing has changed in the international system for centuries (Cox, 1981: 131-132). Liberals, who define "social progress" as one of their basic assumptions (Burchill, 2005: 58), have important contributions to the "change" issue, yet, as Wendt argues, since they define the basic elements of the international system and actors such as "anarchy", "identity" and "interest" as "given", the "change" they envisioned remains superficial (Wendt, 1992: 392-395). Also, both theoretical approaches explain the role of international organizations with the fixed interests of the states (Blyth, 2002: 19), and claim that these organizations are their "tools" (Fearon and Wendt, 2002: 62). For that reason, the mainstream approaches have a narrow and superficial understanding of the issue of change and the role of international organizations within this process. The issue of change is important because the fundamental power of international organizations depends upon the change they create in state behaviour. Therefore, approaches that ontologically do not accept the possibility of change or talk about only a superficial change in international relations will be insufficient to understand the effects of international organizations.

Unlike mainstream approaches, social constructivism draws attention to the change in the international system and actor identities and attributes an important role to international institutions in this change (Adler, 1997: 325). By establishing a balanced methodology between the actor and the structure (Thrift, 1983: 29; Wendt, 1987: 360-361), and by considering not only the material factors but also the ideational ones (Fearon and Wendt, 2002: 58), social constructivism offers a more comprehensive approach to understand the change and the role of international organizations in the international system (Grant, 2018:257).

The first contribution of the constructivist theory to a more comprehensive understanding of the change is about its methodology. Every study in the discipline of international relations implicitly or explicitly uses one of two major methodologies developed in the social sciences. The first one which uses a Weberian tradition explains the state behaviour by focusing on the characteristics of the individual state itself. On the contrary, the one which follows the Durkheimian approach analyses the state behaviour by looking into the structural factors (Wight, 2006: 63). While both methodologies have a certain explaining capacity, both overemphasize or downplay either individual or structural factors. On the other hand, social constructivism develops a structurationist methodology in which while the actor is seen as the key element in the construction of the structure, also the structure is assumed as a fundamental factor in shaping actors' behaviour (Braun et al, 2018: 791). Contrary to the mainstream approaches, the social constructivists claim that this mutual construction relation between actor and structure continues with the intended and unintended practices of the actors (Jepperson et al., 1996: 42-43). This construction process creates a possibility to regulate the existing structure with, especially intended practices. The international actors have the possibility and capacity to make adjustments in the international structure especially by regulating current rules which determine the identities and responsibilities of all international actors.

Concerning this inference, the second contribution of social constructivism in evaluating the institutional change is to give ideational factors a prominent role in international politics. The mainstream approaches in international relations discipline tend to explain the content of the international structure with the material capacity of the actors, mainly of the states (Wendt, 1994: 389). For these approaches, the distribution of capacity, which emerges on the ground of the military, economic, technologic, etc. components states have, creates the fundamental structure of the international system. Even though this view offers a simple and rich explanation of the current system, it has been widely criticized since it leaves out many important variables.

Despite the fact that material elements have an important role in their formation and development, social structures do not consist solely of these elements (Onuf, 2013: 35). On the contrary, as Giddens argues, social structures are combinations of resources (material elements) and rules (ideational elements) (Giddens, 1984: xxxi). While resources constitute the basic units of social structures, rules regulate the relations between these units. Parallel to this, as in all other social structures, the international structure has a material dimension based on the material resources of states, as well as a normative dimension consisting of rules shaping the relations between states and also other international actors (Wendt, 1995: 71). The normative dimension of the structure determines the identities and responsibilities of each actor within the system

through rules (Turner, 1986: 972). Rules ignored by mainstream approaches are key to the formation, continuity, and change of social structures since they both generate (constitutive rules) and regulate (regulatory rules) possible behaviour patterns of actors within social structures (Onuf, 2013: 34-35).

As Dessler (1989: 460-461) argues, rules can be divided into two classes according to the sources that created them. First, *unintentional rules* are directly related to actors' interactions with each other and their power. Since the material dimension of international structure creates the conditions which shape the behavioural patterns of the international actors, it is impossible to ignore its role in the construction of international politics. For example, the behaviour options of weak states against superpower(s) should be different in unipolar and bipolar systems. These policy options, in other words, the rules, directly stem from the distribution of capabilities of states which determines the structural characteristics of the system. From this logic of view, the possibility of change is also directly related to the distribution of capabilities. A major event, generally a big war, can make a change in the distribution of capabilities which leads to a change in unintentional rules which constitute the institutional character of the system. But this kind of change can be defined as superficial because the change in the distribution of capabilities cannot lead to a change in the fundamental elements of the structure and it would be reproduced with the same elements after the deconstruction process (Koslowski and Kratochwil, 1994: 223).

The second class of rules is the intentional ones. While unintentional rules emerge from the distribution of capabilities, the intentional rules are consciously created by international actors. In order to modify the current international system which is based upon the distribution of capabilities, to make it more effective or to eliminate its destructive dimensions, the international actors produce international norms, principles, and rules. These intentional rules consist of an important part of the current international structure's normative dimension and play a pivotal role in the reproduction process of the system. Also, intentional rules play an indispensable role in the institutional change of the system. The international norms, rules, principles, agreements, and even the international organizations that international actors have created to solve the problems of the international system, reduce the unpredictability of the system, bring together actors who consider their self-interests to gather around common interests, and increase the level of trust between them. Therefore, intentional rules open the way for institutionalization in the international system similar to the domestic political level.

The increase in institutionalization enables the international system to evolve from a situation where power and material elements are at the forefront, to a situation where institutions gain importance. This institutional change in the international system triggers important changes in the behavioural patterns of the

actors. The mainstream approaches assume that every actor (or state in international relations) has fixed interests (to survive) which are determined by the structural conditions (Ruggie, 1998: 863-864). On the contrary, the social constructivists claim that actors' interests are commutative. In this process, the institutions have a vital role. The institutions can create a change in the identities of the actors, which leads to a change in the interests of the actors (Jepperson et al., 1996: 42-43). Thus, contrary to the traditionalist argument that all states follow their interests, the social constructivists claim that identities can change the behaviours of the actors (Checkel, 1998: 326-327; March and Olsen, 2006: 4; Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998: 912-913). In other words, actors can act not only according to their interests but also in accordance with their identity. For example, while all states follow their interests in international politics, they also want to be a part of the international society and regulate their behaviour according to its normative framework.

That way of change, even though more slowly than the one offered by the mainstream approaches, has the potential to create a deeper transformation. Also, the claim that the normative structure has an intended dimension creates a possibility to make a change in the international system without an important change in the distribution of capabilities. For example, until it was banned by the UN Charter in 1945, the use of force in interstate relations was common behaviour (Schrijver, 2003). Yet, today in the contemporary international system, the prohibition of the use of force which was developed after the First World War is seen as one of the fundamental norms (Jones, 2003: 44-45) in the international system.

## **2. The Role of the International Organization in the International System**

By considering the contributions mentioned above, it is possible to suggest that there are two important roles that international organizations have in the international system. These are (1) producing new international norms when necessary and (2) making them socialized by international actors.

The first important role of the international organization can be observed in the relation between the international system and the international organization. As seen in every social organization (Scott, 2001: 23-24), international organizations live under open systems and they have a lively relationship with their environments. While international politics occurred in the international system have the capacity to affect international organizations, organizations also have the capacity to make changes in the international system. The power of international organizations in changing the system comes from



their abilities in producing new norms (Kratochwill and Ruggie, 1986: 767). The normative structure of the international system is always developed according to the realities of international politics. In other words, the normative structure follows international politics and there is always a necessity to create new norms to fulfil the gap between reality and norms. In the current international system, the fastest way of producing new norms is through international organizations. They create an institutional ground on which all kinds of international actors come together and discuss the problems of the current system and develop new norms. In this process, international organizations can lead other actors with their expert knowledge and be an effective actor. Producing new international norms gives the international organizations a central role in the preservation and also in the change of the normative structure.

The second important role of international organizations can be seen in the relations between the international organizations and the other international actors, especially the states. The mainstream approaches tend to describe the relationship between the organizations and states as a one-way relation. But as in all actor-structure relations, there is a mutual construction process in this relation. While states create and regulate international organizations according to their individual needs, organizations with the help of international norms can make a change in states' behaviour. As all social structure, the international organizations have constructive and casual effects over the states (Jepperson, 1996: 37). As mentioned before, institutions can affect the identities and the identities can affect the interests of the actors. With the help of international norms, the organizations can provide different identities for the states and their interests can be transformed accordingly.

The casual effects of the international organizations over the state behaviour stem from regulative effects of the international norms (Finnemore, and Sikkink, 2001: 396). With the help of the socialization mechanisms, the international organizations provide the adoption of these norms by the states. By punishing the law-breakers and making it possible for social learning, the international organizations help in changing states' preferences (Caporaso, 1993: 76-77, Barnett and Finnemore, 2018: 67-68). Even though organizations are widely criticized for not having enough tools to enforce the international norms, every organization has certain mechanisms such as reward-punishment tools, economic and even military sanctions, and naming-shaming mechanisms (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 30). These socialization mechanisms create a fundamental ground for a complex social learning process. The international organizations provide a suitable basement for states to connect each other and easily transfer necessary information. This basement removes the uncertainty between states and provides a trustful environment (Wendt, 2001: 1034). In

addition to the socialization mechanisms, this friendly environment makes the adoption of the norms easier and changes the states' identity and also preferences.

### **3. The UN's Role in the Contemporary International System**

Established in 1945 "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" (Charter of United Nations, 1945), the United Nations was designed to provide the necessary multilateral ground for all political, economic, and social relations of international actors. As the most comprehensive organization in the world in terms of both subject and membership, the UN is the most prominent international organization in the development of the normative structure of today's international system. Therefore, although there are harsh criticisms for not fully fulfilling its responsibilities, it would be appropriate to evaluate the above-mentioned functions through the UN. With these functions, the UN contributes to the development and change of the current normative structure (Young, 1968: 902). Since the UN System has a very comprehensive structure, it is not possible to mention all the norm-producing and socialization mechanisms and examples within the system. Instead, the General Assembly and the Security Council, which stand out in the system, will be evaluated and the activities of these bodies in the fight against civil war and global terrorism will be examined.

#### **3.1. The UN as a Norm-Producer**

Embodying current international norms in its charter and giving them legal status is not enough to institutionalize the international system. The international society is an open process, rather than a completed social structure (Onuf, 1994: 1). The normative structure of the system should be changed according to the developments and innovations in international politics. There have been many important developments since the foundation of the UN. The decolonization process in the 1950s and 60s increased the number of sovereign states and those new states brought new economic and social problems. Also, the weapons of mass destruction have been expanded throughout the world and intra-state conflicts and the rise of the violent non-state actors changed the nature of the security agenda of international politics (Weiss and Dawns, 2018: 2-3; Schrijver, 2003: 8-10).

All these developments create a necessity to produce new international norms to overcome the international problems they brought along. However, traditional norm-producing mechanisms such as customary law are slow in the face of the rapidly changing nature of international politics (Schachter, 1996: 6). With its norm-producing mechanisms the UN plays a vital and effective role in

the norm-producing process (Alvarez, 2018: 81-82; Weiss and Thakur, 2010: 41) and with this role, it contributes to the institutionalization and development of the normative structure of the international system (Roberts and Kingsbury, 1993: 48). Even though the UN Charter does not give any of its organs a “legislative” function, the member states appeal to the organization to produce new norms, which provides a norm-producing function to the organization (Higgins, 2015: 1; Schachter, 1996: 3).

The leading organs of the UN in the norm-producing process are the General Assembly and the Security Council. In literature, the General Assembly which consists of all sovereign states as members in the current international system is labelled as a “quasi-legislative” body (Joyner, 1999: 440-441). The Assembly, with its highly participated international conventions, its resolutions accepted in general meetings, and the reports prepared by its sub-commissions, contributed to the creation of the new standards and norms (Singh, 1993: 392-393). Even though the UN Charter designs the Security Council as an executive body and does not furnish it with legislation function, the ability to get binding resolutions especially over security issues provides the Council the possibility to produce norms that have binding power over all international actors (Hurd, 2014: 364). The issues of humanitarian intervention and the fight against terrorism provide fruitful examples in terms of the UN's contribution to the production of new international norms.

For centuries, the ability and the “rights” of states to do whatever they want against their people within their domains have led to the emergence of debates on “the state that torments its people” or “the majority that dominate the minority”. This situation, despite the existence of a strong norm of non-intervention in internal affairs, required external actors to intervene in these events, and that external intervention has been tried to be placed on a legal basis with different conceptual experiments from “just war” to “humanitarian intervention”. A similar initiative was carried out with the concept of “responsibility to protect” in the post-Cold War period when the number of internal conflicts increased rapidly with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia (Evans, 2009: 17). Defining sovereignty not as a “right”, but as an important “responsibility” that provides the source of the legitimacy of states, the concept envisages the fulfilment of this responsibility by the international community if states are unable or unwilling to protect their people (ICISS, 2001). The concept, which intends to produce a permanent solution to the problem of civil war, was developed under the responsibility of the UN from the beginning. Firstly, the concept was brought to the agenda of the international community with the report called as “Responsibility to Protect” prepared by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), which was established under the leadership of the Canadian government, which took action

in response to the General Assembly's call to establish a commission to determine the limits of state sovereignty in the face of internal conflicts (Evans, 2015: 19; Holsti, 2004: 158). The concept developed by the Commission was first included in UN documents with the reports "A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility" (2004) (UNGA, 2004) and "In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All" (2005) (UNGA, 2005a) prepared by the UN Secretariat General. Subsequently, the concept was adopted by all leaders with articles 138 and 139 of the 2005 General Assembly World Leaders Summit conclusion declaration (UNGA, 2005b). Moreover, the concept, which was continued to be developed with the reports prepared by the General Secretariat (UNGA, 2009) after the summit, gained a "binding" quality for all actors in the system with the Security Council's announcement of its adoption of the concept with the Resolution 1674 (UNSC, 2006). Thus, the concept of responsibility to protect, developed under the auspices of the UN, was accepted by the main actors of the international system and became a part of its normative structure.

A similar norm-producing process seen in civil wars is also experienced in the fight against global terrorism. Since it has long been seen as an internal matter of states (Kramer and Yetiv 2007: 411), there have been no comprehensive attempts to combat terrorism within the UN System. However, the quantitative increase of terrorist groups and their activities around the world has made it necessary to address terrorism more comprehensively and in this context, dozens of different initiatives have been taken within the UN System. Among these initiatives, two important examples stand out in terms of the norm-producing process. The first is Resolution 49/60 taken by the General Assembly in 1994. Until this resolution, the most important reason for the lack of comprehensive results in the fight against terrorism in the UN System is the "freedom fighter/terrorist" dilemma, which has an important place in the terrorism literature (Alvarez, 2003: 238-250). With the attempts of the Third World countries that constitute the majority in the General Assembly, the actions of the national liberation struggle movements were tried to be excluded from the General Assembly's counter-terrorism initiatives (Peterson, 2004: 179). However, for the first time, Resolution 49/60 did not refer to the principle of self-determination which had been used to keep national liberation movements out of the scope of counter-terrorism initiatives and all criminal activities aimed at intimidating the public were described as terrorist acts without discrimination (Walter, 2004: 37). Thus, a comprehensive norm has been produced in the fight against terrorism.

Another important example that should be mentioned in this context is the Resolutions 1368 and 1373 taken by the Security Council after the September 11 attacks. With the resolution 1368, the Council declared for the first time that

terrorist activities can be counted among the acts that disturb international peace and security (UNSC, 2001). At the same time, with this decision, it was underlined that the principle of "self-defence", which was created to regulate inter-state relations, can also be applied against terrorist activities and that the US can use its right of "self-defence" against these attacks (von Einsiedel and Malone, 2018: 157; Messmer and Jordan, 2009: 846). Therefore, with Resolution 1368, the Council expanded the scope of existing norms. Moreover, the Council has addressed the issue of financing terrorism with its Resolution 1373. In this context, the Council asked the states to take measures to prevent terrorist groups to use their territory for financial activities and fundraising (UNSC, 2011). Thus, the Council has assumed a "legislative" task by producing new regulatory norms binding all states, although it was not stipulated in the UN Charter (Talmon, 2005: 177-178; Powell, 2018: 885).

As can be seen in these examples, the UN General Assembly and the Security Council reinterpret existing norms or produce new norms to meet the new conditions required by international policy. Thus, the UN System strengthens the normative dimension of the international system and enables its institutional change.

### **3.2. The UN as a Norm-Socialiser**

International organizations can be effective over the transformation of actors' beliefs and interests with the help of their decision-making and implementation mechanisms (Barnett and Finnemore, 2018: 50). They can manage the socialization of norms by actors with these mechanisms. Similarly, there are important UN mechanisms that directly or indirectly contribute to the socialization of international norms. It can be argued that there are two distinct types of socialization mechanisms within the UN system. The first socialization type stems from directly the effect of the normative structure in which the UN plays a central role. The identities that are created by the international norms carried and produced by the UN cause change in the interests and behaviours of the actors who accept these identities. This process facilitates the conformity of the international actors to the normative structure. These socialization mechanisms make the UN an important actor in the international system. In order to be a part of international society, international actors should not ignore the UN System and have to develop new behaviours in accordance with the normative structure.

The second socialization type is the enforcement mechanisms which enable punishing the law-breakers that move out of the limits of the normative structure. In the UN System economic sanctions, military operations, judicial enforcement, and international reporting are important enforcement mechanisms.

While these mechanisms regulate the behaviour of the law-breakers, they also give a strong signal to other actors about the limits of the current normative structure and change their behaviour in accordance with these limits.

Again, it is possible to observe the norm-socialization mechanisms in the UN System in terms of Responsibility to Protect and fight against terrorism. In the context of Responsibility to Protect, it has been closely monitored with the reports prepared by the Secretary-General whether the concept has been adopted by international actors. Besides, the Secretariat reports are evaluated at informal dialogue meetings within the General Assembly (ICRP, 2020). Thus, the awareness of the actors towards the concept is tried to be increased.

In addition to these, the most powerful mechanism in the socialization of the concept is the references to the concept in the Security Council resolutions. In this context, the first Security Council resolution that directly refers to the concept is Resolution 1706, which was adopted regarding the events in Sudan in 2006 (Bellamy, 2011: 18). Besides, the first examples in which the concept became operational with the resolution of the Security Council are the Ivory Coast and Libyan civil wars in 2011. In both cases, it was decided to carry out economic sanctions and military operations with the Council resolutions (Libya 1970-1973 and Ivory Coast 1975), interpreting the conflicts as the relevant states did not fulfil or failed to fulfil their responsibilities to protect their people (Evans, 2015: 32-34; Cronogue, 2012: 128). By punishing those who exceed the boundaries drawn by the concept, with these implementations, the Council clearly conveys the message that not only these states but also all actors in the system should make the concept a part of their behavioural patterns, in other words, adopt it.

Similarly, various mechanisms have been established within the UN System for the adoption by states of the norms established in the fight against global terrorism. In this context, the infrastructure of UN initiatives has been provided by Global Counterterrorism Strategy (GCTS) announced by the General Assembly in 2006 with Resolution 60/288. Within the scope of the strategy, all members supporting the decision confirmed that they will adopt and implement all the decisions, in other words all international norms regarding the fight against terrorism, to be taken by the General Assembly and the Security Council (UNGA, 2006).

Within the UN, a tripartite structure focused on three distinct objectives has been established on the basis of the GCTS for states to adapt and adopt the new norms. First of all, the compliance of the states with the norms and the deficiencies in this regard are audited through the country reports, gathered by international committees such as ISIL, Al-Qaida and Taliban Monitoring Team, Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate and 1540 Expert Team. Secondly,

capacity building projects are carried out under the leadership of institutions such as UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) in order to eliminate the shortcomings of states in the fight against terrorism. Finally, UN Office of Counter-Terrorism tries to ensure the coordination of all activities within the scope of GTS and the cooperation of all partners operating in this field (Schindler, 2020: 166-169). In addition to this structure, through economic sanctions, the Security Council tries to ensure that states adopt anti-terrorism norms. In this context, the Council took economic sanctions for the adoption of anti-terrorism norms in Libya (1992), Sudan (1996), Afghanistan (1999), and Lebanon (2005) (SCR, 2020).

As it is clearly seen in these examples, the UN has the capacity to make changes in the behavior of states with its socialization mechanisms in the organization-state relationship. Due to the constitutive effect of the UN, the socialization process in question is not a simple act of punishment, but a process that directly affects the identity of states and creates permanent changes in their pattern of behaviours.

#### **4. The Limitations over the UN's Norm-producing and Socializing Mechanisms**

As in all international organizations, with its norm-producing and socialization mechanisms, the UN, too, contributes to the strengthening of the normative dimension of the international system that can create change in the behaviour patterns of the actors. However, it should be noted that all international organizations and the UN as well, face significant limitations in the development and change of the normative structure.

The most important limitation faced by the UN and all other organizations directly stems from the material dimension of the international system. The distribution of power between actors, which shapes the material dimension of the international system, directly affects the organizational structuring and functions of organizations and the UN. For instance, the UN, which was established with a multilateral understanding, could not fully fulfill its predicted functions in the bipolar environment of the Cold War due to the competition between superpowers (von Einsiedel and Malone, 2018: 144; Latif, 2000: 27). Similarly, in the "unipolar moment" that emerged in the post-Cold War period, the hegemonic ambitions of the US caused it to pursue unilateral policies by ignoring the UN System, which raised concerns about the UN's existence in the system.

Besides, as the normative dimension of the international system, the material dimension also shapes the identities of the actors in the system. The distribution of power within the system causes the formation of identities such as

"great power", "hegemon", "medium power" and "small power" among its actors. Different identities lead to the formation of different interests, and this situation causes organizations to become one of the areas where different individual interests of states conflict. Regardless of whether it is great or small, all actors try to be effective on the norm-producing and socialization mechanisms of the UN System in line with their self-interests (Young, 1968: 904). Therefore, it is obvious that the UN, which was established to serve the common interests of its members, cannot adequately fulfil the functions it has undertaken as a result of the conflicts of self-interests of its members.

In the context of norm-producing, the states that have influence over the UN system try not to allow the formation of a norm beyond their control. For example, in the ICISS report, which systematically defines the concept, the Commission highlights that states should take responsibility for protection when UN mechanisms fail (ICISS, 2001). However, the concept of Responsibility to Protect, adopted at the UN Leaders Summit, particularly emphasizes that all actions within the scope of the concept should depend on the approval of the UN Security Council (UNGA, 2005). Thus, with their veto powers, permanent members of the Council have taken under their own control all the initiatives envisaged to be made within the concept. Similarly, while the terrorism issue, which has been active throughout the world for many years, was previously addressed with the advisory initiatives of the UN General Assembly, its handling at the Security Council level after the September 11 attacks (Tiwari and Kashyap, 2020: 114; Oudraat, 2004: 152) clearly demonstrates the dominance of the interests of the great powers in the UN System.

Likewise, norm-socialization mechanisms are oriented according to the individual interests of states, especially of great powers. For instance, while the concept of Responsibility to Protect can be applied in cases such as Côte d'Ivoire and Libya where the interests of Security Council permanent members converge, it has not been applied in the Syrian civil war, where larger humanitarian tragedies have occurred and yet the interests of permanent members conflict (Williams, 2017: 539-540; Hehir, 2011: 18). Moreover, this situation has raised criticisms that the role of the concept in shaping the relations between international actors has come to an end (Byers, 2015: 101-102). Also, the lack of enforcement powers of the committees established to supervise the implementation of anti-terrorism norms by the states causes the supervision activities of the committees to depend on the consent of the states, in other words, on their interests (Cortright et al, 2007: 26-27).



## Conclusion

Mainstream approaches in the international relations discipline have managed to explain many significant dimensions of international politics. Yet their materialistic approach makes them ignore the social aspects of international relations. Similarly, because of their materialistic view, they can only develop a superficial understanding of the normative dimension of the system and the role of international organization in its development and change. On the other hand, by making a balance between the actor and structure, and by considering the ideational factors, social constructivism offers a more comprehensive understanding.

By depending on the assumptions of social constructivism it is possible to draw a theoretical perspective in which international organizations play a central role in the development and change of the normative dimension of the international system. The norm-producing and socializing mechanisms of international organizations make them a key player in the development and change of the normative dimension of the international structure. It is possible to observe this theoretical assumption in UN politics. The UN System, with its norm-producing and socialization mechanisms, plays fundamental roles in the international system. First of all, with especially the General Assembly and Security Council, the UN can produce any international norms needed within international politics which gives the UN a norm-producing function. Secondly, with its normative and enforcing powers, the UN can help the socialization of these norms.

These mechanisms will not enable the UN and other international organizations to create a revolutionary transformation in the international system. However, the strengthening of the normative dimension of the international system as a result of the activities of international organizations may bring about changes in the identities of international actors. In this respect, it is possible to define international organizations as the main actors of an evolutionary process leading to a peaceful international system. This process may result in "eternal peace" as hoped, as well as in a new world war, as in the example of the League of Nations. However, whatever the outcome of this process, it is clear today that the international organization alternative has the possibility of reaching peace more than the state-centred power politics dominating the current international system.

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