



Journal of Social Sciences of Mus Alparslan University

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Araştırma Makalesi • Research Article

Nigeria: The Effects of Identity Politics on Societal Security

Nijerya: Kimlik Siyasetinin Toplumsal Güvenliğe Etkisi

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Abstract: Nigeria is prominent country of the African continent with its population, economy and energy resources. Political problems have shaped the security agenda of Nigeria, which was exposed to British colonialism, since the independence declared in 1960. The interruption of democratic processes with the emergence of military coups after the civil war environment and the declared republics between the years 1960-1999 is an indication that a societal security environment could not be established. The reason for this is the failure to ensure the integration of segments with different ethnic and religious characteristics. With the concept of identity being placed at the center of political discussions, terrorist activities of organizations with fundamentalist ideas are encountered. There is the Boko Haram terrorist organization in Nigeria, which has settled in an international context in connection with other organizations that have had an impact on the regional framework in the last 10 years. In this article, the terror problem of Nigeria is examined through historical, political, economic and societal dynamics. Although the identity politics approach that is constructed and formed is thought to be the main factor in the problem of terrorism, the importance of societal and economic development in overcoming this issue is emphasized when the interregional differences in Nigeria are taken into account.

Key Words: Nigeria, societal security, British colonialism, identity, Boko Haram.

Öz: Nijerya nüfusu, ekonomisi ve enerji kaynaklarıyla Afrika kıtasının öne çıkan ülkesidir. İngiliz sömürgeciliğine maruz kalmış Nijerya'da 1960 yılında ilan edilen bağımsızlıktan bugüne siyasi sorunlar güvenlik gündemini şekillendirmiştir. 1960-1999 yılları arasında iç savaş ortamı ve ilan edilen cumhuriyetler sonrasında askeri darbelerin ortaya çıkmasıyla demokratik süreçlerin sekteye uğraması toplum güvenliği ortamının tesis edilemediğinin göstergesidir. Bu hususta farklı etnik ve dini niteliklere sahip kesimlerin entegrasyonunu sağlanamaması nedendir. Kimlik kavramının siyasi tartışmaların merkezine yerleşmesiyle birlikte köktenci düşüncelere sahip örgütlerin terör faaliyetleriyle karşılaşılmaktadır. Nijerya'da son 10 yıllık dönemde bölgesel çerçevede de etki uyandıran diğer örgütlerle bağlantı halinde uluslararası bir bağlama yerleşen Boko Haram terör örgütü bulunmaktadır. Bu makalede Nijerya'nın yaşadığı terör sorunu tarihsel, siyasi, ekonomik ve sosyal dinamikler üzerinden incelenmektedir. Her ne kadar inşa edilerek oluşturulan kimlik siyaseti yaklaşımının terör sorununda temel faktör olduğu düşünülse de Nijerya'daki bölgelerarası farklar hesaba katıldığında sosyal ve ekonomik gelişimin bu hususun aşılmasındaki önemi vurgulanmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Nijerya, toplumsal güvenlik, İngiliz sömürgeciliği, kimlik, Boko Haram.

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Cite as/ Atf: Aydın H. (2023). Nigeria: The Effects of Identity Politics on Societal Security, *Anemon Muş Alparslan Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 11(Afrika), 114-125. <http://dx.doi.org/10.18506/anemon.1307464>

Received/Geliş: 30 May/Mayıs 2023

Düzeltilme/Revised form: 17 August/Ağustos 2023

Accepted/Kabul: 23 August/Ağustos 2023

Published/Yayın: 30 September/Eylül 2023

Introduction

West African country Nigeria is important county of the African continent with its high population and developing economy. Discussing the security of Nigeria, which has been subjected to civil war and military coups since its independence in 1960, requires both historical evaluation and identity oriented examinations. The pursuit of identity oriented politics lies in the background of the problems in Nigeria's state building processes. Nigeria is a complex country with societal, economic, cultural, ethnic and religious differences. Nigeria's shores in the Gulf of Guinea, which open to the Atlantic Ocean, reflect its strategic position. In line with the political problems after independence, issues such as civil war, coup, republican proclamations in Nigeria, and the establishment of the civil government until 1999 showed that the identity element was at the center of politics. It is important for the establishment of democracy culture after 1999 at the point of holding elections and establishing civilian governments.

It is a question of building societal processes based on intellectual, societal and cultural elements. At this point, the construction of societal identity is also in question. Identity corresponds to the human, material, ideological and cultural internal factors that give the state its current form. The impact of historical developments on this issue should not be ignored. The origins of the separation of north and south, which had its roots in the colonial period, should be opened to discussion. The issue of not ensuring the integration of segments with different ethnic and religious characteristics in the country raises the issue of identity. Chief Obafemi Awolowo, one of Nigeria's founding fathers had argued that Nigeria is not a nation, it is a mere geographical expression. While this statement shows that Nigeria has a diversity of identities, it also states that national unity cannot be easily established. However, not the societal diversity, but the way of regulating diversity poses a threat. Therefore, it is necessary to emphasize the importance of correct policies in this regard.

In this article, the terrorism issue of Nigeria as a security problem will be examined in line with Nigeria's historical, political, economic and societal situations. At this point, ethnic diversity is independent variable, conflicts are dependent variable. Among the security problems indexed to ethnic diversity in Nigeria, the issue of terrorism, which develops through identity, is evaluated. It is argued that socioeconomic problems should be resolved in line with regional differences in Nigeria, especially by opening the mechanisms of combating Boko Haram terrorist organization to discussion.

Identity, Security and Terrorism

Security can be explained by feeling safe against danger. Security is defined through threats and its importance is understood in this direction. In addition, based on the definition of insecurity, there is no situation that threatens the sustainability of an actor. While security objectively measures threats to acquired values, subjectively it is about the absence of fears that societal values will be attacked (Wolfers, 1952:485). Therefore, security is provided by freedom from fear.

The widening of the definition of security, together with the questions of security for whom and security against what, brings about the differentiation of the security agenda. For whose security, the level of the individual, state, and international system is seen in the security question, while the diversification of security issues with the increase of threats; not just to be military and also issues in the political, economic and societal fields shape the security agenda. The fact that the responsibility of providing security belongs to the state shows the decisiveness of the state in this regard. Moreover, the ontological view of the concept of security shows how security is structured.

State building, which is a societal process, is the coming together of a community to form a common identity within the framework of a political structure. In line with national identity, sub-identities may have an impact. In this direction, ethnic and religious definitions are brought to the fore and sub-identity emphasis is encountered. Ethnic group has a distinct language, also cultural, societal, historical characteristics. Ethnic and religious identity is a mere societal construct. In addition, the process of identity construct, it is under the influence of subjectivity while being guided by norms, ideas,

beliefs and values. Identity is defined through the other while explaining the self interpretation of the person.

As the ideological foundation, ethnicity and religion is defined as a societally shared belief system about how society conduct itself. During the process of nation building, identity cleavages became more magnified as different groups struggled for hegemony. If ethnic affiliations are widespread, this situation turn to cause of conflicts. Ethnicity is not cause of conflict but rather as a tool used to modify power relations. Therefore, power relations are important to understand effects of identity in one society. Moreover, identity is continuously changing due to societal interations between individuals. For constructivists, it is not fixed, also it is about constructing process.

Although identity is a sociological phenomenon, it is one of the focal points of political issues and security. The securitization of ethnic characteristics poses a societal security issue. So, the issue of identity security is discussed over societal security. Ethnic bods are prevailent rather than the rule of law. At this point, it can be said that ethnic tensions can be prevented in societies that act on the basis of norms. The fact that people live in a society, where ethnic and religious identity characteristics are intense, reduces the importance of organizational structures for class movements. This facilitates the adoption of inequalities in society. There is even a result that supports liberal processes. When considered in terms of security concerns, identity legitimizes violence and discourses are formed by developing opposition over identities. Thus, the concept of terror/terrorism emerges.

Terrorism is the use of violence to achieve political goals within the framework of an ideology. In another definition, terrorism is premeditated, planned attacks to destabilize the settled public order, cultural, economic, religious and societal structure of civilized society (Çaşın, 2008:4-5). Common features in definitions of terrorism; to have a political approach, to undermine the public's trust in the state, to use secret planning and actions, to draw attention and to create public outrage (Çaşın, 2008:102). The goal of terrorism is to inflict public opinion.

According to Rapoport, terrorism has historically changed in four waves. Anarchism was active in the first wave that started in the 19th century. Since the middle of the 20th century, the idea of self-determination against the colonial powers was supported in the second wave as an anti colonial wave. The third wave emerged with the influence of left ideologies since the 1960s. After the 1980s, terrorist organizations emerged that used the identity factor as an ethnic and religious wave (Rapoport, 2022). This historical process shows us how terrorism has changed.

Identity and ideologies play critical roles in terrorism debates. Terror activities are constructed and instrumentalised. Terrorism giving anarchic message makes the state a target. Because the aim of terrorism is the destruction of the political system of the state through violence and fear. Terrorism is not only an ideological approach, but also includes strategic activities. Terrorism also emerges in order to punish societal integration, inequality, group dynamics, cultural and religious disorders (Çaşın, 2008:294). An atmosphere of fear is being tried to be created with terrorist acts and this environment is closing the development. The concept of 'us and them' is dominant in the concept of terrorism. Considering that terrorist organizations need international support, they prefer strategic cooperation to gain space.

The chronicity of the security problem such as terrorism brings out the failed/fragile state debate. At this point, states claiming to have centrally established strong structures may experience security problems. Central and local integration should be ensured. A strong state is one that is integrated with society and can keep societal tensions under control. It is claimed that democratic and economically developed countries are more sensitive and successful against terrorism, but in economically weak and unstable countries, terrorism triggers societal movements. In the fight against terrorism; military tools, intelligence, compromise options (rehabilitation), international cooperation, and disruption of terrorist organization financial resources come to the fore. The most important way to weaken terrorist organizations is to deprive them of human resources.

Politics of Nigeria

In the 14th century, the Sokoto Caliphate was declared with the spread of Islam in the region where Nigeria is located. As result of geographical discoveries, with the discovery of Nigeria by Portuguese missionary travelers in 1471, western powers were also involved in the political process in Nigeria by spreading Christianity. With the termination of the Sokoto Caliphate by United Kingdom, Christianity spread in the region and polarization between northern and southern Nigeria increased. During the colonial period, United Kingdom learned about the region through explorers and supported religious activities with the missionary. Especially since the second half of the 19th century, the main reason for them to start colonial activities is the need for raw materials and markets, together with the effect after the industrial revolution.

The British used three different rule systems in their African colonies; rule through trading companies, indirect rule, settler rule. Trading companies continued their activities by making contracts with the British government. Indirect rule; it emerged with the selection of an ethnic group that was a minority within the exploited country. Persons belonging to the ethnic group selected within the framework of privilege are brought to an active position in the bureaucracy. This situation led to tensions between ethnic groups in the country. The desire to destroy indigenous cultures by creating a dominant culture has led to the development of ethnic politics and the emergence of an area of tension. In this direction, the British aimed to rule Nigeria through the Fulani. There are three major ethnic groups, which are the Hausa-Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba, conflicting each other in the country. The escalation of ethnic tensions was to Britain's advantage. Because in the country dealing with internal tensions, the ideas of independence remain in the background, thus minimizing the cost of ruling a colony. In the settler rule approach, there is the idea of bringing British settlers to the colonies. This was the case for colonies in South and East Africa (Aydoğan and Fidan, 2022:62-64).

The British annexed Lagos in 1861 to protect their commercial interests and made it a royal colony (Campbell, 2010:2). Northern Nigeria came into existence entirely as an artificial creation of British colonialism (Bamidele, 2015:17). After the Berlin Conference (1884-1885), there was state fabrication/packaging, not state building, in Africa (Odeyemi, 2014:89). The history of conflicts and insecurity in Nigeria is rooted in the colonizer's creating antagonistic ruling class along ethnic and religious lines (Ochonu, 2014).

The British divided the country into three self-governing units; Lagos, South and North. The tripartite administration structure became dual with the merger of Lagos and South in 1906, and became single in 1914 when this double protectorate was brought under a single administration. These regions were under the execution of Sir Lord Fredrick Lugard. Flora Shaw, who is the wife of Lugard, suggested the name 'Nigeria' as identity of the Niger area in an article in 1897. But the word Nigeria was adopted 16 years later by Lugard when northern and southern protectorates were fused. This situation shows that Nigeria is the creation of European imperialism (Campbell, 2010:5). In 1939, it was divided into three regions as West, East, and North. Also with its independence after 1960, Nigeria was divided into three regions as West, East, and North within the framework of ethnic and religious concerns. Hausa-Fulani live in the north, Yoruba in the west and Igbo in the east. With the creation of the western and eastern regions to make administrative regions and the politics of ethnic differences became central to the party formation processes, and the style of political leadership (Amusan et al., 2017:49). For instance, the Yoruba identity is a legacy of the British colonialist as a result of welding the different groups into one ethnic group (Forrest, 2004:30).

It can be said that the British government in Nigeria has three goals. First one is domination of Lagos for the protection of commercial interests. Secondly, it is dominance of the Niger delta region in the southeast for its energy needs. Third one is blocking French influence in the northern Sahel (Kavak, 2021:127). The construction of a railway between the north and the south can be given as an example in terms of the decisiveness of British economic interests.

After the proclamation of the republic in 1963, with the military coup carried out by Kaduna Nzeogwu in 1966, the Nigerian Civil War¹, which would last until 1970, broke out. After the Igbos revolted in 1967 and established the Republic of Biafra, a civil war took place that would last until 1970. At the heart of the Biafra war was the struggle for influence over the energy (oil and gas) fields in the three eastern states of Nigeria (Tandoğan, 2016:4). After the Biafra War, religious, linguistic and tribal discrimination increased in the country. The primary reason for the conflict was mutual distrust between the two ethno-politically dominant groups (Kirk-Greene, 1967:4). For Nigeria, the period between 1963-1999 is called the period of military coups, although there are efforts to build a democratic regime. In 1979, the military administration was replaced by Second Republic. In 1983, the Second Republic came to an end with the coups of M. Buhari and I. Babangida, and the military administration remained in office until 1999. In 1993, the Third Republic attempt was unsuccessful. Civil administration was established in 1999 with the Fourth Republic. Although the political party leaders were of military origin, the elections were considered important as a reflection of the will of the people after 1999. Between 1999 and 2015, the People's Democratic Party ruled Nigeria and it was the All Progressives Congress that emerged victorious from the 2015, 2019 and 2023 elections.

One in four Sub-Saharan Africans live in Nigeria. Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa, has a population of 213 million. Nigeria, the fifth most populous Christian country and the fifth most populous Muslim country in the world (PRISM, 2017:19-20). It is estimated that by 2050 it will be the fourth largest country in the world with a population exceeding 300 million (UN, 2022; Statista, 2022). Attention is also drawn to the increase in the number of young people in Nigeria's population. 70% of Nigerians will live in northern Nigeria in 2050 (PRISM, 2017:48). Nigeria will need substantially more infrastructure to deal with these challenges. 36% of the population is Hausa-Fulani, 15.5% is Yoruba, 15.2% is Igbo, 33,3% of the population is other ethnic groups (The World Factbook, 2021). Initially, British parliamentary system (Westminster²) was adopted in Nigeria (Aiyede, 2012:169). However, in the process, the parliamentary system could not be a solution to Nigeria's problems, created problems within itself, and with the 1979 constitution, during the Obasanjo administration, the Westminster model was abandoned and a US style presidential system was adopted. Nigeria was divided into 12 states in 1967, 19 states in 1976, 21 states in 1987, 30 states in 1991, and 36 states in 1999. Legislative power in Nigeria is exercised by the Senate of 109 members and the House of Representatives of 360 members. There is a popularly elected governor for each of the 36 states. Each state has its own government and parliament. According to Article 10 of the Nigerian constitution, the federal state has no religion. However, 12 federated units located in the north of the country are governed by Sharia principles.

It is seen that the countries that gained independence with the decolonization process in Africa have identity problems in the construction of state administration. Nigeria has been in a crisis of identity and national unity since the first days of its establishment, as it brings together ethnically diverse northern Muslim Hausa-Fulanis, southern Christian Yoruba and Igbo within a complex population structure where more than 250 languages are spoken. In this respect, when we look at the historical process of Nigeria, the number of states, which was three in the colonial period, increased to 36 in 1996 by years. This is an indication that national integration could not be established and the state building process was controversial/conflicting.

Nigeria is divided into 774 local government districts that make up 36 states and states. Thus, due to the multi-ethnic structure of Nigeria, it is ensured that every ethnicity has a say in the administration. Federalism is a functional tool because it supports the sharing of authority in the management of

¹ Biafra War: It was a civil war that took place in Nigeria between 1967 and 1970. The Igbo ethnic group attempted to secede from the Nigerian state by declaring the Biafra Republic. In 1970 the Nigerian government regained control of Biafra. The Battle of Biafra had a profound effect on Nigerian history. The war has deepened Nigeria's ethnic, religious and political conflicts.

² The center has a clear superiority over the periphery, that is, the executive power is concentrated in the center. The Westminster model has the characteristics of asymmetrical bicameralism, two-party system, majoritarian electoral system, monist centralist government, unwritten constitution, parliamentary sovereignty and representative democracy.

societies where ethnic differences are intense. Nigeria is governed by its 1999 constitution. This constitution adopted both a horizontal and a vertical separation of powers. In other words, besides the separation of powers between the legislative, executive and judicial organs, there is also a separation of powers and functions between federal and federated states.

African politics is patrimonial (Amusan et al., 2017:56). As ethnic-religious ties become determinant in power relations, patrimonial relations and nepotism come to the fore.³ Nigeria has never been a totalitarian state; its weak institutions and bureaucratic structure preclude it (Campbell, 2010:142). Lacking effective state building apparatus, Nigeria is one of the most fragile countries. (The Fund for Peace). Societal and economic deprivation would be solved if the state operated correctly. Ethnic and religious diversity has an impact on politics in Nigeria (Onimisi, 2014). North dominates politically, South dominates economically (Gieler and Akbaş, 2010:207). Lack of accountability and transparency makes the legitimacy of the Nigerian government questionable.

The Economy of Nigeria

Looking at the current economic figures of Nigeria, it is seen that its GDP is 475 billion \$ and its per capita income is 4900 \$ (CIA World Factbook). The area from which Nigeria generates its revenues; agriculture and oil. There are also natural resources of natural gas, iron, coal and limestone. While Nigeria is 8th largest country in the world in terms of oil reserves, it ranks ninth in terms of natural gas reserves. Most of Nigeria's exports are made of oil and natural gas (T.C. MFA). Nigeria, a member of OPEC, is currently among the top 10 countries in the world in oil production and export. Oil accounts for about 80% of state budget revenues. Contrary to the applications of the federal administration approach in the use of resources, the centralist emphasis should be at the forefront. There are discussions that the income from the oil-producing regions cannot be shared fairly (Ojo, 2010). Nigeria's oil wealth in the hands of a small group of wealthy Nigerians has made income distribution (Campbell, 2010:2). In line with oil revenues, a rentier state structure has emerged with the influence of foreign capital multinational companies (Falola and Heaton, 2008:11).

Poverty has been increasing despite strong economic growth in Nigeria. Over 70 per cent of the Nigerian population, are classified as poor and absolutely poor (International Crisis Group, 2014:3). The economy of the northeast region severely affected because of terror activities, the Nigerian government recorded a loss of revenue through foreign direct investments running into billions of dollars because of insecurity and uncertainty. Northeast region of Nigeria has been instrumentalized, weaponized through doctrinal narratives. In addition, the conflicts between the northern Fulanis, who are engaged in animal husbandry, and the southern Igbos, which are farming, also have a negative impact on the economic processes (Yakan, 2017).

Societal Issues of Nigeria

Identity is the ontological and normative constituent element of international relations. In addition to being a criterion in the analysis of identity, culture and societies, it comes to the fore in the transfer of societal demands to the political field in the process of establishing societal relations. The formation of collective identity in society is based on interdependence, common destiny and homogenization. In Africa and Nigeria, ethnic and religious identities are at the center of politics. For example, in the battle of Biafra sectional struggles between the regions trying to assert their hegemony. States's role is important. When the state fails, the state is to blame for violence because it has neglected its responsibilities (Montclos: 2014:121). This situation involves containing expansionist tendencies of one religion. In this case, secular state understanding can be functional.

Malnutrition, low literacy rate and uncertain future affect societal insecurity atmosphere in Nigeria. Millions suffer from poverty, more than half of the Nigerian people live on less than \$1 per day (Mamman, 2020:180-181). The north and south of Nigeria has pre-colonial differences. The south is

³ Former President Muhammadu Buhari has been severally accused of sowing the seed of nepotism through his appointments.

more progressive than north, also the north is conservative. Because of this, pace of modernisation is slow in the north but the south desire for a faster rate of modernisation based on western ideas and values.

Colonization is an ideology that base on the principle of cultural supremacy. The British colonists thought that it was their responsibility to improve Africans by eliminating the local culture of continent people. In terms of colonial sovereignty, the right belonged to a single party. There could be a ‘wrong or violation’ against this right. Colonized societies were seen as the property and object of authority (Mbembe, 2021:34-35).

During the British colonial period, it was aimed to train civil servants who would serve the colonial administration with educational activities (Aydoğan and Fidan, 2022:66-67). In Nigeria, lessons such as national consciousness and national integrity were not included in the education curriculum of the British colonization period. In addition, the British deepening the separation between the north and the south prevented the formation of a common national identity (Okafor, 2008:95). Between the years of 1907-1960, when the British administration was in Nigeria, 80% of the budget allocated to education was allotted to the south of Nigeria, while 20% was allotted to the north of Nigeria (Aydoğan and Fidan, 2022:347). The educational disparity between the Northern and Southern states is seen as an obstacle to national unity (Aydoğan and Fidan, 2022:353). Almost 2/3 of students in the northern part of Nigeria are illiterate. Poor infrastructure and poverty level pose a challenge (Aydoğan and Fidan, 2022:358-359). In his speech at the national curriculum conference in 1969, the education minister of the time attributed the cause of the war to the inadequacy of the current education system. There are more than 10 million children out of school in Nigeria. This is a very high number, showing that half of the world’s out of school children are in Nigeria (Aydoğan and Fidan, 2022:359). The issue of identity shows that the oppression and control mechanisms of colonialism are institutionalized. Colonialism has determined which sociocultural divisions will be politicized and which will be weakened politically (Laitin, 1985).

Security of Nigeria and Terrorism

Nigeria’s security can be considered within the framework of the concept of societal security. At this point, political, societal and economic issues enter the security agenda. What is seen as religious violence in Nigeria is the result of the struggle for political and economic supremacy between ethnic groups (Uchegara, 2008:113-114). The tension over identity in Nigeria, fueling the distinction between indigenous and non-indigenous communities, started by Britain during the colonial period (International Crisis Group, 2014:3). Even taking this situation further; it has developed to highlight the indigenous and non-native differences between Muslims (Forest, 2012:41). The lack of state-society integration in Nigeria affects the development of Boko Haram. According to the Fragile state index of 2022, Nigeria ranks 16th out of 179 countries (Fragile States Index). Considering that this trend will continue in this way, the situation in Nigeria could turn out to be devastating (Kinnan et al., 2011:65).

Boko Haram is a terrorist organization operating in Nigeria. Boko Haram was founded in 2002 in Maiduguri by Mohammed Yusuf.⁴ Muhammad Yusuf was killed in 2009, Abubakar Shekau became the leader of the organization, in the operation 2021, it was declared that Shekau was killed by the Nigerian security forces. Since 2016, he stands out as Abu Musab al-Barnawi, the son of Mohammed Yusuf, the leader of the Islamic State West Africa Province, a section of Boko Haram. There are three different factions within Boko Haram; the Prophet’s Teaching for Propagation and Jihad, Islamic State West Africa Province, and Ansaru. In the Hausa language, western-style education is called “Boko” and Haram means forbidden.

Boko Haram has radically defined the concept of jihad and brought Salafist thought to the fore (Sıradağ, 2015:9). Salafists are as reformers who want to establish a sacred Islamic ideology. Salafists

⁴ Boko Haram has its roots in the Maitatsine (Hausa meaning curser) movement, which took action against state authority in the 1980s. The leader of the movement, Mohammed Marwa, argued that westernization damaged the basic structure of the religion of Islam.

bring a very radical and strict interpretation of the religion of Islam, and act with the aim of uniting the Muslim world and establishing an Islamic state through jihad and thus putting the Sharia law into practice. Influenced by Salafism, Boko Haram rejects western culture, secularism and democracy along with western education (Sıradağ, 2015:11). Boko Haram advocates that Sharia laws are the only legal element to be based on in state administration. Boko Haram members believe that “if they die during their attack on modern government buildings, they can go to heaven” (Sıradağ, 2015:9). Therefore, Boko Haram seeks to impose fundamentalist thinking. It has perpetrated acts of violence, including kidnappings, mass killings, suicide bombings.

The target audience of Boko Haram is students and the unemployed people. Nigeria has high unemployment rate as 33.3% and this situation is also seen as massive unemployment among youths. As seen in a survey conducted on youth participation in the organization, 93% of those living in Borno state, 90% of those in Kano and 82% of people in Sokoto participate in Boko Haram. The reason is the lack of religious knowledge and ignorance (Onuoha, 2014:5). Presence of large numbers of *almajiri*⁵ children who are used to sustain violence by Boko Haram (Mamman, 2020:177).

It is possible to see the origins of ethnic violence in Nigeria in the 1990s. Movement for survival of Ogoni people organization was established to defend the interests of the Ogoni people against the hegemony of the Igbo ethnicity. Moreover, in 1997 the Federated Niger Delta Ijaw Communities was formed to defend the interests of the Ijaw nation of the Niger delta region. Oadua People’s Congress, on the other hand, acted to defend the interests of the Yoruba nation by opposing the hegemony of the Hausa-Fulani over high-level positions (Ferhavi, 2015:171-172).

Between 2011 and 2021, more than 53,000 people lost their lives in the northern provinces affected by Boko Haram’s terrorist attacks. Across Nigeria, 6 million Nigerians were affected by the Boko Haram attacks and 300,000 had to relocate (UN, 2014). The kidnapping of 276 female students by Boko Haram in the city of Chibok, Borno state, in April 2014, had a worldwide impact. Boko Haram raises funds from ransom kidnappings and bank robberies (Campbell, 2014). Boko Haram has nearly 300 training camps in Nigeria and neighboring countries. Military action is rewarded with 1000 euros and acquiring weapons is rewarded with 2000 euros (Guitta and Simcox, 2014:10).

Boko Haram rejects not only western education but also western culture, secularism and democracy. Boko Haram is not affiliated with any of the political movements and it is against all forms of government. According to Boko Haram, the source of corruption is the democratic system. Therefore, the shariah provisions should be made applicable throughout the country (Onuoha, 2010; Aghedo and Osumah, 2012). Main causes of Boko Haram are weak governance, hatred of the government, societal injustice, ethnic, religious, regional and economic differences in the country. Anomie is a state of normlessness; society becomes deregulated, creates an atmosphere of chaos. In Nigeria, Boko Haram’s attitudes are about anomie (Edet, 2022:43).

Boko Haram’s terrorist acts have spread to neighboring countries. In 2015, the Multinational Joint Task Force was established which included Nigeria, Benin, Chad, Cameroon and Niger (Solomon, 2017:6). Nigeria’s crisis emerges the case of displaced people into neighbouring country (UNHCR). After the 2011 Arab movements, the arms and ammunition smuggled out of Libya came under the control of Al Qaeda and later transferred to organizations affiliated with Al Qaeda in Africa, which activated organizations such as Boko Haram (Uluer, 2014:69).

Terrorist organizations act with a radical perspective that political and societal reforms cannot fix the issues. Terrorism can be understood in terms of the logic, personality and motivation of the terrorist. The terrorist organization should be examined and it should be seen how they recruited members. Terrorist organizations need human resources. In addition, the financial support of terrorist organizations should be looked at by analyzing at the national and international level. On the other hand, the fact that uneducated people are open to exploitation due to their economic deficiencies leads them

⁵ *Almajiri* derived from the word ‘*al-muhajir*’ meaning a searcher of Islamic knowledge.

to terrorism (Çaşın, 2008:282). Ignorance of religious teaching is the foremost factor among youth influencing the adoption of extreme religious views (Onuoha, 2014:5). Because young people are very vulnerable to radicalization. Furthermore, socioeconomic problems will have a negative impact on unemployed/hopeless youth. The water, energy, health and education system in Nigeria is in danger. While one quarter of the population in the south is in poverty, this figure rises to three quarters in the north (Solomon, 2017:10). In addition, the lack of good governance has led to failure of government to deliver quality service to the people (Mamman, 2020:179).

In the fight against Boko Haram, strategies are working closely with residents in affected areas to gather information and prevent violent attacks, disrupting funding, international cooperation and rehabilitation and reintegration of Boko Haram members. Deradicalization is important as nonmilitary process. Counter radicalization focuses on community engagement targeted to prevent and reduce the recruitment of people for radicalization. Strategic communication as messages to the public based on core values of the Nigerian nation. Defeating Boko Haram have to require a new societal compact with Nigerian citizens that encompasses economic recovery strategy (International Crisis Group, 2014:46). Moreover, Operation Safe Corridor (OSC) was established by the Nigerian government in 2016 to receive voluntary defectors from factions of Boko Haram (International Crisis Group, 2021:1). However, result-oriented effects of OSC are arguable.

One of the reasons for the emergence of identity problematic in Nigeria is the development of societal interactions over the categories of religious and ethnic relations. In this regard, upper identity building activities are important. It is seen that the strategy of increasing the number of local governments in order to eliminate the conflict environment that develops over identity in Nigeria is not a solution. The federal structure needs to be supported and the income distribution system needs to be revised. Particularly, the sharing of oil revenues is one of the important disagreements. Equal representation of units can be functional in supporting the federative structure.

Conclusory Remarks

The security of Nigeria, which stands out with its economy and population in Africa, is examined in terms of identity and terrorism with the effect of historical dynamics. Because the basis of the problems that developed over identity was laid during the colonial period. In the process of British colonialism, the foundations of today's problems were laid with the emergence of the division between the north and the south on the basis of ethnic and religious elements. The failure to ensure internal integrity in the 20th century with the coups and the civil war process, and the attainment of a more stable political ground with the regular elections in the 21st century created hope for the solution of economic and societal problems. However, with the actions of the Boko Haram terrorist organization, Nigeria has come to grips with the problem of terrorism.

It is seen that the fourth wave terrorism, which develops with the emergence of the identity element compared to the third wave ideological terrorism, produces different results. Especially, it is encountered that fourth wave terrorism is polarizing and tries to create tension lines by using religious affiliations. The presence of religious tensions means that the problem will be more difficult to solve. Linking the concepts of religion and terrorism means the abuse of religion.

Nigeria's fragile state structure is evident as a political problem. While poverty and unemployment are problems in economic terms, identity tensions and slope come to the fore as problems in societal areas. There are two important tools in the fight against terrorist organizations, namely the military elements and the effective use of the media. Raising awareness among the public will be critical. Increasing efforts should also be channeled to societal and economic development in the affected areas to win the hearts and minds of the local people. Focusing on organizations rather than the causes of terrorism in the fight against terrorism may make it difficult to carry out the fight effectively. In other words, instead of dealing with the causes, one has to deal with the consequences more.

With the development of international cooperation, the movement area of the organization should be narrowed. It should be noted that the international cooperation mechanism on terrorism is important for Nigeria. Because Boko Haram operates at the regional level in connection with other terrorist organizations, the Nigerian government will need international cooperation. In addition, Boko Haram needs public support. Because finding its human source depends on this issue. Therefore, the support of the people of the region to the organization is among the threats to the Nigerian government. At this point, religious opinion leaders play a big role with counter informative activities.

In conclusion, the terrorism problem in Nigeria develops within the framework of the triangle of poverty, unemployment and lack of education. The political environment developing through identities puts the problems within the framework of this triangle into the background. Therefore, policies related to these topics should be decisive and effective. Ensuring societal security requires an objective look at the problems posed by identity politics, which is constructed by actors. The way to overcome the problem of terrorism is to operate a solution mechanism within the economic and societal headings with an understanding that aims at the unity of the country, together with a strong political will.

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