

The Impact of the Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria: A Multi-Sectoral Analysis

Boko Haram İsyanı'nın Nijerya'ya Etkisi: Çok Sektörlü Bir Analiz

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Abstract

Using the Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) and qualitative methodological approach, this article examines the impact of the Boko Haram insurgency on the various sectors and arenas of security as proposed by proponents of the Copenhagen School of Security Studies. Findings of the article suggest that the presence and activities of this terror group have impacted the various arenas of security and have also created dire sub-regional and regional implications in spite of the various counter-measures designed by sub-regional and regional actors to counter the threat posed by the terror group. Therefore, to address this challenge, the article offers practical recommendations to critical and relevant actors involved in countering the presence of this group at the various political, military, societal, economic, environmental, sub-regional, and regional levels.

Keywords

Boko Haram, Insurgency, Multinational Joint Task Force, Nigeria and Lake Chad Basin, Regional Security Cooperation, Sectors of Security, Sub-Regional

Öz

Bölgesel Güvenlik Kompleksi Teorisini (BGKT) ve nitel metodolojik yaklaşımı kullanan bu makale, Boko Haram isyanının/ayaklanması'nın Kopenhag Güvenlik Araştırmaları Okulu'nun savunucuları tarafından önerildiği gibi çeşitli güvenlik sektörleri ve arenaları üzerindeki etkisini incelemektedir. Makalenin bulguları, bu terör örgütünün varlığının ve faaliyetlerinin çeşitli güvenlik arenalarını etkilediğini ve ayrıca alt bölgesel ve bölgesel aktörlerin terör örgütünün yarattığı tehdide karşı koymak için tasarladıkları çeşitli karşı önlemlere rağmen korkunç alt bölgesel ve bölgesel etkiler yarattığını göstermektedir. Bu nedenle, bu zorluğu çözmek için makale, bu grubun varlığına çeşitli siyasi, askeri, toplumsal, ekonomik, çevresel, alt bölgesel ve bölgesel düzeylerde karşı koymada yer alan kritik ve ilgili aktörlere pratik öneriler sunmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Boko Haram, İsyan, Çok Uluslu Müşterek Görev Gücü, Nijerya ve Çad Gölü Havzası, Bölgesel Güvenlik İşbirliği, Güvenlik Sektörleri, Alt-Bölge

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Introduction

The emergence and activities of Transnational Terrorist Organizations (TTOs), especially in the Post-Cold War period, have impacted the way and manner states and the international community respond to and deal with these emergent threats at the state, sub-regional, regional, and global level (Makarenko, 2004). As a consequence of this, regional and sub-regional actors on the African continent are also not insulated from the challenges associated with the presence and activities of these foreign terrorist organizations (Gibson, 2004; Tella, 2018). Nigeria, for example, is said to be grappling with the greatest existential threat to its sovereignty since the end of the Civil War (1967-1970) with the rise and dastardly activities of the radical insurgent group often referred to as Boko Haram (Odo, 2015; Ogunnubi, 2017).

As illustrated by Hansen and Musa (2013), the Boko Haram insurgent group has carried out a series of coordinated attacks on the Nigerian state and various institutions that have adversely affected the country's socio-political and economic development since its activities became well known in 2009. The actions by this group have led to the wanton destruction of lives, properties, and the economy of not only the northeastern region of Nigeria, but also the intended consequence is experienced at both the sub-regional and regional level. These threats, as expressed by many researchers, are not only a challenge to Nigeria's corporate existence as a state, but also pose a serious threat to various sub-regional and regional organizations on the continent. The daunting challenge is faced by multilateral groups such as the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the African Union (AU), whose major role is to ensure the cooperation and integration of member-states in areas and aspects that will lead to the promotion of peace, progress, and development, and collectively deal with any action that will pose a threat to the region (Ogbonna & Jiménez, 2017).

Many studies (Hansen, & Musa 2013; Ayegba, 2015; Nweke, 2014; Hansen, 2017; Maza, Koldas & Aksit, 2020) have proffered the preconditions leading to the emergence of the Boko Haram terror group. These include the long history of maladministration and bad governance, the instrumentalization of violence by the elites, the rise of poverty amidst plenty, the long history of social inequality and injustice, an upsurge in unemployment, endemic corruption, the increasing level of illiteracy in the northern region, and the negative instrumentalization of religion as a vehicle to perpetuate violence, etc. (Adibe, 2013; Hansen, & Musa 2013; Ayegba, 2015; Nweke, 2014; Hansen, 2017; Maza, Koldas & Aksit, 2020; Iyekepolo, 2020). Despite the role played by the Nigerian government and the various sub-regional and regional organizations in taming and countering the activities of this group, there are certain challenges especially, as it relates to the paradigm of sub-regional security cooperation in countering the Boko Haram insurgency.

It is, therefore, within this context that this article aims to critically examine and contribute to the existing literature on the Boko Haram insurgency and its impact on the various sectors and arenas of security as put forward by proponents of the Copenhagen School of Security Studies. In doing this, the study seeks to critically interrogate, analyze issues, and ask questions on the impact of the Boko-Haram insurgency at the various sectors of security, at both the sub-regional and regional levels. The research

draws most of its analysis from secondary sources, reports, and personal interviews with researchers who have contributed to issues around conflict, security, and debates around insurgent groups operating across the continent, and other relevant materials. In spite of the availability of several existing studies and literature on the Boko Haram insurgency, there has been a dearth of literature that focuses on the implications and impact of the insurgency on sectors and arenas of security within the operational and theoretical lens of the Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT). Therefore, this article seeks to fill this gap by contributing to the multisectoral implications of the Boko Haram insurgency under the RSCT theoretical framework of analysis.

Structurally, the article is divided into the following parts: the first part is the introduction, which offers a general overview of what the article sets out to achieve in terms of its objectives, frames the research questions, and states the structure and organization. The second part centers its discourse and analysis on framing a theoretical lens and examining the relevant literature and debates on the Boko Haram phenomenon and sub-regional security cooperation on the continent. Extant studies, review, and discussion on the evolution of the Boko Haram insurgency, ideology, philosophy, and modus operandi form the second part of the article for the sake of better inference and clarity. The next part of the article offers a sectoral analysis of the impact and implication of the Boko Haram insurgency as encapsulated by proponents of the Copenhagen School of Security. These sectors and the arena of security include the military, political, economic, societal, and environmental sectors. The impact of the continued activities of this group will also be analyzed at the sub-regional and regional levels. The final part of the article offers concluding comments and practical recommendations on how critical actors involved in the fight against the activities of Boko Haram can effectively combat and contain its activities.

Boko Haram: Theoretical Discussions and Review of Existing Works

As observed by Kellstedt and Whitten (2018), as a paradigm, a theory is vital and important in every research process given the fact that it has the tendency and potency to bring out the logical and causal mechanism between the issues under investigation and analysis to bring out a well-structured and coherent narrative. As a theoretical framework, this article will adopt the Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) to explain the logic behind the challenges of sub-regional security cooperation in dealing with the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. The RSCT is a securitization theory developed by Barry Buzan and Ole Weaver, whose primary focus is to conceptually and analytically examine security, threats, and threat perception in a geographically structured manner by combining some elements of materialist and constructive narration with the ideas of threats on states and regions, and establishing the processes that define security cooperation amongst actors in the global system (Buzan & Weaver 2003; Godehardt & Nabers 2011). The RSCT also looks at the impact of threats that transcend traditional boundaries of states and spread to other regions.

The RSCT is used here to explain how sub-regional and regional actors can uniformly come together to combat the challenge posed by the Boko Haram insurgent group given the magnitude and intensity of their actions, which transcend the Nigerian state

and spill over to other countries as well (Blanchard, 2014). The theory provides a vivid theoretical lens for analyzing sub-regional security cooperation, especially as it relates to the counterinsurgent efforts being done to contain the activities of the Boko-Haram radical group. As put forward by Comolli (2015), analyzing any counterinsurgent effort in addressing the Boko Haram insurgency requires regional, sub-regional, and national collaboration by these actors. This is because Boko Haram today has not only presented an existential security threat to Nigeria; its activities also pose a complex regional security concern. Therefore, this existential reality requires support from other global, regional, and sub-regional players in the continent because the “War on Terror” requires this semblance of alliances and cooperation to make it realizable.

Apart from the theoretical undercurrents of the Boko Haram and the RSCT, there is a plethora of literature regarding the Boko Haram phenomenon in Nigeria and also sub-regional cooperation within the ECOWAS sub-region. Akinbi (2015) tried to critically analyze the Boko Haram insurgency in light of the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria. This perspective points to the fact that the activity of the insurgent group has grave political implications on the stability and consolidation of democracy in Nigeria and, to an extent, the West-African sub-region.

Another narrative, by Abimbola, Adesote, and Olonisakin (2013), analyzes how the Boko Haram phenomenon emerged as purely a domestic security concern of the Nigerian state. To them, the insensitivity of the Nigerian government and security actors allowed the pattern and trend of the Boko Haram group to spiral to other parts of Nigeria and other neighboring states, requiring a more proactive response by the ECOWAS community to ensure the activities of the group are contained. Studies by Bappah (2016) Ogbonaya, Ogujiuba, and Stiegler (2016) and Botha and Abdile (2019), examined the challenges of regional cooperation in West Africa, especially in combating the Boko-Haram insurgency in Nigeria, ranging from the lack of a clear-cut security policy and framework in dealing with the menace, to the non-commitment and lack of political will from member states to ensure the activities of the group are contained, and the lack of an effective operational strategy and standby-force as plausible factors militating sub-regional security cooperation in the counterinsurgent efforts against the organization. Other research (Maiangwa, 2013; Edward & Kwabena, 2015; Olumuyiwa & Maiangwa 2017b; Onapajo, Uzodike & Whetho, 2012; Popovski & Maiangwa, 2016; Umokoro, 2016; Kallon, 2017), has captured the impact of the Boko Haram insurgency at the various levels and sectors of society and the various regional and sub-regional responses by these regional and sub-regional actors in containing the threats posed by the continued presence and activities of this group.

Counterinsurgent efforts against the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria were also studied by Oyewole (2015), Eji (2016), and Ojelade (2018). These narratives and studies ranged to the role of the Nigerian state, and largely the contribution of regional players like the AU and the ECOWAS, which ultimately culminated in the establishment of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNTJF) against the Boko Haram insurgency. The functionality and operability of the MNTJF against the Boko Haram insurgency were captured in scholarly works such as those by Comolli (2015), Assanvo, Abatan, and Sawadogo (2016), De-coning (2016), Agbibo (2017), Albert (2017), and Obamamoye

(2017). Despite the plethora of studies regarding the Boko Haram insurgency and the role of sub-regional actors like the ECOWAS, there are however limited studies and discussions on the impact and implication of these phenomena at the sectoral level of security analysis and the challenges facing the smooth operationalization of the Task Force saddled with containing the activities of this ragtag and dreaded organization.

Impact of the Boko Haram Insurgency: A Multi-Sectoral, Sub-Regional and Regional Analysis

The Boko Haram insurgency has a significant impact on and implications for the various sectors and arenas of security. This is based on the fact that the group has been able to effectively carry out a series of coordinated attacks on state institutions, individuals, and the private sector. Many consider these attacks to be a threat not only to Nigeria but also to the various security sectors at the state, sub-regional, and regional levels. This part of the article will offer a multisectoral analysis of the impact and implications of the Boko Haram insurgency within the lens of the various sectors and arenas of security as put forward by proponents of the Copenhagen School of security.

Boko Haram and the Military Security Sector

The threats posed by the Boko Haram incursion on the military sector of security put to test the capacity and capability of Nigeria's defense forces in tackling this dreaded organization (Onuoha & Thurston, 2013). As put forward by proponents of the Copenhagen School, a threat to this sector has dire consequences on the other sectors of security. This is because it raises the discourse and narrative on the ability of the state to carry out its responsibility of not only protecting the lives and properties of its citizens, but also measures her wherewithal in response to threats on both her internal, external, and territorial sovereignty (Stone, 2009). Scholars such as Brenya and Kuffuor (2015), Bappah (2016), Maiangwa (2017), Ogunnubi (2017), and Haruna (2018) assert that Nigeria's military was hitherto seen as one of the most powerful defense forces in Africa based on its antecedents and successes in the various peacekeeping engagements in war-torn countries across the continent in the 1990s and early 2000s. The emergence of this dreaded organization now puts to test that assertion. This is because many analysts argue that the Boko Haram insurgency has significantly painted the Nigerian military in a bad light and has further opened up the "Pandora's box" of the deep-rooted crises that have affected this sector in performing its task of dispelling and managing the insurgency. As further shown by Aljazeera ("Report: Boko Haram," 2018), Campbell (2021), "Boko Haram overruns" (2018), and Ogundipe (2018), the military sector is one arena where the Boko Haram insurgents seemed to have sway based on the levels, intensity, and successes recorded in carrying out certain attacks in the northeastern region of Nigeria, leading to a high number of fatalities of both military and civilians, with over 20,000 media-documented deaths, many towns, cities, and villages captured by the terror group, and also the destruction of military tanks and equipment. This led many to believe that the military sector is one sector that has been the focus of attacks by Boko Haram. While the threats associated with the military sector were seen to be a consequence of the lack of professionalism exhibited by its members, the over-politicization of the sector, lack of a coherent strategy and rule of engagement in counter-insurgency, and challenges

associated with operations and logistics are amongst several other factors inhibiting this sector in managing and containing the Boko Haram phenomenon. The fact that this sector of security falls largely within the response and cooperation of the various regional and sub-regional actors in dispelling the activities of this insurgent group under the Multinational Joint Taskforce (whose role encompasses a military approach to counter-insurgency) tends to significantly impact how this sector deals and manages the impact of this group. Consequently, Onuoha and Oyewole (2018) stated that the activities of this insurgent group and the inability of this sector to effectively manage this threat have significantly affected the military arena and invariably affected other sectors of security.

Boko Haram and the Political Security Sector

Ntamu and Ekpenyong (2014) hinted that the Boko Haram insurgency is not only a threat to Nigeria's security, but it has become an existential threat to the survival of the political and legal entity called Nigeria. When discussing the paradigm of political security, Buzan explained that political security seeks to deal with the legitimacy of the political system and institution to handle any form of an existential threat to its survival, given that, once that necessary legitimacy which is the basic [irreducible] minimum is absent, it creates the preconditions for insecurity (Buzan, Waeber, & De Wilde, 1998). As asserted by Okpaga, Chijioke, and Eme (2012), this narrative puts to the test and challenges Nigerian political, legal, and legitimate sovereignty as a result of the activities of this terrorist organization. Going by the series of attacks carried out by this organization on state institutions and agencies, the question arises as to the Nigerian government's requisite capacity to deal with this ragtag group (Ibid). Anyadike (2013) also supported this by observing that the Boko Haram organization threatened the Nigerian Government with certain conditions, which involve the prisoner exchange of some of its members who were arrested by the government and the immediate resignation of the Executive Governor of Borno State (Alhaji Kashim Shettima). The group also engaged in attacking security officers, chasing them to other neighboring cities in the Northeast (such as Bama and Baga) while declaring a caliphate in the captured towns. This has posed a serious challenge to the entire political and national security framework of the Nigerian state. It also questions the legitimacy and ability of the Nigerian government to effectively tackle this scourge. Therefore, as intimated by Siollun (2015), the activities of this insurgent group raised serious questions regarding the ability of Nigerian political leaders to effectively handle the Boko Haram question. This led to various narratives put forward by political pundits and analysts asserting that the inability of President Goodluck Jonathan to clinch the 2015 General Elections was predicated on the fact that over the past six (6) years, his government has shown a lack of political will to handle the myriad challenges bedeviling the country, especially the Boko Haram crises. It was this failure that led to the organization further consolidating its power by capturing cities in the Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe States (BAY states) and establishing a mini-caliphate. This made it possible for the terrorists to successfully raid military camps, chasing away soldiers and carting away several military tanks and equipment (Blair, 2015).

Another narrative was also given. This one proposed that the constant attacks and presence of Boko Haram have not only made the regime unpopular, but have also made

the government lose credibility in the face of Nigerians because of the enormous amount of resources that have been channeled towards dealing with the Boko Haram insurgency with little or no visible results to show that the government is making fruitful efforts in dealing with this menace (Oduah, 2015). Again, the highly publicized abduction of the “Chibok girls” attracted global outrage and attention on the need for the Nigerian government to show serious zest and commitment in ensuring that the fight against this group is won if the regime wants to gain back the trust of the people and her allies among the organizations of states around the world. This failure led to people viewing the 2015 General Elections as a “vote for insecurity or vote for security,” in which many voters opted for the latter (Maiangwa & Agbiboa 2014; Habila, 2017; Hashimu & Ancel, 2017). This political implication has further negatively impacted the Nigerian government and puts to the test not only the government’s capacity to tackle this challenge, but also the assurances and guarantees by the transformed African Union (with the various RECs) that “African problems” can be solved by Africans.

Boko Haram and the Societal Security Sector

Many studies (Solomon, 2013; Blair, 2015; Montclos, 2016; Oriola & Akinola, 2018) have revealed that the activities of the Boko Haram sect have significantly affected the “Islamic identity” negatively. As indicated by Beydoun (2018), this is due to the organization’s modus operandi, where most attacks are carried out using certain Islamic incantations and chants such as “Allahu Akbar,” which, loosely translated, means, “God is the greatest.” To many, the use of these chants creates a violent, negative, and false view and perception of Islam because the phrase is mostly used to signify victory or Allah’s protection when these radical jihadi sects carry out their activity. Subsequently, many say that the use of such chants as a tool by these radical groups to instill fear and terror invariably portrays Islam as a violent religion (Pérouse, 2014).

Another contribution by Nwigwe (2019) asserts that the use of dress by Boko Haram forms and constructs a certain negative perception in the hearts and minds of people. This form of the narrative was given credence based on data which showed that, increasingly, Boko Haram insurgents wear “head-gear, turbans, hijab, and veils” whenever they are out to attack. This form of dress is traditionally used in Islam to signify one’s membership in a religion that abhors all forms of moral decadence, and to show respect for humanity by dressing modestly to demonstrate devotion to and respect for the teachings and precepts of Islam. Therefore, the use of this dress by this radical group to carry out heinous acts of terror portrays a high sense of defiance of all that Islam stands for.

Ishaku (2018), a renowned journalist who has researched the Boko Haram sect, noted during a phone conversation with the authors that, “the use of fashion to constantly portray Islam in a bad light by the Boko Haram and any other radical jihadist terrorist organization is a threat to the identity, values, teachings, and principles of Islam.” If this negative perception is not contained, it will be very difficult to convince people not to immediately label an individual who dresses in a manner that represents his/her religion a terrorist or member of Boko Haram (Ibid). Further observation shows that the societal threat posed by the Boko Haram insurgents was further fueled by the ever-increasing politicization and instrumentalization of religion and identity by the political, religious,

and traditional elites to further pursue their agenda and interests, more often than not, to the detriment of the larger segment of society. This is seen through the constant negative securitization of speeches by these leaders in order to indoctrinate these negative values and ideas into people who naively accept and imbibe these teachings and use them (Adesoji, 2010; Walker, 2012; Agbiboa, 2013). This is because the leaders of Boko Haram and other radical sects operating across the Sahel generally galvanize, mobilize, and instrumentalize these negative religious views, sentiments, and ideologies to further divide societies and create conditions for insurgencies to thrive because of these negative and total misrepresentations of religion and societal beliefs. In the same vein, the Boko Haram insurgency has negatively impacted the process of social interaction among various groups in the region who hitherto were united irrespective of their cultural, religious, and ethnic backgrounds, creating a precondition for mistrust and division among such communities. To this end, it is important for relevant actors involved in countering and combating the Boko Haram insurgency to take cognizance of the ideational and identity construct of the inhabitants of the northeast region (NE) of Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin region (LCB), given the fact that their cultural homogeneity has been exploited, instrumentalized, and weaponized through negative and divisive doctrinal narratives by these rogue elites to further exacerbate and promote extremism and terrorism (Weeraratne, 2017; Uwakwe & Miapyen, 2018; Iyekekpolo, 2020).

Boko Haram and the Economic Security Sector

The economic implications of the Boko Haram insurgency fall largely within the lens of the threats posed by this group to the economy of Nigeria and the region. Regarding the impact and implications of the Boko Haram insurgency on the economy, Ayegba (2015) argued that due to the activities of the Boko Haram radical group, the economy of Nigeria and the entire northeast region have been rendered comatose. This has led to the closing down of businesses, companies, and financial institutions such as banks and discount houses. It has also caused the massive loss of jobs among the teeming populace who derived their sustenance from engaging in business and rendering of services. This position was also corroborated by Durotoye (2015) and Bakare (2016), who noted that not only is the economy of the northeast region severely affected because of the activities of Boko Haram, the Nigerian government recorded a loss of revenue through foreign direct investments running into billions of dollars. With these negative economic deficits, no business investor or organization will want to invest in a region ravaged by insecurity and uncertainty. This figure was further corroborated in the World Investment Report (WIR) published in 2013 by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), which observed a decline of about 21.3% in the nation's Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into the economy of the northeast region, amounting to about USD 8.9 billion in 2011 and over USD 7 billion in 2012 (UNCTAD, 2013). A recent "Economic Freedom Index" report by the Heritage Foundation (2018) ranked Nigeria 115/180 globally and 16/56 regionally, meaning it is one of the hardest places for investments to thrive due to the continued activities of this radical insurgent group. This negative assessment was also seen in a recent report published by The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) for the period 2014–2018, which showed that of countries that are most suitable for business, Nigeria was ranked 76/82 and scored 4.47/10. Negative factors such as

the increasing volatility occasioned by the incessant attacks by this radical terrorist group were seen to be partially responsible for not creating a conducive environment for businesses to thrive (EIU, 2018).

As a result of the continued activities of this group, Nigeria has suffered economic loss in the area of trade, investments, and effective flow of capital within the economy. This was further corroborated by the Borno State government in recent statistics, which revealed that attacks carried out by this group have led to the wanton destruction of properties and investments in the northeastern part of Nigeria worth over 1.3 trillion Naira (over USD 9 billion) (Premium Times, 2018). This was further supported and corroborated recently by Nigeria's Chief of Army Staff General, Major General Tukur Buratai, who presented a paper titled "Counter-insurgency and the Role of the Nigerian Army in creating a conducive environment for Nigeria's Economic Development." He admitted that the massive economic loss because of the activities of the Boko Haram insurgency amounts to over USD 3.5 billion (107 billion Naira) worth of agricultural produce in the northeastern region of Nigeria, leading to massive and dire economic consequences for not only the country but also the economy of the Lake Chad Basin, where member countries enjoy this agrarian produce (Premium Times, 2017).

This massive economic downturn because of the economic threats posed by the Boko Haram insurgents is no longer just a Nigerian problem, given that because of its activities, the downturn has spiraled to other neighboring states, such as Cameroun, Chad, and Niger. These countries had enjoyed harmonious trading and economic relations amongst themselves, but this terrorist group has further affected their harmonious economic relations because so many businesses were adversely affected, leading to many closing down and the loss of jobs and means of subsistence because of fear of constant attacks by the insurgents. Thus, this economic loss has the potential to further cripple the economy of not only the region but the country (Tukur, 2017). It is with this perspective that the committee set up by the Nigerian government to reconstruct, rehabilitate, and rebuild the northeast region showed that over USD 9 billion is needed to reconstruct and rehabilitate the damaged properties (Nwabughio, 2016). In view of all these negative economic indices, it is clear that the activities of the Boko Haram insurgents impact the economic security sector of Nigeria and the region at large.

Boko Haram and the Environmental Security Sector

Challenges to the environment have been given as one factor responsible for the increase in conflict and insecurity, and to a large extent, the unending insurgency of Boko Haram in Nigeria and the Lake Chad region (Rudincová, 2017). Onyia (2015) observed that studies by various environmental experts show that the inability of policymakers in Nigeria and governments that make up the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) to effectively address the challenges associated with climate change, especially in the region, has further stifled the progress and development of the region, leading to drought, massive population explosion, unemployment, and poverty. All these negative factors have the potential to further exacerbate and increase conditions for insecurity and conflict in these areas given the fact that the employment opportunities the Lake Chad Region had created for the growing population of youth no longer exist, leading them to be

easy targets of recruitment by some of these jihadist groups operating across the region (Eichelberger, 2014). This narrative was further corroborated in a recent study and report by Adelphi noting that recent changes to the climate and environment have paved the way for terrorist organizations to further fuel their activities (Doherty, 2017). This is because these groups exploit these negative changes to the environment to recruit members of society who are vulnerable due to the high rate of poverty; these changes also allow and enable these groups to operate with freedom, fluidity, and to a large extent, control and to determine the degree to which people use natural resources such as water and food (Ibid). Another report commissioned by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) highlighted that over time, terrorist organizations often use natural resources as a weaponized shield to carry out their activities. To insurgent groups, controlling who has access to these resources is bait for them (Grecequet, Hellmann, DeWaard & Li, 2019). Therefore, whenever such resources are scarce because of climate change, as witnessed in the northeastern part of Nigeria, Boko Haram insurgents use the deplorable state of the environment to further consolidate their power and operate in the region because some necessities of human existence, such as food and water, are within their control (Rizzo, 2015).

It has again been argued that environmental threats because of the Boko Haram insurgency further created a precondition of insecurity in social relations among various communities in the region through migration of people who are forced to flee their community. As suggested by Bakare (2016) and Enobi and Johnson-Rokosu (2016), the incessant attacks carried out by this group, which has also become a threat to social values considered to be highly emotive and sensitive, such as religion, education, and secularism, create negative stereotypes between members of the two dominant religions in the country (Christianity and Islam). It is through these lenses that tackling issues relating to the biosphere in the region will go a long way in addressing the question and challenges posed by threats to the environment and the overall Boko Haram challenge across the region (“Tackle Lake Chad,” 2018).

Boko Haram and the Human Security Sector

Since it unleashed its reign of terror in 2009, the Boko Haram insurgent group has impacted the safety and security of individual citizens, resulting in a high number of casualties in addition to people suffering various degrees of injuries and traumas. The figures and data released by the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (2014), Anderson (2015), Skinner and Begum (2016), and Amnesty International (2018) indicate that the insurgent group took a civilian death toll of about 6,347 in 2014 alone, ranking it as the world’s deadliest organization ahead of the Islamic State (ISIS). Also, in a recent report by the Government of Borno State in Nigeria, which is the state in northeastern Nigeria worst hit by the activities of this group, the Governor revealed that from 2011 to the first few months of 2017, the civilian death toll was about 100,000 (CGNT Africa, 2017). The human insecurity implications of the Boko Haram conflict were recently captured in a report by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) in (2017), which states that the displacement of over 2.4 million people because of the Boko Haram conflict has further raised great concern over the cases and challenges of human

security and food security across the West African sub-region, especially the Lake Chad Basin. This is because, at the humanitarian level, this insurgency rapidly increased the number of refugees and further contributed to the displacement of people across the Lake Chad Basin. Consequently, the Commission needs to cater for over 208,000 Nigerian refugees and over 75,000 refugees across Chad, Cameroun, and Niger with a financial cost implication of over USD 157 million. On the aspect of food security, there has also been great concern given the fact that the report predicted that over 7.2 million people across the Lake Chad Basin are in danger of facing severe food crises. The “Refugee Response Plan” started by the Commission requires over USD 241 million to help deal with the insecurity associated with food crises (UNHCR, 2018; Human Rights Watch, 2019).

Therefore, with this casualty figure recorded, and the growing rise of humanitarian and food insecurity, it is clear that the Boko Haram insurgent group is not only a threat to Nigeria’s security but is also a major threat to the safety of citizens and individuals, given that a lot of families have become displaced, and women and children have become widows and orphans. With all these negative nuances, the citizens of the Lake Chad Basin stand a great risk if this group continues to operate with no countermeasures taken to address them.

Boko Haram: Sub-Regional and Regional Security Impact

As observed by Pham (2012), undoubtedly, the Boko-Haram insurgency has had a sub-regional and regional implication in the geostrategic politics of the continent of Africa. This is because the activities of the insurgents have now created a security dilemma in the discourse and narrative behind the “Global War on Terror.” Within the West African sub-region and Africa, the spotlight has been shown on the region whenever there is discourse related to terrorism, insecurity, and instability (Ibid). Also, the Boko Haram terrorist group has seriously raised the question of the role and perception of Nigeria as a sub-regional and regional hegemon given the fact that the Nigerian state and armed forces have found it increasingly difficult to dispel or contain the activities of this ragtag group. Once that capability is put to test, other countries looking to Nigeria as a safe-haven whenever they face insecurities are now put in a difficult situation (Oluwadare, 2016). Others have observed (Aduloju, Opanike & Adenipekun, 2014; Comolli, 2015; De Coning, Gelot & Karlsrud, 2016; Emmanuel, 2017) that the Boko Haram threat is no longer Nigeria’s problem alone given that their activities have a sub-regional and regional impact on the continent, in the sense that, their activities have further increased the level of transnational crimes within and across the African continent. The region is also known for its porous borders contributing to the massive proliferation of small and light weapons, creating serious conditions of insecurity in the region. Again, some argue that Boko Haram has been able to effectively collaborate with other designated terrorist groups operating within the African continent, such as Al-Qaida in the Maghreb (AQIM), the Mujahedeen and Janjaweed militias in Sudan, and Al-Shabab in Somalia, further creating a grave security challenge for most countries in the region in which a majority of these countries are mostly considered weak and lacking effective state-building apparatus and the capacity to manage such existential threats.

In terms of sub-regional and regional economic implications, the actions and activities of the Boko Haram organization have significantly affected trade and commercial activities between Nigeria, her immediate neighbors, and her other trading partners in Africa (Ibid). As observed further by Thomas (2016), the United States Department of State suggested in its report that the Boko Haram terrorist organization is becoming a constant threat to the interests and investments of the United States and other trading partner states in Africa, affecting its geostrategic interest in the region. Second, the trade protocol of the Lake Chad Basin and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) member states allows the free-flow of commercial activities between member states, but the constant attacks from Boko Haram have grossly affected trade among these trading partners, causing massive economic shock and shortfalls. With all these issues being raised, the problem of insecurity because of the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria has seriously impacted the sub-regional and regional security discourse on the continent. An example of these patterns of sub-regional cooperation by relevant actors to combat the monstrous acts of Boko Haram can be seen in the member states of the Lake Chad Basin establishing the Multinational Joint Taskforce (MNJTF), which is a strategic military alliance of armed forces of LCB member countries and is made up of Chad, Cameroun, Niger, Nigeria, and The Republic of Benin, due to their close proximity to the areas affected by Boko Haram (Maza, Koldas & Aksit, 2021).

Conclusion

This article offered a multi-sectoral analysis of the impact of the Boko Haram insurgency on the various sectors and arenas of security, using the analysis and framework put forward by proponents of the Copenhagen School of Security through the theoretical lens of RSCT. The insights and analysis of the article focused mainly on the impact of the Boko Haram insurgency on the sectors and arenas of security (i.e. the military, political, societal, economic, environmental, sub-regional, and regional sectors). This constitutes a major limitation of the article. However, further research can focus on other theoretical perspectives. The findings of the article suggest that the activities and presence of this group have implications and impacts on the various sectors and arenas of security. Furthermore, despite the various counterterrorism initiatives designed by various stakeholders at the national, sub-regional, and regional levels to combat the activities of this group, Boko Haram continues to expand and solidify its base by carrying out many attacks. Therefore, as part of practical recommendations to counter this group, this article suggests the following:

a. Political actors involved in framing and designing policies towards counterterrorism should show their willingness and commitment in ensuring that the various measures and policies initiated to counter this group are fully implemented.

b. Regarding the military sector, troops that are deployed under the Multinational Joint Taskforce, the G5-Sahel, should exhibit a high sense of professionalism in the discharge of their mandate and should not engage in any activity that will lead to questioning of their legitimacy and professionalism.

c. Regarding the societal threat posed by this group, relevant and critical stakeholders should ensure the implementation of ideational and counter-narratives that

counteract radicalization and other forms of violent extremism in society using religion and various cultural practices of the people.

d. Regarding its impact on the economy, relevant actors and stakeholders should ensure structural challenges such as poverty and unemployment are adequately addressed to deter vulnerable and impressionistic individuals from joining this group.

e. Regarding its threat to the environment, there should be a deliberate policy by key actors in ensuring that issues related to illegal migration, illicit movements of persons and goods, and environmental degradation are also addressed to limit easy cross-border movements of aliens without proper documentation.

f. At the sub-regional and regional levels, relevant actors, such as the AU, ECOWAS, SADC, and EACC, should promote and strengthen their capacity on regional integration, engage in adequate sharing of information and intelligence, and address mutual suspicion, which tends to be a major barrier to sub-regional and regional cooperation amongst various states on the continent.

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