PROPAGANDA ABILITY OF ISIS TERRORIST ORGANIZATION IN THE FRAMEWORK OF INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

ULUSLARASI TERÖRİZM ÇERÇEVESİNDE IŞİD TERÖR ÖRGÜTÜNÜN PROPAGANDA YETENEĞİ

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ABSTRACT

Terrorism has taken on an international character with the impact of globalization and technological developments. In this sense, terrorist organizations that have grown up by taking advantage of the chaos in the Middle East have affected the international system. The most concrete example of this is ISIS. ISIS has been affected by both cyclical developments and regional dynamics. Furthermore, one of the important features that distinguish this terrorist organization from other organizations is that it tries to realize a bureaucratic structure. ISIS has aimed to establish an Islamic State in this way. ISIS has been able to reach similar people from different countries of the world with its action capacity and propaganda ability. The main purpose of this study is to investigate ISIS's propaganda capability and capacity and to determine the success/failure of ISIS in this field through the results obtained. Because of that, the general screening method was used and statistical data in related literature was used. As a result, the propaganda ability of ISIS has proved to be quite successful.

Key Words: Propaganda, Terrorism, ISIS, Media, International Terrorism.

ÖZ

Terörizm, küreselleşmenin ve teknolojide yaşanan gelişmelerin etkisiyle uluslararası bir karaktere bürünmüştür. Orta Doğu'da yaşanan karmaşadan yararlanarak büyüyen terör örgütleri, bu anlamda uluslararası sistemi etkiler hale gelmiştir. Bunun en somut örneği IŞİD'tir. IŞİD hem konjonktürel gelişmeler hem de bölgesel dinamiklerden etkilenenmiştir. Ayrıca bu terör örgütünü diğer örgütlerden ayıran önemli özelliklerden biri bürokratik bir yapılanma gerçekleştirmeye çalışmasıdır. IŞİD, bu şekilde İslam Devleti kurmayı hedeflemiştir. Eylem kapasitesi ve propaganda yeteneği ile IŞİD, dünyanın farklı ülkelerinden benzer görüşe sahip kişilere ulaşabilmiştir. Bu çalışmada temel amaç, IŞİD'in propaganda yeteneği ve kapasitesinin araştırılması ve elde edilen sonuçlar üzerinden IŞİD'in bu alandaki başarısının/başarısızlığının ortaya konulmasıdır. Bu nedenle genel tarama metodu kullanılmış ve ilgili literatürdeki istatistiki veriler kullanılmıştır. Sonuçta, IŞİD'in propaganda yeteneğinin oldukça başarılı olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Propaganda, Terörizm, IŞİD, Medya, Uluslararası Terörizm.

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of terrorism has reached a position that directly affects the international system in the last quarter of the century. Although there are different views on the definition of the concept of terrorism, elements such as violence, ideology, organization, and fear appear as common points. Looking at the historical background of the concept, it can go back up to the Sicarii organization (70s B.C.).

Today, one of the most mentioned terrorist organizations in the international arena is the ISIS terrorist organization. ISIS, which uses the developments in science and technology very professionally and is nurtured from a radical religious ideology, has made a name for itself with its actions in both the Middle East and Western countries. This structure, which promises paradise, carries out all kinds of bloody attacks

by foreign terrorist fighters from many countries of the world who participate in it. The ultimate goal of ISIS is to establish the Caliphate State.

The innovations brought about by globalization and technological developments have led to the emergence of different dimensions of terrorism. In particular, the change in the field of communication has made it easier for terrorist organizations to reach many different geographies of the world. Terrorism, which has gained an international character in this form, has spread to a wide area. In this sense, ISIS has been one of the most striking ones in recent years, among the international terrorist organizations. ISIS provides personnel to the organization with its propaganda activities, especially through social media. The members of this organization called foreign terrorist fighters, participate in the organization with the claim of establishing the Caliphate State and they can take merciless actions to win the promised paradise. In this study, it will be tried to put forward, how ISIS makes propaganda by using written, visual and social media, in the context of the international character of terrorism. Then the results of this propaganda will be evaluated. The hypothesis of the study is that Isis's propaganda ability is very successful in providing companion of organization.

2. GLOBALIZATION AND INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

The concept of globalization involves the formation of a consciousness that defines the world as a single country. At this point, there is a global order in which the borders disappear and the world is considered as a whole. In other words, globalization corresponds to a social process in which the constraints and barriers imposed by the geography on the socio-cultural life have started to diminish and people have noticed this decrease (Marshall, 1999: 449).

Since the beginning of the 21st century, technological and scientific developments have been effective especially in the fields of transportation and communication and have prepared the ground for the disappearance of both political and economic borders between countries. The reflections of an event that occurred in any geography of the world have become visible in many different countries. There has been an environment where accessing information that is anywhere in the world, has taken only minutes. This new situation caused the nation-state structure to be strained, the economies of the country became more dependent on each other, the political polarizations diminished and the political boundaries between the countries became blurred and liberalism rose (Gürel, 2008: 5).

The innovations brought by globalization, especially in the field of international trade, have been evaluated as a revolution. Issues such as making it easier to invest in other countries and reaching new markets and liberalizing the movement of goods have increased the economic activities of the countries with each other. Actually, this commercial situation is an indicator of a social phenomenon. These trade relations between countries have brought societies closer to each other socio-culturally and have moved beyond geographical boundaries. As a result of this relationship, people have become increasingly interdependent (Kalb et al., 2000: 1).

After the industrial revolution, the demographic structures of countries and cities changed due to the developments in this field. Factors such as labor and market requirements of the industry have caused some changes both in quantitative and qualitative terms in the world. Demographic change in cities has also led to population growth, and people have become much more mobile (Yıldız, 2010: 6). This situation facilitated the migration between the countries. For this reason, the phenomenon of globalization has affected nations and nationalism. Now, the birth certificate obtained from the nation-states has lost its importance comparatively, and the importance of the passport as an international identity document has increased (Hobsbawm, 2008: 89).

Globalization is a concept that has influenced the reshaping of the international system and terrorism. Globalization is characterized as a system built on a connected triple balance. The first is the traditional balance between nation-states. The balance between the hegemonic state of the international system, the USA, and other nation-states is in this group. This power system and balance are manifested in the USA's fight against globalizing terrorism and its relations with other states. The second balance is the balance established between nation-states and international markets. The global economy has become so strong that they can be effective even in overthrowing the powers. Therefore, global economic actors should not be ignored while trying to read the developments in the world. The third equilibrium is the balance between the individual and the state. As the liberal economy gradually increased, the individual has become empowered and an effective point within the international system (Friedman, 2000: 35-36).

One of the effects of the phenomenon of globalization on the issue of terrorism is to facilitate to reach the target. In a globalized world, terrorist organizations are more easily able to determine targets. The revolutionary developments in the field of communication, especially the innovations on the Internet, have led terrorist organizations to gather supporters from all over the world and thus have the capacity to take action everywhere (Pillar, 2001: 34). The free movement provided by globalization has made it easier for capital, individuals, and goods to be relocated, as well as for criminal organizations operating at the international level to move more easily (Çomak, 2008: 10).

There is a mutual interaction between globalization and terrorism. It is possible to examine this interaction under the following headings (Çelik and Dağdeviren, 2004: 45):

➢ Globalization aims to limit the activities of the state, especially in the economic field. The weakening of state control in this sense makes it difficult to control the globalized terrorist activities at the borders. Therefore, it would be appropriate to restructure this system.

➢ The possibility of terrorist actions in every country in every time has increased due to globalizing terrorism. This is an important problem for capital. Capital chooses safe and stable environments while investing. In this sense, global terrorism has become a threat to capital.

➢ In the new globalizing order, capital owners have had a significant impact on both markets and nation-states. Similar developments have occurred in terrorism, though not at the same level. The data in the hands of a small terrorist group, especially in virtual environments, can cause significant problems for states.

➢ Among the most important benefits of globalization are innovations in the fields of transportation and communication. Although the developments in international communication and transportation have brought convenience for individuals, it has also provided a very suitable environment for terrorist organizations.

➢ The development of communication systems has enabled the use of computer technologies to provide personnel to terrorist organizations. Besides, terrorist organizations have had the opportunity to communicate more secretly through computer systems.

➢ As a result of globalization, terrorism, which reaches the power of unrestricted threat, spreads the perception that it can take action everywhere and makes the whole world uneasy at this point.

➢ In the globalizing world, the technologies that people use to develop themselves and lead a better life and the tools used by terrorism to achieve their goals are similar. Satellite communication, fiber-optic, internet and computer systems, mobile phones are examples.

After examining the globalization process of terrorism, the propaganda capacity of ISIS will be evaluated by mentioning the relationship between the media and terrorism.

3. TERRORISM-MEDIA RELATIONS

The media have an important position in the fight against terrorism. Terrorist organizations try to use the media because they want to spread the propaganda they produce and to arouse sympathy for their target audience.

There is an informal close relationship between terrorism and the media. There are those who demand the generated results of both. Terrorist acts and terrorist groups primarily aim to attract attention. In this way, they want to establish dialogue with the government. They also want to make their name known through the method of creating fear on the public and to legitimize themselves by entering into legal frameworks in the ongoing process (Pazarbaşı and Koç, 2009: 163).

Terrorist acts are often directly related to society. In this case, it is possible to say that the media is affected by this situation and cannot remain indifferent to it. In fact, one of the main aims of terrorist groups is to spread their actions all over society and even the world, thereby increasing their recognition. It is very important for terrorist organizations to reach wide areas in the world with the news of the terrorist action that is constantly rotating in the media and the increase in the use of the Internet. Of course, the question arises whether the media supports such terrorist organizations. This situation leads to various criticisms.

The terrorist groups, which had previously resorted to methods such as assassination and hostage, started to choose new areas for propaganda activities by not staying away from the developments in communication

technology. They have become much more active, especially on the Internet. Videos, films and printed media have also been used frequently by these organizations (Kazan, 2016: 117). There are four objectives behind the use of the media by terrorist organizations (Wilkinson, 1997: 56):

➢ Ensuring the spread of actions and attacks to the whole society and creating fear,

➢ Mobilizing the society in line with its own interests and trying to impose the legitimacy of its goals at the international level while realizing this,

➢ Interfering with the work of governments and security forces that try to find the perpetrators of these acts, and disseminating the idea that they are against democracy and law,

➢ To increase the number of sympathizers supporting the terrorist organization and to find new supporters, as well as to reach new capital resources in order to increase money resources.

Although the opinion that terrorist organizations use the media is widespread, it can be said that the media also uses terrorist organizations. Terrorist organizations bring more readers and listeners to the media through their actions. On the other hand, the media is also leading the terrorist organizations to come to the agenda more seriously. As such, there is a mutual interest relationship between terrorist organizations and the media (Korkmaz, 1997: 167).

3.1. Propaganda Ability of ISIS

When the ideology of ISIS is examined, it is seen that concepts such as Kharijism and Salafism come to the fore, and the idea of jihad is built in the light of these concepts. When evaluated in the historical process, the origins of ISIS are based on Al Qaeda, which has made a name for itself during and after the Afghanistan war. In time, it left Al Qaeda by taking the name of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria.

ISIS has become one of the most discussed terrorist organizations in recent years. ISIS came to the forefront with its videos prepared with professional shots broadcast on social media and the capacity to act in different geographical areas of the world. ISIS has been considered as a serious threat in the international arena, especially in Western countries, and then, in time, the process leading to the establishment of an international coalition against ISIS has started. The terrorist organization ISIS actively uses the technological developments of today, especially the innovations in the field of communication, and is very effective in this sense (Friedland, 2015).

ISIS provides personnel to the organization from different geographical areas of the world especially, via internet. Members of the organization who actively use social media make suggestions to reach out to people who are potential foreign terrorist fighters. For this reason, "Al-Furkan Foundation Media Production" was established by ISIS at the end of 2006. The duty of this company is to prepare materials such as brochures, CDs and web sites where ISIS propaganda is made. In 2013, the "Al-I'tisaam Media Foundation" was established to promote propaganda, especially on divine and music topics. Finally, in 2014, "Al-Hayat Media Center" was established, in which publications in various languages were prepared especially for the citizens of Western countries (Gertz, 2014).

The first video of ISIS was prepared at Al-Hayat Media Center and released on June 19, 2014. The focus of this video was the calls for jihad towards citizens of Western countries. It can be said that these videos are high quality and shot professionally (Ayhan and Çifçi, 2018: 22). Another propaganda material prepared in Al-Hayat is the online Dabiq journal. The name of this journal, chosen for propaganda purposes, comes from Dabik, the place where the war between the disbelievers and the Muslims is believed to take place near the apocalypse (Ryan, 2014). The first broadcasting date of the journal was July 2014. In the ongoing process, Dabiq in English, Dar Al-Islam in French, Konstantiniyye in Turkish, Al Manba in Russian and Rumiyah journal simultaneously were published in 10 languages by ISIS: English, French, German, Russian, Turkish, Indonesian, Bosnian, Uighur, Kurdish and Pashto. Also, ISIS published the Arabic-language journal called En-Nebe (Salihi and Göksun, 2018: 20-21).

On March 17, 2014, Al-Furkan, another media organization of ISIS, published an approximately one-hour video. This video called "Salil el-Sawarim I" was watched by 56.998 different Youtube accounts in less than 24 hours, was retweeted 32,313 times in 60 hours on Twitter, and 807.000 times in the next 60 days (Prucha, 2014).

The most comprehensive video about the social life of ISIS is the video that mentioned about Median Dairieh, one of Vice News reporters, who lived 3 weeks in ISIS land. The video was 42 minutes long and

was accompanied by the ISIS militant who was responsible for the media. In this video, the daily activities of the members of the ISIS organization were mentioned and their propaganda were made. Another propaganda element that attracts attention in the videos of ISIS is the images of violent executions. These videos, taken by the organization, can reach millions of people in a very short time through social media and video sharing sites (Şenol, Erdem and Erdem, 2016: 196-199). In this way, both the sympathizers of the organizations in different geographies are reached, and they spread the sense of fear on the Western world which they declare as enemies (Luizard, 2016: 107). In addition to these videos, they make propaganda with computer games such as Call of Jihad (Wilson, 2017: 2). At this point, the aim is to influence young people in line with their ideology. The ISIS terrorist organization continues its propaganda activities in a wide range.

4. CONCLUSION

The developments in the 21st century have caused many changes in every field. The issue of terrorism has taken its share from this change. With the phenomenon of globalization, the borders between the countries disappeared and the revolutionary progress in communication technologies caused a change in the state's perceptions of security. Terrorist organizations, in particular, have been able to engage in propaganda activities aimed at different geographical areas through the developing Internet, and have started to spread the element of fear, one of the means of terrorism. In addition, terrorist organizations have created an enormous pool of human resources through the use of social media.

It can be said that ISIS is quite successful in finding new personnel to fight in its ranks. The fact that participation from many different geographies of the world is taking place can be an indication of this. ISIS makes good use of developing technology and communication systems. In some periods, executed videos are served to the whole world via the Internet, which scares the unbelievers and also reassures their sympathizers in many parts of the world. It is seen that the ISIS terrorist organization, which uses propaganda techniques in this sense, is also very active in social media. Thanks to social networks, communication is established with many different geographical areas and potential individuals in these areas who are warmly welcomed to the ideology of the organization. Thus, the participation of new people in the organization is provided. Considering the presence of foreign terrorist fighters from more than 80 countries in the conflict zones, it is clear how successful ISIS propaganda is.

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