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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# LANGUAGE AND IDEOLOGY IN NEWSPAPER REPRESENTATION OF BOKO HARAM AND NIGER DELTA MILITANTS IN NIGERIAN

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### ABSTRACT

In news reports there are common filaments of in cultural and political ideologies, based on the premise that linguistic choices in texts can carry ideological meaning. In such situations, ideologies are closely linked to power and domination, and they are located in language. News is a representation of the world in a language that is considered to be neutral and media/led. Everything that is said or written is articulated from a particular ideological position. Differences in expression carry ideological distinctions and thus differences in representation. Newspapers have a responsibility to inform and enable people to make judgments about topical issues, this can however be achieved through a press free of vested interests from higher powers. The press is more than a business; it has a duty to the public as a major source of information on the main issues of the day. The wishes of the readers also need to be taken in to account. Exaggerated and highly coloured presentations of facts can have a powerful influence over readers. For most people, reading the daily newspaper whether in print or online constitutes their most substantial and significant consumption of printed discourse. This provides newspaper discourse with major ideological importance. In this paper, we examine the ideologies that underlie the depiction of the Boko Haram sect and Niger Delta Militants in Nigeria as found in newspaper reports. Data were generated from three Nigerian newspapers: Guardian, This Day and Daily Trust.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Niger Delta Militants, henceforth (NDM) had been at the forefront of challenging the various governments in Nigeria especially the military regimes. The height of the challenge was the granting of amnesty by the late Umar Musa Yar'adua's administration. Despite that palliative measure, there are still cases of militants' attacks in the Niger Delta region of the country. With the advent of the Boko Haram, (henceforth BH) there have been more violence in the country and series of attacks and destruction of government and private properties constantly on the increase. A lot of academic research have been carried out in this area to unravel the language of media responses to the crises (see Chilwa 2011, 2014, 2015 and Ebim's works 2017, 2019, 2021a, 2021b). The activities of these two groups are daily and widely reported in the print, and electronics media. From the point of view of language and ideology, this study sets out to analyze those data/newspaper reports to unravel the filaments of ideological projections in the elicited news reports.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Language is a medium of ideological forces which serves to legitimize relations of organized power. The legitimizing of power relations are not articulated, language is ideological, hence a language ideology can be a 'correct' conceptualization of language or it can dissent from the facts, and be a fallacious interpretation of language. Ideologies form the *basis* of the belief systems or social representations of specific groups (Van Dijk, 2001). The most prominent figure in the area of Ideology and resistance is Stuart Hall of the Birmingham school of linguistics. He observes that culture related studies such as ours in this research approach:

is opposed to the base-superstructure way of formulating the relationship between ideal and material forces, especially where the base is defined by determination by the economic in any simple sense...it defines culture as both the means and values which arise amongst distinctive social groups and classes, on the basis of their given historical conditions and relationship through which they

handle and respond to the conditions of existence (Hall1980:267).

He however observes that the critical approach is responsible for an important shift from the question of ideology embedded in media texts to the question of how this ideology might be 'read' by its audience. Hall (1974/1980) proposed a model of encoding-decoding media discourse, which represented the media text as located between its producers who frame meaning in a certain way, and its audience, who 'decode' the meaning according to their rather different social situations and frames of interpretation; van Dijk observes that ideology:

is often used in the media and the social sciences, but it is notoriously vague. Its everyday usage is largely negative, and typically refers to the rigid, misguided or partisan ideas of others: we have the truth, and they have ideologies (1995:56).

Generally, ideologies play a role in the legitimization of power abuse by dominant groups. One of the most efficient forms of ideological dominance is when also the dominated groups accept dominant ideologies as 'natural' or 'common sense'. Gramsci called such forms of ideological dominance 'hegemony' (Gramsci, 1971). Bourdieu sees ideology as a form of symbolic power or symbolic violence which main interest lies in the social conditions of discursive and symbolic power, such as the authority and legitimacy of those who produce discourse (Bourdieu & Eagleton, 1994) thus resulting in ideologies often having a polarized structure which reflects, competes or conflicts group membership and categorization in in-groups and out-groups. These underlying structures also appear in more specific attitudes – for instance the media reports on violence and insurgency which results in the biased personal mental models of group members. These mental models control the 'contents' of discourse, and if they are polarized, it is likely that discourse will also show various types of polarization. Van Dijk observes that ideological discourse often features the following overall strategies of what might be called the 'ideological square':

Emphasize Our good things  
Emphasize Their bad things  
De-emphasize Our bad things  
De-emphasize Their good things.

These overall strategies may be applied to all levels of action, meaning and form of text and talk. Thus, political speeches, interviews, programmes, news reports or propaganda typically focus on the preferred topics of 'our' group or party, on what we have done well, and associates opponents with negative topics, such as war, violence, drugs, lack of freedom, etc. For instance, an ugly incident involving an enemy– like a terrorist attack-- will thus appear on the front page, in a big article with big negative headlines. In other words, there are systematic means to examine discourse at various levels when looking for ways ideologies are (not) expressed or enacted in such discourse: Whenever a meaning is associated with good things it tends to be associated with the in-group and all structural properties of the discourse may be brought to bear to emphasize such meanings. And the opposite will be the case for the "Others", opponents or Enemies. Based on our explanation so far, some of our extracts that are based on insurgency are used here to demonstrate how ideologies have

been hidden in the texts in relation to "them" and "us". The main point of the analysis is to show how various ideologies, are expressed in various kinds of structures. We do this by following in the tradition of van Dijk's approach to ideological discourse analysis.

## NEWS REPORTS AND IDEOLOGY

News is very important in daily life, and most of the knowledge of political developments worldwide originates in the newspapers' daily reports. Nevertheless, journalism is probably the domain most often accused of manipulating language. Obscuring the facts with linguistic and stylistic techniques is one of the methods that can be used for not telling the whole truth, for manipulating or presenting false information. In doing this, different choices are used to evoke different reactions from the reader. Style is the textual result of choices between different ways of saying more or less the same thing by using different words or different syntactic devices or structures. The study of news reports in the press is one of the major tasks of discourse-analytical media research. Linguists analyze how language can indicate underlying ideologies. Articles in newspapers can be interpreted and reshaped in different ways: "They can be summed up, simplified, polarized, intensified and personified. A transformation of the original account of the event in question is presented to the reader in such a way that it may affect his/her view of the world" (Nordlund, 2003:8).

## IDEOLOGICAL PROJECTION IN THE TEXTS

**Ideology of relieving burden:** It has been proven that argumentation against societal challenges is often based on various standard urgings, which represent premises that are taken for granted, as self-evident and as sufficient reasons to accept the conclusion. The data below presents a typical example:

The threat by the violent Islamic group, Boko Haram to bring down the administration of President Goodluck Jonathan in three months has drawn the flak of stakeholders in the Niger Delta region warning of grave consequences should any harm befall him. Reacting to the violent Islamic Boko Haram threat on the President, Spokesman of the defunct Niger Delta Liberation Force (NDLF), a former militant group in the creek of delta, Capt. Mark Anthony warned Boko Haram to mind its utterances in the interest of peace. TEXT A1

The implication of the above data is that differences between discourse types are ideologically significant. A speaker expresses evaluations through drawing on classification schemes, which are in part systems of evaluation, and there are ideologically contrastive schemes embodying different values in different discourse types (Fairclough, 1989:119). This is a situation that "establishes the degree of authority of an utterance" (Kress & Hodge 1979:122). It refers to different ways of expressing attitudes. By adopting this style, the newspaper could be allowed to present opinions and speculations that might be interpreted as actual facts by the readers through the use of utterances that carry a range of meanings as shown above.

**Ideology of Categorization:** Often time people tend to categorize members of their outgroup in a particular way. Examples are:

“We think the Boko Haram is gradually coming out behind the curtain to avail Nigerians of the real motive of the group after all.” The ex-Niger delta chief described as an affront on the sensibilities of ex militants in the Niger Delta who have had over 10 years of violent confrontations with the Nigerian Army under the Joint Task Force warning that any attempt to harm the President would spell doom for the nation. “The attention of the leadership of Niger Delta Liberation Force (NDLF) has been drawn to the ranting of Islamist militants Boko Haram leadership utterances of planning to bring President Goodluck Jonathan’s democratically elected government to an end in three months. EXTRACT G2

“It has been observed of recent that a religious cleric has been distributing inciting statements, leaflets and Compact Disc loaded with information to confuse, misdirect and cause disaffection among you. It is also targeted at breaking the esprit-de-corps which binds us together as a fighting force,” he said. He said the allegations that the Armed Forces are opposed to Federal Government’s plan for amnesty for members of the Boko Haram sect are false. TEXT A3

This aspect of ideological projections tends to expose the “sponsors” of the militant Boko Haram sect who are subtly seen to be coming out behind the curtains. Again the “religious clerics” are categorized as those who “belong” to the sect members as they are distributing materials for corporal mortification.

**Ideology of Comparison:** Different from rhetorical similes, comparisons as intended here typically occur in talk about major actors in insurgency for instance when speakers compare in-groups and out-groups. In news reports, out-groups are compared negatively, and in-groups positively.

Whatever anyone may think is the difference between Boko Haram and MEND as a beneficiary of amnesty, the fact is that the militants did not come out from the creeks where they operated from until it was clear that late president, Umaru Yar’adua, was sincere in his commitment to bring an end to the problems of Niger Delta. TEXT A4

Sixteen soldiers and 150 suspected insurgents have been killed during a military operation targeting a Boko Haram camp in Borno State, the Army headquarters said in Abuja yesterday. Nine other soldiers are still missing following the clash at Kafiya Forest, Army spokesman Brigadier General Attahiru Ibrahim told Daily Trust. TEXT A6

Here the difference between the Niger Delta militants and their modus operandi is clearly spelt out. How the former came out of hiding is quite different from the way the latter is operating. In the next extract the Nigerian soldiers are clearly identified while the insurgents are “suspected” thus raising the question: if they are “suspected” why were they killed?

**Ideology of Counterfactuals:** This applies to the expression that: what would happen, if...” the typical expression of a

counterfactual, is often used as a persuasive argumentative move that is also related to the move of asking for empathy:

“...even IF it is the Nigeria Police that apprehended any person suspected to have committed such offence, it is the duty of the police to hand over such suspect to the NSCDC for prosecution.” TEXT A7

An ex-militant in the Niger Delta region, Mr Kennedy West, has warned of a heavy arms build-up in the region, stressing that the area might witness another orgy of violence IF immediate steps were not taken. He called on the federal government to urgently embark on another round of disarmament programme in the region to avoid a return to the pre-amnesty era. TEXT A2

The first excerpt is the decision to substantiate the initial position that the police have no legal right to prosecute vandals and the second excerpt is on the suspicion that there were arms build-up in the Niger Delta region and the repercussions of such actions if government does not intervene.

**Ideology of Disclaimers:** A well-known combination of the ideologically based strategy of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation, are the many types of disclaimers. Disclaimers briefly save face by mentioning “Our” positive characteristics, but then focus rather exclusively, on “Their” negative attributes. Hence our qualification of the positive part of the disclaimer as 'Apparent', as in Apparent Denials, Concessions, Empathy, etc.

Traditional rulers or Emirs are not qualified to regulate religious preaching because it will create more problems than solutions. How can a Muslim Emir or Christian traditional ruler regulate preaching in Christianity or Islam as the case may be? The Boko Haram sect went about wielding dangerous weapons and abducting Christians to the enclave of their leader, Mohammed Yusuf in the name of implementing Sharia in Nigeria. They were forcefully converted to Islam after they were tortured. Three pastors and eight other Christians who resisted the forceful conversion were beheaded on the order of the leader of the Islamic sect. while 20 churches were burnt to ashes by the fundamentalists. The Christian Association of Nigeria in the 19 Northern States is holding the Federal Government and the five state governments where violence erupted responsible for the mayhem, especially the Borno state government. TEXT A5.

Again, this excerpt serves as a disclaimer to the superimposition of the decision of the northern politicians to believe that traditional rulers have the right to regulate the preaching of Imams, Pastors and other religious leaders in the country.

**Ideology of Evidentiality:** This refers to claims or points of view in argument that are more plausible when speakers present some evidence or proof for their knowledge or opinions. This may happen by references to AUTHORITY figures or institutions or by various forms of Evidentiality: How or where did they get the information. Thus, people may have read something in the paper, heard it from reliable spokespersons, or have seen something with their own eyes. When sources are actually being quoted, evidentiality is linked to Intertextuality. Examples:

IT used to be a story heard from distant lands like Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Middle-East, United States and Europe, among others. Now, suicide bombing is here with us in Nigeria and panic-stricken citizenry, who are yet to recover from recent waves of bomb explosions, are not happy about it. Thus, on the lips of eminent Nigerians and groups were outright condemnations for yesterday's suicide bombing of the Police Headquarters, Abuja, which claimed two lives and destroyed 73 vehicles. TEXT A8.

Documents Link Boko Haram to Bin Laden: There was some form of regular communication between Osama bin Laden and the Boko Haram sect, documents recovered from the Pakistan house of the slain al-Qaeda leader have revealed. This effectively confirms the suspected external link to the Nigerian fundamentalist group, which again struck at the Bayero University Kano yesterday, killing two professors and 15 others at two church services. The Boko Haram militants also struck last night at a church in Jere, near Maiduguri, Borno State, killing three persons. According to a report in the Guardian of London, bin Laden appeared to have been in direct or indirect communication with Boko Haram as well as many other militant outfits. TEXT A10.

FG LOST 4TRN TO MILITANTS: During the heat of the Niger Delta militancy, the Federal Government lost as much as N4 trillion, former minister of Niger Delta. Hundreds of mourners at the cemetery including relations, ministers and top military officers could not hold back their tears at the funeral. Fourteen soldiers including two majors were killed by insurgents in North East region following the declaration of state of emergency there while one soldier was killed while serving under the United Nations Mission in Dafur (UNAMID). TEXT A11.

The leadership of the Christian Association, (CAN) has accused the Federal Government and Governor Modu Sheriff of Borno state of complicity in the Boko Haram crisis. Addressing a press conference in Abuja yesterday, National Secretary of CAN, Elder Samuel Salifu, stated that the urgent manner in which the Boko Haram sect leader, Mohammed Yusuf was killed in custody was only an indication that the Federal Government did not want him to expose his sponsors and backers. TEXT A14

The first two excerpts in this segment are based on the principle of "intertextuality" where the activities of the Boko Haram sect are likened to those of other terrorist organizations while the last three are based on the reactions of the people to the activities of the Boko Haram in relation to the killings they have perpetrated and the aftermath of their actions.

**Ideology of Exemplification/Illustration:** A powerful move in argumentation is to give concrete examples, often in the form of a vignette or short story, illustrating or making more plausible a general point defended by the speaker. Concrete stories are usually better memorized than abstract arguments, and have more emotional impact, so they are argumentatively more persuasive.

Your amnesty committee is still on the road, somehow immune from attack. What Naija citizens trying to survive a messed-up nation and a mismanaged economy want is to

continue to live like zombies, to pray in their mosques and churches without fear and to live till the next day. They can't stop the grand looting, or prevent the amnesty committee members from cashing their fat allowances. Is there a roadmap to subsistence? TEXT A17

IN a brazen attack that lasted over three hours, conducted outside the boundaries of the Niger Delta, suspected militants yesterday, blew up the receptor pipelines inside the Atlas Cove jetty, effectively crippling the capacity of the facility to receive petroleum products. EXTRACT A9

In the first excerpt the amnesty committee members are accused of foot-dragging while in the second one the same group is accused of looting the nation's treasury with impunity and in the last excerpt the Niger Delta militants are seen as people who operate with impunity without being challenged.

**Ideology of National Self-Glorification:** Positive self-presentation may be implemented by various forms of national self-glorification: Positive references to or praise for the own country, its principles, history and traditions.

Today, Odi is growing fast with well-planned streets and a Federal Government College. For a first-time visitor, this may not be the picture of the community that has endured in the media. TEXT A12

President Goodluck Jonathan says the activities of the Boko Haram sect and its tactics of terror took the nation by surprise. Jonathan was speaking at the State House in Abuja late Tuesday night during the breaking of Ramadan fast with Muslim members of the diplomatic community. The president regretted that attacks by the sect had resulted in the death of innocent Nigerians including security operatives. TEXT A13

Leader of the Islamist fanatics, Boko Haram, the radical anti-western education sect has been captured. Mohammed Yusuf had fled Maiduguri during the recent fighting between his followers and the Nigerian military. According to reports, troops stormed the sect's stronghold overnight, killing many of the sect members and forcing others including the sect leader to flee. But he was reported to have been found hiding in a goat pen at his parents-in-law's house today. Before Yusuf's arrest, members of his sect were killed in a gun duel with security forces in Yobe state. TEXT A15.

Boko Haram leader handed alive to police, Army insists: The Nigerian army insisted yesterday that it handed over Islamist sect leader, Mohammed Yusuf, alive to the police last week before he was killed under controversial circumstances. Colonel Ben Ahonotu, commander of the operation that led to Yusuf's capture in the north-eastern city of Maiduguri last Thursday, said the sect leader was interrogated by a senior military officer before the handover. TEXT A16

The growth of Odi with well-planned streets as compared to the deserted village left by the Obasanjo administration is a thing of pride to the Goodluck administration. The position that "Boko Haram" took federal government by surprise is a way of saying the federal security has the military might to confront any challenge.

The proclamation of the arrest of the Boko Haram leader Mohammad Yusuf and his successful hand over to the police is a way of self-glorifying the security agency.

**Ideology of Negative Other-Presentation:** The categorization of people in in-groups and out-groups, and the division between 'good' and 'bad', is not value-free, but imbued with ideologically based applications of norms and values.

“A dividing line must always be drawn between genuine protest and outright criminality. Groups and individuals cannot hide under the guise of defending narrow community interest to commit mayhem and expect the government to fold its arms...all those who break the laws of the land will definitely incur the full wrath of the law” .... “The fact that we have to run a constitutional and democratic government does not diminish the capacity of the government to deal decisively with hoodlums, arsonists and terrorists wherever they are found in the country”, (National Concord, Lagos, Nov. 10, 1999, p. 2.).

Boko Haram does not in any way mean 'Western Education is a sin' as the infidel media continue to portray us. Boko Haram actually means 'Western Civilisation' is forbidden. The difference is that while the first gives the impression that we are opposed to formal education coming from the West...which is not true, the second affirms our belief in the supremacy of Islamic culture (not Education), for culture is broader, it includes education but not determined by Western Education.

I personally arrested Yusuf and handed him over to the police after a short questioning the same day, only to be told that he died in a shootout, Ahonotu told AFP. A senior military officer conducted the interrogation of Mohammed Yusuf. TEXT A18

The government is not ready for the short-term solution rather looking for a long term by opening Almajiri School. That is crazy. Yes. Tell me one person that is not an Almagiri in Nigeria. Today the constitution has made the Federal government stronger and the states weaker. Anything you want to do; you have to go to Abuja and lobby for it. In fact, if you want to be your local government chairman, you have to lobby for it in Abuja, no matter your credibility or acceptability. So, who is not an Almajiri? The problem in the northern part of the country requires a total overhaul and you can't do it all at once, there are short measures to take rather than creating Almajiri School. We are thinking of how government can integrate the people into the society. The concept of the Almajiri is that they are children of poor people, beggars and less privileged of the society. TEXT A20

The former vice president Atiku Abubakar clearly states the position of the federal government in dealing with the Odi community by stating that: A dividing line must always be drawn between genuine protest and outright criminality. Groups and individuals cannot hide under the guise of defending narrow community interest to commit mayhem and expect the government to fold its arms...all those who break the laws of the land will definitely incur the full wrath of the law” .... “The fact that we have to run a constitutional and democratic government thus drawing a line between “Them” and “Us”.

In the next extract the Boko Haram debunks the linguistic label of being seen as a people opposed to westernization and civilization.

**Ideology of Polarization, “Us” “Them”:** Few semantic strategies about “Others” are as prevalent as the expression of polarized cognitions, and the categorical division of people in in-group (US) and out-group (THEM). This suggests that crises reportage is strongly monitored by underlying social representations (attitudes, ideologies) of groups, rather than by models of unique events and individual people (unless these are used as illustrations to argue a general point). Polarization may also apply to 'good' and 'bad' sub-categories of out-groups, as is the case for friends and allies on the one hand, and enemies on the other. Note that polarization may be rhetorically enhanced when expressed as a clear contrast, that is, by attributing properties of US and THEM that are semantically each other's opposites.

The sect frowns at Medias' description of it as the Boko Haram. Instead, it prefers to be addressed as the Jama'atu Ahlissunnahlidda'awatiwal Jihad, meaning a "People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad, (89). Boko Haram's Shekau Likely Dead JTF Says: Military authorities in Borno State yesterday said Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau might have died from gunshot injuries sustained on June 30. The Joint Task Force said in a statement in Maiduguri that “Shekau might have died between 25 July to 3 August” at Amitchide in Cameroon while nursing fatal wounds inflicted on him when troops attacked the Sambisa Forest. The JTF revelation came just a week after a video posted on the internet showed a man claiming to be Shekau speaking on various events that happened days after the dates of his supposed death. TEXT A19

A Muslims' organization Munazzamatu Fityanil Islam has expressed concern over the inability of the Presidential Committee on Dialogue and Amnesty to visit the affected Muslims and mosques during its official tour to the affected people and places by insurgency. TEXT A21 that the ward and village heads, politicians, police and the army, had fell victims of its serial killings, and that they have their list of targets which they will execute chronologically, “because they erred by associating themselves with the government in its effort to arrest Muslim brothers and sabotage Islam.” TEXT A22.

The sect members surprisingly refused the offer. Recently, they transformed into Jama'atu Ahliss-Sunnah Lidda'awati Wal Jihad, and resolved to target security operatives and some civilians for the on-going serial killings in Borno State following their “active support and protection” for the Nigerian system of government which they said contradicted Islamic principles. TEXT A23

The Joint Task Force (JTF) on the Niger Delta has debunked the report that militant leader, Government Ekpemupolo, alias Tompolo, who was declared wanted by the security outfit on May 21, had escaped to Ukraine, declaring that he would soon be smoked out of his hideout. Also, leader of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger-Delta (MEND), General Boyloaf, who indicated, weekend, his intention to accept the proposed amnesty for militants by the Federal Government, yesterday reassured

oil companies in the region and asked them to ignore the 72-hour ultimatum given by the militant group to vacate the region, saying there was no cause to panic. TEXT A24

Gunmen suspected to be insurgents launched a predawn attack on an agriculture college in Yobe State yesterday, killing at least 50 students and injuring five others. The students were woken up from sleep in their dormitory and shot dead. A26.

There is outright rejection of a linguistic label by the Boko Haram sect with preference for a particular name. The other name is an imposition by "them" while the acceptable one is used by "us". In the next excerpt, the JTF clearly reports the death of the leader of "their" group. The next excerpt shows the president being accused of selecting who to visit in the face of the Boko Haram insurgency thus preferring "us" to "them". The next excerpt shows the use of certain linguistic labels to describe some enemies such as: the ward and village heads, politicians, police and the army, as those they will execute. Their resolve is to target "the enemies" who do not belong to them. The excerpt on the Niger Delta militants fails to prove that the militant leader had escaped to Ukraine but they insist on ensuring that he is killed in the process. In the course of the imbroglio, another militant leader "BOYLOAF" accepts amnesty thus leaving Tompolo to be the "bad" one. In the last excerpt, "gunmen" were seen as "suspects" keeping them in a position of innocence.

**Ideology of Positive Self-Presentation:** Whether or not in combination with the derogation of out-groups, group-talk is often characterized by another overall strategy, namely that of in-group favouritism or positive self-presentation which may take a more individual form of face-keeping or impression management, as we know them from familiar disclaimers ("I am not a terrorist, but..."), or a more collective form in which the speaker emphasizes the positive characteristics of the own group, such as the own party, or the own country.

Ijaw Youths blame attack on Tompolo: The Ijaw Youth Campaign for Peace has said that it is saddened by Sunday's attack on Atlas Cove Terminal in Lagos and the continuous destruction of oil pipelines in the Niger Delta by the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta. In an online statement to Vanguard in Port Harcourt, yesterday signed by its spokesman, Pere Prince, the group called on all Ijaws at home and abroad to reject the actions of MEND for its wanton destruction of the country's economic property in the land. TEXT A28

We wish to categorically state that yesterday's attack on Atlas Cove Terminal in Lagos and the previous attacks on oil installations which MEND claimed responsibility is condemnable. We also urge all Ijaws at home and in the Diaspora to join in condemning this barbaric act on the economy of our nation. This is an act of economic sabotage which will not solve the present crises rather it would bring a setback. TEXT A29

Authorities have set up night checkpoints and are searching vehicles in a bid to keep weapons from entering the city of Maiduguri — the centre of the uprising. A dozen police vans escorted by a siren-blaring armoured car have been regularly rumbling through the city streets, but the show of force was halted recently because it rattled residents, a police officer

said. This is part of the security strategy because these troublemakers may want to use the cover of night to bring in arms, said a police sergeant at a checkpoint on Friday night, where about a dozen cars waited. Last year uprising began on July 26 and spread to four states, though it was centred in Maiduguri TEXT A25.

In order to positively represent the image of the good ones, the Ijaw youths who were once militants came out to condemn the attack on Atlas Cove in Lagos and blame the leader of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta, (MEND) Henry Orkah. They did this by condemning the attack thus apportioning blames. In the same vein, the JTF sets up check points in Maiduguri to ensure that "they" Boko Haram do not enter the city to celebrate their one-year anniversary of launching a ferocious attack in Nigeria.

**Ideology of Political Strategy:** One of the dominant overall strategies of the war against the Boko Haram and the Niger Delta militants is that of populism. There are several variants and component move of that strategy. The basic strategy is to claim (for instance against the militants) that "the people" (or "everybody") does not support their actions.

"I deliberately kept quiet all this while, laughing at Nigerian authorities who misled the world that I am dead. I wish they would stop bothering themselves because I cannot be stopped," he said. In the video, Shekau is seen dressed in military fatigue, sitting on a rug and surrounded by lieutenants who wielded sophisticated guns. He spoke in Arabic, Hausa, English as well as his native Kanuri language. Shekau taunted President Goodluck Jonathan and his counterparts, U.S.'s Barack Obama and France's Francois Hollande, saying they would be sad to hear he is still alive. "The claim that I was injured in Sambisa and taken to Amichide in Cameroon for treatment is not true. By Allah, I was never in Cameroon. Only Allah knows my whereabouts because I only give orders and I will never tell anyone where I am," he said. TEXT A27.

Boko Haram resurrects, declares total Jihad: The Islamic sect Boko Haram has declared total Jihad in Nigeria, threatening to islamise the entire nation by force of war. In a statement dated August 9, 2009 and made available to Vanguard, the sect whose activities led to the loss of hundreds of lives in northern Nigeria recently declared that their leader Yusuf, who was killed in controversial circumstances during the crisis, lives forever. In what looked like a declaration of war on the rest of the nation, the Boko Haram sect said it will unleash terror in Southern Nigeria this August, beginning with the bombing of Lagos, Ibadan, and Enugu to make good its words. TEXT A30

"At first we thought they were security personnel on surveillance," a survivor told Daily Trust, adding that the gunmen were in military fatigue. State Police Commissioner Sanusi Rufa'i confirmed that 40 corpses were recovered, and the medical director of the Sani Abacha Hospital in Damaturu, Dr Garba Fika, also said 40 bodies were deposited at the morgue. Five other students who sustained bullet wounds were admitted and those with fractures would be referred to the Nguru hospital, Fika said. But provost of the college Murima Maimato Gaidam, speaking to Associated Press news agency, said the number

of dead could be as high as 50, adding that security forces were still recovering the bodies and that about 1,000 students had fled the campus. TEXT. A31

Although the federal government makes the Boko Haram sect look rejected by the masses and rejoices at the alleged death of the major actor, the assumed dead leader says he “deliberately kept quiet all this while, laughing at Nigerian authorities who misled the world that he was allegedly dead but he wishes they would stop bothering themselves because he cannot be stopped,” thus nullifying the government’s argument. In the next excerpt the Boko Haram did not only resurrect, it declares war “jihad” on the people of Nigeria to proof its illusiveness. And lastly the initial propagandist approach to the Boko Haram militancy was assumed to be a work for God” only to be revealed to be a devilish assignment thus substantiating its populist approach to prosecuting its agenda.

**Ideology of Discrimination/Marginalization:** Crises reportage is dominated by the binary US-THEM pair of in-groups and out-groups. Thus, in order to emphasize the ‘bad’ nature of the major actors in the crises, reports may be exaggerated.

...the committee had only visited victims of the Sabon-Gari bomb blast and the affected Churches in Kano, Madalla, Abuja and Kaduna state. It said: “but the committee did not visit Muslim victims in Kano, Borno, Yobe, Adamawa, Kaduna, Bauchi and Gombe states among other places affected by the insurgency. And there was also no media report indicating the committee’s visit to any mosque destroyed in those areas. The statement further noted that even in Kano state, where the committee visited about 10 victims of Sabon Gari bomb blast, it neither paid similar visit to the families of over 200 Muslims that were killed during the first bombing, nor to the Emir of Kano, Alhaji Ado Bayero, who was also attacked by unknown gunmen. TEXT A34.

In this area of ideological representation, the federal government is accused of only visiting the Christian victims of the Boko Haram insurgency while the Muslim victims of the same fate were allegedly left without any form of consolation from the federal government. This is a clear case of victimization which follows the principles of ideological believe of painting the federal government in bad light as a government that favours only Christians.

**Ideology of Exclusion/Selective Favour:** The study observes that the same ideological basis of the news media representation of insurgency holds true to the representation of the major actors—a representation based on the ideology of exclusion and “othering”. When it comes to the media’s representation of the insurgents and militants, the media expect to reflect the government’s policy and ideology. It is also observed that the media reflect the tense relations between the government and the insurgents and militants. Instances of such ideological projections occurred in the texts:

**SHEKAU APPEARS IN NEW VIDEO:** We’re studying clip – Army: The leader of the Jama’atu Ahlis Sunnah Lid Da’awati Wal Jihad, also known as Boko Haram, has resurfaced and claimed responsibility for recent attacks that left more than a hundred people dead in Borno State. Abubakar Shekau, who military authorities said in August

might have been killed, released a video yesterday in which he said: “The world should know that by the grace of Allah I am alive and will only die at the appointed time.” The video was sent out through intermediaries who had previously passed on similar messages by the sect leader. “Those underrating my capacity should have a re-think because the war we are waging will consume all of you,” Shekau said in his usual boastful style. TEXT A32

**Niger Delta Militants Besiege National Assembly:** Hundreds of ex-militants from the Niger Delta region Thursday stormed the National Assembly to protest their alleged exclusion from the amnesty programme. TEXT A6

“These boys started this problem in 2011 when we asked them to disarm and accept amnesty. They came to my house then and started fighting me. Luckily for me I got over that incident but they were not happy with some of us because we insisted, they must drop their arms.” EXTRACT A33

The headline in the first excerpt of this segment clearly states that the alleged killing of the sect leader by security operatives is false but the government quickly reacts through the JTF that it is studying the videos of the alleged “resurrection” of the leader of the sect. Shekau is not only said to have resurrected but has claimed responsibility for the “recent” bombing in the northern part of the country that led to the dead of many.

**Ideology of Persuasion:** Apart from other forms of ideological projections discussed in this study, the extracts below demonstrate elements of persuasion on both the government and the major actors in the crises. The ideology id embedded in a form of specific rhetoric and the way in which persuasion is conceived and embodied within the newspaper texts as shown here:

At least twice the Boko Haram was persuaded to dialogue with government and lay down its arms. Each time someone, obviously an insider, leaked the move to a select media before negotiations had even begun in an apparent attempt to scuttle the talks (Daily Trust, October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2012). “...without peace and security of life and property, no meaningful development could take place in the state” TEXT A35

“...the president has since empowered joint military forces to tackle those who were hell-bent in sabotaging the nation’s economy and its environment. According to him, the efforts of the security forces in checking the activities of the saboteurs have started yielding results” TEXT A36.

Here the government is said to have persuaded the insurgents to embrace peace and sue for dialogue a gesture the insurgents rejected insisting on unleashing terror on the people. But there is a statement that says “...without peace and security of life and property, no meaningful development could take place in the state” followed by the president’s empowerment of the JTF to ensure that the flush out anybody who fails to embrace dialogue. This is the carrot and stick approach to resolving issues in a crisis ridden society.

## CONCLUSION

This paper has described the representation of insurgents and Militants in the Nigerian print media by using Ideology as a platform.

The analysis revealed that insurgents are given negative portrayal in the print media. The BH insurgents are depicted as faceless people while the NDM are traceable and do not make any attempt to hide their identity, though they are portrayed as enemies of the society who belong to the out-group while the JTF, the FGN are portrayed as good people who belong to the in-group. The militants and insurgents are seen as specific sets of people who are individualistic and should not be associated with in the larger society. The government and security operatives are painted in a collectivist light and are seen as more humane and accommodating. More so, the government has a voice in the media whereas the insurgents are not given a voice; where the militants are represented, they are painted in very bad light as belonging to the “other” while the government which has a voice dictates the pace and direction in which the discourse goes.

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