

Identity (Mis)Representation and Ideological Struggles in Discourses on Boko Haram in Nigeria

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Abstract : Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad (also called Boko Haram) in the North-East of Nigeria has facilitated ideological binarity in discourses on the crisis. Since its proliferation, media representation of the crisis has facilitated identity contamination and ideological struggle through which other critical issues, such as religious intolerance, ethnic diversity and other forms of class conflict in the Nigerian state, are brought to public notice. Though Boko Haram insurgency is ideological laden, the manifestation of the inherent ideologies requires extensive scholarly attention in order deconstruct the veiled ideologies. Therefore, the thrust of this study is to critically investigate identity (mis)representation as a basis for ideological mapping in discourses on Boko Haram in Nigeria, adopting critical discourse analytical tools supported with insights from systemic functional linguistics and critical discourse analysis. The data for this study consist of articles on Boko Haram in Nigerian newspapers published in English. The data selection is purposive and aimed at responding to challenges that are inherent in Nigeria's multifaithism and multiculturalism, and their effects on the construction of narratives on Boko Haram. The study reveals that identity manipulation is a constructive device for ideological mapping, realised through labeling, agency activation, and transitivity. Identity representation in discourses on Boko Haram depicted four dichotomous binarities using exclusion, generalisation, contrasting and attribution.

Keywords : identity representation, ideology, Boko Haram, newspapers

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