

# Discourse of ‘Self’ and ‘Other’ in Newspaper Editorials on Insecurity in Nigeria

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## Abstract

The spate of security threats in Nigeria has recently become quite alarming, dominating newspaper headlines and editorials. This article examines the discourse strategies deployed in the representation of ‘self’ and ‘other’ by editorials in two Nigerian newspapers on the security challenges in Nigeria. Drawing insights from Van Dijk’s socio-cognitive model of critical discourse analysis, the sampled editorials on insecurity in Nigeria from two e-versions of newspapers from the northern (*Leadership Nigeria*) and southern (*Punch*) parts of Nigeria, published from 2017 to 2020 are subjected to discourse analysis. The paper identified the deployment of eight discourse strategies, motivated by nationalist and humanist ideologies. The newspapers polarise between self and other through positive in-group and negative out-group ideologies on the security challenges bedevilling Nigeria with attendant implications for Africa and the world at large.

## Keywords

Insecurity in Nigeria, human security threat, discourse strategies, ideology, Nigerian newspaper editorials

## Introduction

Since the September 9, 2011, terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre and Pentagon Building in the United States of America, there has been a need for new thinking on security globally and locally. While it may seem that there is relative security in other parts of the world, the African continent has been worse off. The National Security Strategy policy document (2022) records that Nigeria is one of the African countries with diverse threats. Precisely since 2009, with the Boko Haram menace, the number of violent crimes, such as kidnappings, ritual killings, suicide bombings, religious killings, politically motivated killing and violence, ethnic clashes, armed banditry and others have increasingly become the regular signature that characterises Nigeria. The National Security Strategy policy document (2022: 43–44) reports that ‘enhancing Africa’s peace and prosperity will bolster Africa’s ability to solve regional and global problems . . .’ and ‘we will continue

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