

# PHASES OF BOKO HARAM: MANIPULATION OF THE NAME OF GOD AND RELIGION

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The use and misuse of religion in the name of God has become problematic among different adherents of religion in Nigeria. The manipulation of religion by religious leaders and their adherents have turned many to religious fanatics and fundamentalists, culminating in religious conflict and violence. Existing studies have largely focused on the concept and role of religion in Nigerian politics and socio-economy, with less emphasis on the implications of fundamentalism as it relates to Boko Haram. This paper is an empirical attempt to unravel how Boko Haram manipulation of the name of God and religion causes religious violence in Nigeria.

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## INTRODUCTION

The manipulation of religion and the name of God for violent purposes in Africa has been alarming. Many acts of religious terrorism have been executed by religious fundamentalists who have incorporated murder and suicide in the propagation of the Faith, as is equally the case in Nigeria. It should be noted that Nigeria is a religious-pluralistic state. Before and after independence, the name of God has been central to what the Nigerian society wants to do. In fact, the country's national anthem and the Nigerian Army's logo all clearly reflect the presence of religion in the affairs of the country. This shows that Nigeria cannot do without God or religion in its daily activities regardless of specific religious affiliation.

More importantly, religion and ethnicity are noticeable identities in