

RELIGIOUS INVOLVEMENT AND GROUP IDENTIFICATION: THE CASE OF THE IBOS IN THE REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the link between religious involvement and tribal group identification among Ibos in Nigeria. Relying on the multifaceted nature of religious involvement, this study focuses on five dimensions of religious involvement—church attendance, prayer, the importance one places on religion, one's belief in God's love, and religious affiliation. Using the data from the *Panel Study of Nigerian Religion and Ethnicity* (1st wave, 2006), this study employs regression analysis. The results show that, among the five dimensions of religious involvement, only church attendance has a significant effect on racial group identification; Ibos who frequently attend church are more likely to identify with Ibos. This study suggests that church attendance increases Ibos' group identification for two reasons: first, because of the formation of Ibo-oriented churches; and second, because of the intense interaction among Ibos within their church communities.

Keywords: Group identification; Religious involvement; Ibo religion; Ibo politics.