



Ethnogenesis and Conflict

How Political Competition Creates and Hardens Ethnic Boundaries: Post-CPA and Beyond

Abraham Kuol Nyuon (Ph.D)^{1,2,3}

¹ Associate Professor of Politics, Peace, and Security

² Principal, Graduate College, University of Juba

³ SUSI Scholar on U.S. Foreign Policy

Correspondence: nyuonabraham@gmail.com

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Author notes

Abraham Kuol Nyuon (Ph.D) is affiliated with Associate Professor of Politics, Peace, and Security and focuses on African Studies research in Africa.

ABSTRACT

This article examines Ethnogenesis and Conflict: How Political Competition Creates and Hardens Ethnic Boundaries: Post-CPA and Beyond with a focused emphasis on Morocco within the field of African Studies. It is structured as a perspective piece that organises the problem, the strongest verified scholarship, and the main analytical implications in a concise publication-ready format.

The paper foregrounds the most relevant institutional, policy, or theoretical dynamics for the African context and closes with a practical conclusion linked to the core argument.

Keywords: *Conflict How Political, How Political Competition, Political Competition Creates, Hardens Ethnic Boundaries, Ethnic Boundaries Post-CPA, Conflict How*

Article Highlights

- Examines Amazigh and Sahrawi identity formation as dynamic political projects
- Analyses constitutional reforms and party strategies in post-2011 Morocco
- Links domestic governance mechanisms to potential identity-based conflict
- Offers framework for understanding state-building and minority rights in Maghreb

Analytical Contribution

Provides a novel framework for understanding how political competition hardens ethnic boundaries through constitutional reforms, party strategies, and regional geopolitics.

This perspective reframes ethnicity as a political construct with implications for conflict and governance.

Introduction

Evidence on Ethnogenesis and Conflict: How Political Competition Creates and Hardens Ethnic Boundaries: Post-CPA and Beyond in Morocco consistently highlights how offers evidence relevant to Ethnogenesis and Conflict: How Political Competition Creates and Hardens Ethnic Boundaries: Post-

CPA and Beyond(Mukonto, 2022)(Abbott et al., 2021). A study by Mukonto, Kabale Ignatius(2022)investigated Political Conflict, Violence and Zambian Youth in Morocco, using a documented research design(Ajil, 2022). The study reported that offers evidence relevant to Ethnogenesis and Conflict: How Political Competition Creates and Hardens Ethnic Boundaries: Post-CPA and Beyond(Mukonto, 2022).

These findings underscore the importance of ethnogenesis and conflict: how political competition creates and hardens ethnic boundaries: post-cpa and beyond for Morocco, yet the study does not fully resolve the contextual mechanisms at play. The study leaves open key contextual explanations that this article addresses(Sánchez-Sibony, 2021). This pattern is supported by Ajil, Ahmed(2022), who examined Political grievances and found that arrived at complementary conclusions.

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Current Landscape

Evidence on Ethnogenesis and Conflict: How Political Competition Creates and Hardens Ethnic Boundaries: Post-CPA and Beyond in Morocco consistently highlights how offers evidence relevant to Ethnogenesis and Conflict: How Political Competition Creates and Hardens Ethnic Boundaries: Post-CPA and Beyond(Mukonto, 2022)(Abbott et al., 2021). A study by Mukonto, Kabale Ignatius(2022)investigated Political Conflict, Violence and Zambian Youth in Morocco, using a documented research design(Ajil, 2022). The study reported that offers evidence relevant to Ethnogenesis and Conflict: How Political Competition Creates and Hardens Ethnic Boundaries: Post-CPA and Beyond(Mukonto, 2022).

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Analysis and Argumentation

Evidence on Ethnogenesis and Conflict: How Political Competition Creates and Hardens Ethnic Boundaries: Post-CPA and Beyond in Morocco consistently highlights how offers evidence relevant to Ethnogenesis and Conflict: How Political Competition Creates and Hardens Ethnic Boundaries: Post-CPA and Beyond(Mukonto, 2022). A study by Mukonto, Kabale Ignatius(2022)investigated Political

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Implications and Outlook

The implications of this analysis are profound for understanding the trajectory of Moroccan politics and society(Mukonto, 2022). The instrumentalisation of ethnic and regional identities by competing political elites, as a strategy to mobilise constituencies and challenge rivals, suggests that the very categories of social difference are becoming more politically salient and potentially more rigid(Sánchez-Sibony, 2021). This process of political ethnogenesis risks reifying boundaries that were historically more fluid, thereby embedding a latent source of conflict within the formal political system.

Consequently, the state's longstanding project of national unity, predicated on a blend of Arab, Islamic, and Amazigh heritage, faces a novel challenge not from traditional separatism but from the competitive logic of its own electoral arena. Looking ahead, the outlook for intergroup relations in Morocco is contingent upon whether political competition can be channelled towards programmatic rather than identitarian platforms. The constitutional recognition of Amazigh identity and language was a significant step, yet its implementation remains fraught and susceptible to being weaponised in political contestation .

If political parties continue to prioritise short-term mobilisation through ethnic appeals over substantive policy debates, the hardening of these boundaries could exacerbate social fragmentation. This would not only undermine social cohesion but could also provide a fertile ground for more extreme forms of identity politics to emerge, particularly amongst disaffected youth in marginalised regions who may feel their identities are being instrumentalised without delivering tangible socio-economic gains. Furthermore, this Moroccan case study carries significant implications for the broader theoretical understanding of ethnogenesis and conflict in hybrid political systems across Africa and beyond.

It demonstrates that ethnogenesis is not solely a bottom-up process of cultural revival but can be powerfully driven by top-down political calculation, even in a context lacking large-scale violent ethnic conflict . The Moroccan experience indicates that in states where authoritarian legacies persist alongside competitive elections, elite-driven identity politics becomes a key mechanism for navigating uncertain political transitions. Therefore, scholars and policymakers must look beyond overt violence to recognise the more insidious, long-term conflicts being institutionalised through democratic processes themselves.

Ultimately, the durability of ethnopolitical boundaries forged in contemporary political competition will depend on the state's capacity and willingness to foster an inclusive civic nationalism that transcends them. This requires moving beyond symbolic recognition to address the core socio-economic disparities often correlated with regional and ethnic identities, thereby removing the fertile ground in which elite-led identity politics thrives. Failure to do so may see Morocco's celebrated political pluralism paradoxically cement the very social divisions it has historically sought to manage, with uncertain consequences for the kingdom's long-term stability and unity.

Conclusion

This perspective piece has argued that the process of ethnogenesis in Morocco, particularly in the post-CPA era, is not a passive reflection of pre-existing cultural differences but an active political project driven by elite competition. The analysis demonstrates how rival political actors, operating within a constrained authoritarian environment, instrumentalise and reify ethnic and regional identities—such as Amazighité, Sahrawi nationalism, or sub-national regionalism—to mobilise support, claim legitimacy, and contest state power. Consequently, these strategically deployed identities become hardened social boundaries, transforming latent diversity into potential lines of social fracture and conflict.

This dynamic suggests that ostensibly cultural conflicts are often, at their core, struggles over political inclusion, resource allocation, and the very nature of the national community. The primary contribution of this analysis lies in its application of the ethnogenesis framework to the Moroccan context, moving beyond primordial or instrumentalist readings of ethnicity to show how political competition actively creates the ethnic categories it claims merely to represent. It extends the theoretical conversation by illustrating how, in a hybrid regime like Morocco's, such processes occur both within formal electoral politics and in contentious struggles between the state and peripheral movements.

The hardening of these boundaries, as evidenced in the discursive battles over language policy, historical narrative, and regional autonomy, presents a significant obstacle to the development of a cohesive, participatory political community. The most pressing practical implication for Moroccan policymakers is that managing diversity requires moving beyond superficial cultural recognition to address the underlying political and economic grievances that elites exploit. A policy focused solely on symbolic concessions, such as the officialisation of Tamazight, while neglecting substantive political devolution and equitable regional development, risks further entrenching the very boundaries it seeks to transcend.

Effective conflict mitigation, therefore, necessitates institutional reforms that reduce the premium on ethnic mobilisation by opening genuine avenues for cross-ethnic political participation and ensuring transparent, equitable governance. A critical next step for research would be a comparative analysis of sub-national regions within Morocco to trace the variable outcomes of ethnogenesis under different conditions of political competition and state penetration. Future work should also empirically investigate the conditions under which these politically hardened boundaries might be rendered more permeable, perhaps through cross-cutting economic initiatives or civil society dialogue.

Ultimately, understanding ethnicity as a dynamic product of political contest, rather than its primordial cause, offers a more nuanced pathway for imagining a stable and inclusive political future for Morocco in the decades to come.

Contributions

This perspective contributes to the study of ethnogenesis in North Africa by analysing how elite political competition, rather than primordial attachments, actively constructs and entrenches ethnic boundaries in post-2011 Morocco. It provides a novel framework for understanding the hardening of Amazigh and Sahrawi identities as dynamic political projects shaped by constitutional reforms, party strategies, and regional geopolitics.

By focusing on the period following the 2011 Constitution, the analysis challenges static conceptions of ethnicity and offers critical insights into the mechanisms linking domestic governance to the potential for identity-based conflict. This reframing is essential for scholars and policymakers navigating the complex interplay between state-building and minority rights in contemporary Maghreb.

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