# Факторы этнической идентичности как причины современных этнополитических конфликтов

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**АННОТАЦИЯ**

Целью статьи является анализ наиболее важных понятий, связанных с идентичностью (в том числе — этнической), которые являются причинами и факторами, приводящими к этнополитическим конфликтам. Автор стремится дать более глубокое толкование понятию «идентичность», рассматривая ее в контексте общих черт или особенностей, а также отдельно выделяя ее проявления в политическом контексте. Также автор анализирует этническую идентичность и ее составные элементы: религиозные, языковые и культурные связи. Подобный подход позволяет определить те проявления этнической идентичности, которые могут послужить причиной для современных этнополитических конфликтов.
*Ключевые слова:* конфликты; идентичность; раса; этническая идентичность; язык; религия; культура

# Factors of Ethnic Identity as Causes of Modern Ethno-Political Conflicts

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**ABSTRACT**

The paper's aim is to analyze the most important concepts related to identity (including ethnic identity), which are the causes and factors leading to ethno-political conflicts. The author seeks to give a deeper interpretation of the concept of identity, considering it in common features or peculiar properties, as well as separately highlighting its manifestations in a political context. The study analyzes ethnic identity and its constituent elements: religious, linguistic and cultural ties. This kind of approach makes it possible to identify those manifestations of ethnic identity that can serve as a cause for modern ethno-political conflicts.
*Keywords:* conflicts; identity; race; ethnic identity; language; religion; culture

The identity has a close connection with the concept (I/me), the role assigned to the individual in society, and the cultural impact on which the personality is based. According to this concept, it is: the traits, characteristics, relationships, and social roles that make up the person — "who I am?" and it also has a connection to the past (what was true according to my own point of view?) and to the present (what is true for me now?), and to the future (what must be true for me — or — what I ought to become — or — what I should not be in the future?).

The self-concepts related to the concept (I/ me) can be considered as cognitive structures that include judgments and evaluative attitudes according to the individual's view of the world, and focus his goals to promote and protect his basic values [1]. Identity concept expresses a set of characteristics and features that a person possesses, and can be identified through them, and this term it includes many aspects that cannot be controlled, such as skin, color, and the gender of the individual, or even the place in which he was born and raised, beside the aspects that the individual chooses by his own will, such as believes, political affiliations and ideologies. In addition to that, there are some aspects of the personal identity that the individual can show to those around him through

what his/her traditions, practices of customs and beliefs, or through the interaction within the community, in another words; the concept of identity refers to the individual's characteristics, behaviors, and psychological construction that distinguishes him/her from others.

The term identity also includes other concepts associated with it, represented in the values of self-awareness, and everything that is considered being unique to the individual [2]. Identity in its current embodiment has a dual connotation; it refers to social groups and the foundations on which an individual's self-respect and dignity are built, and it can also refer to characteristics or personal traits that cannot be expressed naturally from the perspective of a social group. Also, in some contexts, certain cultural categories can be described as 'identities' even though no one sees them as central to their personal identity. It also ensures recognition and provides basic certainty for all its requirements; individuals and groups feel that recognition is a matter of life and death, and for this reason there are real demands for participation Samuel Huntington describes how each of 'us' realizes its own identity only by establishing 'other than we' as a category of change: then, we do not know ourselves sufficiently except through the existence of another that I know and identify with, and then knowing who I am, "We know who we are only when we know the other, and often only when we know who we are against" [3]. However, identity in its current embodiment reflects and evokes the idea that social groups are linked to the foundations of individual self-esteem, which leads us to a deeper interpretation of identity in generalities, idiosyncrasies and alternatives will be addressed further, besides the political and ethnic identity, and its elements as causes of ethno-political conflicts.

**1. In the context of generalities.** It is the systems that are closely related to the cultural identity in which all its affiliates subscribe to, are a matter and bound between each other as: religious belief, language, affiliation, common destiny… the concept of (I/ME) that reflects the culture of society and all its religious and educational institutions. Judicial and political institutions, especially institutions of socialization, in which the individual transforms from a biological being into a person who carries the culture of his society and adheres to its values and controls.

**2. In the context of idiosyncrasies.** If the external view of society gives us a perception of its general cultural character, and its national identity, then a different view from the inside reveals to us the presence of cultural peculiarities that have a strong relationship with some social groups that are determined by age, gender, profession and geographical area. Hence, if the community members meet in cultural generalities or in some alternatives, they may differ in the peculiarities that appear clearly in large civilized societies, where life is complicated, roles are multiplied, and relationships are varied.

**3. In the context of alternatives**. It is a set of cultural systems or features that do not apply or distinguish all members of society in the same way, but are optional cultural systems and patterns, such as the system of traditional clothes, or marriage traditions and customs for some ethnic groups that may differ despite the unity of ethnic affiliation to this group, or and the choice of place of residence or craft.[1]

Based on the foregoing, cultural identities differ according to the peculiarities of nations and peoples, as we find cultural identities that completely coincide with the homeland and the nation, as for example in Germany. One may bring together a different cultural diaspora in terms of beliefs, languages, and ethnicities, so that the national identity makes up its primary reference. This leads us to realize a basic fact that individuals' upholding to their identity and pride takes place considering interaction with the conditions experienced by its affiliates and the extent to which it has achieved in its quest for justice, freedom and equality, as well as on its ability to enable them to achieve themselves, satisfy their needs, control their behavior and organize their network of relationships. Because it represents the sum of the ideas, beliefs, values and attitudes that each individual has about himself, others, the environment around and a society.

**4. Identity in the political context.** In terms of the national state, or the system of government, the form of the state and the management system control over the state administration apparatus, citizenship and nationality, the constitutional structure in it, or the ideology oriented to the main and sub-political structure; (government and political organizations such as parties and civil society organizations). These characteristics are variable according to the way they are used and employed, and any of them can express identity, but some add independent others to the identity component, which are immaterial, subjective, moral contents that appear in the unity of interests, destiny, common history, moral and material contents represented in the region [4].

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[1] The First International Conference on Identity and Social Domains in the Light of Sociocultural Transformations in Algerian Society, Algeria, 2011.

The literature and academic studies specialized in identity show that the identity of any nation is, in fact, only a historical identity, and history is the one that shapes it, and this means that there is no way to form an identity outside the frameworks of society and history. Provided that its members are identical and fusion in the collective societal existence. Therefore, no individual can be independent outside the general framework of the group, that is, he needs an identity that brings him together with others because he cannot have an identity alone. Nor can any force impose an identity on a group of people, without the free and informed choice of their side. Identity is thus a political and social term that reduces the concepts of dependency, belonging, diagnosis, and loyalties to one community and distinguishing it from another, and exaggeration in this concept leads to a kind of chauvinism, which represents a natural extension of nationalist tendencies, which in turn can lead to radicalism and extremism, and thus to the emergence of internal conflicts between groups that often require the intervention of national governments, which constitute conflicts of an ethnopolitical nature, and in the same context It may develop into a regional or even international if it is internationalized at the media level.

## ETHNIC IDENTITY AS A CAUSE OF ETHNO-POLITICAL CONFLICTS

There is no doubt that the difference between scholars in adopting several scientific and philosophical approaches in order to give a specific definition of ethnicity led to enriching the fields of research on this subject, especially in the field of conflict science. Nevertheless, at the same time it led to the adoption of specific methodological foundations and methods specialized in each field of science concerned with the management and resolution of ethnic, intergroup, political, and even ethno-political conflicts because of its close association with other concepts of identity previously mentioned, and because it contains the elements and causes of both political and ethno-political conflicts. Speaking another way, they are mixed conflicts.

While Norman Yetman argues from an un-subjective approach: "It is a product of sensory and mental" [5]. On the other hand, it is defined within the framework of an objective approach; in the sense that it has objective characteristics related to the human needs of the group in a tribal or ethnic framework, and on the basis of some objective material features such as culture, descent, or national origin, in addition to its connection at other times with the relationships and interactions of social

forces [6]. In the context of this proposition, and for a more comprehensive understanding of the subject, it is necessary to clarify the most important conceptual and definitional differences through which the effects of identity-related aspects can be understood as causes of political, ethnic, and ethno-political conflicts.

**1. As a cause of political conflicts.** Political conflict can be defined as a clash and confrontation between different social and political forces and political subjects in their desire to achieve their goals and interests, primarily related to the struggle for power, its redistribution and change of its political status, with political prospects related to the development of society.[2] According to this definition it becomes clear the absence of the most important identity factors through which conflicts of an ethnic and ethno-political nature can arise, except in the aspects related to pursuing the goals and political interests of a group, considering that they arise from the denial or derogation of some rights related to participation in power or Political decision for reasons related to cultural affiliations, descent, or national origin.

**2. As a cause of ethnic conflicts.** The dominant feature of this type of conflict is the steady spread of conflicts between groups of different affiliations. Where this phenomenon has attracted the attention of many researchers and scholars, as it has become a direct threat, which suggests political, economic and social instability, besides the threat of fueling these conflicts with what may have a regional or even international dimension most times. Thus, ethnic conflict can be as an interaction based on the lack of coexistence between at least two groups that differ in the elements of identity, which can be ethnic, racial or minorities, one of which is harmed, and the other deliberately causes this harm or ignores its existence.

According to this trend, the most important reasons for this type of conflict are a state of non-coexistence between two or more ethnic groups, so that the factors of difference must necessarily be present in the "objective and non-objective" elements of identity [7].

## ELEMENTS OF IDENTITY AS A SOURCE OF ETHNO-POLITICAL CONFLICTS

The concept of identity depends on a number of links, each of which may represent a specific nationalism[3]

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[2] Капицына В.М., Мокшина В.К., Новогородцева С.Г. Политология. Учебное пособие. М.: Издательско-торговая корпорация «Дашков и К*»; 2022.

[3] In this context, the meaning of nationalism is meant by the Arabic meaning of it according to what was stated in the comprehensive Arabic-Arabic Lexicon/ Al-Maani Al-Jami' Dictionary — Arabic —

that may be in one way or another a cause of conflict, the most important of these links in the focus of the research are: (race — religion — language — culture and common history).[4]

**1. Ethnic ties.** Race and ethnicity can create nationalism, which is the bond of identity, and this ethnic nationalism may be a majority or a minority. Therefore, if it is a majority, natural problems with minority nationalism can be raised, related to the distribution of power and wealth, and related to equality and justice, and vice versa. Also, if the national minority It is the ruling, and the majority is the governed. A conflict may also arise from this, given that the majority is the holder of the right to power in whole or in most of it, and the race is the branch of the dynasty, just as the tribe is the race branch. Seems odd thing is that the races have specific ties represented by several tribes, such as nationalism. For example, the protective Nilotic tribes in Sudan before the secession of the south in 2011, as the group of tribes that belong to one race have become nationalities in themselves. So, we find that the Dinka tribe, although they belong to the same race The indigo protector, but they have come to consider themselves as a separate national Dinka and this is what happens in many conflicts. These multiple tribes, such as the Dinka, the Nuer, and the Sholluk (some tribes in Southern Sudan), can represent one nationalism because they revolted against the rule in the north in many times, in terms of identity issues. Nevertheless, after the south separation every tribe within the same race had its own demands that depend on the tribal basis and not on the race and identity itself. Such prturbations are happening now in southern Sudan, where the Nuer have specific demands, and they are in second place in terms of number as it has become The Sholluk also has specific demands, and they are in

third place as a tribe, and both are in opposition to the Dinka as the dominant Hamitic Nilotic tribe, in addition to a group of common border tribes. They are neither Hamitic nor Nilotic in the southern borders with the Republics of the Congo and Kenya [8].

**2. Religious ties.** Religion expresses a certain identity with a specific culture, and it may be the religion of most of the population of a country, or it may be a religious of minority. Here, ethnic nationalism does not coincide with religious nationalism, as there may be multiple religions within ethnic nationalism, and vice versa. Religious, if we take, for example, Arab nationalism as a historical, cultural, and linguistic association, we find that among the Arabs are Christians and Muslims, and this adds another complex dimension of ethnic and religious nationalities, and as mentioned, nationalism may represent the majority of the population, or it may represent a minority of the population, and the demands are consistent if they range from satisfying human needs, and interests, but in most cases we find that the pattern of conflict is often the one that tends towards separation.

**3. Linguistic ties.** The language has ethnic roots and religious demands in most cases, especially for Muslim minorities. The races speak languages and it may multiply the languages within the same race according to the tribe. Although the group of these tribes has one race, but the dialects varied according to the tribes. Hence, this language has demands, whether it is a tribe or ethnic group, must publish it, learn it, write it, and teach it in order to preserve identity. A good example is that we find that there are common cross-border identities such as the Nubian groups divided between southern Egypt and northern Sudan, and although they differ in dialect according to tribal affiliation, but they are sheltered by the Nubian tribe, especially since there is a common history link before that division where they had known kingdoms in the history of Sudan, which are the kingdoms of Nubia before and after Christmas.

Another example can be seen is in Belgium, where there are two nationalities, and the basic manifestation of them is the language and not the tribe, because the tribes in Europe have dissolved, but nationalities are based on language such as German, Italian, and Slavic.

**4. Cultural ties.** It is closely related to language, as there is no culture without language, for it is language that carries and transmits cultural legacies. Islamic culture, for example, is linked to the Arabic language as a source. The Holy Qur'an, as all hadiths and the interpretations of the Companions have been written in the Arabic language. Therefore, we find that

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Arabic Dictionary (a social-emotional connection that arises from sharing the homeland, language, unity of history and goals) or an association based on racial participation regardless of principles and content, such as Arab nationalism. And politically it means: a political and social principle with which its owner prefers everything related to his nation over everything else. Relates to others, or is the belief prevailing among the people that they form a distinct group with special characteristics that distinguish it from others, with the desire to protect and advance this distinction within a self-governance. URL: https://www.almaany.com/ar/dict/ar-ar/%D9%82%D9%88%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%A9/#:~:text=1%2D%20%D9%82%D9%88%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%A9%20%3A%20%D9%85%D8%A8%D8%AF%D8%A3%20%D9%8A%D8%AC%D9%85%D8%B9%20%D8%A3%D9%85%D8%A9,%C2%AB%D9%82%D9%88%D9-%85%D9%8A%D8%A9%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D9%86%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%86%C2%BB%20%3A%20%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%AA%D9%87

[4] Ibid.

Muslims, because of their affiliation to the Islamic religion as a multinational religious, demand their societies to teach the Arabic language, which is the most important and the only way to understand their religion correctly.

## CONCLUSION

The concept of identity bonded to several ethnic ties that can create nationalities with demands related to the fair distribution of wealth or the sharing of power and political decision, or equality and social justice in cases, and in other cases where these nationalities are a minority or a majority. Besides religious ties, the multiplicity of religions in ethnic nationalism can make up a factor causing conflicts if it expresses a specific nationalism with a particular culture, or that the religion is for a majority or a minority. On the other hand, it has linguistic and cultural ties with a complex series of overlaps in the hereditary aspects that it bears. This case, there is a necessity to arise of publishing, learning, writing and teaching the language and using it at the official level of the state to preserve the identity and these demands collide with a government or popular rejection if the language was not a minority language, not mentioning the attempts to suppress it and as a result the committed violations.

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