

Project work

Topic: Ethnic conflict

Done

by the student of the Faculty of International Relations group 305

Nurgisaeva Aizhan

Aims of the project: To investigate such phenomenon as a part of social processes

To clarify causes , consequences of ethnic conflicts

To give examples of ethnic conflicts



- Ethnic conflict is a form of conflict in which the objectives of at least one party are defined in ethnic terms, and the conflict, its antecedents, and possible solutions are perceived along ethnic lines.

- The terms *ethnic* and *ethnicity* have their roots in the Greek word *ethnos*, which describes a community of common descent. In ethnic conflict research, the terms *ethnic group*, *communal group*, *ethnic community*, *people*, and *minority* are mostly used interchangeably. Two elements provide the basis to identify ethnic groups: first, the accentuation of cultural traits and, second, the sense that those traits distinguish the group from the members of the society who do not share the differentiating characteristics.

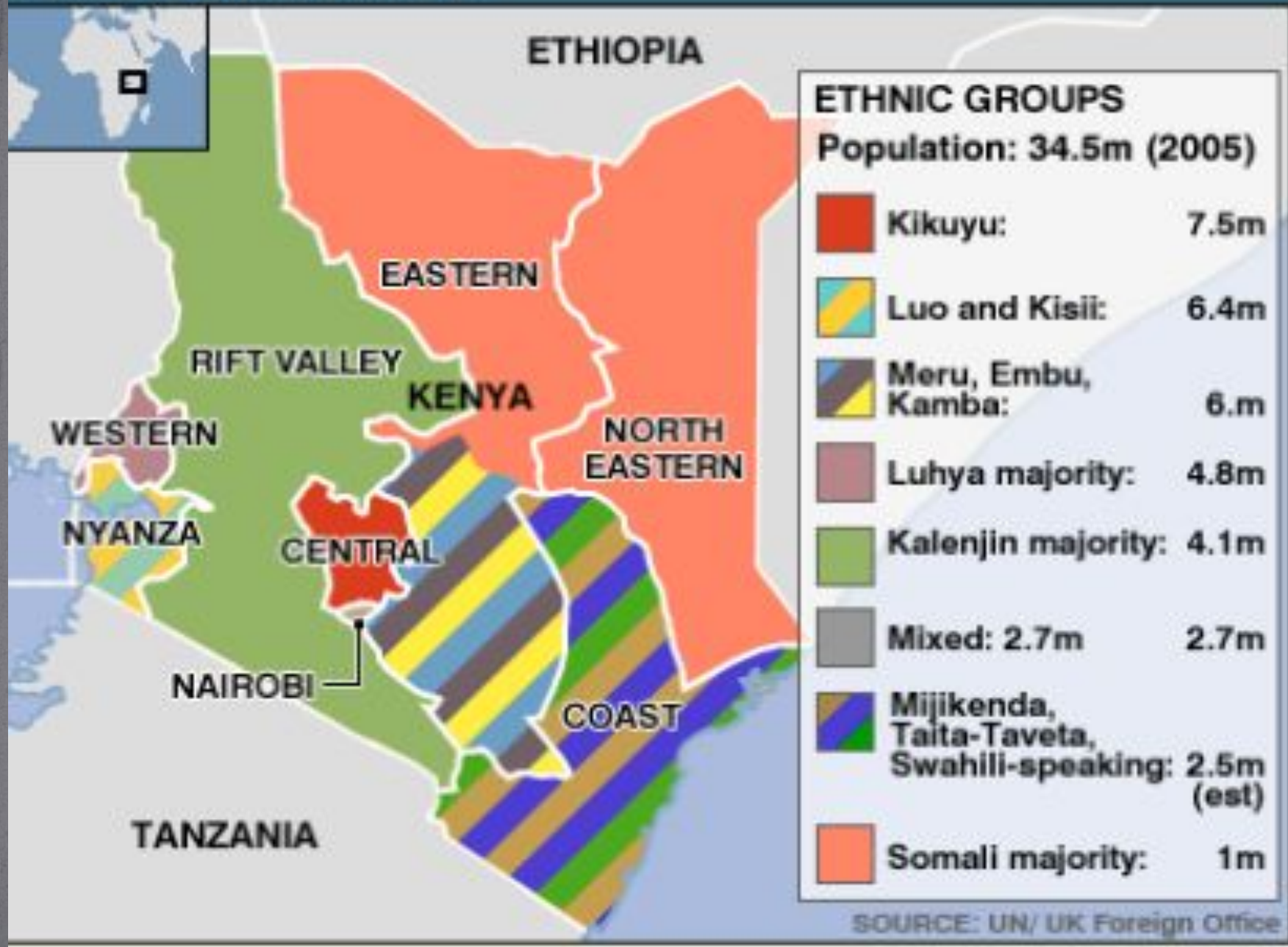
Definition and origin of the term

Ethnic identity is formed by both tangible and intangible characteristics. Tangible characteristics, such as shared culture or common visible physical traits, are important because they contribute to the group's feeling of identity, solidarity, and uniqueness.

Causes

- Ethnic identity is created by social interactions between individuals and groups and remains therefore beyond a person's choice, but it is subject to change if the social conditions change. Individuals and groups cannot avoid the fact that ethnic differences exist, but they determine for themselves what to make of those differences. Ethnic conflict depends thus to a great extent on the opportunities provided for the group to reach their goals. Violent conflict is caused mainly by social and political systems that lead to inequality and grievances and do not offer options for the peaceful expression of differences

KENYA'S ETHNIC GROUPS





Causes and main factors

In several scholarly articles, Michael Edward Brown provided a useful approach to understanding the causes of ethnic conflict. In those articles, he distinguished between underlying causes and proximate causes. Underlying causes include structural factors, political factors, economic and social factors, and cultural and perceptual factors. Proximate causes embrace four levels of conflict triggers: internal mass-level factors (what Brown calls “bad domestic problems”), external mass-level factors (“bad neighborhoods”), external elite-level factors (“bad neighbors”), and internal elite-level factors (“bad leaders”).

Dynamics of ethnic conflict

- Once ethnic conflict breaks out, it is difficult to stop. Massive human-rights violations and physical attacks on civilians—such as rape, torture, mass killings, ethnic cleansing, and genocide—lead to tremendous human suffering. Systematic discrimination and exclusion from national and local political decision making, the appropriation of ethnic minorities' traditional homelands, and policies that marginalize ethnic minorities are common practices accompanying ethnic conflict.
- Even if fought at a low level of intensity, protracted ethnic conflicts have a great impact on the affected society. The lack of functional or legitimate political institutions, weak economic performance, a nonexistent or polarized structure of civil society, and antagonized elites lead to polarization and separation, leaving societies deeply divided and prone to further ethnic strife. In addition, ethnic conflicts have very direct effects far beyond their epicentres

Examples

- Ethnic conflict is one of the major threats to international peace and security. Conflicts in the [Balkans](#), [Rwanda](#), [Chechnya](#), [Iraq](#), [Indonesia](#), [Sri Lanka](#), [India](#), and [Darfur](#), as well as in [Israel](#), the [West Bank](#), and the [Gaza Strip](#), are among the best-known and deadliest examples from the late 20th and early 21st centuries. The destabilization of provinces, states, and, in some cases, even whole regions is a common consequence of ethnic violence. Ethnic conflicts are often accompanied by gross [human rights](#) violations, such as [genocide](#) and crimes against humanity, and by economic decline, [state failure](#), environmental problems, and refugee flows. Violent ethnic conflict leads to tremendous human suffering.

Conclusion

- Cultural differences and ethnic conflicts are important issues shaping international politics. Because cultural affiliations and ethnic identity are particularly strong factors shaping group relations, these conflicts have led to tremendous human suffering and are a significant threat to international security. Instability, refugee flows, spillover effects, and other international consequences guarantee that ethnic conflict remains an issue on the international political agenda. However, it is not the cultural differences that lead to conflict but the political, ideological, and economic goals of international actors, regardless of whether these actors are states or ethnic groups. Given the complexity of ethnic and cultural conflicts, there is no easy solution to related issues.



