THE POLITICIZATION OF ETHNIC CLEAVAGES:
THEORETICAL LESSONS WITH EMPIRICAL DATA FROM AFRICA

SHAHEEN MOAZAFFAR
Bridgewater State College
smozaffar@bridgew.edu

Prepared for presentation at the 2007 ECPR Workshop on
“Politicizing Socio-Cultural Structures: Elite and Mass Perspectives on Cleavages”
Helsinki, Finland, May 7 – 13, 2007

Acknowledgement: Research for the larger project from which this paper is drawn was supported by a grant from the National Science Foundation (SBER-9515439), Shaheen Mozaffar Principal Investigator. Additional work was supported by a grant from the Bridgewater State College Center for the Advancement of Research and Teaching. I thank James Scarritt who supervised the collection of the data reported here and co-authored several pieces from which materials in this paper are drawn. Michelle Camou, Adrian Hull, Glen Galaich, and Eitan Schiffman at the University of Colorado at Boulder and Gail Maloney and Lydie Ultimo at Bridgewater State College provided research assistance. I also Mozaffar thank the Boston University African Studies Center for continued research support. I am solely responsible for the paper.
The central concern of this workshop is to employ “new methods and new comparisons” to revisit and clarify the longstanding debate spawned by Lipset and Rokkan’s (1967) classic work: “whether the main fault lines that shape political competition emerge naturally from societal differences or whether political elites shape (or even create) the lines of division from above” (Deegan-Krause and Zsolt, 2006, p.1). I address this concern in this paper by explicating a theoretical framework that (a) identifies the key variables involved in structuring the politicization of ethnic politics, and (b) specifies the mechanisms by which political elites animate this process of politicization. I draw on data from African countries to illustrate the consequences of this process of politicization and the comparative analytical utility of the framework.

The paper is organized the paper as follows. I begin with a brief review of the intellectual and theoretical antecedents of the debate over the nature of social cleavages and their role in anchoring politics. The purpose is not undertake a review of the vast and now well-known scholarship, but to highlight the central themes in this scholarship that relate to the debate about cleavage politics in order to situate my paper in this debate. I then explicate the theoretical framework, focusing specifically on two related analytical concerns. I first clarify the relationship between the three empirically related but analytically distinct processes of (1) ethnicization (the activation of objective ethnic markers to construct ethnic groups), (2) politicization (the activation of these ethnic groups in the political struggle for power and resources), and (3) particization (the transformation of politicized ethnic cleavages into lines of partisan divisions). I then elaborate the framework grounded in the concept of “constrained constructivism” that highlights the autonomous role of political agency, in the context of social structural, institutional and strategic constraints, in the politicization of ethnic cleavages and the ensuing construction of varied patterns of ethnopolitical cleavages. I then present illustrative data from a number of individual countries, as well as comparative data from all 43 African countries,
that capture the varied patterns of ethnopolitical cleavages resulting from the political dynamics of constrained constructivism elaborated in my theoretical framework. I conclude with a discussion of some implications of my theoretical framework.

ANALYTICAL ANTECEDENTS

Three competing and partially overlapping explanations underpin the debate surrounding Lipset and Rokkan’s (1967) famous analysis of the role of social cleavages in anchoring contemporary politics. The first explanation can be broadly subsumed under the rubric of sociological explanations. Based on Lipset and Rokkan’s original formulation of social cleavages as reflecting the center-periphery, religious, class and rural-urban differences fostered by the Reformation, modern state formation and the industrial revolution, sociological explanations privilege objective social cleavages as the source of individual political orientations, group formation and interest definition. They typically view political parties as emerging more or less spontaneously to organize the political conflicts and represent the competing interests that are autonomously engendered by pre-existing social cleavages. Once established, political parties “freeze” the prevailing social cleavages and persist in the face of franchise expansion, electoral rule changes and economic development because they helped to preserve and advance the interests of political elites and their supporters (Lipset 1960: 230-278; Lipset and Rokkan 1967).

In the study of ethnopolitics, sociological explanations typically view ethnic groups as originating in the fixed distribution of varied ethnic markers that reflexively determine group solidarity, define group interests and motivate collective action in the pursuit of those interests. As with class, ethnic groups autonomously give rise to political parties that organize politics centered around ethnic-based conflicts over power and resources. Democratic elections in this context amount to nothing more than an “ethnic census” in which vote distribution is an isomorphic reflection of ethnic group distribution (Horowitz 1985; Rabushka and Shepsle 1972).
The second explanation gives more weight to political factors such as ideology and political values than to objective socioeconomic conditions as bases of social cleavages. The historical cleavages identified by Lipset and Rokkan are no longer politically relevant because the conflicts associated with them have been successfully resolved and replaced by other forms of conflict linked to changing political values and ideology (Inglehart 1990; Knutsen 1988, 1989; Knutsen and Scarborough 1995). This has led some scholars to claim the decline of social cleavages in anchoring political behavior (Franklin 1992), and others to argue for the persistence of social cleavages, albeit in new forms. Crucial to this persistence is the ability of political parties, which had previously represented the conflicting interests engendered by the historical cleavages, to adapt themselves to the “new value politics” by giving organizational expression to, and articulating the political relevance of, these new sources of social cleavages (Bartolini and Mair 1990; Kriesi 1998).

In the study of ethnopolitics, as well, the second explanation shifted attention to the importance of political factors in dealing with ethnic conflicts. Exemplified most prominently by Lijphart (1977) and his theory of consociationalism, this shift stressed the importance of elite negotiations and institutional design – mutual veto, power-sharing, oversized cabinet coalitions, proportional representation electoral systems – as key mechanisms for managing ethnic conflicts. Scholars studying African politics also shifted attention from earlier concern with ethnicity as atavistic remnants of incomplete modernization (Whitaker 1970) to more theoretically grounded examination of the instrumental mobilization of ethnicity by political elites to organize political competition for state power and resources (Bates 1974; Sklar 1979).

While representing an appropriate shift in analytical focus in its emphasis on political factors, the second explanation nevertheless privileges objective social structures as the wellspring of political orientation and collective political action. Politics, in other words, reflects, filters and gives organized expression to changing values and ideology that originate in the wider social and economic transformation.
The third explanation offers an important corrective to both the previous explanations. For reasons that will become clear in the discussion below, I will henceforth refer to this third explanation as strategic explanation. Strategic explanations explicitly stress the autonomy of politics, and especially of elite political interactions, as the driving force behind the political activation of objective sources of social cleavages. Class cleavages, objectively evident because of industrialization, did not become politicized until socialist parties explicitly articulated the interest of the working class (Przeworski and Sprague 1986). Politics and agency, and not social structures, thus define a society’s fault lines and animate (spawn, organize, manage and sustain) the conflicts resulting from them (Kitschelt 1994; Sartori 1969; Kalyvas 1996).

In contrast to the reflexive logic of sociological explanations, strategic explanations underscore the contingencies of cleavage politics resulting from the strategic calculations of political actors. Strategic explanations are thus particularly relevant in many emerging democracies where the social and economic conditions and associated social structures and patterns of interest articulation and political conflicts are not the same as in established democracies. Political dynamics reflected especially in elite interactions have thus been instrumental not only in the activation of social differences, but in determining which of these differences will become politicized as the basis of group formation, interest definition, and collective political action (Chibber 1999; Chibber and Torcal 1997; Enyedi 2005; Torcal and Mainwaring 2003).

The analytical insights of strategic explanations motivate the theoretical framework I elaborate in this paper. The framework is premised on the notion that the politicization of ethnic cleavages is a strategically rational behavior involving the contingent (as opposed to the reflexive) activation of objective ethnic markers by political elites to form groups, define group interests, and organize collective action to advance political goals. The contingency involved in the activation of ethnicity as a strategic political resource derives from two sources. The first source is the distribution of objective ethnic markers that form the bases of ethnic cleavages.
Variations in this distribution defines the pattern of social structural constrains and opportunities for the strategic activation of ethnicity in political life. I thus draw on the insights of sociological explanations in recognizing that social structures constitute the raw materials for group formation, interest definition and the organization of collective action, but reject their emphasis on the autonomous role of social structures in animating politics.

The second source of contingency in the political activation of ethnicity is the set of institutions that prescribe the overall framework of democratic governance (e.g. executive-legislative relations, presidential or parliamentary systems, federal or unitary systems) and define the electoral system that converts votes into seats and shapes the structure of party systems. These institutions structure the process and outcomes of political interactions. Yet neither sociological nor strategic explanations pay much attention to the role of institutions in shaping cleavage politics. Sociological explanations assume away the importance of institutions in structuring which among the myriad of social cleavages will be politicized and how among the almost infinite possibilities those politicized will be bundled into coherently articulated political interests for electoral mobilization. Strategic explanations assume away the otherwise high information cost associated with correctly calculating the prospects of forming groups and sustaining group solidarity as well as the prospect of mobilizing the group to form an electoral majority, especially an alternative majority against an incumbent majority. Institutions, in other words, define the structure of political opportunities and constraints that shape the strategic calculations of political elites seeking to politicize ethnic cleavages.

The central lesson to be derived from my theoretical framework, then, is that the strategic calculations and interactions of politics elites in the context of varied social structural and institutional constraints and opportunities animate the politicization of ethnic cleavages. My theoretical framework thus gives primacy to the agency of political elites in politicizing ethnic cleavages, but acknowledges the importance of social structural context comprised of the raw materials that constitute ethnic cleavages and of the institutional context that determines whether
ethnic cleavages will be politicized and shapes the combination of the raw materials constitutive of ethnic cleavages that will be politicized. My framework, in other words, blends agency and structure in explaining how ethnic cleavages are politicized.

**THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

A unified theoretical framework blending agency and structure is useful for analytically grounding the accumulated insights of an otherwise vast and disparate literature that employs constructivist logic to explain both the emergence of ethnic groups and associated change and stability in the emergent ethnic demography (see, among others, Anderson 1983; Atkinson 1999; Barth 1969; Birnin 2006; Bates 1974; Brass 1991, 1997; Burguière and Grew 2001; Chandra 2001, 2004; Cohen 1969; Fearon and Laitin 2000; Laitin 1986, 1998; Laitin and Posner 2002; Kasfir 1979; Maiz 2002; Mozaffar 1995, 2001; Mozaffar and Scarritt, 1999; Nelson and Tienda 1985; Posner 2005; Rothschild 1981; Young 1976; Vail 1989; Van Cott 2005.). As an approach to the systematic study of ethnopolitics, constructivism, supported by wide-ranging evidence, represents a successful frontal assault on primordialism and its fundamentally flawed and empirically suspect logic that individuals have single and immutable identities generally, and ethnic identities in particular. The constructivist literature, however, remains inchoate and lacks a unified theory because of its incremental and unsystematic development, and not because of any substantive theoretical weakness in constructivist insights. The accumulated findings that appropriately motivate the constructivist consensus thus remain “product(s)…of a large, diffuse and interdisciplinary body of literature” and have yet to be codified and inscribed with the status of “cumulative findings” (Chandra 2001: 11). Constructivism, in this respect, represents an analytical approach that provides only a broad theoretical context within which to place an explicit theory of ethnopolitics consistent with this context. A close reading of the constructivist literature suggests, moreover, that three ostensibly competing theoretical perspectives circumscribe this broad theoretical context and can usefully be combined to advance theory.
The three theoretical perspectives are the social-structural, institutional and strategic rational-choice perspectives.

The social structural perspective stresses that social changes engendered by the broader processes of modernization define the social structural context for the construction of ethnic groups, identities and cleavages. The institutional perspective stresses that the institutional framework of the modern state defines the political context for the politicization of ethnic groups. And the strategic rational-choice perspective stresses the importance of cultural artisanship, collective action costs and strategic bargaining within and across groups as well between groups and the state in the construction of ethnopolitical groups (politicized ethnic groups). Constructivism thus combines agency and structure in accounting for both the formation and the politicization of ethnic groups. It informs and underpins my theoretical framework.

**Ethnicization, Politicization and Particization**

Constructivist insights suggest a two-stage process involving the formation and politicization of ethnic groups. In the context of electoral politics and the transformation of politicized ethnic cleavages as sources of interest definition, preference formation and electoral mobilization, a third stage involves the particization of ethnopolitical cleavages. The three stages overlap empirically, but it is useful to treat them as analytically distinct to clarify the logic of each stage, draw attention to the potential disjunction between the stages, and account for the contingencies and variations in the construction, politicization and particization of ethnic groups. The relationship of the three stages can be diagrammatically represented as in Figure 1, in which I have used the term “ethnicization” to specify the process of ethnic group formation.³

![Figure 1 goes here]

Culturally plural societies typically feature a portfolio of varied objective (ascriptive) ethnic markers, such as race, language, religion, caste, tribe, etc. The mere presence of these markers, however, does not automatically indicate their intrinsic social relevance and political salience. These markers have to be self-consciously activated to constitute ethnic groups
comprised of individuals with a common identity defined by these markers. This is the process of ethnicization. Ethnicization thus involves the self-conscious invocation of one or more of these objective ethnic markers to organize individual characterized by those markers into identity groups. It is the crafting of ethnic cleavages, the simultaneous process of group construction and differentiation on the basis of the objective ethnic markers.

Once constructed, the ethnic groups become available for politicization, which involves activating the ethnic markers as the bases of interest definition and organizing collective political action. However, as with other social cleavages (Jaensch 1983; Meisel 1974), not all ethnic cleavages are politicized, and even fewer become “particized, i.e. made into important lines of partisan division” for electoral competition (Cox 1997: 26). This distinction between particization and other forms of politicization of ethnic cleavages is important, because it points to, and also helps solve, the problem of endogeneity that appears to be, but is actually not, inherent in the specification of ethnopolitical groups and in measures of resulting ethnopolitical cleavages employed in explanations of variations in the structure of party systems. The data on politicized ethnic cleavages that I report below are based on this distinction. Specifically, the data report ethnic cleavages that were politicized by various forms of long-standing politicization other than particization. They include: (a) organized group mobilization unrelated to party formation (primarily in ethnic associations or cliques of leaders within the same party, the bureaucracy or the military); (b) articulation of grievances by leaders claiming to speak for a group rather than a party; (c) participation in collective action or (violent or nonviolent) conflict with other groups or the state; being subjected to state violence; (d) encapsulation within or domination of an officially designated administrative region or unit (common under colonial rule but continued under postcolonial governments as well); and (e) occupying a disproportionate number of high positions in the bureaucracy or the military, and controlling disproportionate socioeconomic resources.
In contemporary Africa, many, but not all, of the objective markers of ethnicity have pre-colonial origins, which maybe the reason for the primordialist claim that contemporary ethnic identities are essentially continuations of unchanging pre-colonial “tribes” that were reflexively configured by these markers. Constructivists appropriately reject this fundamentally flawed logic of intrinsic immutability of group identity, but acknowledge the role of a variety of pre-colonial ethnic markers (e.g. religion, kinship, clans) as important social structural constraints on the construction and politicization of contemporary ethnic groups and identities (Atkinson 1999). These constraints emerged from the direct and indirect impact of colonial rule, specifically, the institutional framework of colonial governance, in activating pre-colonial ethnic markers and structuring (enabling or constraining) ethnic group and identity construction.

Colonial rulers’ reliance on local agents to cope with the dilemma of maintaining control at low cost not only enhanced the power of these local agents, but also encouraged them to differentiate their groups from those not so privileged by colonial authority, either by recombining and redefining existing objective markers of ethnicity or by accentuating previously minor differences among the groups. Colonial rulers sought to achieve additional economies in the cost of governance by establishing administrative units that brought together erstwhile disparate social groups, occasionally facilitating the combination and redefinition of differentiating ethnic markers to create new and larger groups (e.g. the Ibos of southeastern Nigeria), but mostly encapsulating culturally diverse groups within the administrative units and setting the stage for the emergence of politically salient intra-group and inter-group differences. In other instances, colonial rulers privileged one ethnic marker (e.g. ancestral village) to foster spatially distributed and anchored, hence fragmented, ethnic identities over another (e.g. religion) that could foster larger and more encompassing ethnic groups (Laitin 1986). Finally, colonial policy indirectly shaped ethnic group and identity construction by engendering wider social, economic and political changes associated with modernization and development (Cohen 1969; Vail 1991). In these different ways, colonial rule established the relevance and importance of a
wide range of heterogeneous criteria of group formation and identity construction, thus helping to increase, instead of decrease, the quantitative variety in the available portfolio of objective ethnic markers in Africa’s culturally plural societies, and strengthening the social structural constraints on the construction of large and cohesive ethnic groups and identities.

The colonial period was one of relatively rapid changes in ethnic and ethnopolitical group and identity construction, and the politicization (and in some cases particization) of these groups and identities increased with the rise of African nationalism in the latter part of the period and the ensuing rapid pace of decolonization. Motivating this increase was the independence bargain struck between the departing colonial rulers and the emergent African nationalist leaders, requiring the latter to demonstrate popular support in the planned democratic elections as a condition for taking control of post-colonial governments. Lacking time and skill to organize non-sectarian mass electoral campaigns, the nationalist leaders opted for the cost-effective strategy of electoral mobilization of their respective ethnopolitical groups. But the electoral mobilization of these groups required their construction, not as encompassing, cohesive groups, but as syncretistic aggregations without total assimilations of the varied local communal groups and identities that were constructed and consolidated under colonial rule.

Thus the defining characteristic of the ethnopolitical groups that emerged in African countries at independence and featured prominently in their post-independence politics has been presence of politically salient inter-group cleavages juxtaposed with politically salient intra-group cleavages. The resulting ethnopolitical group morphology typically involves (1) marked variations in group size, such that no major ethnopolitical group constitutes an outright majority in a country, although some constitute large pluralities, and (2) considerable variety in the quantity of available ethnic markers, such that, even as they produce politically salient inter-ethnic differences, they also produce politically salient intra-group heterogeneity and limited cultural differences among large agglomerations of such groups. These two features of ethnopolitical group morphology combine with state accommodation of instrumental (“pork-
barrel”) ethnopolitical demands to encourage communal contention as the typical pattern of political interactions in which ethnopolitical groups and identities serve as cost-effective strategic resource for organizing competition for representation in and access to the state. Communal contention underscores the high start-up cost of new group formation and identity construction, thereby discouraging political entrepreneurs from exaggerating cultural differences among groups and encouraging them instead to maintain strong group identities that are strategically sustained by their ability to access the state and secure valued goods and services for their followers (Mozaffar and Scarritt 1999; 239-242; Rothchild 1997; Rothchild and Olorunsola 1983; Scarritt 1993; Scarritt and McMillan 1995; Scarritt, McMillan and Mozaffar 2001).

However, while relatively stable, the ethnic demography resulting from the processes described above, as well as the ethnopolitical cleavage patterns resulting from this demography that are captured in the data reported below, are not fixed, because the social structural, institutional and strategic constraints on the politicization of ethnic groups are themselves variable. I now explicate the ways in which these three types of constraints limit as well as facilitate the construction of ethnopolitical groups and cleavages.

**The Logic of Constrained Constructivism**

I use the concept of “constrained constructivism” to refer to the process by which the combination of social structural, institutional, and strategic constraints shape the politicization of ethnic cleavages and of the resulting demography of emergent ethnopolitical groups. The concept underscores the centrality of political agency in animating the process of ethnopolitical group construction, but acknowledges the importance of intrinsic constraints related to the strategic calculations and interactions of political agents, as well as the extrinsic constraints of social structure and political institutions. The concept of constrained constructivism thus motivates a theory of ethnopolitical group formation and cleavage construction that rejects a simplistic instrumentalism of political agents manipulating identities in any way they please to maximize
their interests, and emphasizes a significant yet structurally, institutionally and strategically constrained instrumentalism in the political construction of ethnic groups and identities.

Modal constructivist explanations typically offer an overly deterministic interpretation of how ethnopolitical groups and identities are constructed. These explanations stem from two ostensibly competing analytical orientations that inform constructivist analysis and that correspond broadly to the competing emphasis on structure and agency in explanations of human behavior. Structural and agency explanations, however, are not as mutually exclusive as their treatment in constructivist scholarship would suggest, but contain important substantive complementarities that can usefully be combined into a single and more analytically sound theoretical framework that can advance systematic constructivist analysis of ethnopolitics.

This unified framework is particularly important for addressing one of the more important substantive insights of constructivist scholarship, namely, the malleability of ethnic identity and associated shifts in ethnic demography. The malleability of ethnic identities and associated shifts in ethnic demography derive from (a) the changing bases of ethnic identities over time, (b) the existence of multiple bases of ethnic identities at the same time that engender both inter-group intra-group cleavages, and (c) the shifting political salience of both types of cleavages (Laitin and Posner 1999, 13-16). The reflexive over-determinism of structural and agency explanations that features so largely in extant constructivist scholarship are thus curiously at odds with this crucial insight into the spatio-temporal variations in ethnic identities and ethnic demography. To overcome this analytical weakness in constructive scholarship, a unified theoretical framework blending the complementary insights of structural and agency explanations is needed. The logic of constrained constructivism helps to advance the development of such a unified theoretical framework.

The logic of constrained constructivism is best clarified in relation to the logic of constructivism. The central logic of constructivism is that individuals have multiple ethnic identities that are constructed in the course of social, economic and political interactions.
Constructivist explanations broadly stress structure and agency as two competing and apparently irreconcilable sources of ethnic group construction. In general, constructivist explanations stressing the autonomy of structure interpret the construction of ethnic groups as a function of (a) the broad changes in social, economic and political structures wrought by modernization (e.g. Deutsch 1953; Geertz 1963; Hannan 1979), (b) the institutional reorganization of political context and the accompanying specification (and often redefinition) of the criteria for entry in the resulting social, economic and political interactions (Pandey 1992; Laitin 1986), and (c) the efficient organizational response to the political competition for power and resources engendered by the centrality of the state in allocating scarce resources (Bates 1974). Constructivist explanations stressing the autonomy of agency interpret the construction of ethnic groups as a function of rational political entrepreneurs manipulating varied ethnic markers and investing them with symbolic significance and political salience to differentiate ethnic groups, define group interests and facilitate collective political action (Brass 1974, 1991, 1997; Hardin 1995; Kasfir 1979). Close scrutiny reveals, however, that structure and agency explanations mirror each other in positing over-determined, reflexive and unproblematic links between the postulated independent variables that measure structure and agency and the construction of ethnic groups. Very little effort has been made in constructivist scholarship to blend the insights of the two sets of explanations. My framework represents an initial step to fill this gap.

The central logic of constrained constructivism is that ethnopolitical group and identity construction is quintessentially a strategic activity of cultural artisanship, but one that is constrained by a combination of social structural, institutional and strategic factors. This logic is diagrammatically represented in Figure 2. Figure 2 includes the pre-colonial and colonial periods to signify the initial conditions that fostered the process of ethnicization described in the previous section and established the social structural and institutional contexts that constrain or facilitate the politicization of resulting ethnic cleavages. The combination of these two sets of constraints impacts the strategic calculations of political elites who animate politicization of ethnic groups.
through what I refer to as strategic cultural artisanship. I now elaborate the combination of social structural, institutional and strategic constraints on strategic cultural artisanship.

[Figure 2 goes here]

**Social Structural Constraints**

In plural societies, objective ascriptive markers such as language, race, religion, dress, diet and customs constitute the cultural elements that define ethnicity. Ethnicity is the sense of ethnic identity. Ethnic identity, to use Fearon’s (1999) perceptive formulation, is a social category comprised of (1) rules of membership that determine who can and cannot be a member of that category and (2) a set of putative characteristics (values, beliefs, desires and behavioral proclivities) that define the content of the category. The objective markers that define ethnicity in plural societies are the putative source of the content of ethnic identity. Their intrinsic attributes provide individuals characterized by them with “intersubjective cognitive resources” (Johnson: 1988: 232) for stabilizing convergent expectations and organizing cost effective collective action. The reinforcing relationship between stabilized expectations and collective action socially validates ethnic identity. And social validation as a source accrued confidence in one’s ethnic identity helps to infuse the objective ethnic markers with subjective meaning and symbolic significance (Stinchcombe 1975; Stryker 1980).

However, the mere presence of the objective ethnic markers in plural societies does not mean that they will reflexively foster a self-conscious ethnic identity. The construction of a self-conscious ethnic identity is a matter of strategic artisanship involving the transformation of one or more of the ethnic markers that define its content into a composite social criterion for drawing cultural boundaries that simultaneously assimilate and differentiate individuals into distinct ethnic groups and invest them with normative significance (Horowitz 1985: 64-73). Specifically, it involves a “process of intensifying the subjective meanings of a multiplicity of symbols and of striving for multisymbol congruence among a group of people defined initially by one or more central symbol” (Brass 1991: 20). The striving for multisymbol congruence, if successful, results
in the construction of conceptually parsimonious composite ethnic groups (Hispanic, Asian-
American, Muslim, Yoruba, White) that, even as they subsume intra-group differences (Cubans
and Mexicans, Chinese and Koreans, Sunnis and Shittes, Egbas and Ijebus, Irish and Italians),
economize on the cognitive limitations that engender the simplified labeling of complex
environmental stimuli (Rodkin 1993).

However, variations in the presence and in the indicators of inter- and intra-group
differences point to variations, respectively, in the type and complexity of social-structural
constraints on the instrumentalism of strategic cultural artisanship. These social-structural
constraints stem from the quantitative variety and qualitative differences in the available portfolio
of objective ethnic markers in culturally plural societies that furnish multiple bases of politically
salient significant inter-group as well as intra-group cleavages. For example, in Africa, as
elsewhere, language, religion and region, exist as very broad and competing sources of group
formation and identity construction. But distinct dialects distinguish language groups, sectarian
differences divide religious communities, and highly varied local identities spatially anchored in
ancestral villages and towns, where they remain intimately tied to patterns of property rights, land
use, and capital accumulation, cross-cut language and religious distinctions.

Additionally, incomplete modernization and uneven development weaken without
destroying the “institutional completeness” of a wide array of local social organizations rooted in
particularistic criteria (family, kinship, lineage, clans, etc.).6 These social organizations and their
particularistic criteria are but only syncretistically aggregated by cultural artisans to construct
more encompassing social groups to “which the label of ethnic group is commonly attached”
(Lijphart 1977, 48), hence they compete with the larger constructed agglomerations as alternative
sources of life chances, definitions of identity and important bases of economic and political
Nielsen, 1985). The syncretistic aggregation without complete assimilation of these relatively
autonomous social units into larger constructed agglomerations vitiate the prospects of forging
the multi-symbol congruence among the varied objective ethnic markers, engendering politically salient intra-group cleavages in, and threatening the sustained solidarity of, the more encompassing ethnopolitical groups.

A related social-structural factor concerns the high degree of territorial concentration exhibited by African ethnopolitical groups (Gurr 1993; Scarritt 1993; Scarritt and Mozaffar 1999). Generally, territorial concentration facilitates ethnopolitical group and identity construction by furnishing a critical mass of individuals who are likely to have similar interests based on common location, hence reducing the start-up cost of group formation and identity construction and enhancing the prospects of sustained stability of the constructed social groups. But variations in the physical patterns of ethnopolitical demography can render territorial concentration an important constraint on the unfettered instrumentalism of ethnopolitical group and identity construction. African countries, for example, exhibit two broad physical patterns of ethnopolitical demography. In one pattern, ethnopolitical groups are found in territorially concentrated pockets within a country’s administrative boundaries and sometimes spill over them. Since these boundaries often date back to the colonial period, as described above, they encompass not only politically salient ethnic sub-divisions but also people who are not members of the larger ethnopolitical groups. This pattern is typically found in large states, such as Nigeria, where these differences precipitated, during the decolonization negotiations, a flurry of demands by “ethnic minorities” for the creation of their own “ethnic majority” states that were rejected by the special minorities commission appointed by the British colonial authorities (Willink Report 1958). These unmet demands escalated after independence, and their accommodation has seriously diminished the cohesion of the larger ethnopolitical groups, such as the Yoruba, Hausa-Fulani, and the Ibos and has contributed to the increasingly complexity of Nigeria’s federal system, now comprised of 36 states from its beginnings at independence with three states (Suberu 2001). Elsewhere, as in Malawi, for example, distinct and large ethnopolitical groups are concentrated in
correspondingly large administrative regions, but sharp intra-ethnic differences distributed within each region weaken the overall regional political unity of the encompassing groups.

In the second pattern, ethnopolitical groups are concentrated in areas that fall under the sovereign jurisdiction of more than one state. For example, the Hausa are concentrated in a large area that covers northern Nigeria and southern Niger. The Yoruba are concentrated in an area that covers western Nigeria and eastern Benin. The Ewe occupy an area that covers eastern Ghana and western Togo (Asiwaju 1976, 1989; Miles 1994; Welch 1966: 37-147). Moreover, due to historic trade patterns and colonial rule, members of the same ethnic group are occasionally widely spread across several countries. The Hausas for instance, are found in virtually every country across the Sahel between Lake Chad and Senegal, while the Fulani are found in Benin, Cameroon, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal, and Sierra Leone.

**Institutional Constraints**

Attention to the administratively delineated territorial concentration of ethnopolitical groups draws attention to the institutional constraints on the unfettered instrumentalism in the construction of ethnopolitical groups and identities. Institutional constraints are linked to the centrality of the modern state in organizing social, political and economic interactions. In Africa, as elsewhere, the introduction of the modern state and markets under colonial rule expanded the ecological scale of human activities, imposing increasing diseconomies on a wide range of localized small-scale social organizations and creating incentives for social actors to merge their heterogeneous identities centered around these organizations upward into more encompassing ethnopolitical groups to correspond to the larger, newly-created political and economic arenas (Hannan 1979).  

Moreover, in the context of the availability of a multiplicity of objective ethnic markers in the portfolio of cultural elements in plural societies, the laws and policies enacted by the state intentionally and unintentionally encourage the activation of some ethnic markers, while discouraging the activation of others, as bases of ethnopolitical group and identity construction.
Thus, British colonial policies encouraged ancestral birthplaces at the expense of religion in Nigeria (Laitin 1986), but stressed linguistic differences in Ghana (Laitin 1994) and religious differences in India (Pandey 1992) as bases of group identity and collective political action. Colonial policies thus did not eliminate, and in some ways enhanced, the constraints of markedly varied objective ethnic markers in Africa’s culturally plural societies on the unfettered instrumental construction of large and cohesive ethnopolitical groups and identities.

Affirmative action policies and the strategic use of “ethnic arithmetic” in the allocation of state resources and positions by postcolonial governments reinforced established ethnopolitical groups and cleavages, but, due to the prevalence of politically salient intra-group differences, also encouraged the creation of new groups and cleavages, especially if the distributive policies had discriminatory effects and the state either ignored or sought to repress the initially peaceful demands for amelioration by the discriminated groups (Rothchild and Olorunsoa 1983). State repression, in fact, remains a major source of politicization of previously non-politicized ethnic groups, such as the Ogoni of Southern Nigeria (Osaghae 1995, 1998).

Elsewhere, state policies also affect the variety and configuration of the objective ethnic markers and shape the process and impact of strategic artisanship. For example, the different language rationalization strategies in the post-soviet states of Estonia, Latvia, Kazakhastan and Ukraine reflect the different patterns of their incorporation into the Soviet state and resulting differences in communist territorial policies. In the two Baltic states, weak incorporation favored considerable linguistic autonomy for the titular elites. In Ukraine, a high degree of “integralist” incorporation encouraged the linguistic and cultural assimilation of titular elites into Russian language and culture. In Kazakhastan, however, the application of a classic colonial model of low incorporation of the titular elites encouraged their instrumental acquisition of Russian but without producing a substantial cultural shift (Laitin 1998: 59-82). In all four states, however, in response to their language policies, a Russian-speaking population (including titulars and non-titulars) is emerging as a separate identity group, although its internal cohesion is not assured. To
the extent that the distinction between the (very broadly defined) Russian-speaking population and the titular language-speaking population are rigidly drawn and becomes institutionalized, deeply-divided societies are the likely outcomes. To the extent that the Russian-speaking populations are divided along other lines (e.g. Russians, Jews, Belarusians, Russophone titulars, non-titulars), multiethnic societies are the likely outcomes.

In the United States, census designations (until the 2000 census) reconstitute the culturally distinct identities of Puerto Ricans, Cubans and Mexicans into a broader Hispanic identity. But the political salience of these identities varies with the country’s institutional pluralism. The Hispanic identity shapes the expression of common political demands of the broadly defined Spanish-speaking population at the national level, but the culturally distinct Puerto Rican, Cuban and Mexican identities encourage separate affiliations and foster competition in local politics (Nelson and Tienda 1985).

Elsewhere in Western countries, the policies of post-WW II liberal-welfare states engendered economic development, but the accompanying modernization and social changes also destroyed local bases of ethnic identities (e.g. the parish church in Francophone Quebec) and exposed existing or newly-created regional inequalities, creating large potential constituencies for ethnoregional parties and political entrepreneurs to mobilize. The institutional framework of liberal democratic politics also created new organizational resources, such as political parties and elections, for collective action. Ethnopolitical mobilization through political parties thus reflect a territorial base (Basque, Quebec, Scotland, Belgium), and with the cultural basis of ethnic identity destroyed by modernization, ethnicity was redefined in territorial terms. As in developing countries in the 1960s and 1970s, modernization in Western countries both created the conditions for ethnic conflict and also helped to “sculpt the institutional structure and ideological character” of ethnic politics (Newman 1991:468. See also, Fox, Aull, Cimino 1981; Rudolph and Thompson 1985; Tiryakian and Rogowski 1985).
These examples, which could be multiplied manifold, illustrate an aspect of state structuring of political interactions that has a crucial impact on the dynamics of strategic cultural artisanship: the delineation of institutions as sets of rules that define the strategic context of political interactions and differentiate individuals into social categories as criteria for participating in them. Precisely because the institutions they delineate confer social identities, states also seek to fashion the cultural framework that endows political interactions with symbolic meaning and normative significance. Hence the rules and the associated content of social identities become the raw materials for cultural artisans to construct ethnopolitical identities as sources of interest definition and cost-effective collective action. Their ability to do so and the type of culturally plural society that is likely to ensue, however, depend on the variety and structural configuration of the rules and their content as well as on the institutionally delineated arena of political interactions. Increased variety and complex configuration, combined with multiple arenas of political interactions (local, regional, national), create incentives for cultural artisans to construct heterogeneous ethnic identities consistent with the structure of multiethnic societies. As political interactions move exclusively to larger arenas, cultural artisans will have an incentive to simplify the variety and complex configuration and merge the heterogeneous rules and content of locally relevant identities upward, engendering a shift toward rigid homogeneous identities consistent with the structure of deeply-divided societies (Mozaffar 2001).

**Strategic Constraints**

The interaction between politics and culture structured by the state makes available a portfolio of objective ethnic markers that cultural artisans can use to construct ethnopolitical groups defined by them. But the combination social structural and institutional constraints discussed above reinforce the strategic constraints of high start-up costs, including the unknown maintenance cost of potential groups, that are intrinsic to the set of decisions and activities involved in constructing and sustaining large and cohesive ethnopolitical groups. While the configuration of social structural variables and the institutional framework of political, social and
economic interactions constrain, but also facilitate, the construction of ethnopolitical groups, start-up costs exert an independent constraint on the strategic cultural artisanship of creating new ethnopolitical groups as well as changing existing ones, since the logic of both processes are functionally equivalent.

Strategic cultural artisanship is fundamentally a process of coordinating the heterogeneous interests of individual ethnopolitical actors to construct and promote the corporate interest of the ethnopolitical group. Interest heterogeneity derives from intra-group role differentiation, especially between leaders and followers, but also creates an interdependence among them that affects the process of group formation, identity construction, interest definition and collective behavior in three ways.

First, interest heterogeneity transfers the start-up cost of ethnopolitical groups to cultural entrepreneurs who deploy their entrepreneurial skills (and entrepreneurship is a quintessential strategic activity) to invest the selected objective ethnic markers with symbolic significance for identity construction and interest definition and mobilize individual actors distinguished by those markers for collective action. Second, due to the usually large size of ethnopolitical groups, interest heterogeneity helps reduce the maintenance cost of ethnopolitical groups over time, since the individual cost of supporting the group is lower in large groups. Joint production and maintenance of ethnopolitical identity thus becomes possible. Third, interdependence engenders conditional cooperation among ethnopolitical actors, whereby the benefits of group action accruing to individual actors depend on the collective benefits accruing to the whole group. In ongoing ethnopolitical group action, each actor’s interest in mutual cooperation is thus contingent on, “involves ineliminable reference” (Johnson 1988: 229) to, the other actors in the group. A common interest in avoiding individual sub-optimal benefits from non-cooperative behavior motivates the irredeemably conditional cooperative strategy of all ethnopolitical actors (Johnson 1988).11
Ethnopolitical group construction and the organization of ethnopolitical collective action, then, is preeminently a process of strategic interaction between self-interested actors with divergent interests. Divergent interests create interdependence, interdependence motivates strategic rationality, and strategic rationality constrains the unfettered pursuit of self-interest by rendering the choice of goals, strategies and behavior of each actor dependent on the choice of goals, strategies and behavior of other actors in the interdependent relationship. The ability to sustain ethnopolitical group solidarity on the basis of strategic rationality alone depends in part on the size of the group and in part on the response of the state to ethnopolitical demands.

Large ethnopolitical groups comprised of heterogeneous interests help to reduce the cost of individual contributions to group solidarity, but also render strategic rationality an insufficient basis for sustaining contingent cooperation over narrow materialist concerns, especially in the long run. Characteristic information problems of accurate communication of divergent individual interests and their coherent expression in terms of ethnic identity pose problems for ethnopolitical group leaders in sustaining group solidarity. The availability of heterogeneous ethnic markers and their potential reconfiguration, moreover, present options for defection and construction of alternative ethnopolitical identities. And the broader patterns of social structural differentiation create additional opportunities for organizing group behavior and realizing individual interests, potentially diminishing the salience of ethnicity for those purposes. Cultural artisans thus confront the classic leadership dilemma of falling victim to their own success: the very benefits they confer on their followers by their effective articulation of ethnopolitical interests and successful organization of ethnopolitical action undermine their power and influence.\textsuperscript{12}

Strategic rationality now encounters the need to invent tradition and symbolically merge ethnic interest with ethnic identity. The invention of tradition is a quintessential rational and political act of inventing, constructing and formalizing a historical past (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). It is the intellectual bricolage (Lévi-Strauss 1966) of constructing identity and difference as a single process of simultaneously fostering group solidarity and group differentiation. The
symbols and rituals that constitute invented tradition endow ethnic identity with normative significance and invest interests defined in terms of that identity with unassailable emotive power. Symbols are the “intersubjective cognitive resources” (Johnson 1988: 232) that impose order in strategic relationship through public dramatization in rituals (Geertz 1981). Rituals are practices representing social relations as “real.” Symbols are rationalized by analogy as existing in nature (Douglas 1970; 1986: 45-33). Their ritualistic expressions “literally” embody certain possibilities and exclude others (Moore and Meyerhoff 1977). Identity means difference. And since symbolic identity simply exists in nature, “our” identity must be real and “our” identity-based relations and interests natural. As “dirt is matter out of place” (Douglas 1966), difference is naturally unnatural. “Their” identity must, therefore, be fictitious and “their” identity-based relations and interests a pollutant. A way of seeing becomes a way of not seeing.

The instrumentality of strategic rationality, even as it structures ongoing interest-based interactions of contingent cooperation among ethnic actors, dissolves ethnic interests into ethnic identity. And ethnic identity validates all instruments that promote and protect ethnic interests. This potent conjoining of ethnic identity and ethnic interest constitutes the explosive logic that drives the transformation of multiethnic into deeply-divided societies and fuels the ferocity of resulting ethnic conflicts.

Most ethnic conflicts, however, are neither violent nor ferocious (Fearon and Laitin 1996, 2000). They are peacefully managed through accommodative strategies of instrumental (pork-barrel) ethnopolitical demands (Rothchild 1997), thus enabling strategic cultural entrepreneurs to exchange material benefits for political support with their followers and helping to reduce the cost of strategic rationality in maintaining group solidarity. In most African countries, these strategies are facilitated by the distinctive morphology of ethnopolitical groups that reflects the structure of multiethnic societies: (a) marked variations in group size, such that virtually no major ethnopolitical group constitutes an outright majority in a country, although some constitute a large plurality and (b) considerable variety in the quantity but not the quality of the ascriptive
markers, such that, even as they produce politically salient inter-ethnic differences, they also produce politically salient intra-group heterogeneity and limited cultural differences among large agglomerations of such groups. In combination with state responses accommodative of instrumental ethnopolitical group demands, this morphology has fostered communal contention as the typical pattern of political interactions in which ethnopolitical identities serve as the principal strategic resource for organizing competition for representation in and access to the state. The result is that most political entrepreneurs do not have any incentive to exaggerate cultural differences, but do have incentives to maintain strong group identities that is strategically sustained by their ability to access the state and secure valued goods and services for their followers (Mozaffar and Scarritt 1999: 239-242; Scarritt 1993; Scarritt and McMillan 1995; Scarritt, McMillan and Mozaffar 2001).

The logic of constrained constructivism elaborated above motivates five criteria for specifying ethnopolitical groups and measuring associated ethnopolitical cleavages in African countries: (1) specification of only those groups that are demonstrably ethnopolitical, that is, groups that have demonstrated their actual political relevance or high potential political relevance based on past relevance; (2) specification of the maximum number of such groups in order to include all that are actually politicized or have a high potential for politicization; (3) specification of these groups at several levels of inclusiveness to capture politically salient intra-group heterogeneity and associated ethnopolitical cleavages; (4) specification of the territorial concentration of groups at all levels of inclusiveness; and (5) specification of a time period for which evidence of politicization can be used to analyze political outcomes: (a) to capture structural cleavages the first evidence of group politicization should be at least ten years prior to the first outcome (i.e., election or human rights violation) analyzed, (b) to capture the possibility of change in the cleavage structure the outcome should be no more than twenty years after the most recent evidence of politicization. In the next section, we describe the theory and the method
we employed to specify ethnopolitical groups and measure their cleavage patterns according to these five criteria.

**CONSTRAINED CONSTRUCTIVISM AND ETHNOPOLITICAL CLEAVAGE PATTERNS**

In this section, I present two types of data to show the impact of the logic of constrained constructivism elaborated above on the varied patterns of ethnopolitical cleavages in African countries. I first present data on a number of individual countries and then present comparative data on all 43 countries. The varied patterns of ethnopolitical cleavages extracted from a dataset that classifies 381 ethnopolitical groups (1) by their population shares that help to measure the pattern of inter-ethnic cleavages, and (2) at three levels of inclusiveness that helps to measure the degree of intra-group cleavages. The combination of inter-group and intra-group cleavages provides the basis for measuring the overall cleavage patterns in each of the 43 countries covered in the dataset.

These varied patterns reveal that the vast majority of African countries are multiethnic as opposed to deeply-divided societies. Multiethnic societies typically feature three or more ethnopolitical groups, some or all of which are internally divided and none of which possess a majority population share. The result is that no group is capable of establishing political dominance on its own. Multiethnic coalitions are thus the dominant political strategy. In deeply-divided societies, the whole population of the country is permanently organized around two nationally dichotomous, large and internally cohesive groups that are often implacably opposed to each other (Mozaffar 2001).

Tables 1-6 present data on each of the six patterns of ethnopolitical cleavages. The tables present three types of data. First, the data identify the ethnopolitical groups at each level of inclusiveness, with groups at the highest level of inclusiveness (the national level) highlighted in bold, groups at the second level of inclusiveness are underlined, and groups at the third level of
inclusiveness are italicized. Second, the tables present data on the population share of each group at each level of inclusiveness. Finally, the tables display the values of the Ethnopolitical Group Fragmentation Index (EGFI), a metric that measures fragmentation at each level of inclusiveness as well as total fragmentation. The Ethnopolitical Group Fragmentation Index (EGFI) is the inverse of the well-known Herfindahl-Hirschman concentration index and is calculated by the following formula: \[ \text{EGFI} = \frac{1}{\sum_{i} g_i^2}, \] where \( g_i \) is the ethnopolitical group \( g \)’s share of the country’s population. High EGFI values indicate high levels of fragmentation typically found in highly multiethnic societies and low EGFI values indicate low levels of fragmentation, with values of 2.00 or lower indicating deeply-divided societies.

**Burundi and Rwanda**

Table 1 presents data on Burundi and Rwanda, which along with Comoros and Djibouti, are representatives of permanently deeply-divided societies in which the whole population are divided into two nationally dichotomous and highly cohesive groups. In both Rwanda and Burundi the Hutu-Twa comprise the numerically dominant population (80% in Burundi and 90% in Rwanda), but for a number of historical reasons, including, especially, colonial policy, the numerically smaller Tutsis are the major competitors for power and influence. The low EGFI values of 1.43 in Burundi and 1.22 in Rwanda are indicative of the structure of deeply-divided societies. By way of comparison, Comoros and Djibouti, the only other two permanently deeply-divided countries in Africa, have EGFI values of 1.15 and 1.96, respectively.

**Nigeria**

Eight other countries in which ethnopolitical groups are also classified at the first level of inclusiveness – Benin, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Nigeria, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda – have been deeply divided only temporarily (e.g. Nigeria, Uganda) and could possibly become so again, are deeply divided now but have largely been multiethnic (e.g. Sudan), or have the potential of becoming deeply divided (e.g. Tanzania). Their dominant cleavage
patterns, however, are that of multiethnic societies. These eight countries thus exemplify the second pattern of ethnopolitical cleavages. Nigeria is representative of this pattern and Table 2 displays the Nigeria data. Again, for the sake of clarity, information at the first (highest) level of inclusiveness is highlighted in bold, information at the second level is underlined, and all information at the third level is italicized.

[Table 2 goes here]

In Nigeria, the political significance of a national dichotomous first level of an all-inclusive cleavage between north and south emerged during the colonial period and attained its maximum significance in 1964-65 when the secession attempt by the Ibos of southeastern precipitated a brutal civil war. This national dichotomous cleavage emerged again at several later points in time, although with lesser intensity. For the most part, however, Nigerian ethnopolitics has centered around the groups organized at the second level of inclusiveness, such as the Hausa/Fulani-Middle Belt cleavage in the north, as well as the importance of the Kanuri in the northeast and, at the third level of inclusiveness, the Tiv in the Middle Belt. Similarly, intra-regional divisions are evident in the long-standing Yoruba-Ibo cleavage in the south, as well as the existence of Ibibio (and related peoples) and Edo minorities in areas controlled by the two major southern groups (Yoruba and the Ibos).

While these broad second-level cleavages continue to play a strategic role in coalition politics in Nigeria, these cleavages have become increasingly more complex as intra-group divisions have fostered politically salient third level groups. Thus, the Yoruba, the second largest group in Nigeria, are divided among the Ekiti, Egba, Ijebu and Oyo, while the relatively small Ibibio/Efik/Ijaw second-level grouping, comprising only 8% of the population, is further divided into four distinct politicized groupings at the third level of inclusiveness. Most of the third level groups have been created through partial reconstructions of long-standing identities in response to constitutional changes mandating a two party system and power sharing among six geo-cultural zones, and they in turn produced differential voting patterns in the state, National Assembly, and
the aborted Presidential elections of 1991-93. They include the fragmentation of the traditional unity of the Hausa-Fulani into the Sokoto and Kano coalitions, the specification of the Nupe and Adamawa in addition to the Tiv in the Middle Belt, to the inclusion of the Anambra as one politically significant Ibo sub-group, and to the division of the Ibibio and related peoples into four sub-groups. One of the latter is the Ogoni and related oil minorities, who were subjected to extreme repression in the 1990s (Osaghae, 1995).

Nigeria’s fragmentation score thus varies substantially from an EGFI of 2.00 at the highest level of inclusiveness, to 4.96 at the second level, to a total EPGFI of 12.01 for all three levels of inclusiveness taken together.

**Angola**

A group of seven countries feature ethnopolitical groups classified only at the second level of inclusiveness with no sub-groups at the third level: Angola, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Niger, and Togo. Table 3 presents data on Angola to illustrate this pattern.

Angola has six ethnopolitical groups comprising 94% of the population. Nine other groups comprising six percent of the population, in other words, have not been politicized with respect to their ethnic characteristics. The Ovimbundu-Ovambo possess the largest population share with 38%, followed by the Mbundu/Mesticos with 26%, the Bakongo with 11%, the Cabindan-Mayombe grouping with 2% Mayombe (2), the Lunda-Chokwe with 9%, and the Nganguela with 8%. Since none of these groups are subdivided at the third level, the overall, Angola’s overall fragmentation index is 3.70.

[Table 3 goes here]

**Zambia**

A different pattern of ethnopolitical cleavages are found in 10 countries: Botswana, Ghana, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Ethnopolitical groups in these countries are coded at second and third levels of inclusiveness; in none is the total national population divided into rigid, internally cohesive dichotomous groups.
characteristic of deeply-divided societies. These countries are thus permanently multiethnic societies, illustrated by the Zambia data reported in Table 4. The configuration of ethnopolitical groups shows significant ethnopolitical fragmentation due to the presence of politically salient intra-group differences. In Zambia, the total population is divided into five ethnopolitical groups, with the Bemba-speaking group constituting a plurality of 43 percent of the population and the Barotse as the smallest group with eight percent of the population. The fragmentation index at this second level of aggregation is $\text{EGFI} = 3.65$. But, with the exception of the Tonga-Ila-Lenje, all the other four groups are sub-divided into additional groups at the third level of inclusiveness, giving Zambia a considerably high total fragmentation index of 7.14, a difference of forty-nine percent between the degree of fragmentation of the whole population divided into five large groups and the fragmentation based on the cleavages within four them.

Table 4 goes here

**Gabon**

A group of 14 countries feature many small groups, both divided and undivided:
Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Mozambique and Somalia. Table 5 presents data in Gabon to illustrate this pattern. These data illustrate a slightly different cleavage patterns in those countries in which ethnopolitical groups are either not sub-divided, or feature only a few sub-groups. Virtually the whole population of the country is divided into eight distinct ethnopolitical groups, with the Fang comprising a plurality of 30 percent. Only two of these groups – the Eshira and Omyene – feature small sub-groups. The result is that there is only a five percent difference between the fragmentation index of 5.35 at the second level of aggregation and the total fragmentation index of 5.65.
Comparative Analysis

Table 6 presents the EGFI values for 43 African countries for all three levels of aggregation. Only twelve of these countries (28 percent) are deeply-divided societies, as indicated by the low EGFI values at the first level of aggregation. Of these, four (Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti and Rwanda) are permanently deeply-divided, as indicated by their identical EGFI values across all three levels of aggregation. The other eight contain significant second and third level cleavages, indicating that their ethnopolitical group configurations also reflect multiethnic patterns. These eight plus 30 other countries (excluding Burkina Faso for reasons given below) all contain second level cleavages, the level at which ethnopolitical fragmentation initially reflects multiethnic configurations. The EGFI values at this level range from 1.22 for Senegal to 12.28 for Uganda (excluding Burkina Faso and the four permanently divided countries). Thus 38 out of 43 countries comprising 88 percent of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa are multiethnic societies. In 27 of them (or in 71 percent), the EGFI values become higher, sometimes substantially so, as one moves from the second to the third level of aggregation, exemplifying a pattern that typifies multiethnic societies.

The indices also enable us to differentiate among the multiethnic countries themselves. We can, for example, compare the difference (in percentages) between second and third level indices as a measure of the degree of multiethnicity among the 38 multiethnic countries. Using a difference of 50% in the EGFI values between the second and third level of aggregations, it is possible to classify countries registering a difference of 50% or more as “high” multiethnic societies, countries registering a difference of 50% or less as “medium” multiethnic societies, and countries registering no difference as “low” multiethnic societies. The logic behind this differentiation is this. In Table 6, the second level, which is the highest level of aggregation for 30 countries and the second highest for eight countries, is the level that typifies multiethnic
societies. This is the level at which inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic coalitions are likely to solidify first in national politics. To the extent that such solidarity is sustained in the face of inter-ethnic conflicts and intra-ethnic divisions, the degree of multiethnicity will decrease and the EGFI values for the two levels will measure little or no difference. But if the ethnopolitical group solidarity at the second level is weak, perhaps even breaking up because of salient intra-ethnic divisions at the third level, multiethnicity will increase and the EGFI values will register the difference. The magnitude of this difference will depend on the number of inter-ethnic cleavages at the second level and on the number of potential breakaway third level cleavages each of them encompass.

On the basis of this logic, Table 7 differentiates among 38 multiethnic countries. It shows that ten countries (26 percent) can be classified as highly multiethnic, seventeen (45 percent) as moderately multiethnic and 11 (29 percent) as low multiethnic. Combining the countries in high and medium categories gives a figure of 28 countries (71 percent) that are substantially multiethnic.

South Africa and Togo illustrate the utility of this classification. South Africa also illustrates the utility of the indices in capturing shifting ethnopolitical cleavages, while Togo illustrates the utility of developing fragmentation indices based on ethnopolitical instead of ethnic groups. In the case of South Africa, the absence of an EGFI index at the first level in Table 2 may, at first blush, seem counterintuitive. But even in the worst days of apartheid, that country never became a deeply-divided society, despite the best efforts of the apartheid government to transform it into, and portray it to the world, as one. The European and African populations manifested sharp internal divisions, while the presence of internally divided “Coloreds” and Asians only added to the ethnopolitical fragmentation. The relatively low EGFI value of 1.66 at the second level of aggregation thus indicates the shifting intra- and inter-ethnic coalitions that were formed in opposition to the varying accommodative and divide-and-rule strategies of the
apartheid regime. The relatively high EGFI value of 7.89 at the third level of aggregation is perhaps a more accurate indicator of the fragmented multiethnic social structure in South Africa that became evident in the lead-up to the breakdown of the apartheid regime and its replacement with a negotiated democratic settlement (Sisk 1995).

Togo registers the same EGFI values at the second as well as the third level of aggregations. The low value of the index (1.82), moreover, is roughly the same as the EGFI values of the deeply-divided societies. However, the principal ethnopolitical cleavage encompasses two broad groups (Ewe and Kabre) that together constitute approximately 67 percent of the country’s population. While each group possesses internal divisions, these are not sufficiently salient to undermine the overall unity of either group. The remaining third of the Togolese population consists of 19 ethnic groups that have no record of utilizing their ethnicity for political mobilization, and have usually allied with one or the other two major groups to advance their interests. Because of their small size, they pose no threat to the political dominance of the two major groups.

Tanzania also shows the utility of relying on ethnopolitical instead of ethnic groups in calculating fragmentation indices. Table 6 shows an EGFI value of 1.06 at the first level of aggregation, which accurately captures the deep but asymmetric division between the mainlanders (who constitute 97 percent of the population) and the Zanzibaris (who constitute 3 percent). The principal political interactions take place between the varied ethnopolitical groups that comprise and divide the mainlanders. Yet this second level divisions among the mainlanders encompasses ten distinct ethnopolitical groups comprising about 40 percent of the population and are neither intensive nor autonomously sustainable. Their small size encourages inter-group cooperation over largely instrumental issues of resource allocation. Moreover, the widespread use of Kiswahili as the lingua franca and the brand of socialism emphasized by Julius Nyerere, the country’s founder and long-time president, have helped to encourage such cooperation and also to diminish the divisive intensity of ethnopolitical demands (McHenry 1994).
EGFI value of 2.85 across the second and third levels of aggregation is thus an accurate indicator of the relatively stable pattern of multiethnic political interactions in Tanzania.

In Table 6, also, the low EGFI values at the second level of aggregation in some multiethnic countries, such as Botswana, Mauritius, and Zimbabwe, encompass inter-ethnic coalitions and intra-ethnic solidarity in national politics. However, as the higher EGFI values at the third level of aggregation in all these cases indicate, such coalitions and solidarity tend to dissipate in the face of changing political situations (the breakdown of intra-Shona and Shona-Ndebele coalitions after the end of the protracted civil war that brought independence to Southern Rhodesia) and shifting issues and arenas of political interactions (local political issues after national elections in Botswana and Mauritius).

Finally, Burkina Faso remains the perennial outlier in attempts to capture the pattern of ethnopolitical fragmentation in Africa. Its EGFI value of 1.00 indicates the fact that the Mossi, who comprise about 50 percent of the population, remain the only salient ethnopolitical group. There are, however, 29 other ethnic groups who comprise the rest of the population, but they apparently have never activated their ethnicity for political purposes.

Finally, Table 8 displays data on the 12 African countries that are actually or potentially deeply divided societies. Of these, four (Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti and Rwanda) identified in the top panel of the table are permanently deeply divided. The EGFI values of all four are the same across all three levels of aggregation, vividly exemplifying that in deeply-divided societies the whole country is dichotomously configured in rigid ethnopolitical cleavages. Seven of the other eight countries have been deeply divided at some points in their histories and have the potential of becoming so again. Their predominant pattern, however, is that of multiethnic societies consistent with the central tendency in Africa. This is reflected in their higher EGFI values at both the second and third levels of aggregation. Finally, in a reverse trend, Sudan, one of Africa’s most multiethnic societies with EGFI = 9.18 at the third level of aggregation, indicates
with great poignancy the human tragedy and the utter futility and brutality of trying to pulverize a multi-ethnic society into a deeply-divided one.

**Table 8 about here**

**CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

In this paper, I have advanced a theoretical framework to clarify the role of agency, and especially of elite interactions, in politicizing the objective social cleavages. In stressing the autonomy of political agency, however, I have drawn on sociological explanations of cleavages pioneered by Lipset and Rokkan (1967) to stress the ways in which social structural configurations both constrain and facilitate the politicization of objective social cleavages. I have also drawn on the insights of more recent scholarship that stress the importance of political factors, specifically, the institutional framework of governance centered around the modern state, to clarify the ways in which political institutions also define the structure of opportunities and constraints on the political mobilization of social cleavages. Finally, I have drawn on the analytical insights of strategic rational choice theory to stress the role of the strategic calculations of political elites in constraining and facilitating how social cleavages are politicized.

Situating the framework in the recent and growing constructivist literature on ethnopolitics, I suggested that two broad theoretical orientations reflecting the ostensibly competing emphases on structure and agency in explanations of human behavior inform the extensive and fragmented constructivist literature. Both orientations, however, mirror each other in their reflexive and over-determined explanations of the construction of ethnopolitical groups and identities. My framework combines these two complementary approaches in a conceptually unified framework that is grounded in the logic of constrained constructivism. Constrained constructivism offers a nuanced and contingent account of how social cleavages are politicized.

In particular, it stresses the importance of three types of constraints in structuring (facilitating and limiting) the construction of ethnopolitical groups and identities. Social
structural constraints refer to the varied objective cultural elements that constitute the raw materials, the potential markers, of ethnicity and, hence, the potential bases for joining individuals characterized by them into solidarity groups. A culturally plural society will typically have a portfolio of these varied ethnic markers, \((x_1, x_2, x_3, \ldots x_n)\), although the variety will not be infinite. Which of these will be activated and in what combinations, however, will depend, in the first instance, on their number, diversity and potential political relevance. They will also depend on the structure of opportunities and constraints defined by the state and the institutional framework of governance. Thus institutional constraints refer to the configuration of rules that both enable social actors to select and activate these markers and define the arenas of social, economic and political interactions in which they are able to do so. Finally, strategic constraints refer to the set of decision costs intrinsic to the process of group formation and identity construction. These include the costs associated with intra-group bargaining and with creating and maintaining group solidarity (Hechter 1987; Olson 1965).

In varied combinations, these three types of constraints structured the construction of ethnic groups and identities and their politicization under colonial rule in Africa. Colonial rule established the initial conditions for ethnic group and identity construction by encouraging African actors to define selected ethnic markers from the existing portfolio of objective cultural elements as sources of new ethnic groups and identities to match the new scale and arenas of social, economic and political interactions defined by colonial rulers. But the coercive authority of the colonial state that determined which of these markers will be selected and activated by African actors, and the administrative imperative of balancing control and cost that led colonial rulers to rely on myriads of local agents to enforce and legitimate colonial rule, heightened the salience of markedly varied, and often conflicting, sources of ethnic group and identity construction, contributing to the creation of fragmented ethnic demography. The demand for constructing larger, more encompassing ethnopolitical groups dictated by the independence bargain in the decolonization phase of colonial rule led to the attempted simplification of the
variegated ethnic demography, but through the construction of ethnopolitical groups as syncretistic aggregations without complete assimilation of smaller and heterogeneous groups. The resulting complexity of ethnopolitical group morphology and the associated politics of communal contention, reinforced by the accommodation of instrumental ethnopolitical demands by post-colonial governments and the high-start up cost of new group and identity construction, discouraged political entrepreneurs from exaggerating the otherwise limited cultural differences among ethnopolitical groups and encouraged them to sustain group solidarity strategically by securing state resources for their followers in return for political support.

Finally, both the data on specific groups of countries and the comparative data that I presented manifest the varied patterns of ethnopolitical cleavages resulting from the political dynamics of constrained constructivism. These variations highlight the important role of agency in the contingent construction of different types of culturally plural societies, for example, multiethnic and deeply divided societies. The logic of constrained constructivism helps to clarify this role. Constrained constructivism motivates a theory of strategic cultural artisanship that situates the otherwise autonomous role of agency in the strategic context defined by the combined effects of (1) the available portfolio of ethnic markers, (2) the centrality of the state in structuring political interactions, and (3) group relations in the struggle for power and resources.

What are the implications of the varied patterns of ethnopolitical cleavages resulting from the process of constrained constructivism? There are quite a few, but I focus on two substantive areas that have attracted much attention of scholars and policymakers recently. The first is the issue of ethnic conflict and conflict management. Despite growing recognition among scholars to the contrary, both scholarly and popular (especially journalistic) discourses continue to assert an inexorable link between cultural diversity and ethnic conflict. These assertions are based on what Tversky and Kahneman (1982) call the heuristic of availability. Accordingly, such assertions about Africa almost invariably cite the readily available examples of the Biafran war in Nigeria, the North-South conflict in the Sudan, and the Hutu-Tutsi violence in Rwanda and Burundi as
evidence of ethnic conflict as endemic in Africa, when in reality they are the exceptions. For instance, Fearon and Laitin (1996, 2000: 225) systematically examined the existence of neighboring ethnic dyads as a “reasonable indicator of potential ethnic conflicts” in African countries between 1960-1979 and found that the probability of any two such groups to be involved in conflict approached zero.

Juxtaposing the three exceptional cases with the Fearon and Laitin analysis does, however, suggest the greater probability of violent conflicts in deeply-divided societies. The data presented in Table 8 show Rwanda and Burundi to be permanently deeply-divided societies and Sudan to be deeply divided only along the North-South axis. The Biafran war had more complex origins in the context of a potential North-South divide alongside the broad division in the South between the Yorubas and the Ibos. But the Biafran war and the ethnopolitical configuration that facilitated it were only brief outliers in postcolonial Nigerian history. As Table 2 shows, significant intra-regional and intra-ethnic heterogeneity, combined with the largely successful attempts by every post-Biafra Nigerian regime to scrupulously counteract the emergence of the deep divisions of the early years, have transformed Nigeria into one of the most complex multiethnic societies in Africa. Similarly, Bates (1999: 26-27) reports that the link between ethnic diversity and violence is not straightforward, but centers around a “red zone” in which the probability of violence as “the largest ethnic group reaches 50% or more of the population” and attempts to exclude competitors from access to power and resources. The Fearon and Laitin data, on the other hand, highlight the dominant multiethnic patterns of African countries captured by the data reported in Table 7. While not entirely devoid of conflict or violence, multiethnic societies are perhaps less prone to (especially large-scale) violence, not only because the very heterogeneity of the groups militates against it but also because the formal and informal mechanisms of intra-ethnic “self-policing” as well as inter-ethnic networks that help to preempt inter-communal violence are easier to design and sustain in smaller and locally focused ethnic groups (Fearon and Laitin 1996; Varshney 2001).
The difficulty of constructing and sustaining these mechanisms of moderation in large ethnopolitical groups that typically define deeply-divided societies, however, is only part of the explanation for the proneness of these societies to violence. The connection between the ethnopolitical group configuration of deeply-divided societies and violent conflict, in other words, is not an inexorable one. To be sure, the dichotomous cleavage structure permits a zero-sum definition of the political game and sharpens the perception of the security dilemma (Posen 1993) that is considered to motivate violent ethnic conflict. But the mechanism linking these facilitating conditions to violent outcomes and the accompanying failure to build (or the destruction of existing) internal mechanisms of moderation are exclusively a function of strategic cultural artisanship. Such artisanship is facilitated in large groups by characteristic information asymmetries between leaders and followers that enable the former to communicate in extremist unmediated rhetoric aimed at primordializing otherwise fluid identities and demonizing the “ethnic other” (Bates, De Figueredo and Weingast 1998; De Figueiredo and Weingast 1999). Yet the goal of this rhetoric to deepen and “freeze” the existing inter-ethnic cleavage is likely to be threatened by the fluidity of ethnic identities and intra-ethnic divisions. So, just as the limits of strategic rationality motivates the intellectual bricolage of inventing traditions, the imperative of primordialization dictates the use of violence against the “ethnic us” to maintain intra-ethnic solidarity against the “ethnic other.” Thus in the first few hours of the brutal genocide in Rwanda in 1994, the Hutu extremists who launched the genocide against the Tutsis, killed virtually all of the moderate Hutu leaders who a year earlier had signed the Arusha Declaration that implemented a power-sharing arrangement between the Hutus and the Tutsis.

But what role do followers play in the transformation of a multiethnic society into a deeply-divided one? Fearon and Laitin (2000), based on their review of six books on ethnic conflict worldwide, suggest one plausible answer. The “strategic action on the ground” is motivated not so much by the sympathy of ordinary people with the rhetoric and appeal of the leaders, although that is likely, but by the opportunity created by the accompanying political
turbulence to pursue individual, localized goals and agendas, in the process redefining group boundaries and identities. Another plausible reason is suggested by the “tipping” model first identified by Schelling (1978) and employed with great analytical force by Laitin (1998, 1999) to account for both the failure of the Russian language to replace the titular languages in Estonia and Latvia during communist rule and the prospects for the adoption of the titular languages by the Russian-speaking minorities in those states today. In the tipping model, shift from language A to language B, for example, evolves slowly at first up to a point at which the growing number of former language A speakers now speaking language B as the primary language begin to tip the shift in favor of language B, prompting a cascading effect that eventually leads to the replacement of language A by language B. In utilizing the tipping model to account for “on the ground” individual action in transforming a multiethnic society to a deeply-divided one, the social construction (or reconstruction) of identity can be modeled as a coordination game in which the strategic logic motivating the cascading effect is that each individual decides to align with the constructed “ethnic us” against the constructed “ethnic other” because she thinks that the other members of the “ethnic us” will do so as well, or, more accurately, that she thinks that the other members of the “ethnic us” think that she will do so as well.

The second substantive area where the analysis of this paper has important implications is the issue of institutional design in accommodating ethnic conflicts, especially in the context of democratic transitions and consolidation. At the most general level, attention to the difference between multiethnic and deeply-divided societies in designing institutions acknowledges the usually unexplored significance of the conception (perhaps even a vision) of society that underpins all political institutions. Context, in other words, shapes the design and mediates the direct effects of political institutions, although it does not determine either. For example, power sharing (Sisk 1996) is now widely acknowledged as an important ingredient in mitigating ethnic conflicts, especially in the aftermath of extended civil wars. Yet, the logic of power sharing is premised on the ethnopolitical configuration of a deeply-divided society, a perfectly reasonable
premise in post-civil war situations in which they are recommended. Yet, power sharing in post-
civil war situations is at best an interim solution, since its continuation is likely to ‘freeze’ the deep
cleavages that either precipitated the war or were produced by it. The alternative to power
sharing, of course, is multiethnic coalitions premised on a different conception of culturally plural
societies. The daunting challenge confronting institutional designers in conflict situations
featuring deeply-divided ethnopolitical groups is to both secure the cessation of armed hostilities
in the short run (likely to be facilitated by power sharing) and ensure the stability of the peace
settlement in the long run (likely to be facilitated by multiethnic coalitions). In this respect, the
negotiated interim constitution that ended apartheid and brought majority rule in South Africa
may very well stand as a unique achievement unlikely to be easily replicated elsewhere.

A second area where the systematic understanding of the difference between multiethnic
and deeply-divided societies may prove fruitful is in the design of electoral systems. Here again,
the tendency among many, but not all, scholars to reflexively favor some form of proportional
representation (PR) system for culturally plural societies seems somewhat misguided. It is likely
the case that a proportional representation system with its emphasis on centrally controlled party
list system and large multimember districts may be more conducive to the rigid ethnopolitical
configuration of deeply-divided societies, or societies that approximate such configuration on a
continuum from deeply-divided to multiethnic societies. On the other hand, electoral systems
with single-member districts (SMDs) and plurality formulas may be more compatible with the
fragmented ethnopolitical configuration of multiethnic societies. Such systems are especially
useful in facilitating the face-to-face interactions and accountability in the context of intra-ethnic
heterogeneity and the accompanying salience of local issues that are typically found in
multiethnic societies.

Malawi and Namibia attest to these varied links between ethnopolitical context and
institutional design and outcomes. Both countries have virtually identical electoral outcomes
with respect to the proportionality between votes and seats and the victory of major parties in the
national legislature. Yet, Malawi has an SMD plurality system (which usually produces the highest amount of vote-seat disproportionality worldwide) and Namibia has one the most proportional of the PR systems in the world. The ethnopolitical configuration of the two countries accounts for the similar outcomes of their different institutional designs. In Malawi, the three major ethnopolitical groups are each concentrated in a separate region, and thus vote as regional blocks to dominate the seats in their home regions. In fact, their vote and seat distributions correspond roughly to the EGFI value of 2.3 at the second level of aggregation. But each ethnopolitical group and region is also internally divided, and the locally focused SMD system permits the accommodation of the resulting intra-ethnic and intra-regional heterogeneity.

In Namibia, the 72 national legislative seats are allocated in a single nationwide electoral district by PR formula. This design along with a host of others was negotiated as part of the civil war settlement in 1989, and the proportional electoral outcomes since then have routinely reflected the broad-based national-level ethnic coalitions around which electoral competition is organized. Interestingly, however, Namibia is also very highly fragmented at the lower third level of aggregation (EGFI = 9.91, compared to EGFI = 3.46 at the second level of aggregation), which has engendered considerable and eventually successful pressure on central party elites to relax control of candidate nomination and to change the PR system to an SMD system for regional council elections. These pressures came from candidates running for regional councils who felt unable to respond to the pressures for accountability and pork-barrel servicing from their heterogeneous and predominantly rural constituents, and, as a result, saw their local authority steadily eroded by the national party elites’ control over them.

Recent research based on systematic data attests to the empirical relevance of these complex connections between variations in ethnopolitical configurations and variations in the institutional design and political outcomes in Africa’s emerging democracies (Mozaffar 1997, 1998, 1999, 2004, 2006; Mozaffar, Scarritt and Galaich 2001). A particularly crucial insight gained from this research is that, contrary to the many offhanded assertions often cavalierly
thrown about by many academic and popular commentators, multiethnic societies conduce to
democratic survival. Deeply-divided societies do not.
REFERENCES


Fearon, James D. 1999. “What is Identity (As We Now Use the Word)” Typescript.


Mozaffar, Shaheen, and James R. Scarritt. 2007. “Patterns of Ethnopolitical Cleavages in Africa, manuscript in progress”


Marx and Weber, of course, offered the classic statements about the relationship between social differentiations and politics. Dahrendorf (1967) offered a synthesis of their insights by combining Marx’s narrower focus on the economic position of class as the wellspring of revolutionary politics with Weber’s broader concern with distribution in political authority linked to both social and economic status differences as the source of political conflict (Zuckerman 1975).

Primordialism, however, continues to be employed with varying degrees of analytical rigor by some scholars who acknowledge the situational activation of pre-existing ethnic identities but stress the immutability of these identities once they are acquired and activated (see, for example, Esman 1994; Reilly 2001; Roeder 2000; Van Evera 2001). To be fair, Roeder, who is otherwise aware of the problems with primordialism, uses it as a methodological artifact to examine ethnic-based behavior as if individuals treated their ethnic identities as fixed, in much the same way as many economists treat maximizing behavior as if individuals were behaving rationally. For an earlier crude version of primordialism, see Isaacs (1975). For a recent and particularly odious, use of it, see Vanhanen (1999).

For a preliminary exposition of the relationship of these three processes identified in Figure 1, see Mozaffar and Scarritt (2002). The three processes are analogous to Stoll’s (2004) conceptualization of latent, politicized and particized cleavages. Stoll also identifies a two-step process involving first the transformation of latent cleavages into politicized cleavages and then conversion of politicized cleavages into particized cleavages. I argue that ethncization is itself is a distinct step that involves the self-conscious activation of object ethnic markers as the bases of group formation. Conceptually, it precedes politicization, although empirically the two processes occur simultaneously.

Laitin’s (1986, 1998) excellent works remain singular exceptions to this statement.

Fearon, relying on ordinary language usage, explicates this formulation in an excellent piece, “What is Identity (As We Now Use the Word?).” The formulation emphasizes two aspects of identity as a social category, a social aspect (which we use here) and a personal aspect (which we do not). In the latter sense, personal identity is something in which the individual takes special pride or views it as more or less unchangeable. See also Fearon and Laitin (2000: 848-849). I thank Professor Fearon for providing us with this unpublished manuscript and am solely responsible for the use I make of it here.

“Institutional completeness” refers to the extent to which the set of membership rules and ascriptive markers that distinguish an ethnic group make the group the exclusive source of its members’ social and economic needs. Ceteris paribus, the greater the institutional completeness of the group the greater the dependence of social actors on it for their life chances. For explication of the concept of institutional completeness, see Breton (1964) and Stinchcombe (1975, 601-606).

As mentioned above, however, the local social organizations and corresponding identities were only syncretistically merged, without total assimilation, into the larger constructed ethnopolitical groups.

Institutions … are founded [on analogy] with nature and, therefore, in reason. Being naturalized, they are part of the order of the universe and so are ready to stand as grounds for argument … By using formal analogies that entrench an abstract structure of social conventions in an abstract structure imposed upon nature, institutions grow past the initial difficulties of collective action … [T]he logically prior question, [then], is how individuals ever agree that any two things are similar and dissimilar. Where does sameness reside? The answer has to be that sameness is conferred on the mixed bundles of items that count as members of a category; their sameness is conferred and fixed by institutions (Douglass 1986; 53).

Hechter (1987) offers a very useful exposition of the strategic logic that underpins the formation and maintenance of group solidarity.

For useful theoretical expositions of the organizational logic of collective action described here, see Oliver and Marwell 1988; Oliver, Marwell, and Prahl 1988; Oliver, Marwell, and Teixera 1985. Of course, Olson (1965) remains the classic.

This is the typical dilemma faced by African-American leaders in maintaining the leadership of their dispersed constituencies. If mobilization on purely instrumental grounds is effective in securing benefits for the constituents, the beneficiaries have no incentive in supporting the leaders, especially if the benefits lead to social mobility. Hence, the construction of multiculturalism as a means to maintain the political influence of now reconstituted, and self-appointed, cultural entrepreneurs. A more direct political strategy, of course, is the demand for majority-minority electoral districts premised on presumed correlation between cultural affinity and bloc voting.

This dataset was developed as part of my larger collaborative project work with Scarritt on the comparative analysis of ethnopolitical cleavages in Africa. The analytical (conceptual, theoretical and methodological) issues that motivate the project, the data collection and the data set are elaborated in Mozaffar 2001; Mozaffar and Scarritt 2002, 2007; Mozaffar, Scarritt and Galaich 2003; Scarritt and Mozaffar 1999.
Figure 1: Ethnicization, Politicization, Participation

- Objective Ethnic Markers:
  - Race
  - Language
  - Religion
  - Caste
  - Tribe
  - Etc.
Figure 2
The Logic of Constrained Constructivism

- Pre-Colonial and Colonial History
- Social Structural Constraints
- Strategic Constraints
- Institutional Constraints
- Strategic Cultural Artisanship
- Ethnopolitical Group Formation and Identity Construction
Table 1. Ethnopolitical Cleavage Patterns in Burundi and Rwanda*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnopolitical Groups (%)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>BURUNDI</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hutu-Twa (80%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutsi (18%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL EGFI = 1.43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RWANDA</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hutu-Twa (90%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutsi (10%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL EGFI = 1.22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Population percentages are in parentheses.
Table 2. Ethnopolitical Cleavage Patterns in Nigeria*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnopolitical Groups (%)</th>
<th>North</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hausa-Fulani (32%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sokoto coalition (14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kano coalition (13.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bororo (1.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle Belt (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adamawa (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Idoma-Igala/Igbirra (2.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nupe (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tiv (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kanuri (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yoruba (21%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ekiti (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Egba (1.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ijebu (1.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oyo (7.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ibo (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anambra (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ibibio/Efik/Ijaw (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ibibio (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ijaw (1.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ogoni/Oil Minorities (0.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anang (1.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Edo (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urhobo (1.5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

First Level EGFI = 2.00

Second Level EGFI = 4.96

TOTAL EGFI = 12.01

*Population percentages are in parentheses
Table 3. Ethnopolitical Cleavage Patterns in Angola*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnopolitical Groups (%)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ovimbundu-Ovambo</td>
<td>(38%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mbundu/Mesticos</td>
<td>(26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakongo</td>
<td>(11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabindan Mayombe</td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunda-Chokwe</td>
<td>(9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nganguela</td>
<td>(8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Approx. 9 Nyaneka-Humbe groups]

EGFI = 3.70
TOTAL EGFI = 3.70

*Population percentages are in parentheses
Table 4. Ethnopolitical Cleavage Patterns in Zambia*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnopolitical Groups (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bemba Speakers-(Mambwe) (43%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bemba-Bisa (22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luapula (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamba-Lala (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Mambwe) (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonga-Ila-Lenje (19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyanja Speakers- (Tumbuka) (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chewa-Ngoni (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kunda (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Tumbuka) (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunda-Kaonde (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunda (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louvale (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaonde (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barotse (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loci (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Nkoya) (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EGFI = 3.65
TOTAL EGFI = 7.14

*Population percentages are in parentheses
Table 5. Ethnopolitical Cleavage Patterns in Gabon*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnopolitical Groups (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fang (30.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eshira (20.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bapounu (2.50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M’bete (15.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koto (13.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omyene (5.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mpongwe (1.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duma (5.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsogo (5.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teke (5.00)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \text{EGFI = 5.35} \]

\[ \text{TOTAL EGFI = 5.65} \]

*Population percentages are in parentheses.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>First Level</th>
<th>Second Level</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>3.6970</td>
<td>3.6970</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>1.7241</td>
<td>3.0085</td>
<td>7.8585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>1.5109</td>
<td>6.5210</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burkina Faso</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>1.4283</td>
<td>1.4283</td>
<td>1.4283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>5.7280</td>
<td>6.7422</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
<td>2.7996</td>
<td>2.7996</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chad</td>
<td>2.5196</td>
<td>2.5407</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comoros</td>
<td>1.1497</td>
<td>1.1497</td>
<td>1.1497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo (Democratic Republic)</td>
<td>6.0930</td>
<td>9.0360</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo</td>
<td>4.5033</td>
<td>4.7370</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Djibouti</td>
<td>1.9563</td>
<td>1.9563</td>
<td>1.9563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Côte d’Ivoire</td>
<td>3.1711</td>
<td>3.4405</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equatorial Guinea</td>
<td>1.2321</td>
<td>1.9101</td>
<td>1.9101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>2.1636</td>
<td>2.7293</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>3.6401</td>
<td>3.9550</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabon</td>
<td>5.3534</td>
<td>5.6544</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambia</td>
<td>3.0900</td>
<td>3.0900</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>2.7298</td>
<td>4.8140</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea</td>
<td>2.8227</td>
<td>2.8227</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea-Bissau</td>
<td>1.1050</td>
<td>2.3375</td>
<td>5.2521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>5.9783</td>
<td>9.5421</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>4.1391</td>
<td>4.1391</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madagascar</td>
<td>5.4053</td>
<td>5.4053</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>2.3010</td>
<td>5.7604</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>3.5520</td>
<td>3.3754</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritania</td>
<td>1.3676</td>
<td>2.6624</td>
<td>2.6624</td>
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Table 7 Patterns of Multiethnic Societies in 38 African Countries Based on Difference Between EPGFI Values at the Second and Third Levels of Aggregation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Multiethnic (N=10)</th>
<th>Medium Multiethnic (N=17)</th>
<th>Low Multiethnic (N=11)</th>
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<td>Chad</td>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea-Bissau</td>
<td>Congo (Democratic Republic)</td>
<td>Equatorial Guinea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Congo</td>
<td>Gambia</td>
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<td>Côte d'Ivoire</td>
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<td>Zambia</td>
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</table>

*High = the difference in EGFI values between the second and third level is ≥ 50%.  Moderate = the difference in EPGFI values between the second and third level is ≤ 49%.  Low = no difference in EGFI values between the second and third levels.*
Table 8 Measuring Deeply-Divided Societies in 12 African Countries*

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<th>Total</th>
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<td>9.1770</td>
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*Cell entries are EGFI values measuring First Level fragmentation, second level fragmentation, and Total fragmentation