**The Impact of Ethnic Discrimination on National and Ethnic Identity in Africa: A Comparison between Kenya and Tanzania**

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In the international system, the nation-state is regarded as the main body for forming political organisations, largely due to its historical success in Europe and the West. As a result, post-colonial African states were expected to follow a similar trajectory - homogenising existing diverse ethnic groups to build national identities [7]. For the leaders of newly independent African states, nation-building became the primary concern, as national identity was considered a prerequisite for political stability, economic development, and collective national goals [6]. However, the nature of the African continent differs significantly from that of Europe and the West. The modern African state emerged not through organic national consolidations but as a result of colonial rivalries, conquests by the then-European powers, and arbitrary border demarcations. These demarcations often split single ethnic groups across the borders of multiple colonies, and more often than not, multiple ethnic groups were in the same nation [5].

Consequently, while the nation-state model in Europe has developed over centuries, many African nations are still in the early stages of forming cohesive national identities. Ethnic identities remain deeply rooted, often taking precedence over national identities in the political and social landscape. In fact, Africa is home to the world's 20 most ethnically diverse countries [2]. With the notable exception of Tanzania, often cited as an example of successful nation-building, most post-colonial African states are still multi-ethnic rather than unified nation-states, still struggling to balance ethnic identity with national identity [7]. One of the major challenges these nations face is unravelling the richness of ethnic diversity and constructing a national identity that is inclusive of all people [1], with ethnic discrimination being one of the leading causes.

According to the Rejection-Identification Model (RIM), derived from the Social Identity Theory (SIT), perceived discrimination has a direct negative effect on self-esteem and an indirect effect caused by the strengthening of minority identities [3]. Molina et al. (2014) demonstrated that ethnic minorities with higher levels of perceived discrimination tend to show lower levels of national identity and higher levels of ethnic identity. In contrast the majority of group members that have higher forms of discrimination show a higher level of national identity with little influence on ethnic identity [4].

This model has primarily been applied to marginalised groups in nation-states that are not historically theirs, such as Latinos and Black populations in the United States and Europe [8]. However, it has not been applied to societies characterised by extensive ethnic diversity and history, such as many African societies. In these societies, many ethnic groups consider the nation-state theirs historically since they were all forcefully grouped together by the colonial masters.

To test the validity of this model, we compare Kenya and Tanzania, two African countries that provide an ideal comparative framework due to their shared colonial history, economic and demographic similarities, and clearly different ethnic diversities.

This study employed a quantitative research approach, utilising data from Afrobarometer Wave 8. A multinomial regression analysis was conducted to examine how perceived discrimination influences national and ethnic identity across African nations. Our findings showed that this model was valid in both societies, revealing that Kenyans and Tanzanians identify more with their ethnic identity than national identity when faced with persistent ethnic discrimination.

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