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## **Ethnicity, Ethnicism and Citizenship: A Philosophical Reflection on the African Experience**

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**ABSTRACT** The concept of ethnicity continues to attract lots of debates and intellectual analyses. Termed the resilient paradigm, ethnicity accounts for a greater percentage of the analyses by scholars on the problems confronting Africa. Problems such as conflict, violence, corruption and democratic problematic are often attributed to the resilience of ethnicity. This paper attempts to show that whereas the concept of ethnicity has been dubbed evil it is an innocent phenomenon. The paper discovers that ethnicity, as a concept, is politically neutral. Ethnicity is a biological term, connoting the absence of a deliberate choice. It is the politicisation of our origin, root, etc., especially for the purpose of political advantage that results in inter-ethnic opposition, hindered group interaction and political conflict. The paper further argued that, in the bid to control and dominate the state, what result is the 'politicisation of ethnicity'. The paper concluded that the politicisation of ethnicity should not be considered a constant factor in every plural setting, although the potential for it may be present. What activates this potential differs from one setting to the other but, essentially, they are variables contingent upon other factors that can be distinguished one from the other.

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