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Universidad
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Navarra Center for
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**Navarra Center for International Development,
Institute for Culture and Society
University of Navarra**

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Nicolas Berman - Natural resources and ethnic identity

We document the malleability of ethnic group identification to economic shocks. We combine individual data on ethnic identification from multiple waves of the Afrobarometer surveys with geolocalized information on the contours of ethnic homelands and on the location and intensity of natural resources extraction in Africa. We study how natural resources affect the extent of ethnic (versus national) identification.

Our strategy makes use of different dimensions of exposure to natural resources: time, spatial proximity, and ethnic proximity. We show that an individual's ethnic feelings get reinforced when natural resources activity increases in the homeland of his ethnic group. This result holds when controlling for local natural resources, and for individuals leaving outside their ethnic homeland. We then turn to the potential channels explaining this increase in ethnic identification, by estimating the effect of natural resources in the ethnic homeland of an individual on his perceptions of relative deprivation and persecution, economic conditions and trust.