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Trends. History and the Consequences of Political Boundaries in Africa

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One very common "truth" about Africa is that much of its military, politico-military, political, and economic conflict stems from arbitrary or inappropriate political boundaries effected by the European colonial powers. These boundaries allegedly segmented "naturally occurring" ethnic groups and tribes and threw together different groups and tribes—all in a conflictogenic manner. This "truth" has an attractive or unattractive feature—depending on one's political persuasion—of attributing blame away from the perpetrators of conflict as well as those caught up in such conflict.