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A Teaching Roundtable

Teaching Nationalism in IR

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INTRODUCTION BY MARY ANNE S. MENDOZA, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, IRVINE

Scholars of nationalism are familiar with the different ways to define their object of study. Benedict Anderson's conception of a nation is of an "imagined community" in which most will not meet their fellow members, yet they still share a "deep, horizontal comradeship."¹ One way to think about nationalism, then, is in pursuit of this unit. This understanding is reflected in Ernest Gellner's definition of nationalism as a "political principle" in which the "political and the national unit should be congruent" and Andreas Wimmer's more recent iteration of the desire for the "rule of like over like."²

Students, however, may grow frustrated at the variety of definitions. What distinguishes nationalism from its closer counterparts, such as patriotism, or more nefarious manifestations like xenophobia? Furthermore, why does it matter?

Convincing students that this matters may be easy in a course on Comparative Politics. Nationalism takes a clear stance on "who belongs," especially when it influences the metrics of citizenship.³ But the internal workings of states also influence the relationships between them. Not all nations seek their own states, which prompts Montserrat Guibernau to distinguish between the needs of "nations without states" and those that seek general autonomy.⁴ The nations that do seek statehood pose a serious challenge to existing state borders, demonstrating that nationalism does belong in the realm of International Relations (IR) as well.

The contributions in this roundtable provide ways to approach both the content and method of teaching nationalism. They address two issues: the place of nationalism in courses about International Relations, and how instructors can teach this topic.

Rather than clashing, each of the essays in this roundtable contributes to a more holistic approach towards including nationalism in courses on International Relations. Danielle Gilbert argues that nationalism matters in IR since it increasingly leads to international conflict, and presents a discussion and group project component to teach it. Emir Yazici considers two content-related challenges for how to teach the different types of nationalism and how to distinguish them from similar concepts. When it comes to using active learning, instructors can adopt a general approach such as the one advocated by Charmaine Willis: discussion questions based on everyday life which build upon a cultural perspective on nationalism that is established in lecture. Instructors seeking a more specific case approach can adopt Allen Carlson's two-step process that can help students specifically consider the role nationalism plays in understanding China's relationship with the rest of the international community.

Bringing Nationalism into IR

¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso: 1983), 7.

² Ernest Gellner, *Nations and nationalism*, vol. 1. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983).

Andreas Wimmer, *Waves Of War: Nationalism, State Formation, And Ethnic Exclusion In The Modern World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

³ For example, see Sara Wallace Goodman, "Integration Requirements for Integration's Sake? Identifying, Categorising and Comparing Civic Integration Policies," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 36:5 (2010): 753-772.

⁴ Montserrat Guibernau, "Nationalism without States," in John Breuilly, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

Despite its domestic origins, nationalism has the potential to increase and intensify international conflict. In order to accommodate the pursuit of self-rule, existing states must yield their sovereignty. This is because nationalism emphasizes the importance of a group being able to control its own political fate within a given territory. But in doing so, states give up not only territory but also the resources, influence, and business that are located there. This serves a considerable blow to state capacity and legitimacy, which is amplified when a state is already facing considerable challengers from other states or internal threats. States rarely give up sovereignty over their territory willingly. Thus, nations need to fight for it.

The fight of a nation to secure its own independent state, or at the very least increased autonomy, brings in more actors. The home state most certainly has stakes in securing its borders. Gilbert's contribution points out that nationalism not only influences the re-drawing of borders, but also "[re-defining] who belongs inside of them." The importance of a state's borders plays directly into its claim to sovereignty. As much as IR focuses on the importance of Westphalian understandings of sovereignty, Carlson notes that "without nationalism, and the claims it makes upon the division of space within the contemporary international system, sovereignty itself would be largely meaningless." IR instructors do both the discipline and their students a disservice by focusing on only one part of the sovereignty-nationalism dyad.

On one hand, it is clear why nationalism fits in neatly into Comparative Politics since nations pose an internal challenge to state sovereignty. As Carlson notes, IR has "generally neglected the issue of nationalism," especially when considering Realism's emphasis on materialism and rationalism, which limits the relevance of nationalism. When Catalonia held what the Spanish state considered an 'illegal referendum' in October 2017, the Spanish state deployed police forces. Ballot boxes were seized, voters were dragged from polling stations, and police forces fired rubber bullets into crowds. After the Catalan Parliament proceeded with a vote to declare Catalonia's independence from Spain, the Spanish state dissolved it. Nationalism as an internal problem also manifests itself when colonies consider statehood. Prior to Burma's independence, one of its key military leaders, General Aung San, met with leaders of different ethnic minorities for the purpose of alleviating their concerns about inclusion. Publicly, Aung San emphasized the need for cooperation between Burma's different nationalities. Privately, he wrote letters to Karen leaders stating his refusal for ethnic quotas.⁵ Both of these examples reflect the importance of identity-based factors that would fall outside of the scope of Realism.

On the other hand, nationalism can pose challenges outside of the home state that make it an important force in IR. A European Arrest Warrant, which is valid in all member-states of the European Union (EU), was issued for former Catalan President Carles Puigdemont. This indicates that nationalism in this case is no longer a single-state issue. While political officials in different European states made statements condemning Spain's response, the EU remained steadfast in its stance that Catalonia's independence was an issue for Spain. The issue highlights the salience of relations between states, particularly since other EU member-states like Belgium and Italy have their own regions which are seeking independence. The issue also highlights the importance of areas such as international law, in which the EU's Lisbon Treaty emphasizes recognition of "essential state functions, including ensuring the territorial integrity."⁶ Nationalism in IR also provides a way to consider the onset and duration of violent conflict. Soon after Burma's independence, which did not provide for an independent Karen state, the Karen National Union (KNU) rebelled. The KNU celebrated 70 years of fighting the Burmese state in 2019. Funding for KNU activities also involved actions along the Thai-Burma border, influencing relations between the two states in formal and informal ways. These examples underscore the ways in which nationalism influences IR, both in terms of international organizations and conflict.

An important caveat is that not all forms of nationalism lead to international conflict. Yazici emphasizes how only a certain type, irredentist nationalism, triggers conflict but only under certain conditions. Including nationalism, either in terms of

⁵ Hugh Tinker, *Burma: The Struggle for Independence, 1944-48* (London: H.M.S.O., 1984), 446.

⁶ Foreign and Commonwealth Office London, "Consolidated Texts of the EU Treaties as Amended by the Treaty of Lisbon," (Crown Copyright, 2008)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/228848/7310.pdf.

types or which conditions are more likely to result in war-prone nations, offers IR instructors a way to emphasize how political scientists make arguments.

Bringing Nationalism into the IR Classroom

Content

There are different ways to teach nationalism, and courses often devote several lectures to its definition and type. But how should IR instructors incorporate the topic into a single lecture or week? As Gilbert notes, it is common in CP courses for instructors to focus on the causes of nationalism. Willis proposes understanding the relationship between identity and nationalism, especially through how primordialism and social constructivism explain the ties that contribute to or lessen loyalty to a nation. Yazici considers types of nationalism: as a dichotomy of civic or ethnic nationalism, a spectrum of levels of inclusion and exclusion, or specific types such as white or irredentist nationalism.

Distinguishing nationalism from similar concepts offers a second way to incorporate it into a courses. This reflects Gerring's criterion of differentiation for "conceptual goodness," in which a concept is properly distinguished from other similar concepts.⁷ Yazici's approach involves differentiating nationalism from patriotism, xenophobia, and populism. It matters that our students can do this not only for their exams, but also because such distinctions matter for policy implications. Willis takes this point further by arguing that understanding the foundation of nationalist rhetoric also helps scholars understand why national appeals are so persuasive.

Guiding Questions

One way to guide the discussion is through a series of questions. These questions can range from everyday experiences to a specific case. The approach advocated by Willis involves focusing on how everyday experiences reinforce what students learn from themes from lecture. While her example turns to travel and sports, instructors can tailor their lesson plans to topics that are more familiar for them. Carlson moves in a more pointed direction, asking students to consider a two-step process concerning questions about China that moves from a normative framing to an analytical approach (descriptive or causal). Instructors can switch out the case of China for a different state or even an international organization. Gilbert's four questions strike a balance in the middle: establishing a shared understanding of events before an application of existing theories. Even when the focus of the lecture is on definitions, such as through Yazici's coverage of concepts similar to nationalism, instructors can ask students to take a step back and consider the limitations of each definition and why this matters. It is important that those who include questions in the classroom do so for a deliberate reason that is obvious to the students. Instructors should be mindful about the ways in which questions can facilitate a discussion that reinforces material from lecture or the readings rather than simply having a discussion for the sake of filling time.

Active Learning

Varying methods of assessment is a valuable pedagogical skill. In some cases, it may be prudent to move away from exams. Students can work on a collaborative podcast, applying concepts in a manner that practices skills of oral communication. Working in groups can also provide a way for students to practice cooperation, a relevant skill in many work places. Willis moves more towards including games and simulations. These exercises can help students practice the concepts covered in lecture more easily.

Gilbert proposes that students write a policy piece or op-ed that can be published online. These kinds of assignments allow students to still demonstrate critical thinking and analysis in a different way. It also provides a way to prepare students for

⁷ John Gerring, "What Makes A Concept Good? A Criterial Framework For Understanding Concept Formation In The Social Sciences," *Polity* 31:3 (1999): 357-393.

skills that may be more relevant in their field of work while also providing something for their CVs. Carlson's second step also provides policy-oriented implications from which students can work. This allows instructors to bridge the gap between assessments both inside and outside of the classroom.

Conclusion

The contributions in this roundtable provide not only a blueprint for how to teach nationalism but also a foundation for thinking about other content and methods to tailor to their own teaching and institutional preferences. There is no single way to design a course or plan a lesson. Moreover, there is more than one right way to do so. What matters is that instructors think deliberately about the ways in which students can learn, focusing on multiple methods of assessment to address different learning styles. Such consideration is a service for students not only in class but also in the workplace and beyond.

Participants:

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Danielle Gilbert is a Ph.D. Candidate at George Washington University, where she is also a Fellow with the Institute of Security and Conflict Studies. In 2019, she won George Washington University's "Best Instructor in Political Science" award for her undergraduate Nationalism course. As a fellow with the Bridging the Gap Project, she manages the annual New Era Workshop. Her research on hostage taking by armed groups has been supported by the Cosmos Club, James W. Foley Legacy Foundation, and the United States Institute of Peace. Danielle's work has been published in *Terrorism and Political Violence*, *Political Violence @ a Glance*, *Just Security*, *War on the Rocks*, and the *Washington Post*.

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Charmaine Willis is a Ph.D. candidate and instructor at the University at Albany (SUNY)'s Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy. Her research primarily focuses on U.S. base politics, social movements, civil society, and political violence. Her dissertation project examines the role of framing and frame resonance in anti-US-military activism in Japan, South Korea and the Philippines. In addition to teaching courses on nationalism, comparative politics and international relations, she has published a variety of peer-reviewed pedagogical pieces including her most recent piece, "System, State, or Individual: Gaming Levels of Analysis in International Relations," published in *International Studies Perspectives* with Victor Asal and Inga Miller.

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ESSAY BY ALLEN CARLSON, CORNELL UNIVERSITY

As a student of international relations who focuses primarily on issues related to Asian security and China's foreign and national security policy, my seminars and lectures often involves considerations of nationalism. Simply put, I believe it is impossible to understand China's relationship with the world, or the evolving security dynamic within Asia, without reference to the role of nationalism. Over the years I have developed a two-step process for teaching this perspective to my students.

First, I call attention to the fact that, apart from a handful of notable exceptions, the field of international relations historically neglected the issue of nationalism.⁸ The claim is purposively broad and made with the intention to demonstrate to students how such a dearth of scholarship limits the field's ability to describe and explain foundational aspects of international politics.

Along these lines I first posit to students that scholars working within the realist tradition have generally tended to eschew nationalism in favor of a focus upon the distribution of power within the system and the manner in which states (or, more precisely their leaders) calculate interests within such a structure.⁹ Realism, not to put too fine of a point on it, sees the world through the dual lenses of materialism and rationalism. Within such a prism nationalism is of limited consequence. I do not contend that realists make no mention of nationalism in their work, but rather that they tend to see it largely as noise. It produces more smoke than actual fire on the world stage.¹⁰

I then point out that one might expect that the broad array of scholars who have criticized realism for its exclusion of the role that ideational factors play in international relations would have devoted a great deal more attention to nationalism in their scholarship than realists have tended to do. Yet that they have not prioritized such a move in their work. Instead, they have generally concentrated on international norms and the extent to which they modify the anarchic nature of international politics. Their search has tended to bring inclusive forms of collective identity, those that surpass the nation, into the study of international politics, rather than those exclusionary identities that form within them.¹¹

Such a portrait of the field is not presented as exhaustive, and I complement it with an acknowledgement that a new generation of international relations scholars has begun to grapple with nationalism.¹² However, I also pair such

⁸ For an important example of such an exception see, James Mayall, *Nationalism and International Society*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

⁹ Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle For Power And Peace*, 4th ed. (New York: A. A. Knopf: 1968); Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw-Hill: 1979).

¹⁰ For partial exceptions to this trend see John Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War," *International Security* 15:1 (1990): 5-56; and, Stephen Van Evera, "Hypotheses on Nationalism and War," *International Security* 18:4 (1994): 26-33. Also, more recently, see John Mearsheimer, *The Great Delusion: Liberal Dreams and International Realities* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018).

¹¹ Most notably see Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: 1999).

¹² For excellent reviews of new developments in the literature see Harris Mylonas and Kendrick Kuo, "Nationalism and Foreign Policy," in Cameron G. Thies, ed., *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Foreign Policy Analysis*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); and Jaakko Heiskanen, "Spectra of Sovereignty: Nationalism and International Relations," *International Political Sociology* 13 (2019): 315-332.

contextualization with an emphasis upon the degree to which the literature on nationalism continues to be dominated by those working within comparative politics.

The stage then being set in this manner, I make the contention that this relative blind spot in the field is especially constraining, as nationalism is one of the foundational organizing principles of contemporary international politics. Paired with the concept of sovereignty, it is what makes the system what it is.

Over a decade ago I observed (through drawing of Christian Reus-Smit's work) that, "... sovereignty is an empty vessel (it is meaningful only with reference to related legitimizing principles), and dominant understandings of what ideational substance has filled such a container have historically varied, so too has sovereignty's role in international politics."¹³ Yet, in the ensuing period I have come to think it may be more accurate to assert that while variations in the practice and structure of sovereignty clearly take place in international politics, they rarely, if ever, eclipse the bind that exists between sovereignty and nationalism.

Absent the principle of sovereignty, nationalism would make no sense, as it is the concept of delimited territorial claims, a sense of collective ownership over such space, that forms the core of all forms of nationalism. Concurrently, without nationalism, and the claims it makes upon the division of space within the contemporary international system, sovereignty itself would be largely meaningless.

International politics as we know it only exists via this sovereignty-nationalism dyad. International relations scholars have tended to emphasize the Westphalian side of this structural pairing, but, have not given its nationalist counterpart its proper due.¹⁴ In the classroom I move such a claim from the realm of abstraction to that of concrete experience by asking students to consider a series of questions that illustrate just how difficult it is to talk about international politics without referencing both sovereignty and nationalism: How does one distinguish between the internal and external in international politics? To what degree are the divisions between states anything more than simply the product of the drawing of arbitrary lines upon a map? What claim does any given state have to the territory it governs?

On the heels of these queries I ask students to ponder the extent to which they identify with the state in which they were born. I ask them to think about what it means to them to be American, Chinese, or any other nationality. Finally, we consider how their individual sense of self relates to collective nationalist identities, and by extension to the to and fro of international politics.

Such discussions create the intellectual space to turn to the second step within my process of teaching about nationalism in international relations, mainly, how significant it is within China's relationship to the rest of the world.

I ask students to consider the question "what is China?" with an eye toward demonstrating to them that regardless of how one answers, one's response will be framed with reference to the interlocking structures of sovereignty and nationalism.

Is China the People's Republic of China? Is it the Republic of China? Is Tibet a part of China? Xinjiang? Mongolia? To what extent does international recognition of the status of any of these spaces matter in regards to their relationship to China? What of the relationship between members of the Chinese diaspora and China? And, especially over the last year, what about Hong Kong? What is its relationship to China?

¹³ Christian Reus-Smit, *The Moral Purpose of the State: Culture, Social Identity, and Institutional Rationality in International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); Allen Carlson, *Unifying China, Integrating With the World: Securing Chinese Sovereignty in the Reform Era* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005): 29.

¹⁴ See Stephen D. Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press: 1999).

Students tend to think they know how to answer such questions.

They argue that China is this, or, Taiwan is that, or, Hong Kong is something else. But, they also tend to make such assertions in a jumbled manner that reflects more their own sense of national belonging than it does rigorous intellectual thought.

I do not attempt to teach them that there is any single “right” answer to any of these questions, but rather press them to develop an awareness of the distinctly different arguments they forwarded in response to them. In the seminar I taught last fall I illustrated each of these with reference to Hong Kong.¹⁵ First, I ask students to note that one could respond to my queries about what China is in a normative manner, one that relies primarily on first principles and draws upon underlying philosophical or ideological set of beliefs.

By way of example, last fall I asked my students to consider the following question: Should the people of Hong Kong have the right to hold a referendum on self-determination?

I then noted that from within a normative frame one could contend that as a previously colonized people those in Hong Kong have the right to self-determination as is specified in a series of United Nation’s General Assembly resolutions from the 1950s and 1960s, at the height of the global decolonization movement. But, one could also argue that the people of Hong Kong do not have the right to hold a referendum since self-determination only extends to clearly defined groups of people that are distinct, and the residents of Hong Kong are Chinese, and thus part of the People’s Republic of China.

Rather than allowing students to reflect for too long on such normative framings, I then ask them to develop a more analytical approach (whether descriptive or causal), and, teach them that doing so involves utilizing established methodologies to conduct empirical research that allows researchers to substantiate their claims about how and why events have unfolded as they have.

As such a line of observation tends to strike most students as somewhat abstract I ground it with reference to a specific case. More specifically, last year I asked students to discuss the following question: What is the most important factor that caused the widespread, and ongoing, protests in Hong Kong? And, to seed subsequent conversation, I put forward the following claim: While the immediate catalyst for the protests was the extradition bill, the underlying cause was the strengthening of a distinct Hong Kong collective identity.

After allowing for extensive consideration of how one might go about supporting such a causal claim, I noted that one may also develop more policy-oriented arguments about nationalism’s role in international politics. Here my intention is to lead students to think about what measures any state might take to bring about a particular outcome.

Returning again to Hong Kong, last fall I asked my students to reflect upon the following question: What would be the most effective policy measures that the Hong Kong government could take to strengthen its legitimacy in the eyes of the residents of Hong Kong. I then observed that one might respond that although the use of force could effectively stop protests, it would also probably undermine the Hong Kong government’s legitimacy. I then asked my students what might be a more efficient way of brokering an end to the protests.

¹⁵ For outstanding articles that touch upon the role of nationalism and national identity in Hong Kong please see Sebastian Veg, “The Rise of ‘Localism’ and Civic Identity in Post-handover Hong Kong: Questioning the Chinese Nation-state,” *The China Quarterly* 230 (June 2017): 323-347; Malte Philipp Kaeding, “The Rise of ‘Localism’ in Hong Kong,” *Journal of Democracy* 28:1 (2017): 157-171; Brian Fong, “One Country, Two Nationalisms: Center-Periphery Relations between Mainland China and Hong Kong, 1997-2016,” *Modern China*, 43:5 (2017): 523-556; Anson Au, “Collective Identity, Organization, and Public Reaction in Protests: A Qualitative Case Study of Hong Kong and Taiwan,” *Social Sciences* 6:4 (December 2017): 1-17.

This two-step teaching process is not intended to be comprehensive, but rather to generate critical thought in the classroom. While it is not without its flaws, I do feel it has deepened my students understanding of nationalism's general role in international politics, and, the impact it has had upon China's relationship with the rest of the world.

ESSAY BY DANIELLE GILBERT, GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Nationalism is more relevant than ever for students of international relations (IR). Wherever one looks in international politics, the themes of nationalist mobilization and conflict abound, from citizenship laws and trade deals, to protests and political violence. White nationalism and populism threaten to disrupt the twentieth-century liberal world order, as Brexit and ‘America first’ policies rend alliances and norms. The world’s two most populous countries—China and India—are simmering with nationalist turmoil, as official state policy excludes millions-strong Muslim populations. Ethno-nationalist retrenchment threatens major conflict in the long term, as borders buckle under pressure from refugee flows. A far cry from the cosmopolitan future of multiculturalism, regionalism, and supranationalism that was heralded in the 1990s,¹⁶ current events seem to suggest that nationalism, at least for the foreseeable future, is here to stay.

The forces of nationalism produce domestic and transnational effects that shape international relations in meaningful ways. In 2020, global politics are being forged by a parochial inward turn, as issues of identity produce international conflict and cooperation. It is therefore ever more important that instructors of international relations incorporate lessons on nationalism in our courses, exploring the pertinent and salient effects of identity politics on the world stage.

In this essay, I make a case for why, and how, instructors should bring nationalism into courses on international relations. I offer two strategies for capitalizing on the contemporary relevance of nationalist conflict to impart conceptual and theoretical knowledge. First, I encourage instructors to lean into controversial topics as they arise. I offer suggestions for ways to use troubling news stories as ‘teachable moments’ to illustrate core concepts and theoretical debates. Second, I outline two assignment options—an individual op-ed and a group podcast—to empower students to explore and engage the questions of nationalism in IR that pique their interest. These assignments require students to connect core IR theories and concepts to the events they see in the news, applying their newfound knowledge to the world around them. Whether the focus of a semester-long course or a single class session, nationalism provides relevant and timely lessons for students of international relations.

Why Teach Nationalism in IR?

If Comparative Politics studies the domestic politics of foreign countries, and International Relations the interplay between them, it makes sense that nationalism has long been the purview of CP syllabi. Nationalism, per Ernest Gellner, is the “political principle, which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent.”¹⁷ Nationalist movements are largely inward-looking, defining the internal character of a population seeking self-rule. The literature on the emergence and spread of nationalism helps explain the timing of the nation-state’s prominence in the eighteenth and nineteenth

¹⁶ Anthony Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism* (London: Routledge, 2013).

¹⁷ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 2nd ed. (London: Blackwell, 2006).

centuries;¹⁸ questions whether the nation is primordial¹⁹ or constructed;²⁰ and explains what it means for a national movement to take on a civic²¹ or ethnic character.²²

And yet, we would be remiss if we did not consider the centrality of nationalism to IR today. Recent events suggest that the relationships between states are in large part driven by what happens inside them. Despite domestic origins, nationalist movements have enormous ramifications for the relationships between states, particularly through their role in increasing conflict and reducing cooperation. As leaders push for, or respond to, domestic forces of nationalism and populism, their behavior toward allies and adversaries may dramatically change. Failure to consider such explanations hampers our ability to identify the causes of political outcomes.

Nationalism is important to IR primarily because of its role in increasing international conflict. One of the first things you learn in a nationalism course is the inherent contradiction between the right to self-determination for nations and the existing status of states. There are far more of the former than the latter. Should each national group seek its own nation-state, it would mean challenges to existing borders of sovereign states. For example, the Basques, Scots, and Kurds want national independence—but those aspirations are negated by existing boundaries in Spain, Great Britain, and Turkey. Some nation-states instead seek to expand their existing boundaries, incorporating co-nationals by acquiring foreign territory. Irredentism²³ of this sort is epitomized by Russia's claim on Crimea.

Beyond re-drawing borders, nationalism can re-define who belongs inside of them. There is a growing global backlash to the influx of immigrants and religious minorities—not just in countries with ethnically homogenous populations, but also by those with a 'civic' understanding of who belongs. 'Sons of the soil' movements claim a state as a homeland for a specific linguistic group, and attempt to exclude others.²⁴ Rhetorical exclusion is often followed by physical exclusion of minorities, eliminating populations through displacement, disappearance, or genocide. The creation of refugees—or refusal to let refugees in—can be a significant driver of regional conflict.

In addition to stoking violence, nationalism can reduce international cooperation. Adopting a 'go it alone, us first' strategy may cause countries to turn away from regional partnerships or international norms. These ideologies recall the protectionism and mercantilism of the past. Today, it manifests in the murky combination of racism and economic populism that is plaguing the United States and Europe. As an inward-looking America and crumbling European Union

¹⁸ Karl W. Deutsch, "Social Mobilization and Political Development," *American Political Science Review* 55:3 (1961): 493-514; Barry R. Posen, "Nationalism, the Mass Army, and Military Power," *International security* 18:2 (1993): 80-124.

¹⁹ Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism*.

²⁰ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Brooklyn: Verso, 2006); Rogers Brubaker, "Rethinking Nationhood: Nation as Institutionalized Form, Practical Category, Contingent Event," *Contention* 4:1 (1994): 3-14.

²¹ Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1976).

²² Max Weber, "Ethnic Groups," In *New Tribalisms* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1978), 17-30; Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

²³ Michael Hechter, *Containing Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

²⁴ David D. Laitin, *Nations, States, and Violence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

(EU) disrupt seven decades of cooperation, incorporating nationalism in the discussion is crucial for understanding how and why we got here.

But teaching nationalism is also important because it is on our students' minds. Students come to our courses interested in and troubled by these phenomena, seeking a lens for understanding global trends. How can scholars and instructors of international relations best incorporate the lessons of nationalism in the IR classroom?

How to Teach Nationalism in IR?

One way to incorporate nationalism into IR courses—while responding to student curiosity—is to lean into controversial current events in the classroom. Because of their interest in these issues, students will often come to class curious about the day's news. By grounding the news in theory and history, instructors can use timely examples to illustrate vital course concepts. When a news story on nationalism and IR develops, I suggest leading a classroom discussion around four central questions:

First, what do we know about this controversy or event? Asking students to identify factual details of a news story tests their reading (viewing or listening) comprehension, while helping to hone their judgment as responsible consumers of news. Beginning the discussion this way also lays all impressions out on the table, so that students may engage in further discussion from a set of shared facts and understanding.

Second, what does this event or story look like to you? Can you think of any historical precedents? Pay particularly close attention to the language being used by the relevant actors. Does anything sound familiar? Having students attempt to situate current stories in a broader comparative context encourages them to focus on wider themes, historical analogies, rhetoric, and symbols, while demonstrating the contemporary relevance of older texts.

Third, what are some course concepts that seem related to this discussion? What might theories of nationalism and IR say about this event? In this set of questions, students are asked to make explicit connections to course material. This tests their knowledge to date, but also shows them how the course material is relevant for their experience beyond the classroom: How does what they've learned help them think about this story, and politics more broadly?

Finally, what else would you want to know about this particular event to be able to understand where it came from, why it is happening now, or what might happen next? The last set of questions challenge students to engage with strategic problem-solving and forecasting of future events.

I use these questions to help organize and focus discussion when there is a newsworthy nationalism story. For instance, during my undergraduate nationalism seminar in summer 2019, President Trump tweeted that four U.S. Congresswomen of color should “go back” to the “totally broken and crime infested places from which they came.”²⁵ In the next session after these tweets, I opened the discussion by projecting the President's tweets at the front of the room. Not only were the President's troubling words perfectly illustrative of several course concepts; I also wanted to help students—many of whom were women of color—process this event in a supportive environment. Considering the tweets in a classroom setting shows students that they have the tools to understand many of the drivers of today's politics: Nationalism is not just something that happens in other places and other times.

Following the guiding questions above, I first sought to foster a shared understanding of the event. The students read the tweets silently and then began to offer background, naming the targets of the attack and affirming they were all U.S. citizens.

²⁵ Colin Dwyer, “‘Go Back Where You Came From’: The Long Rhetorical Roots of Trump's Racist Tweets.” *NPR*, 15 July 2019, <https://www.npr.org/2019/07/15/741827580/go-back-where-you-came-from-the-long-rhetorical-roots-of-trump-s-racist-tweets>.

Second, I asked them to consider the language of the tweets and offer any historical precedents. Words started to jump out at them—“infested,” “go back,” “viciously”—which they likened to ‘othering’ rhetoric from the Holocaust and Rwandan Genocide. Through this process, they naturally brought the discussion back to directly consider course concepts, such as dog whistles, scapegoating, and violations of the ‘nationalist principle’ when someone from outside the nation rules over the national group. Analyzing the troubling language as they would a scholarly text gave the students an opportunity to calmly process the President’s words, and to affirm to one another why they were upsetting, wrong, and also fully preceded in history. Instructors can be prepared to do this kind of activity as often as is relevant, given the headlines of the day.

Beyond in-class discussion, instructors can use assignments to help students lean into these important lessons of nationalism in the study of IR. The goal of these assignments is twofold. First, the assignments aim to empower students to explore and engage with the particular questions related to nationalism and IR that pique their individual interest. This supports the pedagogical principle of individual choice, in which students are given the responsibility and leeway to pursue topics of interest in their assignments. Second, the assignments challenge students to analyze these questions by connecting real-world current events to the themes and theories learned as part of the course material. In this way, instructors need not sacrifice crucial course material in the pursuit of relevance.

One way to engage students with the course material is to put their acquired knowledge and skills to an applied test. Ideally, such an assignment would require critical thinking, interpretation, analysis, and honing of practical skills. Rather than a final exam, instructors might consider asking students to write a policy piece or op-ed that analyzes a current question or problem on the subject of nationalism and IR. In my course, I raise the stakes of this assignment by giving students the opportunity to publish their final pieces online. Partnering with the online outlet *Divergent Options*,²⁶ I asked students to write an 800 – 1,000 word ‘assessment’ of a contemporary issue in nationalism, in which they had to offer a persuasive position about the news event and include insights from our course material. Students wrote about the status of the Sikh-Canadian diaspora, lessons learned from Bosnia for foreign intervention, and the potential role for the European Intervention Initiative.²⁷ Students benefit in several ways from this kind of work. They get to practice the kind of writing they might do after graduation, learn how to work with a professional editor, and gain a line for their CV. If they do the assignment well, students can both engage in an issue of personal interest and demonstrate their knowledge of course themes. Instructors could provide guidance on publishing with other outlets, student journals or newspapers, or a section on the department’s website.

Group projects can also be used to achieve course objectives. In my seminar, I assign a ‘Nationalism in the News’ project, in which students have to give a five-minute oral presentation in class about a nationalism-related news story.²⁸ In addition to answering the ‘five w’s’ of journalism (who, what, where, when, and why), students have to explain to the class why this particular story is important, and connect the story explicitly to at least one course concept or theme. This in-class oral presentation works very well for a small class, but would threaten to overwhelm the class time in a large lecture course. Instead, instructors can assign a podcast project to students, to be completed in groups.

²⁶ *Divergent Options*, <https://divergentoptions.org/category/topics/assessment-papers/>.

²⁷ Nikita Khurana, “Assessing the Relationship of Sikh-Canadians with Canada and India,” *Divergent Options*, <https://divergentoptions.org/?s=khurana> (9 December 2019); Chanson Benjamin, “Assessment of Nationalism in Bosnia and its Ramifications for Foreign Intervention,” *Divergent Options*, <https://divergentoptions.org/?s=chanson> (12 September 2019); and David Perron, “Assessment of European Intervention Initiative and Overcoming Nationalist Barriers,” *Divergent Options*, <https://divergentoptions.org/?s=EI2> (6 September 2019).

²⁸ I have written elsewhere about using course assignments to train students to apply course themes to current events. An article describing the ‘Nationalism in the News’ assignment, and an overview of my course structure, is currently under review. Please contact the author for the latest version.

Here is how such an assignment might work. Students are asked to form groups of three to five individuals, and each group must pick a nationalism-related story from the prior two weeks' news. They are then asked to write and produce a five-minute podcast segment, which they will send to the instructor (or teaching assistant) by a designated date. Over the course of five minutes, students should provide a brief report on the story (answering the 'five w's'), and explicitly connect the story to two course concepts or theories. Students may present that connection in a special educational segment, as if they are teaching their listeners about IR scholarship, or weave it into their analysis. Students can interview relevant experts (not including their instructor or teaching assistant, but perhaps other faculty, graduate students, or local experts); hold a roundtable discussion among themselves; or include and comment upon audio from other shows or radio. But whatever the format, each student must participate in the recording, and the final product must include both reporting *and* analysis. Instructors can post all final podcasts online for the students to listen to and share.

Such an assignment provides numerous pedagogical benefits for students. For example, it provides experience for students to practice working in groups, which more closely resembles most post-collegiate professional environments. It hones their oral presentation and production skills, and exercises their creativity. Moreover, for those groups who elect to interview outside experts for their podcasts, students make professional contacts and requests, which will be useful skills for future research or logistical roles. There are also clear benefits of such an assignment for instructors; the timing should be limited to approximately one minute of audio per student, so grading should be manageable.²⁹

These are just a few suggestions for how to synthesize the contemporary relevance of nationalism with the core coursework of international relations. While a comparative politics course may be best suited to examining nationalism's causes, IR is perfectly situated to study its effects. Particularly for its role in shaping international conflict and cooperation, nationalism should be central to discussions of global politics. With the robust resurgence of nationalism in recent years, giving students the tools and theoretical frameworks to interpret these dynamics is more important than ever. Using the activities outlined above, instructors can both impart traditional, core theories, while giving students the tools that are necessary to interpret future trends.

²⁹ I also recommend sharing with students a rubric for these kinds of assignments, so that they have a clear set of expectations for success. I might consider grading this assignment out of 15 points: The students chose a timely, relevant story (2); the students accurately presented and summarized the story (2); the students effectively conveyed why this story is important (2); the students accurately connected this story to at least two major themes or concepts from class (4); the students produced a clear, professional final product (2); all students participated in the project (3).

 ESSAY BY CHARMAINE WILLIS, UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY, SUNY

With the rise of nationalist sentiment around the globe, the need for courses about nationalism is perhaps greater than ever. In addition to empowering students to interpret nationalist rhetoric and behavior, courses on nationalism also help unpack related terminology and explain why nationalist ideology can be so virulent. As a starting point, nationalism courses should and usually do discuss the meaning of commonly used but often misunderstood terms like ‘nation,’ ‘state,’ ‘nationalism,’ ‘populism,’ and ‘patriotism.’³⁰ This discussion not only helps students make sense of current events but also creates a foundation for perhaps the more important and more difficult discussion of where nationalist sentiment comes from and the reasons that appeals to the nation³¹ are often persuasive.

This essay focuses on the latter type of discussions in the classroom from a cultural perspective. Nationalism and national identity are an important facet of identity politics that is often overlooked and is especially important in the current wave of ethnonationalism encompassing the globe. Events such as Brexit, India’s recent court ruling curtailing the citizenship of Muslims, and increasing white nationalist rhetoric in the United States and elsewhere illustrate the importance of identity in nationalism. Works focused on identity and nationalism provide students with a foundation for understanding such events by highlighting the salience of social ties and group belonging. In this essay, I discuss foundational ideas by Clifford Geertz and Benedict Anderson and discuss ways in which instructors can illustrate the authors’ key points through discussion and games.

Identity and Social Ties

The literature on identity and nationalism can be categorized into two groups: primordialism and social constructivism. Perhaps the most well-known author in the former category is Geertz, with his *Interpretation of Cultures* and other works included in many nationalism syllabi. Geertz argues that people are born into many social groups on the basis of kinship, race, religion, language, region, and shared custom.³² The key to his argument is that these ties are ‘natural,’ or what Geertz terms ‘cultural givens’ or ‘primordial bonds’: “for virtually every person, in every society, at almost all times, some attachments seem to flow more from a sense of natural [...] affinity than from social interaction.”³³ These ties can conflict with loyalty to the nation, especially civic nations where members do not share ‘natural’ connections. He argues that such conflicting loyalties can present challenges to nation-building.

Other scholars, most famously Anderson in his *Imagined Communities*, contend that almost all ties are socially-constructed. Anderson argues that, like religious communities before them, nations are imagined communities because “the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.”³⁴ From this perspective, only kinship or familial ties are ‘natural’ in the sense that individuals have tangible relationships with all other members of the group; it would not be possible for one to meet and

³⁰ Lowell W. Barrington, “‘Nation’ and ‘Nationalism’: The Misuse of Key Concepts in Political Science,” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 30:4 (1997): 712-716, <https://doi.org/10.2307/420397>; Jan-Werner Müller, “False Flags: The Myth of the Nationalist Resurgence,” 25 February 2019, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2019-02-12/false-flags>.

³¹ I adopt Barrington’s definition of a nation as a “group of people linked by unifying traits and the desire to control a territory that is thought of as the group’s national homeland” (713).

³² Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

³³ Geertz, 260.

³⁴ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd ed. (London: Verso, 2016), 6.

form a relationship with all other members of a large group like a nation. However, Anderson argues, a nation is still a community, with its members sharing a sense of camaraderie and belonging. This shared experience and solidarity are what “makes it possible [...] for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings.”³⁵ Thus, from this perspective, the challenge facing nation-builders is that the idea of a nation must command people’s loyalty.

Illustrating Social Ties Through Games and Discussions

The essential points here are that, as social beings, we all have a variety of social ties and are members of groups so expansive that we cannot meet all their constituents. While students may enjoy discussing, if not reading, these foundational pieces, they often struggle with understanding how Geertz’s and Anderson’s arguments relate to their own experiences. There are several avenues to clarifying these concepts for students. After lecturing on these pieces, my preferred method is to have a short discussion with students about their experiences travelling abroad to illustrate Anderson’s argument about nations being “imagined communities.” I ask students if they have ever travelled abroad, with ‘abroad’ defined loosely: it could mean outside of their home country, their state, or even their hometown. As the majority of students have left their home, I ask them if they have, while abroad, ever met someone from their home area that they had never met before and if so, I ask how did that make them feel? Most students with this experience reply that they felt some kind of kinship with the person or people that they met, despite never having met them before. I then discuss how this illustrates Anderson’s point about communities being socially constructed since we feel some kind of common connection when meeting someone of the same social group, despite the fact that we have never before met. It may also be helpful to provide one’s own example to solidify the point. The example I use is an experience I had travelling outside the U.S., where I was wearing a National Football League (NFL) jersey, and had other Americans approach me to talk about (American) football. This example not only helps highlight Anderson’s point but also touches upon the importance of cultural symbols to national identity, which authors such as John A. Armstrong, Anthony D. Smith, and John Hutchinson explore further.³⁶ This discussion is helpful in illustrating Anderson’s point in that it applies not just to the ‘nation’ as an imagined community but to even smaller political units such as states and towns so that most students can relate, even if they have never travelled abroad.

Another technique to illustrate some of the abstract concepts in the nationalism literature is through the use of active learning such as games and simulations. Several studies in political science and other disciplines have demonstrated that such techniques can be more effective in helping students learn³⁷ and more enjoyable for students.³⁸ Games can be a particularly effective learning technique because they require active participation from students³⁹ without the amount of time and

³⁵ Anderson, 7.

³⁶ John A. Armstrong, *Nations Before Nationalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982); Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (London: Penguin, 1991); John Hutchinson, *Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism: The Gaelic Revival and the Creation of the Irish Nation State* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1987).

³⁷ J. Patrick McCarthy and Liam Anderson, “Active Learning Techniques Versus Traditional Teaching Styles: Two Experiments from History and Political Science,” *Innovative Higher Education* 24:4 (June 2000): 279-294, <https://doi.org/10.1023/B:IHIE.0000047415.48495.05>; Brian Frederking, “Simulations and Student Learning,” *Journal of Political Science Education* 1:3 (September 2005): 385-393, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15512160500261236>.

³⁸ Kristina M. DeNeve and Mary J. Heppner, “Role Play Simulations: The Assessment of an Active Learning Technique and Comparisons with Traditional Lectures,” *Innovative Higher Education* 21:3 (March 1997): 231-246, <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01243718>; Judith E. Miller and James E. Groccia, “Are Four Heads Better than One? A Comparison of Cooperative and Traditional Teaching Formats in an Introductory Biology Course,” *Innovative Higher Education* 21:4 (June 1997): 253-273, <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01192275>.

³⁹ Victor Asal et al., “Mini-Games for Teaching Political Science Methodology,” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 51:4 (October 2018): 838-841, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096518000902>.

preparation that simulations require. While there are several published games that can be used in the context of identity and nationalism, I employ “The Identity Exercise” described in Victor Asal and Lewis Griffith’s 2017 article.⁴⁰ This game is particularly useful because it can blend well with concepts discussed in a nationalism course, such as Geertz’s point about social embeddedness and Anderson’s idea of imagined community.

This exercise begins by having students write down the five identities that are both most important to them and which make them part of a larger group (the latter is especially important).⁴¹ Students are then asked to cross the identities off one-by-one until they are left with one identity. Instructors can choose to frame the question in various ways, including ‘which identity are you willing to give up?’ (when crossing identities off the list), ‘which identity are you not willing to live without?’ (when faced with having to cross off the second-to-last identity), or ‘which identity are you willing to die for?’ (also when crossing off the second-to-last identity). Asking the final question may be particularly helpful for a nationalism class, as it can be tied to Anderson’s point that there are some social groups that people are willing to die for, ‘imagined’ though they might be. As the authors describe, this is challenging for students, especially when they are forced to choose between identities that they value greatly.⁴²

The second part of the game has the instructor ask for volunteers to share the categories to which their identities belonged and makes a list (for example, not ‘female’ but ‘gender’.) As Asal and Griffith note, students often contribute categories like nationality, gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, religion, economic status, and region, many of which align with Geertz’s ascribed “primordial ties.”⁴³ Finally, the instructor reads each category in the list and asks students who are comfortable doing so to raise their hands when the category that their final identity fell into is called.

As the authors describe, there are a variety of potential questions that can be used to debrief the exercise.⁴⁴ When using this exercise in the context of a nationalism course, questions about ‘othering’, feelings towards others within the same social group, and one’s identity facilitating the use or justification of violence are relevant. These questions can be used to highlight to students Anderson’s point that (most) social groups are ‘imagined communities’ and to encourage them to think critically about exclusion or the use of violence towards other groups.

Furthermore, questioning students about the identity they chose to keep and why this identity is the most important to them can be used to illustrate Geertz’s point that people belong to many different social groups and they prioritize some ties over others. As mentioned, Geertz argues that it is tension over individuals’ various social ties and identities that can cause conflict within nation-states and inhibits nation-building. Discussing the students’ decision-making process for choosing which identities to keep can be used to segue into a discussion about identity and how some identities appear to be intractable, even to the extent that people are willing to die for them, which can be tied to both Geertz’s and Anderson’s works.

Conclusion

⁴⁰ Victor Asal and Lewis Griffith, “A Terrible Beauty Is Born: Teaching about Identity Salience and Conflict,” *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict* 10:1 (January 2017): 3-13, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17467586.2017.1300291>, 6.

⁴¹ Ibid., 7.

⁴² Ibid., 7.

⁴³ Ibid., 7.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 8-9.

The literature on nationalism can be used to make sense of many current events. A foundational understanding of nationalism for students should include an understanding about social ties and the ways in which social belonging can influence our behavior and perspectives. Through understanding the ways in which social ties bind members of the same group together, students can make sense of the politics of exclusion and debates about citizenship that abound in many countries. Needless to say, classroom discussions about identity, especially in the context of nationalism, can be difficult. Active learning exercises, such as “The Identity Exercise,” can facilitate the discussion by inducing students to think about their own identities in ways they may not have and providing students with new insights.

Major Challenges in Teaching Nationalism to Undergraduate Students

Nationalism is an essential component of major research areas in international relations such as political violence, the international political economy, and environmental politics. Nationalism levels and the types of governments can make interstate cooperation and conflict more or less likely. Therefore, it is important to understand and teach what nationalism is and how it comes into play in international relations. In this essay, I will point out two major challenges in teaching nationalism to undergraduate students: clarifying (1) the types of nationalism and (2) the differences and similarities between nationalism and other popular ideologies, such as patriotism, xenophobia, and populism. The rise of populist political parties around the world and white nationalism in the U.S. make it both more difficult and more important for undergraduate students to comprehend what nationalism is and is not. I argue that the instructors should stick to a parsimonious conception of nationalism in order to avoid misguided theoretical inferences and policy implications regarding the role of nationalism in international relations.

Types of Nationalism

The primary challenge in teaching nationalism is clarifying the types of nationalism.⁴⁵ The most-used typology in the literature, ethnic versus civic nationalism, is still useful to simplify matters.⁴⁶ Ethnic nationalism is considered as an exclusionary type of nationalism based on a dominant ethnic identity, while civic nationalism is based on a legal relationship between a state and citizens regardless of their identity.⁴⁷ They are expected to have different implications for domestic and international politics. For example, ethnic nationalism is expected to be more repressive due to its exclusionary conception of nation, whereas civic nationalism is associated with higher levels of respect for minority rights because the boundaries of the nation are not limited to the boundaries of a single ethnic group. Civic nationalism is also less likely to increase the likelihood of interstate conflict, whereas ethnic nationalist governments are more war-prone as this type of nationalism increases intergroup enmity, exacerbates external threat perception, increases strategic miscalculations, strengthens the military-industrial complex, and boosts nationalist outbidding.⁴⁸

In this context it is important to acknowledge and warn the students about the Euro-centric background of ethnic versus civic nationalism dichotomy. Hans Kohn associates ethnic nationalism with “backward” Eastern nations and civic

⁴⁵ There is a vast literature on different types of nationalism. For example, humanitarian, Jacobin, traditional, liberal, and integral nationalisms of Carlton J. Hayes, *The Historical Evolution of Modern Nationalism* (New York: Smith, 1931); Western vs. Eastern and ethnic vs. civic nationalism of Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism: A Study of the Origins and Background* (New York: Macmillan, 1944); ethnic, civic, revolutionary, and counterrevolutionary nationalisms of Jack L. Snyder, *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000); or banal nationalism of Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995).

⁴⁶ See Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism* for ethnic vs. civic nationalism dichotomy.

⁴⁷ Michael Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalism* (New York: Macmillan, 1994).

⁴⁸ See Snyder, *From Voting to Violence*, and Gretchen Schrock-Jacobson “The Violent Consequences of the Nation: Nationalism and the Initiation of Interstate War.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 56:5 (2012): 825-852.

nationalism with “advanced” Western nations.⁴⁹ However, the prominent historical examples of ethnic nationalism, such as German and Italian nationalism in 1930s, show that ethnic nationalism can emerge in Western Europe as well.

In a recent article, Florian Bieber argues that ethnic vs. civic nationalism is no longer a useful dichotomy.⁵⁰ Rather, the levels of inclusion and exclusion can help us classify nationalisms more accurately. The level of inclusion and exclusion can be determined by “latent” factors (such as exclusionary citizenship or structural socio-economic discrimination) and “virulent” factors (such as media discourses, rise of nationalist political parties, or violence against minorities and refugees).⁵¹ Nationalism becomes more dangerous when latent (*banal*) nationalism turns into virulent (*epidemic*) nationalism. Exogenous ideological, economic, institutional, or social shocks trigger the transition from latent to virulent nationalism. In other words, the ethnic versus civic dichotomy cannot always capture the nature of nationalism. We may need to focus on latent versus virulent aspects of both ethnic and civic nationalism in order to make more reliable inferences about their political implications.

Political institutions, rather than the conception of nation (for example, ethnic versus civic), can also determine the consequences of nationalism. Advanced democratic institutions can tame even ethnic nationalism by putting constraints on the nationalist chief executives, whereas the absence of democracy may pave the way for adventurous or repressive civic nationalism. Hence, it is important to take the interaction of nationalism and democracy into account in order to have a better understanding of the variation in the outcomes of nationalism in different countries.⁵²

Another important nationalism type, especially in the context of international relations, is irredentist nationalism. Stephen M. Saideman argues that nationalism does not necessarily cause war.⁵³ Only a certain type of nationalism, irredentist nationalism, causes international conflict through territorial claims. Even irredentist nationalism does not always cause war. War-proneness of nationalism depends on the extent to which the members of a nation care about their ethnic kin and how tolerant they are towards ‘others’ in their homeland. Irredentist nationalism becomes war-prone only when there are strong ties between the homeland and the ethnic kin in a neighboring country and when the members of the nation in the homeland are tolerant towards the others. In the absence of these two criteria, even a nationalist government will avoid making claims over the territories where their ethnic kin live. As a result, while nationalism can trigger international conflict by causing territorial claims, which are the most salient and war-prone issue type between states, war is not an inevitable outcome of nationalism.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism*.

⁵⁰ Florian Bieber. “Is Nationalism on the Rise? Assessing Global Trends” *Ethnopolitics* 17:5 (2018): 519-540.

⁵¹ Bieber, “Is Nationalism on the Rise” 521.

⁵² See Emir Yazici. “Nationalism and Human Rights.” *Political Research Quarterly* 72:1 (2019): 147-161 for an empirical test of the effects of nationalism on human rights in partial and advanced democracies.

⁵³ Stephen M. Saideman “When Nationalists Disagree,” in *Nationalism and War*, John A. Hall and Siniša Malešević, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013): 341-355, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139540964.019>.

⁵⁴ According to issue-based approach, claims on certain types of issues with high salience (territorial, river, maritime, and identity claims) are more likely to lead up to war. See Paul D. Senese and John A. Vasquez. “A Unified Explanation of Territorial Conflict: Testing the Impact of Sampling Bias, 1919-1992.” *International Studies Quarterly* 47:2 (2003): 275-298; Sara McLaughlin Mitchell and Paul R. Hensel. “Issues and Conflict”, in Tor George Jakobsen (ed.), *War: An Introduction to Theories and Research on Collective Violence*. (Hauppauge: Nova Science Publishers, 2011): 275-295.; Paul R. Hensel, Sara McLaughlin Mitchell, Thomas E. Sowers II, and Clayton L. Thyne. 2008. “Bones of Contention: Comparing Territorial, Maritime, and River Issues.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*

Last, 'white nationalism' has become a popular term, particularly in the North American and European countries, due to violent and non-violent white nationalist movements, as well as anti-white nationalist groups. When I taught *Politics of Ethnicity and Nationalism*, this was one of the trickiest, albeit in-demand, subjects I had to cover in class. The primary challenge about white nationalism is that 'whiteness' does not really refer to a nation per se. In fact, members of several nations in different countries (for example, North American and European nations) can consider themselves to be white nationalists based on the claim that whiteness, rather than being American, English, German, French etc., is their definitive identity. In other words, race and nation are used interchangeably in this ideology. All the white nations of Europe and North America are a part of 'us' and the rest are considered as 'others.' Accordingly, 'white nationalism has two major goals: protecting the so-called 'white nation' from 'non-whites', and prioritizing the interests of this white nation over other concerns, such as civil rights. On one hand, white nationalism resembles ethnic nationalism in the sense that it is exclusive and intolerant towards others.⁵⁵ On the other hand, it is not the same as ethnic nationalism because multiple ethnic, linguistic, and national groups are considered as parts of the 'white nation.' Thus, white nationalism does not fit into scholarly definition or typologies when we stick to a parsimonious conceptualization of nationalism. Since nationalism is a more legitimate ideology than racism, nationalism may be used by racist groups to increase their legitimacy.

Nationalism, Patriotism, Xenophobia, and Populism

The second challenge in teaching nationalism is discussing the similarities and differences between nationalism and other popular ideologies, such as patriotism, xenophobia, and populism. Even though there are conceptual differences between nationalism, patriotism, and xenophobia, it is quite difficult to distinguish them in practice. Populism, a distinct ideology, can also be combined with nationalism. It is our task to clarify the conceptual differences between these ideologies and when and how they coalesce.

Patriotism refers to someone's loyalty to their state and its institutions.⁵⁶ It might seem as though nationalism and patriotism are two different phenomena in the sense that patriotism is more inclusive and civilized than nationalism. For example, Spanish patriotism can be considered an acceptable ideology compared with ethnic Spanish or Catalan nationalism. Similarly, we can talk about the differences between inclusive British patriotism and exclusive English nationalism. However, it should be noted that the difference is less clear when we compare patriotism to civic nationalism. How is civic Spanish nationalism, which would consider Catalans as a part of the Spanish nation, different than Spanish patriotism? Similarly, it is easy to distinguish ethnic French nationalism from French patriotism, but is there any difference between civic French nationalism, which would consider all immigrants and minorities as a part of the French nation, and French patriotism?

The complicated relationship between patriotism and nationalism can also be seen in the statements of French President Emmanuel Macron, who claims that nationalism is "a betrayal of patriotism"⁵⁷ Like George Orwell's comparison of nationalism and patriotism, Macron criticizes nationalism for being aggressive when it comes to advancing the nation's

52:1 (2008): 117-143.; Hensel, and McLaughlin Mitchell, "From Territorial Claims to Identity Claims: The Issue Correlates of War (ICOW) Project," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 34:2 (2017): 126-140.

⁵⁵ This is another example demonstrating how backward/hawkish nationalism, such as white nationalism, can emerge in Western nations despite Kohn's Euro-centric dichotomy between Eastern/backward/ethnic nationalism vs. Western/civilized/civic nationalism.

⁵⁶ Anthony D. Smith *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History*. (Cambridge, Polity Street: 2001).

⁵⁷ See Macron's tweet from his official Twitter account on 11 November 2018, <https://twitter.com/emmanuelmacron/status/1061657617683111942>.

interests at the expense of other interests or values.⁵⁸ Patriotism, allegedly, refers to the right amount of devotion to the nation and requires sacrifices only to defend one's nation rather than attacking others to advance national interests. The question is what is the right amount of devotion to a nation? Also, how do we decide which acts are aggressive or defensive? I argue that if we use a parsimonious conception of nationalism, patriotism simply refers to civic nationalism. However, it is still important to discuss this complicated relationship because patriotism can be used to sugarcoat nationalism and mislead the society by hiding the potentially dangerous consequences of rising nationalism.

Xenophobia is another closely related ideology to nationalism. It refers to fear and hatred of strangers because of stereotypes, prejudices, and real or imagined group interests.⁵⁹ Even though nationalism can reinforce xenophobia, it should be noted that other exclusive and intolerant ideologies, such as racism or religious extremism, can reinforce xenophobia as well. Moreover, economic concerns or fear of increased crime in developed countries may stimulate xenophobia even in the absence of nationalism. Thus, nationalism is not equal to xenophobia.

Last, nationalism and right-wing populism can be easily conflated and it is important to inform students about the relationship between them. Populism is based on the idea that the society is divided into two antagonistic groups: "the people" versus "the corrupt elite" and that policies should be designed according to will of "the people"⁶⁰ Even though this definition does not have any reference to nation or nationalism, Erin Jenne argues that populism multiplies the effects of nationalism when they are combined (*ethnopolitism*)⁶¹ She points out that when the "enemies" of populists (domestic and global elites such as business-owners or the International Monetary Fund) and the "enemies" of nationalists (such as immigrants, ethnic minorities, and foreign enemies) are coupled, we are likely to observe a revolutionary and exclusionary nationalism. For example, ethnopolitists may claim that the domestic corrupted elite and the foreign enemies of their nation are conspiring against their people. Thus nationalism and populism are two distinct ideologies whose threat perceptions can overlap and create a dangerous version of nationalism.

Conclusion

Though it is not the first time that nationalism has emerged as an important phenomenon in international politics, it is probably more challenging to teach nationalism in the context of international relations than before. Among all other factors I have discussed above, the prevalence of 'white nationalism' and populism particularly makes it more difficult to explain what nationalism is what it is not. I believe that flexing the widely accepted definitions of nationalism in order to keep up with the current political trends can have misguided theoretical and political implications.

⁵⁸ George Orwell. *Notes on Nationalism*. (London: Polemic, May 1945). See Jared A. Goldstein "Is There Really a Difference Between Patriotism and Nationalism?" *Slate*, 20 November 2018, <https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2018/11/trump-nationalism-patriotism-difference.html> for an excellent discussion of the differences between patriotism and nationalism.

⁵⁹ H.R. Wicker (2001) "Xenophobia", in *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences* edited by N. Smelser and Paul B. Baltes (Amsterdam and Oxford: Elsevier, 2001):16649-16652; Mabel Berezin, "Xenophobia and the New Nationalisms" In *The Sage Handbook of Nations and Nationalism* edited by Gerard Delanty, Krishan Kumar. (London: SAGE, 2006): 273–284.

⁶⁰ Cas Mudde. "The Populist Zeitgeist," *Government and Opposition* 39:4 (2004): 541-563.

⁶¹ Erin K. Jenne "Is Nationalism or Ethnopolitism on the Rise Today?" *Ethnopolitics* 17:5 (2018): 1-7. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449057.2018.1532635>.