

**Defining Nationalist Conflict
Benedict Anderson, Sovereignty, and Domestic
Intergroup Conflicts**

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Abstract

This article investigates the relationship between Benedict Anderson's theory on nationalism and domestic intergroup conflicts, a common phenomenon which Anderson does not examine in his literature. By researching domestic intergroup conflicts in three different world regions and historical periods, it becomes clear that they are best understood through Anderson's national framework: different groups can fulfill three out of four of Anderson's national conventions relatively harmoniously, but when they envisage the fourth convention of *sovereignty* for the territory differently, members of said groups have a strong motivation for conflict. This holds true across the various dynamics of domestic intergroup conflict, namely identity conflicts, insurgency, and institutionalized oppression. To end a nationalist conflict, the solution must lead to all nationalisms fulfilling Anderson's four conventions of the nation by awarding acceptable terms of sovereignty to a critical mass, thus removing motivation to engage in conflict. The study contributes to discussions to tease out best practices in preventing and ending conflict

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Introduction

Benedict Anderson (1936-2015) was a ground-breaking scholar on nationalism and its development, theorizing it not to be an ideology but something to be categorized with kinship, religion, and the like.¹ As the foundation of his theory, Anderson forwards four conventions that forge and sustain a nation. First, it is *imagined*, because while it is impossible for all members of a nation to know one another there is still a feeling of interconnectedness. Second, it is *limited* because membership in a nation is finite and those who lie outside of this number are considered part of a different nation. Third, it is sovereign, which is to say that it has the right to govern itself. Finally, it is a *community*, because there is a feeling of horizontal comradeship despite the reality of inequalities that likely exist internally.² Anderson posited that these feelings of nationalism are not organic nor ancient, but possible only through relatively recent cultural shifts and novel inventions like the printing press.³

There is, however, a gap in this impactful theory: why do states across time and space have internal conflict? This article will further develop Anderson's theory, showing how domestic intergroup conflict is best understood through his conception of the nation. That is to say, different groups can be imagined, limited, and form a community in the same space relatively harmoniously; however, this is not the case with sovereignty. When sovereignty is envisaged differently by different groups in one territory, members of said groups have a strong motivation for conflict in pursuit of their vision for a complete nation. Conducting case studies by using primary sources, such as speeches from political leaders, publications, and petitions, and secondary sources that explain groups' goals or call to action for members, this article argues that such conflicts should be redefined as nationalist

¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (New York: Verso, 2006), 5.

² Anderson, 6-7.

³ Anderson, 36, 18, 44-45.

conflicts. In doing so, it compliments conflict theories while offering a new, unified perspective. It also argues that adopting this approach to understanding such conflicts will contribute to not only ending them but preventing them from arising.⁴

This article will be investigating three forms of domestic intergroup conflict: (1) war or violent conflicts between identity groups; (2) insurgencies against representative or semi-representative states; and (3) anti-oppression struggle against institutionalized exclusion by dominant groups. It does not include civil uprisings against oligarchic or autocratic governments in cases where the ruling party's interests do not align with any wider group of civilians, as this means that the regime does not fulfill Anderson's national conventions. In certain cases, there may be disagreement over how specific conflicts should be categorized. It matters not: the argument here is that *all* domestic intergroup conflicts are nationalist conflicts and thus the same guidelines should be considered to resolve them. Accordingly, the conflicts are divided in this study only to show how the nationalist framework applies across diverse dynamics. The three cases analyzed in this paper are: 1) The Troubles in Northern Ireland representing a domestic identity conflict; 2) the Cameroonian Anglophone Crisis as a case of an insurgency; and 3) the American Civil Rights Movement that is representative of anti-oppression struggle of a subordinated minority group. These cases were intentionally selected to reveal the generalizability of this nationalist conflict theory across time and space: they are located in Western Europe, Africa, and North America and together span centuries.

⁴ Anderson, 5-9.

Subordinate Group

		Exclusionary Nationalists	Inclusionary Nationalists
Dominant Group	Exclusionary Nationalists	Identity Conflict	Oppression
	Inclusionary Nationalists	Insurgency	No Conflict

Identity Conflict: Northern Ireland

Nationalist conflict can arise when internal groups have noncongruent identities based on, for example, religion or ethnicity. The Northern Irish case study illuminates how Anderson's nationalist conventions operate and by extension motivate conflict in such dynamics. This conflict between Irish and British Nationalists, known as The Troubles, killed 3530 people, including over 1800 civilians, and injured 47,500 more between 1969 and the Good Friday Agreement in 1998.⁵ It was rooted in the 1921 partition of the island of Ireland, which had hitherto been under English rule for centuries. This act led to Protestant-dominant Northern Ireland, sometimes known by its historic name of Ulster, remaining in the United Kingdom as a semi-autonomous province while the rest of Ireland became a free state.⁶ The indigenous nationalism of Northern Ireland is Irish,⁷ with a sense of national community to a united Ireland; however, British

⁵ Lorenzo Bosi and Gianluca De Fazio, "Contextualizing the Troubles: Investigating Deeply Divided Societies through Social Movements Research," in *The Troubles in Northern Ireland and Theories of Social Movements*, edited by Bosi Lorenzo and De Fazio Gianluca (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017), 11.

⁶ Bosi and De Fazio, 18.

⁷ Commonly referred to as Republicanism or simply Nationalism.

Nationalism,⁸ while originally imported to Ireland through years of strategic Protestant immigration aimed at marginalizing Catholics,⁹ has existed in Northern Ireland for centuries now.

In identity conflicts, both sides imagine a wide group of people, including many whom they do not know, to be part of their nation. Bobby Sands (1954-1981) became a famous Irish Nationalist symbol when he died during a hunger strike protesting Irish Nationalist fighters being stripped of political prisoner status. “I may die, but the Republic of 1916 will never die. Onward to the Republic and liberation of our people.”¹⁰ This statement, particularly Sands’ use of the term “our people,” shows how Irish Nationalists imagine the whole of Ireland to be connected as one people. The general possessive pronoun is used similarly in a recruitment notice from 1971 for a British Nationalist militia, the Ulster Volunteer Force, showing a feeling of connectedness between all of those who abide by the Queen’s rule. It states that “if through wrong political direction Her Majesty’s Forces are directed against Loyalist people, members of platoons must do everything possible to prevent a confrontation. WE ARE LOYALISTS; WE ARE QUEEN’S MEN.”¹¹

Community in identity conflicts moves groups past the purely demographic imagining of a nation’s citizenry to the sense that members are tied to each other and to their nation in a comradeship of equals. In 1969, as violence in Northern Ireland mounted, then-Irish Taoiseach Jack Lynch stated that “[the current situation will be ended]

⁸ Commonly referred to as Unionism or Loyalism.

⁹ Youssef Courbage, “The Demographic Factor in Ireland’s Movement Towards Partition (1607-1921),” *Population: An English Selection* 9 (1997): 171-185, www.jstor.org/stable/2953830.

¹⁰ Timothy Shanahan, *The Provisional Irish Republican Army and the Morality of Terrorism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 40.

¹¹ Ulster Volunteer Force, “The UVF Calls For Volunteer Platoons” (circular, 1971), Alpha History, <https://alphahistory.com/northernireland/uvf-calls-for-volunteer-platoons-1971/>.

by the granting of full equality of citizenship to every man and woman in the Six County area, regardless of class, creed or political persuasion, and eventually by the restoration of the historic unity of our country.”¹² This statement from the south illustrates the promise of an egalitarian united Irish community that would come with achieving unification. Likewise, prominent British Nationalist Ian Paisley gave a speech in 1994 rallying against the peace process, asking “are we, the sons and daughters of Ulster become so craven as to allow our ancient foes to triumph over us? Are we the offspring of the defenders of Londonderry and the descendants of the men of the Boyne given to turning back in the day of battle?”¹³ Using familial language and references to past battle draws upon feelings of historic connections between British Nationalists in Northern Ireland, in this case to incite action.

Vitality, in identity nationalist conflicts, all sides set limits on their national membership to the effect of excluding the other groups. The Irish Republican Army’s 1977 *Green Book*, a training manual for recruits, offers insight into the limited nature of Irish Nationalist membership. It states that “the Irish Republican Army, as the legal representatives of the Irish people, are morally justified in carrying out a campaign of resistance against foreign occupation forces and domestic collaborators.”¹⁴ This statement lays out the limitations of the Irish Nationalist conception of the nation through marking those who support Northern Ireland’s union with the United Kingdom as

¹² Jack Lynch, “Jack Lynch On Violence In Northern Ireland” (speech, Dublin, August 1969), Alpha History, <https://alphahistory.com/northernireland/taoiseach-jack-lynch-violence-northern-ireland-1969/>.

¹³ Ian Paisley, “Self-Determination and Unionist Resolve” (speech, Belfast, November 1994), Alpha History, <https://alphahistory.com/northernireland/ian-paisley-self-determination-1994/>.

¹⁴ Irish Republican Army, “Green Book: Security and Commitment” (manual, 1977), Alpha History, <https://alphahistory.com/northernireland/ira-green-book-commitment-1977/>.

the enemy, which in turn shows who they consider the Irish people. A telling quote about the exclusionary nature of British Nationalism comes from a 1985 speech given by Paisley in the aftermath of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, stating that the British Nationalists “choose democracy... light... the accord of True Peace,” instead of Irish Nationalist “tyranny... secrecy ... discord of war.”¹⁵ This quote sets the limit of the community by degrading Irish Nationalists, positioning them as starkly contrary to British Nationalist values.

As theorized, it is Anderson’s final qualifier, sovereignty, that incited conflict in Northern Ireland. Irish and British Nationalists were both vying for their own imagining of sovereignty for Northern Ireland. “[Having the same rights/privileges as other British citizens] is our inalienable right as citizens of the United Kingdom,” continues Paisley in his 1985 speech decrying the Anglo-Irish Agreement, “and Heaven help the men who try and take it from us.”¹⁶ On the other hand, an IRA mural photographed by Tony Crowley in Belfast dated 1985 reads “Stop Maggie Now!” in Gaelic, referring to then Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, and depicting an Irish hand blocking a British one from grabbing Northern Ireland.¹⁷ These are examples of both sides expressing their view that the United Kingdom and Ireland respectively should have sovereignty over the region, two goals that are inherently conflicting.

¹⁵ Ian Paisley, “Never! Never! Never!” (speech, Belfast, November 23, 1985), Alpha History, <https://alphahistory.com/northernireland/ian-paisley-never-never-never-1985/>.

¹⁶ Paisley, 1985.

¹⁷ Tony Crowley, photographer, “mni00171,” photograph, Belfast, Northern Ireland, c1985, from Murals of Northern Ireland Collection, <http://ccdlibraries.claremont.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/mni/id/353/rec/9> (accessed April 8th, 2020).

Insurgency: Cameroon

The second type of nationalist conflict occurs when an insurgent nationalism rises up against a state that aligns with the national imaginings of at least a portion of the people. It is different from identity conflict because it is not two identity groups on relatively equal ground fighting one another but a subordinated group rebelling against the dominant one. The Anglophone Crisis in Cameroon demonstrates how Anderson's national conventions function to motivate insurgencies. The conflict has root in the October 1961 referendum that unified Cameroon's British colony and its significantly larger French colony into a federation, residents of which had each been primarily taught the language of their colonizers. The Francophone government then began attempting to overhaul Anglophone society with French culture; eleven years later, the situation further deteriorated when a fraudulent referendum was held to annex Anglophone Cameroon and create a unitary state.¹⁸ The Anglophone Crisis heated up in 2016 when Anglophone Cameroonian activists protesting under-representation and marginalization were violently suppressed by government security forces; these forces have in turn been met by armed separatist groups who want the Anglophone regions to secede from the country as the independent state of Ambazonia. Nearly 2000 people have been killed in the conflict since October 2017, including 650 civilians.¹⁹ The first nationalist camp of the conflict is the insurgent Ambazonian Nationalism of armed separatists and their supporters, who feel marginalized by the Cameroonian state and are fighting to secede from it. The second nationalist camp is those who feel loyalty to Cameroon, including not

¹⁸ Koungou Léon, "L'Ambazone : l'« État » catalyseur du mal-être de l'anglophone au Cameroun," *Revue Défense Nationale* 4, no. 809 (2018): 101-106, <https://www.cairn.info/revue-defense-nationale-2018-4-page-101.htm>.

¹⁹ "Cameroon," *Global Centre For The Responsibility to Protect*, last modified May 15, 2020, <https://www.globalr2p.org/countries/cameroon/>.

only citizens in support of the government but those that want reform instead of secession.

Insurgent nationalists imagine all those who share their identity or cause as part of their nation, while state nationalists imagine all the country's citizens as members of theirs. "Today we affirm the autonomy of our heritage and our territory," stated Sisiku Ayuk, the self-declared first president of Ambazonia in light of its unrecognized declaration of independence.²⁰ The usage of a general possessive pronoun when referring to land and history shows how Ambazonian Nationalists consider them shared amongst the entire territory's population. However, President Paul Biya has made clear that Cameroonian Nationalists believe that everybody hailing from within the country's current borders are imagined as part of the nation even despite some of the citizens' own desires, stating that "Cameroon is one and indivisible! It shall so remain."²¹

In insurgency situations, the nationalisms feel the ties of comradeship with their specific group and all citizens of the nation respectively. Ambazonia's national anthem paints the pictures of a historical nation of brothers with lines such as "allegiance to the heroes who bore the land with their blood" and "Ambazonia... your children shall be like the stars above."²² President Biya applied similar familial rhetoric to all Cameroonians in 2019 when announcing a national

²⁰ "Soldiers in Cameroon shoot dead several independence activists," *Deutsche Welle*, last modified October 2, 2017, <https://www.dw.com/en/soldiers-in-cameroon-shoot-dead-several-independence-activists/a-40770510>.

²¹ Ryan Lenora Brown, "In Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis, a Stitched-Together Nation Pushes at the Seams," *The Christian Science Monitor*, last modified January 26, 2018, <http://myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocview%2F1991252687%3Facc>

²² "Hail Ambazonia, Land of Glory," *Ambazonia*, accessed July 2, 2020, <https://ambazonia.org/en/about/the-national-anthem>.

dialogue on the separatist issue: “the dialogue will rally all the sons and daughters of our beloved and beautiful country, Cameroon...”²³

Critically, the insurgent nationalism is limited to those that share the identity or cause while the state nationalism is inclusive of all citizens except for the insurgent fighters. “We want them to withdraw from our country... Their presence is illegal. They have encroached within Ambazonia illegally and dismantled our economic, political and social system,” stated Cho Ayaba, leader of the Ambazonian Defense Forces, exhibiting how Ambazonian Nationalists imagine the government and their supporters as dangerous aliens to their nation.²⁴ In turn, Cameroon’s military spokesmen Colonel Didier Badjeck has justified military killings by saying that “the enemy is inside the population... They go in one door and they’re normal citizens, they come out the back door and they have an arm and are secessionists.”²⁵ This quote makes clear the distinction that Cameroonian Nationalists have made between separatists, who are the enemy, and citizens.

The emergence of an insurgent nationalism leads to conflict because of the groups’ opposing desires for sovereignty, either regarding the entire territory or a specific area. AyukTabe elucidated

²³ Juliette Jabkhiro, “Cameroon leader says government will organize talks to solve separatist crisis,” *Reuters*, last modified September 10, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-cameroon-politics/cameroon-leader-says-government-will-organize-talks-to-solve-separatist-crisis-idUSKCN1VV2QH>.

²⁴ Dionne Searcey, “As Cameroon English Speakers Fight to Break Away, Violence Mount,” *New York Times*, last modified June 28, 2018, <https://search-proquest-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/usnews/docview/2059855549/B4E2B5A1BEE247A6PQ/65?accountid=14771>.

²⁵ Siobhan O’Grady, “Cameroon’s Crackdown on its English-Speaking Minority is Fueling Support for a Secessionist Movement: Violence Spurred by the Linguistic Split has Brought the Central African Country to the Brink of Civil War,” *The Washington Post*, last modified February 6, 2019, <https://search-proquest-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/usnews/docview/2176617908/B4E2B5A1BEE247A6PQ/90?accountid=14771>.

that "Southern Cameroon is fighting for a total and unconditional independence from Cameroon as opposed to the independence by joining [French Cameroon]..."²⁶ The Cameroonian Nationalist government has gone to war with Ambazonian Nationalists over this pursuit, with Cameroon's information minister Issa Tchiroma Bakary stating that "secession... this shall never, ever take place."²⁷

Oppression: The United States

The final type of nationalist conflict occurs under conditions of oppression, where an exclusionary nationalism marginalizes a minority group who in turn support an inclusive nationalism. It is different from the former conflicts as it is the dominant group effectively fighting a subordinate group through structural and physical violence, but also because it is the subordinate nationalism that imagines all inhabitants as members of the nation. The case of the American Civil Rights Movement reveals how Anderson's nationalist conventions operate in cases where a population is oppressed. The Civil Rights Movement, originating in the 1950s in southeastern states and continuing into the 1960s, challenged the severe discrimination and disenfranchisement that persisted against African Americans by the white population almost 100 years after the abolition of slavery.²⁸ The first nationalism of the Civil Rights Movement was a United States Nationalism,²⁹ inclusive of all people regardless of race; what stood in the way of this

²⁶ Mimi Mefo Takambou, "Cameroon's separatist leader is willing to talk peace, but only with UN backing," *Deutsche Welle*, last modified March 23, 2020, <https://www.dw.com/en/cameroons-separatist-leader-is-willing-to-talk-peace-but-only-with-un-backing/a-52873413>.

²⁷ Searcey.

²⁸ "Civil Rights Movement," *Anti-Defamation League*, accessed July 1, 2020, <https://www.adl.org/education/resources/backgrounders/civil-rights-movement>.

²⁹ Not to be confused with White supremacy or populism, adherents of which have sometimes co-opted the epithet of American Nationalism in popular culture.

nationalism was White Nationalists, who wanted to continue segregation.

In oppressive dynamics, the inclusive nationalism imagines all citizens of a state as part of the nation while the exclusionary nationalism imagines only a subset of the population as members. Civil Rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King (1929-1968) showed how United States Nationalists imagined everybody living in the country as a member of their nation when he stated in the famous 1963 *Letter from Birmingham Jail* that “anyone who lives inside the United States can never be considered an outsider anywhere within its bounds.”³⁰ On the other hand, White Nationalist academic W.C. George’s 1955 booklet depended upon outdated scientific racism to justify segregation, which in turn revealed his imagining of a separate white community. He concluded that “we cannot consider the Negro to be genetically acceptable... we cannot afford to take the chance of having him destroy our race and our civilization...”³¹

In situations of oppression, the inclusive nationalism ties all citizens together as a community of equals while the exclusionary nationalism is selective. In his legendary address to the thousands assembled for the 1963 March on Washington, Dr. King stated “I have a dream that one day down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification, that one day right down in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.”³² This quote, particularly its use of familial

³⁰ Martin Luther King Jr, *Letter from the Birmingham jail* (San Francisco: Harper, 1994).

³¹ W.C. George, *The Race Problem From The Standpoint Of One Who Is Concerned About The Evils Of Miscegenation* (American States Rights Associaton: 1955), 6, http://projectdaps.org/exhibits/show/daps_exhibit/item/714.

³² Martin Luther King Jr., "I Have a Dream" (speech, Washington, DC, August 28, 1963), American History, <http://www.let.rug.nl/usa/documents/1951-/martin-luther-kings-i-have-a-dream-speech-august-28-1963.php>.

language, showcases how United States Nationalists were striving to achieve a community amongst all Americans even in the most racist of places. By contrast, in response to the Civil Rights Movement, racist organizations including but not limited to the Ku Klux Klan began to re-emerge. They tried to ensure the maintenance of segregation by extra-legal means while also becoming a significant force in electoral politics in the American South. Robert Shelton (1929-2003), a Grand Wizard of one of the new KKK sects, showed the White Nationalist belief that all and only white people are tied together by saying, “to a degree, [the KKK] is a religion, a faith, a belief. A man may subscribe to its principles and live under it, and, in the heritage and background of the Klan—the *only* organization by and for Americans—sentimentally. In this way we are all members.”³³

The inclusive nationalism in oppressive situations does not limit any citizen from being a member of the nation while the exclusionary nationalism limits their community to only a specific subset of the population. No citizen was limited from being a part of the United States Nationalists’ vision for an equal nation: the Birmingham Manifesto of 1963 says that “we believe in the American Dream of democracy, in the Jeffersonian doctrine that ‘all men are created equal and are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among these being life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.’”³⁴ This is in contrast to the White Nationalist organization Jackson Citizens’ Council’s condemnation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which made clear the intentional divisions between communities by stating that “businessmen cannot play both sides of the street; they must ultimately

³³ “The Imperial Wizard Explains the Klan,” *The New York Times*, last modified July 5, 1964, <https://www.nytimes.com/1964/07/05/archives/the-imperial-wizard-explains-the-klan.html>.

³⁴ F.L. Shutlesworth and N.H. Smith, “Birmingham Manifesto,” *Teaching American History*, April 3, 1963, <https://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/birmingham-manifesto/>.

choose whether to serve white or Negro customers, especially in social or semi-social situations.”³⁵

Inclusive nationalists and exclusionary nationalists’ have conflicting desires for political sovereignty of the nation: the inclusive nationalism wants everyone to be able to play a role in governance while the exclusionary group wants their interests to be privileged if not absolute. A petition from United States Nationalists to the Governor of Alabama George C. Wallace and the Alabama Legislature presumed to be from 1965 demands that “that it immediately (1) register all its citizens of voting age, free of impediments, and (2) conduct a free and fair election; thereby providing equal representation and participation of all citizens, Negro and white, in all levels of city, county, and state governments.”³⁶ United States Nationalists sought a nation where *all* members could govern themselves fairly. White Nationalists did not concur, wishing to continue the white-dominated era of American governance. In a speech delivered by Judge Tom P. Brady (1903-1973) promoting segregation and the Citizen’s Council to the Commonwealth Club of California in 1957, he stated that “if in the South the Negro was permitted, as he is in some Northern States, to obtain the ballot by simply reaching 21 years of age, it would mean that no qualified white man in many counties throughout the South could ever hold public office. It would also mean that in the halls of Congress, seats now held by competent white representatives would be held by ignorant, incompetent Negroes.”³⁷

³⁵ “Civil Rights Act: How South Responds,” *The New York Times*, last modified July 12, 1964, <https://www.nytimes.com/1964/07/12/archives/civil-rights-act-how-south-responds.html>.

³⁶ “A Petition to Hon. George C. Wallace” (petition, circa. 1965), Civil Rights Movement Archive, https://www.crmvet.org/docs/65_al-petition.pdf.

³⁷ Thomas P. Brady, “Segregation and the South,” (speech, San Francisco, October 4, 1957), eGrove, https://egrove.olemiss.edu/citizens_pamph/63/.

Why Nationalist?

Understanding domestic intergroup conflict as conflicts between opposing nationalisms is important because inherent to this framework are non-violent solutions. To end a nationalist conflict, the solution must lead to all nationalisms fulfilling Anderson's four conventions of the nation by awarding acceptable terms of sovereignty, thus removing motivation to engage in conflict, to a critical mass. While the most evident solution is partition, as Anglophone Nationalists in Cameroon are demanding,³⁸ other solutions must be found in situations where this method is not possible or right. In Northern Ireland, The Troubles were ended by 1998's Good Friday Agreement, which included a key sovereignty-based solution that did not involve further partition of Ulster. The GFA acknowledged both sides' comparable claim to sovereignty by agreeing that if the majority of both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland voted for Northern Ireland to secede, Britain could not stop them. While British Nationalists won the battle for their conception of national sovereignty on paper, both sides were largely satisfied with having an equally valid claim to sovereignty if they were to become the majority, Irish Nationalists even more so than British.³⁹ Moreover, most of the victories of the Civil Rights Movement had the effect of modifying American sovereignty, such as overhauling segregation rules, banning discrimination through the Civil Rights Act in 1964, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 that addressed ways whites systemically

³⁸ "Cameroon Holds First Peace Talks With Main Separatist Insurgents," *The New York Times*, last modified July 3, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2020/07/03/world/africa/03reuters-cameroon-separatists.html>.

³⁹ Brendan O'Duffy, "British and Irish Conflict Regulation from Sunningdale to Belfast. Part II: Playing for a Draw 1985–1999." *Nations and Nationalism* 6, no. 3 (2000): 408-425, http://resolver.scholarsportal.info/resolve/13545078/v06i0003/399_baicrfipfad1.

repressed Black voters.⁴⁰ With these changes, White Nationalists could no longer legally govern as they desired and United States Nationalists got closer to the inclusive governance they sought.

However, if only sovereignty issues are resolved, the current violent conflict will end but tension will remain between the groups who still do not view one another as part of their community. In Northern Ireland, even 20 years after the peace process, British and Irish Nationalists remain largely separate in vital areas such as housing and education.⁴¹ In this environment, tensions arose over what Brexit would mean for the sovereignty of the region now that membership in the European Union would not ensure an open border on the Island. CEO of Co-operation Ireland Peter Sheridan comments that “most [Irish Nationalists] who voted for the Good Friday Agreement were happy to be Northern Irish within the context of a wider Europe. What they weren’t voting for was to be Northern Irish within the context of the United Kingdom.”⁴² Prime Minister Boris Johnson’s solution is to have customs in the Irish Sea, which in turn angered British Nationalists in Northern Ireland.⁴³ Likewise, White Nationalism permeates through American people, politics, and institutions, as demonstrated by the recent resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement in response to systemic police brutality as well as the wider

⁴⁰ “Milestones Of The Civil Rights Movement,” *PBS*, accessed September 4, 2020, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/eyesontheprize-milestones-civil-rights-movement/>.

⁴¹ Paul Nolan, “Two tribes: A divided Northern Ireland,” *The Irish Times*, last modified April 1, 2017, <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/two-tribes-a-divided-northern-ireland-1.3030921>.

⁴² Muriel Wang et al, “In Northern Ireland, Brexit renews discussions on sovereignty and identity around an unclear border,” *USA Today*, last modified July 5, 2020, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2020/07/05/northern-ireland-brexit-renews-discussions-sovereignty-identity/3074060001/>.

⁴³ Wang et al.

discrimination against Black people⁴⁴ and the racist reactions from many White Americans to it.⁴⁵ Thus, while the issues related to sovereignty must be prioritized in ending the conflict, community-building initiatives must follow to ensure that tension does not fester below the surface.

This information is also critical to understanding how to monitor and prevent potential crises. For nationalist conflicts to occur, two conditions must be met: two or more groups with different imaginings of their national community must exist in the same state and they must disagree over how to exert the state's sovereignty. A country can be multi-national with little sense of a joined community but maintain peace if the groups all agree with how the state is exercising its sovereignty, as that is the fundamental driver of intergroup conflict. More commonly, when there are disagreements over how to govern but a sense of a national community, these ties hold the country together and the divides manifest in political parties and dialogue between elected officials. However, if these situations begin to erode, the central government if not the international community must be cognizant of the potential for escalation and pre-emptively implement solutions in line with the ones outlined above to avoid violence or bloodshed.

Conclusion

All domestic intergroup conflicts can be defined as nationalist conflicts through applying Benedict Anderson's nationalism theory, whether the

⁴⁴ Joyce Ladner, "George Floyd's killing stirs old pain, anger for a 1960s activist," *The Washington Post*, last modified June 17, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2020/06/17/george-floyds-murder-stirs-old-pain-anger-1960s-student-activist/>.

⁴⁵ Katanga Johnson and Jim Urquhart, "White nationalism upsurge in U.S. echoes historical pattern, say scholars," *Reuters*, last modified September 4, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-global-race-usa-extremism-analysis/white-nationalism-upsurge-in-u-s-echoes-historical-pattern-say-scholars-idUSKBN25V2QH>.

opposing sides are relatively equal in power, a subordinate population fighting a dominant group, or oppressors marginalizing another community. Just as *Imagined Communities* had tremendous impact on understanding the nation-states, this application also offers a new touchpoint for peace and conflict studies.

When uncovering what motivates civil wars, there are two predominant schools of thought: greed versus grievance. According to Lars-Erik Cederman and Manuel Vogt, “grievance-based accounts view internal conflict as a reaction to socio-economic and/or political injustice. In contrast, explanations centering on greed make sense of civil war in terms of individuals’ desire to maximize their profits, primarily in a narrowly materialist sense.”⁴⁶ In national conflict theory, the profits that define “greed” are understood as the rights of citizen under a full nation of Anderson’s conception – which is to say, sovereignty over their politics and economics which they believe will better their situation. Yet, the actual conflicts are ordered by the “grievance” of incongruent nationalist identities, defined by their limited, imagined community who have a different desire for that territory’s sovereignty. This theory challenges the greed-grievance dichotomy as here both aspects are necessary for violent conflict, shown in the table below.

⁴⁶ Lars-Erik Cederman and Manuel Vogt. “Dynamics and Logics of Civil War.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 61, no. 9 (October 2017): 1996. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002717721385>.

Nationalist Identity (Grievance)

		Diverging	Uniform
<i>Sovereignty (Greed)</i>	Diverging	Nationalist Conflict	Democratic Electoral Politics
	Uniform	Multi-National Community	No Conflict

This new approach to understanding domestic intergroup conflict also illuminates how to solve them. In order for nationalist conflicts to end, Anderson's four conventions for the nation must be achieved to the satisfaction of a critical mass through modifying sovereignty, as that will remove the motivation for conflict. However, tension will fester, threatening to reignite with any small change in sovereignty, unless measures are put into place to bridge the two communities together. If these are not both fulfilled, the conflict will never truly end as the underlying cause will remain, lest the other side is completely decimated. These measures should be prioritized by those trying to create and maintain peace, but also in initiatives intended to prevent violent conflict or war.

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