

# *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict*

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# Nation= type of collective identity

- One description (of many): “an imagined community”
  - Can be combined with stuff: religion, ethnicity, political philosophy
- **NATIONALISM** can stress cultural or political aspects
  - civic/political vs ethnic/cultural nationalism
- But the political is usually a necessary component:
  - Aspire for complete autonomy & sovereignty... for **NATION-STATE**
  - **A nation is an imagined community that demands political autonomy**

# Ethnic group

- Can be defined by religion, cultural “tradition”, ancestry, language...
  - Like nation, it can be “imagined,” but usually based on somewhat “observable” differences like language, dress, etc.
  - May or may not espouse nationalism, but often demands at least some autonomy
  - **PRIMORDIALISM** = identities are fundamental, unchangeable, biological, permanent
  - **CONSTRUCTIVISM** = identities change over time, are interpreted in different ways at different times or situations, are constantly being constructed and reconstructed...
    - Boundaries are fuzzy and contested, and so is the content

# Origins and Consequences

- Origins of identities
  - Historical circumstances
  - Are they rational? Are they political?
  - Are they on the rise or in decline?

## Consequences

### → Politics & policies

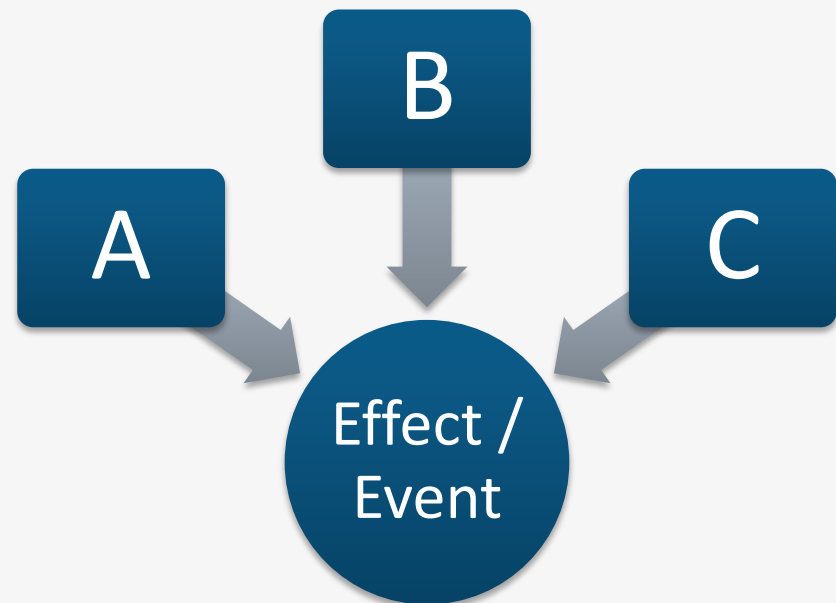
- How to structure political competition & policymaking to get good political outcomes, compromise, etc.?

### → Violent conflict

- Anything distinctive about ethnic/national identities and frequency or intensity of conflict?
- How to avoid? How to manage? How to resolve?

# Lots of questions... few answers

- Evidence: can be gathered incorrectly, interpreted incorrectly, fudged... and cannot *prove* anything
- Theory: can be ill-conceived, poorly specified, overstated, incomplete, based on poor evidence...
- Makes it difficult to answer questions about complex social phenomena



# Causes

- NECESSARY CAUSE = phenomena cannot occur unless X occurs (to some degree)
- SUFFICIENT CAUSE = phenomena can (but may not) occur if (only) X occurs
  - X might be both necessary & sufficient, but usually it is neither
- “PROBABILISTIC” CAUSE = the presence of X makes it more likely that the phenomena will occur
  - Can also be necessary and/or sufficient
  - Implies other causes also exist