

CONFERENCE ON
“EXPLAINING THE IDENTITY & CONFLICT NEXUS IN FOREIGN
POLICY: GREECE IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE”

Athens, Greece – October 18-19, 2024

Organized by

Nicholas Sambanis

DIRECTOR, IDENTITY & CONFLICT LAB @ YALE UNIVERSITY

Panagiotis Tsakonas

DIRECTOR, MIGRATION AND DIASPORA LAB @ UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS

The nexus between national identity, nationalism, and violent inter-state conflict is at the core of a sprawling literature on international security and foreign policy, yet the mechanisms underlying the causes of nationalism and the effects of national identification on conflict escalation are not well understood. The perception that national identity is under threat can motivate “us” versus “them” thinking that has been linked to conflict escalation. National identification can generate hostility and discrimination against immigrants and refugees from other countries, it could motivate the repression of ethnic minorities which could in turn spark separatist movements and civil wars, and it could underlie hawkish foreign policies that culminate in the outbreak of inter-state military disputes. Our conference aims to explore **mechanisms and measures underlying all forms of nationalist conflict** with a particular focus on inter-state relations so as to advance the literature on nationalism as a determinant of foreign policy design.

We seek to explore concepts, ideas, and policy challenges connected to national identification and its role in motivating violent and non-violent conflicts around the world. While we have a particular focus on the Eastern Mediterranean region and Greek foreign policy more specifically, we seek to advance a comparative perspective, drawing lessons from theoretically informed comparative empirical studies and cases from other regions. We are concerned with generating policy-relevant insights for the management of destructive forms of the expression of nationalism everywhere. Some of the questions that we hope to address are the following: What does national identification mean and how can it be measured? Does national identification imply a convergence among nationals’ beliefs and values, or are such beliefs more closely tied to other social identities, such as social class, partisanship, or ethnicity and religion? What is the connection between civic identity and national identity? Why do conflicts that appear to threaten national identity escalate quickly to violence? Do citizens seek to conform to majority opinion when their national identity is activated by external threats? Do external threats unite the nation? How could conflicts over sovereignty or territory that threaten national identity be contained?

We invite paper proposals from all social sciences on any topic related to the theme outlined above. We seek thought-provoking papers that are grounded in theory while providing rigorous and original empirical analyses that address questions of vital practical, normative, and policy importance. We are open with regard to methodological approach and encourage applications from researchers across the social sciences.

Interested scholars should submit **one-page abstracts** for consideration by **March 30, 2024**. Notifications of acceptances by **April 30**. Paper drafts must be submitted by **September 17, 2024** in order to be included in the program. Only completed (unpublished) papers will be accepted for presentation. Well-developed pre-analysis plans will also be considered.

We **cover all accommodation expenses and meals for 2 nights** in the Lycabettus area near the conference venue at the Byzantine & Christian Museum of Athens. Other expenses, including travel, are not covered. Abstracts should be no longer than 500 words and may be submitted using this link: <https://forms.gle/ecETTrwnPBrJGrCs8> Direct any questions to Penelope Gabeta (gabeta.penelope@gmail.com).