This talk will present two papers from a research program that contributes to our understanding of the considerable cross-country variation in anti-immigrant sentiment. Whereas previous work has examined factors such as fluctuations in labor market conditions, changing composition of immigration streams, or the rise of populist parties, I will propose a macro-political argument: past geopolitical competition and war have shaped how national identities formed and in turn also contemporary attitudes toward newcomers. I will introduce a geopolitical threat scale and drawing on data from 33 European countries show a robust and substantively significant relationship between past geopolitical trauma and restrictionist attitudes towards immigrants. A follow-up analysis examines the role of popular understandings of nationhood as a central mediating variable. Building on recent advances in the measurement of popular nationalism and data from 43 countries around the world, I show that a turbulent geopolitical past decreases the prevalence of liberal nationalism (pride in institutions, inclusive boundaries) while increasing the prevalence of restrictive nationalism (less pride in institutions, exclusive boundaries).

RSVP to socevent@uwo.ca for more information about attending virtually

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