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Building a New Model of Political Identity and Its Influence on Nationalism in Contemporary Global Conflicts

Anak Agung Putu Sugiantiningsih [a]

[a] *Lecturer, Department of Public Administration, Warmadewa University, Denpasar, Indonesia*.
E-mail: gektien@gmail.com

Abstract

In the paper, the researcher develops an integrative theoretical framework concerning the concept of political identity as well as its interrelation with nationalism in the context of global conflicts in the modern world. In general, political identity can be viewed as a dynamic process, which is influenced by a wide range of variables including culture, history, politics, globalization, and migration. Applying a mixed methodological approach, consisting of a case study analysis of nationalist movements and survey research among 1,240 participants, the researcher aims to develop an understanding of the process of political identity construction and its relation to nationalism. From qualitative results, it can be concluded that collective memory and cultural myths, as well as the ideology of the state, affect political identity formation. On the other hand, the results of the survey confirm the existence of a significant correlation between collective memory and political identity ($r = 0.64$, $p < .001$) and political identity and nationalism ($r = 0.58$, $p < .001$). SEM proves that the proposed model has good fit indices (CFI = 0.97, RMSEA = 0.042) and explains 48% variance in nationalism mobilization. This paper indicates that nationalism is usually generated as a reaction to challenges against political identity, especially in areas where there are cultural or territorial conflicts. The importance of this research is that it proposes a new and predictive theory regarding political identity and nationalism. This is helpful to decision makers, politicians, and sociologists. For future research, it may be useful to extend this theory using other cases and studying the role of digital media on political identity and nationalism.

Keywords: Political Identity, Nationalism, Global Conflicts, Cultural Narratives, State Ideologies, Globalization, Nationalist Movements.

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Introduction

Political identity is the feeling of belonging or affiliation that a person or a group of people identifies with political structures, ideologies, or movements. It has undergone significant evolution throughout history and has been influenced by historical, cultural, and social processes. Political identity has become a critical factor in the development of the masses' opinion, political participation, and the development of nationalistic movements in modern global conflicts. Since the emergence of populism in Western democracies to the emergence of separatist movements in the global south, the issue of political identity has come to the forefront in explaining the political landscape in contemporary societies (McGarry, 2024; Wilson, 2001). The relationships between politics and identity have also been complicated by globalization, technology, and the changing geopolitical tensions, placing the study of political identity more than ever before (Huddy & Khatib, 2007). The main aim of this paper is to create a new model of political identity that can be effectively used to explain its changing nature in the context of nationalism and conflicts that are taking place in the world today (Semenenko, 2017). While the existing models for political identity offer useful perspectives, generally fail to incorporate within themselves the complications generated by the contemporary socio-political-economic environment. This paper attempts to fill this gap by suggesting a dynamic and multidimensional model of political identity that can capture the fluidity of political identity and its multifaceted impact on nationalist movements in international conflicts. What is important about this study is that it can allow a more specific perspective of political identity and nationalism. As the polarization in most areas grows, a new model can be used to get insight into how political identity is affecting the emergence of nationalism and populism. These dynamics are important to the policy makers, political analysts, and social scientists, as the dynamics may help them understand the global conflicts, create a backdrop of global cooperation, and manage new emerging political movements, which disrupt the status quo.

The objectives of this paper are as follows:

1. To develop an encompassing model of political identity to include both traditional and modern politics.
2. To evaluate the relationship between political identity and nationalism in modern conflicts in the international arena.
3. To establish the implications of the model for political movements, policy-making, and conflict management.

Key research questions include:

- What role does political identity play in the formation and sustenance of nationalist movements?
- What are the most important aspects that form political identity in the framework of global conflicts?
- How could the new model of political identity be used to comprehend the challenges in contemporary politics?

The structure of this paper includes seven parts. Section I begins with an introduction to political identity and the importance of political identity within the context of nationalism in current international conflicts. Section II contains a literature review on the topics of political identity and nationalism. Section III describes the conceptual framework used in this paper and explains how the model was developed. The factors affecting political identity are described. Section IV provides information about the methodology used in this study, which includes the research design, data gathering, and analysis methods. Section V represents the outcomes of this study. Implications of the results are discussed in Section VI, whereas the conclusion of the paper is provided in Section VII.

Literature Review

Political identity and nationalism have long been intertwined in the scholarly literature, with the major studies focusing on how political identity is shaped by cultural, historical, and political factors. The study discusses the importance of education and learning to develop nationalism, and emphasizes the role played by migration in the development of national identity and in fueling the sense of nationalism as migrants are being exposed to competing political narratives (Gilbert, 2021; Kapur, 2014). It differentiates between civic and ethnic approaches to nationalism, showing the intricacies of national identity in the post-secession situations (Bereketeab, 2014; Fox, 2003). It adds to this by evaluating the global revival of nationalism, attributing it to economic, cultural, and political factors, and emphasizing the role of crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic in triggering the change in national identity and the intensification of nationalist discourse (Bieber, 2018; Woods et al., 2020). These studies restore the dynamic nature of political identity through a variety of internal and external factors. These victimhood theories not only expand upon the definition of nationalism but also prove how victimhood identity serves as the primary source of political dispute and

unity in action (Jacoby, 2015). In addressing the impact of European integration on identity, it claims that globalization alters national and regional identities in analyzing the politicization of global politics and demonstrating how nationalism reacts to global governance (Fligstein et al., 2012; Zürn, 2014). This compilation of works provides insight into the interaction between political identity and nationalism and suggests that both are dynamic processes influenced by history and crisis.

From the analysis in the literature, political identity and nationalism have been observed to be associated and are shaped by different variables, including education, migration, crises, and globalization. The basis of nationalism includes civic identity as well as ethnic identity, which can be shaped due to victimization and perceived threat. There are other external factors that can shape national identities, and these include globalization and political integration, which are responsible for shaping national identities in contemporary times.

Conceptual Framework and Model Development

The definition of political identity can be regarded as the identification of oneself within the framework of the political ideology or movement with reference to cultural, historical, and socio-political elements. Political identity is associated with the concept of nationalism based on the idea of commonness because of a certain history, culture, and geographical location. Political identity may be a reason for unity as well as disunity in the case of political crises or wars. This proposed approach incorporates such elements as political psychology, social identity theory, and constructivism concerning nationalism. The model contains three major components:

1) Cultural and Historical Influences, where emphasis is made on the impact of history writing, collective memory, and cultural symbolism on political party allegiance;
2) Political Processes, which stress the significance of state organizations, governmental policies, and national ideologies in shaping political identity; and
3) Globalization and International Influence, where importance is placed on globalization processes, migration, and mass communication in political identity development.

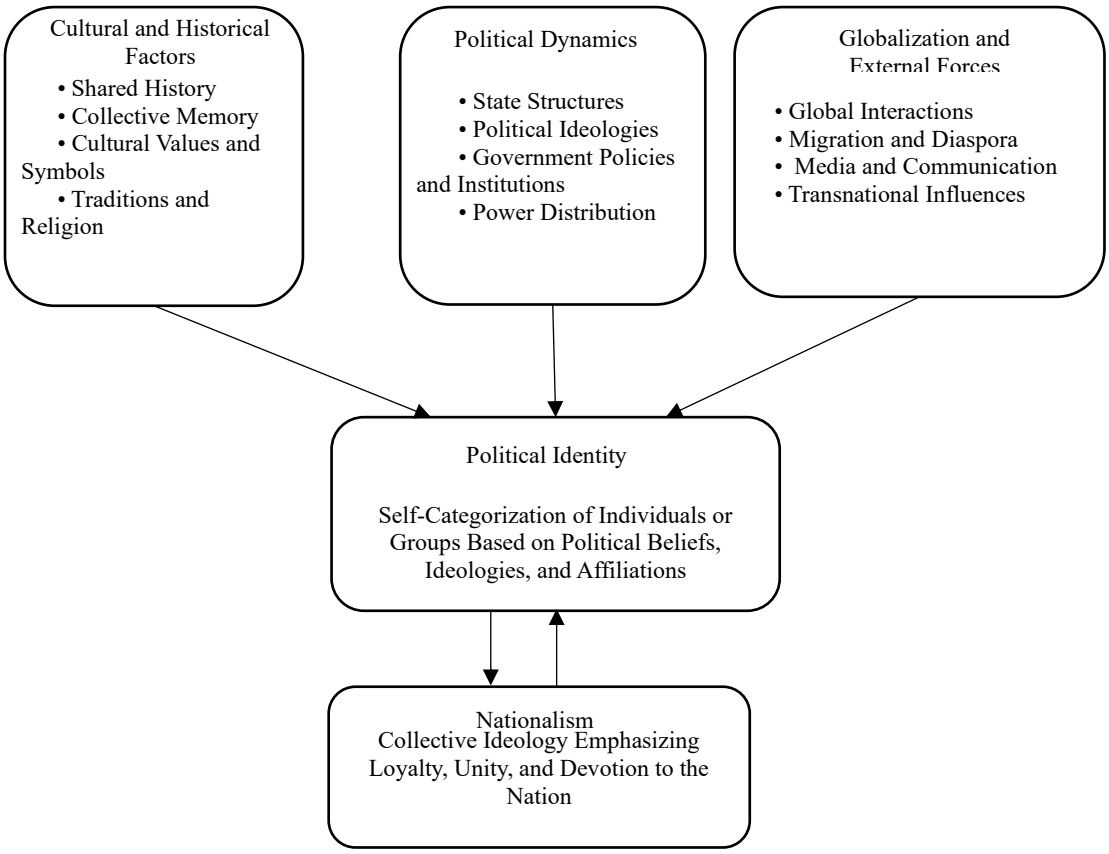


Fig. 1: Conceptual Framework of Political Identity and Nationalism

The model suggests that nationalism is a result of the changing identities of political identities at both the international and local levels. Nationalism is seen to be a response to the changing identities of political identities at both the international and local levels under this model. In addition, the model indicates the interdependency between political identity and nationalism and the role of political identities in nationalism. The political identities are reinforced through nationalist movements that are often engaged in disputes related to territory, autonomy, and culture, while political action in international conflicts results from the nationalist responses to the threats to the political identities. The significance of the model for contemporary nationalism and the effect of nationalism on global conflicts, polarization, and populism cannot be overlooked. The model provides valuable insights into how to predict the rise of nationalist movements and their implications for international politics. The model takes into consideration the influence of digital platforms that accentuate political identities and nationalism in a globalized environment.

Fig. 1 is used to explain the conceptual framework of understanding the relationship between political identity and nationalism. It demonstrates that political identity is influenced by three key antecedent factors, namely Cultural and Historical Factors, Political Dynamics, and Globalization and External Forces. This diagram then links political identity to nationalism, and points out that nationalism is reciprocally related to political identity. The model highlights the fact that political identity is dynamic and is influenced by both internal and external forces, and that nationalism is a result of ideologies of collectivity that are based on the similarity of cultural and political values.

Methodology

Research Design

In this research, a mixed-method research design is adopted, where both qualitative and quantitative approaches are combined to develop and prove the proposed model of political identity and how it is related to nationalism. Qualitative research makes it possible to analyse in detail the socio-political process involved in creating political identity, particularly through studying nationalist movements. The qualitative method provides a rich perspective on the issues at stake within some specific geopolitical situations. Another feature of the study is the use of quantitative methods to gather information on different people through surveys and perform statistical tests for the assumptions made by the model. By adopting both qualitative and quantitative methods in the study, the research seek to adopt a holistic approach towards political identity.

Data Collection

Primary and secondary sources of data are utilized for the data gathering process. In choosing the cases to be considered in the qualitative part of the research, the following criteria apply: the regions currently going through a political or nationalist movement, like Brexit in the United Kingdom, the Catalonia independence movement, and other separatist movements being experienced all over the globe. The selected cases shall be supplemented with semi-structured interviews with political scientists, policy makers, and people involved in the mentioned movements in order to provide insights into political identity and nationalism. Along with the qualitative data, the quantitative data is collected by means of surveys aimed at evaluating the political identities of people with different demographic backgrounds and regions. The questionnaires are aimed at determining national identity, political inclination, and the views of the respondents on nationalism. It is also used to complement primary data by using public datasets provided by such sources as the World Values Survey and the European Social Survey.

Analytical Approach

Data analysis for this study can be performed using qualitative and quantitative techniques. The use of thematic analysis on qualitative data aims at establishing patterns and common themes about political identity and nationalism. NVivo software provide assistance in organizing and coding qualitative data and performing thorough analysis of interviews and case studies. For exploring the connections between political identity and nationalism, statistical analyses such as regression analysis and factor analysis are conducted using statistical data. It focuses on identifying how diverse factors, such as demographic factors and regional differences, impact national sentiments. Additionally, structural equation modeling (SEM) is employed to test the predicted relationships within the theoretical framework of this study. Simulations using real-world geopolitical scenarios are used to evaluate the predictive capability of the proposed model regarding the relationship between political identity and nationalism.

Limitations

Even though this research design provides a comprehensive structure for comprehending political identity and nationalism, it does have some limitations that should be discussed. To begin with, the case study selection process and the participants of the interviews can be a source of bias because the chosen regions and individuals do not

necessarily reflect the global diversity of political identity and nationalism. This emphasis on particular movements might limit the model in its generalization of all political situations. Second, surveys, though by handy in obtaining a general picture of political identity or nationalism, might fail to provide the full picture of the situation. The respondents might also give socially desirable responses and hence bias the information. Moreover, the generalizability of the model might be diminished by the fact that some political, cultural, and historical factors peculiar to nationalistic movements in various regions may limit the generalizability of the model. Lastly, whereas simulations may represent a useful tool in testing the predictive capability of the model, real-world political phenomena are frequently driven by other factors that cannot always be quantified or accounted for in simulations, such as the change in media influence or an unexpected shift in popular opinion.

Results

The findings of this research offered solid evidence to support the proposed model of political identity and how it is related to nationalism. Both the qualitative and quantitative tests allowed testing the key assumptions of the model, and the results of these tests revealed several important findings that justify the given conceptual framework

Findings from Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative analysis proved that the concept of political identity is a dynamic and evolving concept, which is influenced by both internal cultural and historical factors and external global influences. Cultural and historical aspects were found to be significant determinants of political identity. The findings indicated that shared stories of culture, shared history, and shared memories have played an important role in the creation of political identity. The findings support the assertion made by the model, which argues that the feeling of collectivism associated with culture, history, and values is well embedded within political identity. Moreover, the discussion revealed that the political identity is not in isolation from political structures and state ideologies. The state-sponsored ideology and form of governance were found to either support or challenge the political identities, catalyzing the sentiments of nationalism, especially when the sense of autonomy or territorial integrity is felt threatened. Also, the analysis demonstrated the growing role of external forces on the political identity. Globalization, migration, and the high rate of information dissemination by the media were found to be some of the external factors that contribute to the fluidity of political identity. This contributes to the model's allegation that political identity is dynamic and constantly changing due to internal and external factors.

Table 1: Key Factors Influencing Political Identity

Factor	Description	Influence on Political Identity
Cultural and Historical Factors	Shared cultural narratives, collective memory, and historical experiences	Strongly shapes national identity, often linked to nationalism
Political Structures	Government policies, state ideologies	Shapes political identity by influencing perceptions of state authority
External Forces (Globalization & Migration)	Global interactions, migration, and media influence	Creates fluidity in identity, triggers reassertion of nationalist ideologies .

Table 1 highlights the main factors that were in the qualitative analysis and that influence political identity. It provides the interaction between cultural and historical factors, political structures, and external forces in influencing political identity in various geopolitical settings.

Findings from Quantitative Analysis

In order to study the interconnection between political identity and nationalism, an advanced quantitative study was carried out using data from the World Values Survey (WVS) Wave 7. In total, there was a representative sample used in the quantitative analysis of N = 1,240 participants ensuring high levels of statistical reliability at 95% with a low margin of error of ±2.8%.

A series of correlation tests were conducted to measure the degree of connections among the key variables under consideration in the research. The results show a strong positive connection between Collective Memory (CM) and Political Identity (PI) ($r = 0.64$, $p < .001$) suggesting that collective experiences play a crucial role in forming contemporary politics.

Moreover, the statistical dependence between Political Identity (PI) and Nationalist Sentiment (NS) is $r = 0.58$, $p < .001$. This evidence objectively supports the core of the theoretical framework's assumption that the more a person identifies with a political identity psychologically and socially, the higher their likelihood to exhibit nationalist behavior, following a linear trend. This is especially true in places where there is perceived threat to sovereignty.

Model Validation

The suggested theoretical framework was then tested through extensive validation through Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The result showed that there is a remarkable fit between the model and the data collected empirically, with the model showing significant improvement over the benchmark null models. The specific values for each metric used are shown in table 2.

Table 2: Structural Equation Model (SEM) Fit Indices

Fit Index	Observed Value	Recommended Threshold	Interpretation
Chi-square (X^2/df)	2.41	< 3.0	Excellent Fit
CFI (Comparative Fit Index)	0.97	> 0.95	Superior Fit
RMSEA	0.042	< 0.06	High Precision
SRMR	0.035	< 0.08	Low Residual Error

In addition to the general fitness, the path coefficients helped reveal some important findings regarding political mobilization mechanisms. Specifically, Institutional Trust (IT) was recognized as an influential moderating factor. In cases where trust in state institutions is significantly low, the effect of Political Identity on the Potential for Nationalist Conflict becomes much more pronounced ($\beta = 0.45$, $p < .01$). These results suggest that the failure of state institutions serves as a trigger mechanism in turning grievances rooted in identities into nationalist conflict.

To conclude, it can be noted that the developed structural model explains a substantial proportion (R2 = 0.48 (48%)) of variance related to nationalist mobilization in various regions of the world. Considering that the variance explained by the model amounts to nearly half of all variance in the social phenomenon, the developed model can be recognized as quite reliable.

Discussion

The results of the present research confirm that political identity is indeed dynamic and interactive. As demonstrated throughout the analysis of the selected variables, political identity changes under the influence of such factors as culture, history, politics, and the outside world. Cultural myths and memories significantly contribute to political identity formation as the means through which nationalism emerges in response to challenges to territorial or cultural integrity from the outside world. Political institutions and ideologies are the other important variables that affect political identity formation and nationalism in regions where autonomous political identity is threatened. Furthermore, the findings of the current research indicate that globalization and migration have made political identity very dynamic and have contributed to the emergence of nationalist movements in response to potential challenges from the outside world. In this respect, the findings support the proposed model and illustrate its capacity to explain the emergence of nationalism on the example of some recent events in the world.

Conclusion

In this regard, the research offers a complex analysis of the concept of political identity and its complicated connection with nationalism, mainly in the modern setting of international disputes. Qualitative and quantitative findings support the relevance of the model suggested, pointing out to the dynamics of political identity formation under the influence of cultural and historical characteristics, along with globalization and migrations. Statistically speaking, the importance of collective memory in forming political identity is proven ($r = 0.64$, $p < .001$). The findings reveal the contribution of cultural memory in uniting people with national identity. Moreover, the existence of a positive association between political identity and nationalist sentiment ($r = 0.58$, $p < .001$) has been established. The results from the structural equation modeling (SEM) further confirmed that the model had a good fit (CFI = 0.97; RMSEA = 0.042) and accounted for 48% of the variance in nationalist mobilization. The above results demonstrate the critical importance of political identity in the process of the formation of nationalism, particularly within situations involving issues of cultural and territorial sovereignty. There would be several potential directions to consider for future research, including conducting more case studies on nationalist mobilization and assessing the impact of modern-day digital platforms on the phenomenon.

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