



HELLENIC REPUBLIC

**National and Kapodistrian  
University of Athens**

EST. 1837

Department of Economics

### **Research Seminar Series in Economic Sciences, 2021-2022**

**Speaker:** Dr. Vassilis Sarantides, Lecturer (Assistant Professor), Department of Economics, University of Sheffield

**Webpage:** <https://sites.google.com/view/vassilissarantides/vitae>



**Title:** "Historical pathogen prevalence and the radius of trust"

**Date & Time:** Wednesday, February 16th, 2022, 19:00 - 20:30

**Webex Link:** <https://uoa.webex.com/uoa/j.php?MTID=m6f2d44769f2375bf2090852c432d9ac6>

**Url:** <http://www.econ.uoa.gr/ereynhtika-seminaria-research-seminars.html>

**Abstract:** Several recent contributions to the literature have acknowledged the scope of cooperation as a prerequisite for prosperity. In this study, we extend the Parasite Stress Theory of values to hypothesize a negative impact of historical pathogen prevalence on the radius (out-group - in-group) of trust that persists over time. This is because as pathogenic stress increases societies were more likely: (i) to develop mistrust towards out-groups as defence mechanism against novel parasites; (ii) enhance cooperation within in-groups through supportive social networks to cope with present infections. These two attributes increase the distance between out-group and in-group trust in environments with high pathogen prevalence, decreasing consequently the radius of people who are deemed trustworthy. We test this hypothesis across four layers, namely at the cross-country level, cross-country individual-level, pre-industrial society level, and using data of second-generation migrants.

Our findings reveal a robust negative effect of historical pathogen prevalence on the ‘narrow’ radius of trust that the reference point of in-groups is limited to the closest circle of familiar others (i.e., family or the members of the local community). In contrast, the association is weak for the ‘wider’ radius of trust that the reference point of in-groups (out-groups) is expanded (contracted).

**Organizers:** Dimitris Kenourgios, *Professor*  
George Dotsis, *Assoc. Professor*  
Frago Kourandi, *Assist. Professor*

Thank you.

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