Identity  
Affirmative Case by Joel Erickson



“Identity” assumes a non-combative stance on the resolution, positing nationalism and globalism as differing attitudes which invariably coexist in each one of us. When we maintain a delicate balance between the two, which one ought to be considered preeminent?

As a mentality that prioritizes the nation-state above the world, nationalism reinforces our spirit of national consciousness and consequently fortifies our sense of identity via affording symbols and traditions with which to identify. On the contrary, globalism’s intrinsic propensity to systematize disparate cultures and traditions deemphasizes notions of identity.

Ask the judge for a simple response: Prioritize which side better helps her know herself better.

Identity

Regardless of one’s political perspective, it’s sometimes impossible not to laugh when watching *Watter’s World*, a show where Fox News correspondent Jesse Watters exposes people’s eccentricities and sometimes ignorance via outrageous interview footage. While most exchanges are edited for comic relief, one segment highlights an important axiom: Watters asks an individual the simple, yet profound question: “Can you have a country without borders?”[[1]](#footnote-1)

The reply? Sheer dumbfounded silence, a perfectly appropriate reaction for such a rudimentary concept—it is impossible to have a nation without some kind of national consciousness, without a sense of identity. Because nationalism better upholds a sense of identity, I affirm that we ought to uphold it above globalism.

# Value: Identity

The metric or standard with which you ought to compare the pros and cons of nationalism and globalism is the value of identity, which is “the condition of being oneself or itself, and not another.”[[2]](#footnote-2)

## Reason to Prefer: Prerequisite

If we’re not aware of who we are, if we cannot ascertain what it means to be distinctly “us,” if we cannot differentiate ourselves from what we are not, then we are effectively incapacitated, impaired from performing the basic functions of life. The “Law of Identity”—an almost ludicrously self-evident truism that things are identical with themselves—undergirds the laws of logic and comprises the bedrock for rational thought.[[3]](#footnote-3) Knowledge of one’s identity is a prerequisite of life, a foundational element of reality.

Having established the weighing mechanism for the round, I want to emphasize two crucial elements of the round through two points of analysis:

# Resolutional Analysis 1: Perspectives of Prioritization

In essence, nationalism and globalism are differing perspectives to answer the question of prioritization: Which one is paramount? The nation or the world?

**Nationalism** refers to the “the strong **belief** that the interests of a particular nation-state are of primary importance. Also, the belief that a people who share a common language, history, and culture should constitute an independent nation, free of foreign domination.”[[4]](#footnote-4)

**Globalism** denotes “the **attitude** or policy of placing the interests of the entire world above those of individual nations.”[[5]](#footnote-5)

Nationalism and globalism are beliefs or attitudes about whether or not the interests of a particular nation-state or the entire world are primary. Consequently, the two exist as contrasting perspectives on prioritization.

# Resolutional Analysis 2: Delicate Balance

Both nationalism and globalism have the potential of existing in unpalatable extremes. Rabid nationalism can breed ethnic cleansing, and unadulterated globalism entails a world devoid of borders. The question is not which is the lesser of two evils. Rather, when nationalism and globalism coexist as attitudes, which one is primary? My contention is that…

# Contention: Prioritizing Nationalism Better Upholds Identity

## Subpoint A: Philosophical Basis

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel wrote in his famous work *Phenomenology of Spirit* that “a consciousness exist[s] for itself in mediate relation with itself through another consciousness.”[[6]](#footnote-6) Hegel is particularly notorious in the philosophical discipline for his uncanny ability to express very basic thoughts in unintelligible language. What he’s actually saying is quite simple: We know who we are through what we’re not.

Globalism emphasizes uniformity to the detriment of individuality. It causes us to identity first and foremost as people of the world rather than American citizens. Without an emphasis on national identity, we begin to lose the ability to identity with our nation, thus eroding our identity. By placing the concerns and interests of the nation-state first, nationalism maintains differentiation between nations and helps us to understand ourselves through what we are not. We belong to America first, not the United Nations.

Still too abstract?

## Subpoint B: Practical Basis

Nationalism gives us a concrete national consciousness with which to identify. According to Encyclopedia.com,

“Distinctive flags are created as well as national anthems and patriotic music and poetry. The use of national symbols also gives a nation-state a presence to the world. They also give something for the citizens to rally around and share in common while forming prejudices against others with different symbols. The symbols unite people by giving images and sayings representing national values, history, and goals. The symbols celebrate patriotism (allegiance to the state) and rally members of a group seeking nation status. In addition to flags and patriotic music, symbols can include a simple but distinctive combination of colors and regalia (symbols of authority) associated with the head of state.”[[7]](#footnote-7)

We know ourselves via our country’s relation to other nations. Encyclopedia.com continues,

“Symbols can also include myths to inspire people. Myths are stories, either wholly fictitious or exaggerated from a real life event, that inspire patriotism and reaffirm the nation's values. **The myths establish a distinction from peoples of other nations**.”[[8]](#footnote-8)

In contrast, globalism removes this sense of identity through, according to Aaron Renn, a Senior Fellow at the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, imposing a “global culture and regime, a shared set of social, lifestyle, and political norms, along with supranational institutions that embody them, that explicitly supersede all national norms and institutions.”[[9]](#footnote-9)

# Conclusion

Remember that neither nationalism and globalism are negative, and both are essential. However, the question you must answer is which one is primary. Globalism seeks to minimize differences between nations, and as a result potentially jeopardizes our sense of identity. Nationalism recognizes that national consciousness supersedes global consciousness, and consequently offers us a fixed sense of identity through differentiating us from other nations.

I’d like to conclude with this quote from journalist Ron Fournier, who reminds us why our national identity as Americans is crucial: “We, the people. Manifest Destiny. Conceived in liberty. Fear itself. Ask not. Morning in America. United we stand. Yes, we can. In times of great change and tumult, presidents seek to inspire beleaguered Americans by reminding them of their national identity.”[[10]](#footnote-10)

Opposing This Case

“Identity” hinges upon a couple of philosophical nuances which it attempts to exploit. First, undermine the continual conflation of “personal identity” with “national identity.” The value framework ambiguously interchanges the two, and highlighting that globalism can still preserve personal identity renders large swaths of this case non-unique.

Second, contest the “delicate balance” analysis point. No judge wants the debate to devolve into sides hurling extreme examples to stigmatize either nationalism or globalism, but you could make the robust case that, pragmatically speaking, nationalism does engender real world abuse and such oppression must be taken into consideration.

Third, mitigate the global culture argument. Demonstrate that (1) global culture does not necessarily remove national culture and (2) the case does not present any harms generated by global culture.

Ultimately, “Identity” is predicated on an almost “balanced affirmative” foundation. Turn the arguments by demonstrating that globalism preserves the benefits of nationalism, then overwhelm with your robust negative strategy.

1. “A Borderless Planet?” *Fox News*, July 26, 2016. <http://insider.foxnews.com/2016/07/26/watters-world-immigration-dnc-edition> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. “Identity” Dictionary.com, 2017. <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/identity> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Matt Slick, “Law of Identity,” *Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry*, <https://carm.org/dictionary-law-identity> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. “Nationalism,” The American Heritage New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy, Third Edition. Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005. 22 Jun. 2017. <Dictionary.com <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/nationalism> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. “Globalism,” Dictionary.com, 2017. <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/globalism> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. . G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. J.L.H. Thomas, from M.J. Inwood, ed. *Hegel: Selections* in Paul Edwards, gen. ed.*, The Great Philosophers* (New York: Macmillian, 1989), reprinted in Forrest E. Baird, ed. *Philosophical Classics, Vol. IV: Nineteenth-Century Philosophy* (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2003), 46. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. "Nationalism." Prejudice in the Modern World Reference Library.  *Encyclopedia.com.* 22 Jun. 2017, <http://www.encyclopedia.com> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. "Nationalism." Prejudice in the Modern World Reference Library.  *Encyclopedia.com.* 22 Jun. 2017, <http://www.encyclopedia.com> (emphasis added) [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Aaron Renn, “What Is Globalism?” <http://www.urbanophile.com/2017/05/05/what-is-globalism/> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. BrainyQuote, <https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/r/ronfournie477309.html?src=t_national_identity> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)