Applications of the Resolution  
Foundational Article by Chris Ostertag



The purpose of this article is advocacy: giving you some research starters. Think of it as a buffet of useful arguments and their accompanying thematic cores. Good applications are abundant – you’ll see many of them in the cases at the back of this book. This article teaches you *how to run those applications well*.

The purpose of applications depends on the type of case you’re running. Idealistic, value-centric cases want to make powerful philosophical claims of worth based on the essential nature of the resolutional terms. Pragmatic, contention-centric cases want to pile on evidence and bury their opponents’ case logic with a mountain of data.

In the first, an application is not advocacy but illustration, a convenient portrait of how the case works. In the latter, an application is hard proof that such-and-such is the case. Many applications can be used for both purposes; just make sure you impact them correctly to avoid contradicting yourself.

# For affirmatives

You may be thinking this resolution is about the Trump Administration. Arguably, he won the presidency by advocating Nationalism over Globalism. As an Affirmative strategy, I advise you not to talk too much about Trump. For better or for worse, the Trump administration is extremely divisive. Treat it like you would abortion or gay marriage, a potato far too hot to safely handle. Offending your judge is the quickest way to lose rounds.

That’s not to say you shouldn’t be prepared to address the Trump Administration if the Negative brings it up. Your opponent may very well bring up a strong condemnation to your position, citing Donald Trump as a harmful application of the Affirmative world. Honestly, it is quite amazing how brash and bold the Trump Administration has been concerning its Nationalist rhetoric. According to the Economist:

For the first time since the second world war, the great and rising powers are simultaneously in thrall to various sorts of chauvinism. Like Mr Trump, leaders of countries such as Russia, China and Turkey embrace a pessimistic view that foreign affairs are often a zero-sum game in which global interests compete with national ones. It is a big change that makes for a more dangerous world.[[1]](#footnote-1)

That said, starting off the debate calls for a better strategy, and that would be to choose applications that few can safely disagree with. You want big, obvious impacts that appeal to the most powerful human emotions. This resolution’s scope will help you find them.

Your best bet is *patriotism*. While it’s worth noting that nationalism and patriotism are not exactly identical, they do dwell in circles that overlap. You’ll get plenty of mileage from applications that speak to classic Americana. You want to evoke the sacred dirt and sweat of a baseball diamond or auto shop; the gritty pleasure of hard entrepreneurial work and building a strong, warm family; and the nobility of self-effacing courage forged on battlefields and cornfields alike.

Nationalism isn’t about hatred or exclusivity, which may be how the Negative will want to define you. To conflate them is a mistake. Nationalism doesn’t mean “my country, right or wrong.” It means “my country, because I’ve worked hard to make it right.” Nationalism is the bravery of 56 men huddled in the sweltering heat of a Philadelphia city hall, pledging their lives, fortunes, and sacred honor to the creation of a better future. Nationalism is the heroism of Abraham Lincoln, shot in the head for the ideals he treasured. Nationalism is the GIs who knew no fear charging into battle against Nazi machine guns and barbed wire. Nationalism is the humble Georgian preacher who wasted in jail so that one day his Dream could be realized. These righteous men fought for freedom because they loved their country and weren’t afraid to stand for it.

Globalism, on the other hand, is a facile dream of a utopian future gone horribly wrong. Globalism makes lofty promises, but it can’t deliver. It contravenes the most sacred moral imperative of government: serve your citizens first and foremost. Globalism is the fist of tyranny gloved in white satin, suggesting a handshake but concealing a dagger. Globalism wants to strip away your freedom in the name of unity, a vacuous fantasy bringing only servitude. That’s your affirmative thematic core.

Here are some ideas supporting nationalism:

* **American exceptionalism.** Argue that nationalism on the part of specific good countries improves worldwide conditions. The international community can only be as strong as its constituent members. Virtue starts at home and spreads abroad. Understanding that national good is the necessary precursor of positive global society justifies prioritizing nationalism.
* **America as global leader.** Argue that American dominance reflects the power of a nation unapologetically committed to its ideals. Cite economic and military data reflecting American power. Argue that patriotism created that order, and nationalism procured those goods.
* **Identity as source.** Talk about how America is great in [fill in the blank way] and link that to nationalism. American identity, often forged at the expense of global peace, made [blank] better. Potential blank-fillers include: economic freedom, respect for human rights, political neutrality, etc.
* **World diversity.** Argue that love for and protection of distinct national identities protects the panorama of world cultures and safeguards humanity’s cultural heritage for future generations. Globalism, by valuing holistic wellbeing, loses the ability to protect diversity by creating refuges for specific cultures.

Some ideas criticizing globalism:

* **UN usurpation of US sovereignty.** Discuss parental rights, gun rights, and national sovereignty. The US pays for 22% of the UN’s general budget and over 28% of its peacekeeping budget, only to lose power over its own land.[[2]](#footnote-2)
* **Identity as shield.** Argue that globalism undermines national identity, leaving it open to subversion. Discuss Muslim immigration to Europe and America and the demographic shift, etc. Argue that nationalism protects our heritage from threats. Everyone knows what America stands for, while globalism destroys value by eroding identity.
* **Pluralism.** Argue that moral pluralism damages societies. Run stats on moral erosion and argue that globalism accentuates pluralism’s dangers by mitigating nations’ ability to maintain moral standards by way of their own laws. A multicultural society cannot promulgate a monistic ethical code, and it thereby loses its moral identity.
* **Misallocation of resources.** Argue that it’s morally wrong and pragmatically dangerous for governments to help other nations before themselves. Take homelessness as an example. According to the National Center on Family Homelessness, “A staggering 2.5 million children are now homeless each year in America.”[[3]](#footnote-3) It’s hard to justify foreign aid when this number of American children don’t have roofs.

# For negatives

Don’t demonize America. You can’t get away with that. Instead, you want your judge to see through the narrow nostalgia of the affirmative’s Americana pitch. The world is interconnected now. We don’t have to understand it; we don’t have to like it. But a nation which fails to get on the train is relegating itself to the periphery of the global future, ironically dooming the very citizens it ostensibly prioritizes.

For the negative, nationalism can run the gamut from evil to unproductive. Globalism can be presented as a necessary evil, a powerful contingency, or the loftiest goal of the human race. You can aggressively criticize nationalism without criticizing nations. Argue that anyone who prioritizes the preservation of a mere political entity over actual humans and their rights is either ignorant or villainous. Patriotism can be beneficial, but when it *degenerates* into nationalism, problems arise. Nations aren’t inherently valuable; people and their rights are. Globalism recognizes that making nations great isn’t nearly as important as making humanity great. Virtuous, prosperous, healthy people are sometimes the product of daring choices that recognize a nation-state’s lack of intrinsic worth.

Don’t let the Affirmative paint globalism as communism, and don’t let them conflate patriotism with nationalism. Nationalism is a dangerous force; it’s exemplified by organizations like ISIL and the KKK, groups who will defend their nascent country with deadly force and horrific abuse. Globalism isn’t necessarily a panacea – you can’t argue that effectively in the NCFCA – but it is better than rampant abuse.

Ideas supporting globalism:

* **The Benedict Option**. This is based on a phenomenal book authored by Rod Dreher arguing that the preservation of America as a Christian nation is less important than ensuring the vitality and endurance of the global Christian community. *The Atlantic* contains a useful piece on it,[[4]](#footnote-4) and opinions ranging from profoundly favorable to hateful abound on the internet. The Benedict Option asserts that modern national societies are almost entirely incompatible with a life characterized by traditional virtue and discusses compelling reasons to abandon nationalism. This could be a fun, unusual application that draws on evangelical ideas to question the importance of nation states.
* **Free trade**. Argue that nationalism results in protectionist economic policies that undermine prosperity, whereas free trade (characterized by few tariffs, low taxes, and open borders) promote prosperity. The Heritage Foundation maintains a useful compendium of numbers about this.[[5]](#footnote-5) Policies supporting free trade are unequivocally tied to economic success. But the kind of protectionism that prioritizing your own nation can generate economic burdens that damage everyone in the long term.
* **Long-term benefit**. Argue that cooperation to achieve significant objectives is beneficial to the entire human race. Nations like South Sudan or Somalia don’t have the political coherence or abundant resources necessary to protect their people. In one, Christians are slaughtered in droves; in the other, rampant piracy presents a threat to international shipping. Prioritizing nationalism says: “you deal with this yourself.” Globalism—understanding that the world as a whole is valuable and that every human is worth protecting—allows intervention in these cases to save beleaguered religious minorities and protect the world economy. Critically, you can cast this as a *net gain* for values like human rights and general welfare. Your impacts will dwarf the affirmative impacts.
* **Peace**. Planning policies with a global framework in mind is a significant upgrade vis-à-vis policies that seek to (violently) build one nation at the expense of another. See the war application listed below.

Ideas criticizing nationalism:

* **Dangerous nationalists**. This is going to be a bread-and-butter application. The framework: so-and-so was a terrible person and their actions are the inevitable result of valuing nationalism. Good candidates: ISIL, the KKK, Nazis, etc.
* **Slows progress**. Argue that nationalism promotes insularity, which restricts the free flow of ideas and information. Protecting ideas that could save lives by pillorying them within national borders is irresponsible and unrighteous.
* **War**. By definition, war is the result of competing national interests. The ruling individual, council, or legislature of a given nation decides that another nation has intruded on its rights, or controls valuable resources. By construing their nation as paramount, they find it appropriate to attack another nation and violate its people’s rights so they can secure its land, wealth, or resources. By definition, globalism can’t create this kind of turmoil. In fact, cross-national organizations like the UN and EU have demonstrably reduced the incidence of armed conflict. Portray nationalism as the problem and globalism as the solution.

1. “The new nationalism.” The Economist, November 9, 2016.

   <https://www.economist.com/news/leaders/21710249-his-call-put-america-first-donald-trump-latest-recruit-dangerous> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Schaefer, Brett D. “America, We Pay Too Much for the United Nations.” Accessed 6/23/17 <http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2015/06/16/america-pay-way-too-much-for-united-nations.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. National Center on Family Homelessness. Accessed 7/8/17. <http://www.air.org/center/national-center-family-homelessness> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Green, Emma. “The Christian Retreat from Public Life.” Accessed 6/25/17 <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/02/benedict-option/517290/> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <http://www.heritage.org/index/> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)