Morality

Negative Case by Ethan Tong



This case tackles this resolution on principle rather than results. It discusses the worldview implications of valuing nationalism or globalism through the last two contentions. The most important part of globalism, according to this case, is that it recognizes morality or immorality regardless of country or origin.

In case of conflict of value, the debater should seek to argue from a value level. There is good reason why morality should be the main goal of this resolution. Because the value is so imperative in order to conduct a paradigm-focused debate, this value should be carried throughout as the crux of the round, if argued.

An interesting point to note from this resolution is that it does not specify an actor, but rather a transcendent truth. It doesn’t say “nationalism ought to be valued above globalism *in the United States*,” but rather assumes that there is an overarching principle which can be applied to any and every country. If the opposing debater attempts to say that the U.S. should stick to their own principles, the debater should ask if Iran should do the same. The resolution does not narrow this down to the U.S. only.

It is important to understand the value of morality. Nationalism doesn’t necessarily ignore morality per se, but it can be argued to ignore one of the fundamental assumptions of morality: that there is absolute truth. If the judge can be convinced that Nationalism denies absolute truth, morality is undermined by the affirmative side of the resolution.

The repetition at the conclusion is on purpose, because it serves to remind the judge of the premise behind the negative case—that, regardless of country, an injustice is an injustice.

Negative Case: Morality

Two years ago, an Iranian man was sentenced to death row for blaspheming the prophet Mohammed. However, the government decided to be “gracious” to him, and instead sentenced him to two years of theology study in Islam. Failure to do so would inflict the original sentence: a death penalty for blaspheming Mohammed.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Although this is absolutely unjust, nationalism would claim that the government can and should be able to follow through with this sentence. Because nationalism fails to see the transcendent value of morality, **I stand resolved: nationalism ought to be valued above globalism.**

# Definitions

In order to clear up any misunderstandings about the terms, I’d like to define both nationalism and globalism. Nationalism is defined by Oxford Dictionary as

“Patriotic feeling, principles, or efforts.” [[2]](#footnote-2)

Globalism, on the other hand, is defined by Cambridge as

“the idea that events in one country cannot be separated from those in another and that economic and foreign policy should be planned in an international way”[[3]](#footnote-3)

Notice that both definitions contain two parts: the principle, and then the result. For nationalism, the principle is patriotism, which can lead to patriotic efforts. Globalism’s principle is the idea that events are events, regardless of country, and this can manifest itself in both economic and foreign policy.

Interestingly, many people confuse globalism and globalization, but there is a major difference between the two. Globalism is the principle of universal truths, and can *lead* to globalization. Globalization is action that globalism can take. This means that the resolution isn’t asking us which one works, otherwise it would have said “globalization.” Instead, the resolution is asking which principle we ought to value. Should we value the principle of globalism or the principle of nationalism?

# Value

To contrast the two values behind nationalism and globalism, we need a weighing mechanism, or a higher standard, to determine the worth of each. I propose that we use the **value of morality.** Morality, of course, is a set of values that determines right from wrong.

Why is this the most important? Merriam-Webster’s online dictionary says that the word “ought” means moral obligation or duty,[[4]](#footnote-4) so the resolution asks us to make a moral choice. If it’s not moral, we can’t choose it.

We’ll examine the implications of morality with each side of the resolution in the contentions.

# Contention 1: Nations have different views of morality

Because different nations have different cultures and worldviews, they will have different ideas of morality. For example, Nazi Germany considered Jews an inferior race and sought to exterminate them. There is a plethora of other modern examples as well:

* In Iran, the government was ready to kill or indoctrinate a citizen because it had blasphemed Mohammed.
* In China, the government consistently persecutes Tibetans and religious minorities[[5]](#footnote-5).
* In Afghanistan, they use the death penalty on those who have been raped, because according to their government, rape victims have committed adultery[[6]](#footnote-6).
* In North Korea, concentration camps and political prison camps are everywhere[[7]](#footnote-7).

These are the governments of these countries, and yet they systemically perpetuate injustices and immorality. How does this fact impact nationalism and globalism?

# Contention 2: Nationalism ignores universal truths

Nationalism ignores morality because it ignores the fact that there are universal truths. We all know that there is injustice in the world and that morality is being violated. However, nationalism does nothing to prevent it, or even disapprove. Rather, nationalism affirms these countries in their immorality.

Looking back to the definition, nationalism is defined as “patriotic feelings, principles, or efforts.” Nationalism says that all countries are morally correct in their principles and feelings. If we *value* nationalism, and *value* patriotic feelings, we are inherently justifying them. Nationalism has more implications than one might think. Not only does it promote patriotic feelings for one country, it promotes patriotic feelings as a whole. If you value nationalism, you are valuing every patriotic feeling on the globe. This means that we are saying to every country that does immoral things, “you are justified.” Nationalism takes a postmodern view of claiming that every country is right in its beliefs. We cannot value nationalism because nationalism fails to see universal standards of truth and morality.

On the other hand, globalism removes country borders and instead maintains the fact that there are transcendent values, which we can see in

# Contention 3: Globalism recognizes transcendent values

The principle behind globalism is that regardless of country, an injustice is an injustice, and immorality is immorality. Nationalism says that every country is right, but globalism recognizes that there is absolute truth of what is right and what is wrong.

Again, we aren’t looking at the results of globalism, but rather the principle. The principle globalism stands for is transcendent values, absolute truth, and universal morality. It doesn’t merely accept every country as correct because of patriotism, but rather it is the idea that there is a set of morals that cannot be violated by any country, regardless of the government.

Two years ago, an Iranian man was sentenced to death row for blaspheming the prophet Mohammed. From a nationalistic perspective, the Iranian government was justified. But from a globalism paradigm, it is wrong, because regardless of country, an injustice is an injustice.

Choose the side that best upholds universal truth, and vote for globalism.

Opposing This Case

While morality may be an important value, there are cases to be made about other moral values, such as justice, or governmental legitimacy. These moral values can negate the value of morality by claiming it is a fundamental prerequisite, and that it need not be discussed as broadly as is stated by the negative.

However, if the debater would prefer to negate the argumentation behind the value instead of the value itself, there is a strong case for that as well. First of all, globalism is not merely moralistic in nature, and as the definition states, can apply to economic and other generic foreign policy as well. Globalism does not always equate to morality. Secondly, nationalism is internally focused. While the second contention claims that any patriotic feeling is justified by nationalism, by definition, nationalism excludes any other nation from the discussion. This means that nationalism is not always affirming other countries, but rather its own, and only its own.

A strong argument that can be made is be made that *because* not all nations have the same idea of morality, globalism looks different from country to country. We cannot say that globalism should be prioritized in Iran, because then Iran would seek to throw its morality across the whole globe. The negative is assuming we are choosing globalism or nationalism from a U.S. first perspective, and we aren’t. In fact, the affirmative says that Iran’s nationalism is wrong, but the same goes for Iran’s globalism. The point is entirely non-unique.

1. Saeed Kamali Deghan, “Iranian Death Sentence Commuted to Two Years Theology Study.” *The Guardian*, 2015. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/30/iran-death-sentence-commuted-theology-study> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. “Nationalism.” *Oxford Online Living Dictionaries.* <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/thesaurus/nationalism> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. “Globalism.” *Cambridge Dictionary.* <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/globalism> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. “Ought”. *Merriam Webster.* <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ought> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. “China ramps up persecution of Christians and other religious groups, report finds”. *Fox News, 2017.* <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2017/02/28/china-ramps-up-persecution-christians-and-other-religious-groups-report-finds.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. “Punished For Being Raped and For Accusing Rapists: Women's Burden Under Sharia”. *Breitbart, 2014.* <http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2014/10/28/punished-for-being-raped-the-burden-of-women-under-sharia/> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. “Acts of Genocide since World War II”. *Inter-Parliamentary Alliance for Human Rights and Global Peace* <http://www.ipahp.org/index.php?en_acts-of-genocide>. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)