

'Patriotism is an outdated concept in the world today.'
How far do you agree with this statement?

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The onset of the First World War saw the concept of patriotism and national pride take an extreme battering: times had changed, and the old, glorious idea of war was rendered obsolete as war became increasingly heartless and lethal with the invention of chemical weapons, warplanes and humongous tanks. A century after the end of the war, the idea of patriotism still persists, and almost certainly will continue to persevere through the ages. Some in our current world perceive that patriotism is an outdated concept, and possesses no real value in modern-day affairs. The advent of globalisation enhanced this notion, as interconnectedness, globalism and integration into the global community appeared to dwarf the concept of patriotism. Nevertheless, the reality that patriotism is not merely relegated to the realm of history cannot be ignored, and it continues to be highly relevant in many fields of the modern world.

Patriotism is the embodiment of the identity of a sovereign state, and the fact that national identities are still integral to global politics demonstrates that patriotism is indeed highly relevant to the world today. Patriotism is inherently a mark of a nation's sovereignty in this world, and thereby a symbol of self-determination, a core concept to the idea of nation-states which many people still cherish. With the Eurozone financial crisis beginning in 2008 and the slow strangulation of weaker European states such as Greece, Spain, Italy, Portugal and Ireland through the power of austerity measures, the people of these countries asserted their own national identities by taking to the streets. They were indignant about their governments and the European Union undermining their will, and condemned their governments and the European Union for the infringement of the sovereignty of their own countries by the European establishment. The years ahead would see new parties arise all over these nations, most notably the election of an anti-austerity, patriotic Socialist party in Greece (SYRIZA), which challenged the European Union's authority directly, thereby displaying their own sovereign right to self-determination. Furthermore, the Kurdish people of Turkey, Iraq and Syria, unwilling to accept more oppression from these governments, utilised their highly patriotic sentiments to demand autonomy, and when this was constantly denied, even took to arms to earn their sovereignty through bloodshed. These examples are testament to how patriotism and the fight for self-determination are still vital to global politics today, with people of a multitude of national identities evoking their rightful sense of belonging to autonomous people groups to assert their self-determination, something they perceive as a fundamental human right. It is therefore unacceptable to assert that patriotism is a completely outdated concept in the world today, as people groups continue to utilise their patriotic sentiments to alter global politics even in this modern world.

Nevertheless, some hold the notion that patriotism was only really relevant in those bygone days when war was romantic and chivalrous, asserting that patriotism has been outdated ever since the two World Wars, which saw the use of devastating, inhumane methods to kill and destroy without regard for nationality. This is indeed true. While patriotism may be a force to be reckoned with in global politics, its value in this world has undoubtedly dwindled in the modern age and holds no real relevance with regard to the fight for self-determination in the current era where war is disdained and internationally

condemned as inhumane violence. The ongoing conflict in Syria, a war perceived as a major thorn to stability in this modern world, has seen the use of superpower manipulation of the conflict by both the United States and the Russian Federation, ever so eager to exert their influence in the region with the use of drones, airstrikes, missiles and reinforcement of rebels, and the Syrian government respectively, with deadly armaments capable of killing indiscriminately. The Turkish government, paranoid about the notion of Kurdish autonomy, misused its involvement in the war against Syria to quell Kurdish “terrorists”. In Yemen, Saudi Arabia and Iran, with blatant disregard for Yemeni sovereignty, play off Yemeni tribesmen, clans and most importantly, Shi'ite Muslims and Sunni Muslims against one another; actions very much similar to those of Russia and the United States in Syria. The conflicts in these two countries attest to the idea that patriotism is irrelevant to the machinations and motives of greater powers in their proxy wars, deliberately playing people off against one another in spite of their national identities and patriotism for their sovereign countries, as drones, chemical weapons and airstrikes fall out of the skies as a show of power by stronger countries. It is evident that, in accordance with the global condemnation of inhumane violence, conflict in the modern age, with all its lethality and heartlessness, has rendered patriotism and the idea of nationalism somewhat obsolete, particularly when greater powers are at play.

Even so, war is indeed not as notable as it had been years before, subject to international disdain as it is. It is still apparent that patriotism holds sway in the realm of national politics, especially when patriotism takes on its more extreme and overt form: nationalism. Nationalism is a concept that has indubitably shaped and steered the course of global politics, as some begin to subscribe to the notion that their own countries ought to come first in global affairs, and that there is no need for globalism and global interconnectedness that threaten a country's own identity. As the migrant crisis continues to plague the European Union and the Middle East, people in states taking in hundreds of thousands of migrants fleeing conflicts in the Middle East have begun to feel a deep sense of animosity towards the European Union for its lacklustre system of handling the migrant crisis, inadvertently draining states which host many refugees of the resources which they most desperately need. One such prominent country is Greece, where the people of the nation have to contend with the European establishment mandating that the Greek government take in refugees despite their lack of financial resources from the devastating financial crisis before. As a result, Greek nationalism has seen a drastic spike, with the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn Party gaining in popularity, thus enabling them to hold seats in the Greek Parliament and thereby influence Greek politics with their nationalistic sentiments. This is not merely limited to Greece, however; European states all over the European Union have begun turning more and more nationalistic, utilising the poorly-managed migrant crisis to stoke the fiery sentiments of nationalism. The alt-right Alternative for Germany party has hit unprecedented popularity ratings, whilst Marine Le Pen's nationalistic Party in France has won a substantial one-third of the presidential votes. It is therefore highly evident that nationalism, a more extreme manifestation of patriotism, has continued to shape politics to a large degree in this world, as nationalistic sentiments proceed to run rampant with ongoing crises and affairs that continue to fuel the flames of nationalism. Patriotism, in the form of nationalism, is undoubtedly capable of moulding the political process in many nations, a power that is very much not outdated and highly relevant in the current world.

Yet, several still choose to cling on to the notion that patriotism is irrelevant in this globalised world economy and interconnected global communities, as globalisation has created a world where national identities are obsolete. Such people may cite the examples of the remaining Socialist states, comprising Cuba, Vietnam, Laos, China and North Korea. They argue that in spite of Marxism-Leninism (Maoism for

China) having formulated the national identities of these countries for decades and ideals of Communism being intrinsic to these societies, patriotic sentiments in the name of Socialism have not stopped these nations from yielding to Capitalist globalisation and principles of profit-making, abandoning their national identities that were founded in Socialist principles. The examples of these Socialist nations have further convinced some that patriotism is indeed an outdated, meaningless concept in the world today, with its globalisation and market economies taking precedence over any sort of national identity.

In conclusion, it is true that patriotism has been subverted in some ways by developments and systems in the world today. Nevertheless, its undeniably immense value in global politics still remains. In spite of its relevance being undermined by globalisation, patriotism has remained strong and will continue to persist in the future. Following Woodrow Wilson's principle of self-determination for all groups in the world, people cling on to national identity (and thereby patriotism) as an intrinsic aspect of sovereign nation states. Independent groups view patriotism as a must, and self-determination as a fundamental right. Therefore, even in this globalised world which threatens the importance of patriotism and the unique identities of different countries, their beliefs will not be halted. Will patriotism ever fade out of existence, become obsolete and reserved for the history books? Such a turn of events may be possible, but the odds of that are minuscule, considering the value and huge presence of patriotism today, especially in global politics.

Comments:

Wide-ranging references that are very relevant to the question, though organisation could be more consistent. Felicitous and cogent explanations are woven into paragraphs in a fluent manner. Language is clear and vocabulary is suitably varied, although there are sentences that are far too long and convoluted.