

Belonging beyond borders

Long-term trends in national and global identity
in an era of globalization

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Abstract

As globalization has expanded over recent decades, the world has become increasingly interconnected, raising important questions about how this process shapes national and global identities. Humans have a fundamental need to belong and identify with others; however, globalization can challenge these identities, and its effects may differ across educational groups. Drawing on World Values Survey data from 1981 to 2022, this study investigates long-term trends in national and global identification over time and across educational strata. The results show that global identification follows a curvilinear pattern before declining sharply in recent years, whereas national identification has remained relatively stable overall but also shows a decline in the most recent period. Contrary to expectations, increases in global identification were not limited to highly educated individuals; medium- and low-educated groups also showed notable growth during the second period. These results highlight the complex, nonlinear, and stratified nature of identity in an era of globalization, challenging theoretical assumptions about national and global identification.

Keywords: global identity, globalization, national identity, time trends, World Values Survey

Introduction

We live in an increasingly interconnected world where people across the globe share cultural experiences, such as listening to the same music, eating similar foods, and watching the same sports. The internet and social media facilitate the formation of friendships and communities that transcend national borders. Additionally, global crises such as climate change and pandemics contribute to global consciousness and underscore the need for collective solutions to these shared challenges. However, despite this growing interconnectedness, nationalism appears to be on the rise. Leaders like Donald Trump, with his "America First" rhetoric, and other populist figures are gaining traction by emphasizing national interests. This apparent contradiction raises important questions about how globalization is experienced across different segments of society. If globalization brings people closer together, why does nationalism seem to be strengthening? Do all segments of society respond to this increasing interconnectedness in the same way?

Although many factors influence social identity, globalization is often cited in literature as a key driver of changes in both national and global identification. As the world becomes more connected, this intensifies identity-related responses, driven by the enduring human need to belong. A longstanding theoretical debate exists about whether globalization fosters a shared global identity or instead provokes a reassertion of national identity in response. While empirical findings are mixed (e.g., Zhou, 2016; Wang, 2016; Ariely, 2012; Bearce et al., 2023, Reysen et al., 2020), they consistently show that identity responses are closely tied to individual-level characteristics, an important factor being education level.

Globalization may shape this relationship further, as different educational groups experience the benefits and drawbacks of globalization unevenly, a dynamic often described in literature as the divide between the “winners” and “losers” of globalization (Steiner et al, 2024; Ollroge, 2023).

Globalization itself is not a recent phenomenon, but its scale, speed, and impact have changed (Kinnvall, 2004). While there is no single, unified definition, Dreher (2006, as cited in Gygli et al., 2018), building on the works of Clark (2000) and Norris (2000), describes globalization as the process of creating networks of connections among actors over intra- or multi-continental distances, mediated by various flows including people, information, ideas, capital, and goods. Globalization has eroded national boundaries, integrated national economies, cultures, technologies, and governance structures, and fostered complex relationships of mutual interdependence.

Globalization influences all three dimensions; cultural, political, and economic, leading to increasing interconnectedness. The KOF Globalization Index (see Appendix 1) shows that globalization levels rose rapidly after 1990, continued to rise until around 2010, and has grown more gradually since then.

Identification is a fundamental aspect of how we perceive ourselves and others, influencing our behavior and social interactions (Hogg, 2016). Historically rooted in kinship and proximity, identity has expanded to encompass broader categories such as nation, ethnicity, and race (De Swaan, 1995). As social circles grow, it is conceivable that identification could ultimately extend to the highest level of self-categorization, humankind itself (Turner et al., 1987, as cited in Grimalda et al., 2018).

Global identification is linked to specific behaviors and traits. International organizations like the United Nations and UNICEF emphasize the need for a global human identity. Research has associated global identity with higher self-esteem, self-efficacy, cross-cultural competence, and openness to experience. It is also positively correlated with cultural integration and negatively associated with anti-immigration attitudes and right-wing authoritarianism (Chen et al., 2022; McFarland et al., 2019). Additionally, global identification promotes support for human rights, environmental sustainability, and

international cooperation (McFarland et al., 2019; Hasbún Lopez et al., 2019; Grimalda et al., 2023). If global identification continues to grow, it could become a crucial mechanism for addressing global challenges. Understanding if this identity is growing and what might influence it is therefore essential.

The relationship between globalization and identity remains contested. Some scholars argue that globalization fosters this sense of global belonging (e.g., De Swaan, 1995; Beck, 2011; Reysen et al., 2020), others, however, contend that national identity will endure and could even become more pronounced as a response to globalization (e.g., Hall, 1991, Fulcher, 2000). Empirical research also suggests that educational background plays a mediating role: because globalization affects individuals differently depending on their level of education, divergent identity outcomes may emerge.

Moving beyond theoretical speculation, this study examines empirical data to assess how national and global identities have changed over time. By adopting a long-term perspective, it aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of identity trends in the context of increased globalization.

To investigate long-term trends in national and global identification, this study uses data from the World Values Survey (1981–2022), divided into three periods based on changes in survey questions. Across these phases, logistic regression models are used to estimate how identification has changed over time. Time is modelled with linear and quadratic terms to detect potential non-linear trends.

By integrating long-term empirical analysis with existing theoretical perspectives, this research aims to fill a gap in the literature by providing insight into how identification has evolved globally and across educational groups, during a period of rapid globalization. Due to data limitations, this study does not follow individuals or countries longitudinally. Instead, it offers a broad cross-sectional overview of global trends.

It therefore addresses the following research question: What trends in national and global identification have emerged internationally and across different educational groups from 1981 to 2022?

By addressing this question, the study contributes to the ongoing debate on identity transformation in a globalizing world, offering empirical insights into a key contemporary sociological issue.

Theoretical framework

This theoretical framework examines the mechanisms underlying social identification and the relationship between globalization and identity, with particular attention to the role of education.

Social identification

Social identification is a fundamental aspect of how we perceive ourselves and others. It is a self-concept, stemming from an individual's awareness of belonging to one or more social groups, shaping both self-perception and the perception of others, while also influencing behavior and social interactions (Hogg, 2016). This identification is accompanied by the emotional and value-based significance attached to group membership (Tajfel, 1972). According to social identity theory, positive and distinctive group identities enhance self-esteem, contributing to psychological well-being (Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Haslam, 2009).

Social identity is shaped by categorization, a process in which individuals associate with certain groups while distinguishing themselves from others. Identification involves aligning oneself with specific social groups based on perceived similarities and differences (De Swaan, 1995). This is followed by social comparison, where one's group is evaluated in relation to other groups, often described in terms of in-groups and out-groups. The in-group represents the social group to which an individual belongs, fostering solidarity and loyalty, whereas the out-group comprises those outside this affiliation and is often perceived as distinct or even oppositional.

Social categorization can produce bias and discrimination, even in the absence of real conflict (Tajfel et al., 1971).

This identification process occurs both consciously and unconsciously. Erikson's theory of identity development suggests that identity formation is a dynamic process occurring both consciously and unconsciously, with much of it unfolding outside deliberate reflection (Schachter, 2018). Identification can persist even in the absence of physical proximity or direct

interaction, as individuals maintain a sense of belonging to a group regardless of geographical distance (Deaux, 1996).

Social identifications are neither static nor singular; rather, they are multiple and fluid (De Swaan, 1995). Erikson (1956) argued that an individual's sense of identity is continuously shaped by their social and historical context. Similarly, Zhou (2016) highlights that in the case of global identity, both individual factors such as age and education, and contextual factors such as the nation in which one resides, economic prosperity, and globalization, play a role in shaping identity. Individuals actively engage in the selection, modification, and redefinition of their identities in response to their environment (Schachter, 2005). Depending on situational factors, certain social identities may take precedence over others (Grant & Hogg, 2012).

According to Gee (2000), there are four perspectives on identity. Nature identity (N-Identity) refers to traits shaped by natural forces beyond an individual's control, such as being an identical twin. Institutional identity (I-Identity) is a position defined and authorized by institutions and their authorities; for example, Gee illustrates this with the role of a college professor. Discursive identity (D-Identity) emerges through social interaction and recognition, such as being perceived as charismatic because of how others describe and treat someone. Finally, affinity identity (A-Identity) is based on participation in specific groups and shared practices, such as being part of a fan community or hobby group.

Building on Gee's framework, this research argues that these identity types can be related to broader forms of social belonging relevant to this study. For instance, national identity can be understood as an I-Identity, maintained and reinforced by state institutions and collective symbols. Anderson (1983) describes national identity as an imagined community, a socially constructed sense of belonging fostered through shared experiences, for example, via mass media. This shared experience creates an in-group perception, reinforcing national identity (Putri, Nasruddin, & Wahab, 2018). Similarly, affinity identity can be linked to

cosmopolitanism, where individuals develop a sense of global belonging through cultural exchange and a shared commitment to addressing global challenges.

Through this framework, it can be observed how different identities are shaped, distinguishing between those that are socially constructed and those that emerge more naturally. Moreover, identities are dynamic and evolve in response to various contextual factors. Globalization influences these types of identities, leading to shifts in how individuals define themselves.

Globalization affects institutional identity by blurring national boundaries, which could contribute to the homogenization of cultures. While this process may facilitate the expansion of identities on a global scale, it can also heighten awareness of national distinctiveness and uniqueness, potentially reinforcing national identification.

Within literature, two competing hypotheses frequently emerge: the reactive individual and the cosmopolitan individual. The reactive individual strengthens their attachment to national identity as a defense mechanism against perceived cultural homogenization, whereas the cosmopolitan individual embraces a global identity (Grimalda et al., 2018)

Scholars have debated the relationship between national and global identities. Some argue that these identities can coexist, either independently or as part of a bicultural identity (Pichler, 2011, Schueth & O'Loughlin, 2007), while others view them as fundamentally opposing. A large review, covering 45 empirical studies, found that in most regions worldwide, there is a negative relationship between global and national identity (Li et al, 2025). This was in line with the empirical study of Ariely (2018), who also found a negative relationship between these identities in most countries.

Cosmopolitanism

Cosmopolitanism lacks a universally accepted definition. Some scholars define it as a sense of belonging that transcends national boundaries, while others argue that it entails a more profound moral responsibility, an idealistic and conscious choice. Pichler (2009) suggests that cosmopolitanism can be understood through two primary approaches: The subjective (identity-based) approach, which focuses on an individual's feelings of global belonging or attachment. The objective (behavior-oriented) approach, which emphasizes attitudes and engagement with global issues.

This suggests that cosmopolitanism consists of multiple aspects that do not necessarily coincide (Pichler, 2011). While the ethical and political dimensions of cosmopolitanism may involve a deliberate decision to embrace a global perspective, others may experience cosmopolitanism passively as a consequence of the diminishing significance of nation-states, primarily adopting the identity-based aspect.

Beck (2011) argues that imagined national communities draw their identity from a shared past, whereas cosmopolitan communities are united by a shared future. While people may not have the same historical background, global challenges such as climate change, pandemics, and economic interdependence foster a sense of common destiny. However, if imposed cosmopolitanization by globalization does not translate into conscious cosmopolitanism, it may provoke a nationalist backlash. This statement by Beck indicates that cosmopolitanism must ultimately be a conscious choice to be sustainable.

The diminishing significance of national boundaries is often referred to as cultural homogenization, a process driven by the global diffusion of cultural practices that transcend local traditions. This phenomenon fosters a global culture, frequently associated with the widespread consumption of products and media from multinational corporations such as MTV, McDonald's, and CNN, which are perceived as lacking distinct national identities (Barber,

2015; Ritzer, 2003). While some scholars argue that this global culture is shaped predominantly by Western influences (Mazrui, 1998; Tomlinson, 1999, as cited in Amin, 2024), others contend that globalization is a multi-directional process influenced by various global actors (Hall, 1991).

Although cultural homogenization facilitates global integration, it also erodes the distinctiveness of national and local identities. It weakens unique cultural symbols, languages, and traditions that historically defined specific imagined communities (Anderson, 1983). Consequently, individuals' attachment to local communities and nation-states may decline, contributing to the deterritorialization of identity (Scholte, 2000). According to De Swaan (1995), as societies become increasingly similar in cultural practices, political systems, and economic interdependence, a global identity may emerge.

Although theoretically globalization is linked to global identification, empirical evidence remains inconclusive. For example, Schueth and O'Loughlin (2008) found that only the social and political dimensions of globalization were associated with global identification, whereas economic globalization showed no significant effect. Reysen et al. (2020) examined the perceived impact of globalization and found a positive relationship with global identification. In contrast, Zhou (2016), using data from 2005–2008, found no significant direct relationship, while Wang (2016) even reported a significant negative association between globalization and global identity.

These studies generally conclude that individual-level characteristics, rather than globalization itself, are stronger predictors of global identification. They argue that globalization operates indirectly, shaping personal factors that in turn influence identity (Zhou 2016; Wang 2016; Reysen 2020). Previous empirical studies have predominantly focused on shorter timeframes and examined the direct impact of globalization. Based on the theoretical framework, a global increase in globalization is expected to lead to a rise in global identification. Given the frequently observed negative relationship between global and

national identification, an increase in global identification would likely coincide with a decline in national identification. This leads to the first hypothesis: **H1:** From 1981 to 2022, global identification has increased, while national identification has gradually decreased.

Reactive individual

The concept of the reactive individual is characterized by a strong attachment to national identity. National identification, which is rooted in shared ancestry, language, territory, and other cultural markers, has long been a defining feature of human societies (Kunovich, 2009). Historically, identity was primarily based on kinship and geographical proximity. However, with the rise of nation-states in the 19th and early 20th centuries, national identification emerged as the dominant form of social and political organization, becoming a central aspect of individual and collective identity (De Swaan, 1995).

As previously mentioned, national identification is an institutional form of identification, meaning that it is a concept constructed by institutions. Globalization challenges national identities by diminishing the distinctiveness of national borders and blurring the lines between "insiders" and "outsiders" (Castells, 2004, as cited in Reese & Roseman, 2019). This perceived erosion of national identity can provoke a sense of threat among individuals within the nation-state, leading to defensive reactions. Hall (1991) describes the decline of nation-states as a complex and potentially perilous process, where individuals may respond with exclusionary attitudes or even racism to preserve their national identity.

In literature, the term "backlash" is commonly used to describe the growing resistance to globalization. As globalization has intensified, this backlash has manifested in nationalist policies, increased protectionism, and skepticism toward international cooperation. This reaction is not driven by a sudden, widespread shift in public opinion; rather, existing anti-globalization attitudes have become more politicized and have gained greater political

influence. Several factors contribute to this backlash, including cultural change, technological developments, and rising economic inequality. The backlash is particularly pronounced in communities that have been most negatively affected by globalization's disruptive effects (Walter, 2021).

Political rhetoric also reflects this resistance. For example, former British Prime Minister Theresa May famously stated, "If you believe you are a citizen of the world, you are a citizen of nowhere" (May, 2016), highlighting the perceived threat of globalization to national identity.

According to Fulcher (2000), globalization has not weakened the nation-state; rather, it has supported its development and continued relevance. Through institutions like the United Nations, global norms related to nationhood have been spread, smaller states have received protection, and national awareness has been encouraged. Fulcher argues that although the nation-state evolves in response to global changes, there is no indication that it is disappearing. In this view, national identity is not vanishing but reshaping itself within a changing international environment.

Empirical research has produced mixed results, leaving the relationship between globalization and national identity inconclusive. For instance, Wang (2016) found a negative relationship between globalization and national identity. The same study also reported that approximately 95% of respondents identified primarily with their nation-state, which aligns with Evans and Kelly's (2002) findings that national attachments remain strong even in highly globalized contexts. This supports Fulcher's (2000) argument that national identity persists despite globalization. Other researchers have reported varying outcomes: for example, Ariely (2012) conducted a broader analysis and found that while higher levels of globalization are generally associated with lower levels of national identity, high levels of national identification

are not necessarily determined by a country's degree of globalization. This suggests that the relationship is complex and not straightforward.

Based on the theoretical framework, national identification is expected to remain a salient form of identity and may even become more prominent as a backlash to globalization. Given the frequently observed negative relationship between global and national identification, the following hypothesis is formulated: **H2:** From 1981 to 2022, national identification has remained stable or increased, while global identification has either decreased or remained low.

Globalization, education, and identity

Identity is linked to specific socio-demographic factors. For example, cosmopolitanism tends to be more prevalent among younger individuals, woman, and those with higher levels of education (e.g., Pichler, 2009; Grimalda et al., 2015). In contrast, national identification is more common among older individuals, men, and those with lower levels of education (e.g., Inglehart & Norris, 2016; Wang, 2016; Indelicato & Martín, 2022).

While factors such as age and gender influence whether individuals adopt a national or cosmopolitan identity, education plays a particularly pivotal role in shaping global identification and thus creates a divide between those who can embrace a global identity and those who are not. This is especially relevant in the context of globalization, as education not only directly fosters global perspectives through its content and curriculum, but also indirectly provides individuals with the skills, networks, and opportunities that increase their exposure to and engagement with the world. Therefore, this study primarily focuses on the relation between education and identity, with age and gender included as control variables.

Individuals with higher levels of education are often better equipped to imagine belonging to more abstract communities, like a global community (Bollen and Medrano, 1998; Jones & Smith, 2001, as cited in Kunovich, 2009). Through formal education, people are more

frequently exposed to diverse worldviews, including foreign literature, international peers, and study-abroad experiences, all of which can foster this broader global perspective. Building on Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital, Igarashi and Saito (2014) argue that cosmopolitanism can be understood as a form of cultural capital. However, this cultural capital is not equally distributed: it is largely concentrated among highly educated, who have privileged access to resources for global engagement, circulation, and exchange (Kim,2011; Igarashi & Saito,2014). Highly educated individuals not only have better access to these resources but also benefit from an education system that increasingly emphasizes global perspectives. Whereas education was once primarily designed to strengthen national identity (Bourdieu, 1999), there has now been a shift towards framing humanity as the primary point of reference, defining students as members of a global community and encouraging openness and global cooperation (Ramirez, 2007 as cited in Igarashi & Saito,2014).

Less educated groups often lack these resources, which limits their ability to develop a cosmopolitan outlook. This unequal access highlights how education contributes to stratification in the availability of cosmopolitan cultural capital. Individuals with lower levels of education are often more strongly attached to national identity. Changes in their social environment, such as immigration and globalization, are frequently perceived as threatening by this group. Several studies have shown that higher levels of education are associated with lower perceptions of both economic and cultural threat from immigrants (e.g., Quillian,1995; Velázquez, 2023). This perceived threat has been linked to stronger nationalist attitudes (Baydhowi et al., 2023, Koning & Mosiaco,2020).

Globalization shapes this relationship between education and identity further. Literature frequently refers to a distinction between the 'winners' and 'losers' of globalization. Rising levels of globalization create new opportunities and risks, and individual characteristics such as education determine how people experience these changes. This self-perceived classification

is often stratified along educational lines: individuals with less formal education, lower income, and low-skilled occupations are more likely to see themselves as globalization's "losers", while those with higher education and income are more likely to perceive themselves as "winners". This divide stems from the fact that higher education equips individuals with the skills and resources needed to benefit from the globalized economy and culture. (Steiner et al., 2024; Ollroge, 2023).

Bearce et al. (2023) found that globalization has a significant negative relationship with national identity among those at the top of the social ladder, having the possibility to go beyond national views. However, globalization is not associated with increased nationalism, even among individuals at the bottom. The observed divide between higher and lower educated individuals is primarily due to the higher educated adopting a more global identity, rather than a rise in nationalism among the lower educated.

Based on this, it is expected that higher-educated individuals are more prone to adopt a global identity in response to increasing globalization. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed: **H3:** Global identification has increased among the most among highly educated individuals, while national identification has decreased.

In contrast, less educated individuals do not have access to these exclusive resources needed to adopt a cosmopolitan outlook. As a result, they are more likely to maintain a strong sense of national identity, which tends to persist or even intensify in response to perceived threats from globalization. Based on this, the following hypothesis is proposed: **H4:** Among lower educated individuals, national identification has remained strong or has increased, while global identification has remained low.

Method

Data

This study conducts a secondary analysis of data from the World Values Survey (WVS), a cross-national research project based on nationally representative surveys conducted in nearly 100 countries, covering approximately 90% of the global population (Inglehart et al., 2022). The data come from a combined dataset spanning six waves: Wave 1 (1981–1983), Wave 2 (1990–1992), Wave 3 (1995–1998), Wave 4 (2000–2004), Wave 5 (2010–2014), and Wave 7 (2017–2022). Although the dataset covers multiple time points, it is not panel data: each wave samples new individuals and includes only a partially overlapping set of countries, resulting in no full continuity at the respondent or country level. Not all countries participate in every wave, and some regions remain consistently underrepresented or excluded, which limits the generalizability of the findings.

For each wave, social scientists worldwide contribute suggestions for survey questions, which are then consolidated into a single questionnaire in English. Once finalized, the questionnaire is translated into the local languages of participating countries. To ensure translation accuracy, many national teams also use independent back-translation into English. Additionally, most countries conduct a pre-test of the translated questionnaire to detect any wording or interpretation issues. When a question proves too problematic in translation, it may be omitted from that country's version. Although efforts are made to minimize this, cultural differences in interpretation can still affect the comparability of responses.

Because data from multiple waves are used, there may be differences in sampling rules and procedures over time. Detailed information about the data collection procedures for WVS-7 is available on the WVS website, which provides an overview of how the World Values Survey operates.

WVS-7 uses either full probability sampling or a combination of probability and stratified sampling, targeting individuals aged 18 and older in private households. National teams are encouraged to use as many Primary Sampling Units (PSUs) as possible, with a maximum of 10 respondents per PSU. In certain countries, quota sampling is permitted; in such cases, interviewers are instructed to interview the first contact. Sampling plans must be approved in advance by the WVS Executive Committee. Each country must submit a non-response report, and every reasonable effort is made to minimize non-response.

Data collection is primarily conducted via face-to-face interviews or, in some cases, telephone interviews in remote regions. Responses are collected either on paper or via Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI), with any deviations requiring formal approval. All data are anonymized at the point of collection, and archived datasets cannot be traced back to individual respondents.

Despite certain limitations, such as variation in countries and question design across waves, the WVS remains the most extensive, widely used, and methodologically standardized dataset available for studying global and national identification. The present study draws on core survey items aligned with the social identity theory framework (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) to operationalize identification:

1. Wave 1–4 (1981–2004): “To which of these geographical groups would you say you belong first of all?” (Options: locality, region, country, continent, world)
2. Wave 5–6 (2005–2014): “I see myself as a world citizen” / “I see myself as a citizen of the country” (4-point Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree)
3. Wave 7 (2017–2022): “How close do you feel to the world?” / “How close do you feel to your country?” (4-point scale: very close to not close at all)

These items have been used in prior research to assess national and global identification (e.g., Ariely, 2018; Bearce et al., 2023; Schueth & O’Loughlin, 2008; Wang, 2016; Zhou, 2016).

To illustrate the broader context of globalization worldwide, this study also includes a graph of the KOF Globalization Index (Dreher, 2006; Gygli et al., 2016; Haelg, 2019), which ranges from 1 to 100 (higher scores indicate greater globalization) and covers 190 countries from 1970 to 2022 (see Appendix 1).

Sample and Variables

To allow for comparison over time, national and global identification were recoded as binary variables in all periods: 1 indicates identification with the nation or the world; 0 indicates otherwise.

In Period 1 (Waves 1–4), both identification variables were based on item G001, which asked: “To which of these geographical groups would you say you belong first of all?”. For national identity, respondents who selected “*country*” were coded as 1; all other responses as 0. For global identity, respondents who selected “*world*” were coded as 1; all others as 0.

In Period 2 (Waves 5–6), national and global identification were based on Likert-scale agreement with the statements “I see myself as a citizen of [country]” (G021) and “I see myself as a world citizen” (G019). Respondents who agreed or strongly agreed were coded as 1, and those who disagreed or strongly disagreed as 0.

In Period 3 (Wave 7), identification was derived from perceived closeness. Respondents were asked “How close do you feel to your country?” (G257) and “How close do you feel to the world?” (G063). Those who reported feeling “very close” or “close” were coded as 1; those who felt “not very close” or “not close at all” were coded as 0.

The main independent variable is *jaarrecode*, constructed from variable S020 by calculating the number of years since the first year of each period. This variable represents the time elapsed since the start of the dataset and was included in the models both as a linear and a quadratic term, to capture potential curvilinear trends in identification over time.

Country dummies (S003) and education dummies (X025 or X025A_01 for Wave 7) were included. Control variables include age (X003), gender (X001), and education, selected for theoretical relevance and data consistency. Other controls such as SES or income were considered but excluded due to high missing or limited scope.

Analytical method

The analysis covers the period 1981–2022. To ensure consistency and the largest possible sample for each analysis, respondents with complete data on the dependent variable, age, gender, and the relevant education variable were included in the respective models. Cases with missing values on any of these variables were listwise deleted per model, ensuring maximal use of available data. Education was recoded into three levels: low (no education/elementary), medium (secondary), and high (tertiary/university).

Because of substantial missingness in education, especially in earlier waves, additional steps were taken to retain as much data as possible while maintaining validity. Independent-sample t-tests on SES, income, sex, age, and identification were used to compare respondents with missing education data to those in known education groups. In Periods 1 and 3, the missing group showed mixed characteristics, aligning with low-educated individuals on some variables (e.g., age), but scoring higher on others such as global identification. Because this group could not be clearly assigned to an existing education level, it was retained as a separate category coded as 0 in the regression models but excluded from subgroup analyses.

In Period 2, most missing education cases were coded as having no formal education. Independent sample t-tests confirmed that these respondents consistently resembled the lowest educated group across all key variables. Therefore, they were included in the lowest education category, and this group was coded as 1 in Period 2.

For each of the three periods, four main fixed-effects logistic regression models were estimated. These models examined the effects of time (both linear and quadratic) to capture possible non-linear trends. Country and education level were included as dummy variables to control for country-specific characteristics and categorical differences in educational attainment. Country fixed effects were used to account for unobserved, time-invariant national factors. Robust standard errors were clustered at the country-year level to correct for potential within-cluster correlation. Prior to constructing the country-year cluster variable, all cases with missing values on the dependent or key control variables were excluded. This ensured that the country-year clusters accurately reflected the analytical sample used in each model.

- Model 1 was a full model including the time variables (linear and quadratic) and all control variables.
- Models 2–4 were estimated separately for each education level (low, medium, high).

Additionally, interaction models were estimated to test whether temporal trends in identification differed significantly across educational groups. These models included interaction terms between education level and both the linear and quadratic time variables. This approach allowed for a formal test of whether trends within specific educational groups differed statistically from each other. The results of these interaction models are presented in Appendix 2.

Several robustness checks were conducted, including models without control variables and models restricted to countries that participated in at least two survey waves. Due to space constraints, these additional models are not reported in the main text but are available upon request.

Results

Socio-demographic characteristics

Table 1 displays the socio-demographic characteristics of individuals who identified primarily with either the nation or the world across three periods. While the overall sample sizes decreased across periods, a clear and consistent pattern emerged in the profiles of national versus global identifiers.

National identification was consistently more prevalent than global identification across all periods. For instance, in Period 1 (G001), 36.86% of respondents primarily identified with the nation, compared to only 8.06% who identified primarily with the world. In Periods 2 (G019/G021) and 3 (G063/G257), national identification remained more common (95.21% and 84.26%, respectively) than global identification (76.28% and 49.34%). It is important to note that respondents could endorse both identifications simultaneously in the last two periods.

The gender distribution was balanced and did not show systematic differences. The other demographic characteristics showed observable differences between national and global identifiers. Global identifiers tended to be younger. For example, in Period 1, global identifiers had a mean age of 37.23 years ($SD = 14.56$), compared to 40.13 years ($SD = 15.36$) for national identifiers. This pattern held across periods; the age group distribution further illustrates this.

Differences in educational attainment were also found. Global identifiers were consistently more likely to fall into higher education categories. In Period 1, 31.30% of global identifiers were classified as highly educated, versus 23.87% of national identifiers. Conversely, 30.95% of national identifiers had low education, compared to only 22.41% among global identifiers. This trend remained largely stable in Period 2. In Period 3, both groups had high proportions in the low education group, although the proportion was still slightly lower for global identifiers (53.95%) than for national identifiers (54.59%).

Overall, global identifiers were typically younger and more highly educated than national identifiers, with only minor gender differences. These patterns were largely consistent across the three survey periods.

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics by global and national identification across three periods.

	Period 1(G001)		Period 2(G021/G019)		Period 3(G257/G063)	
	National	Global	National	Global	National	Global
N (total respondents)	156579		154694	148841	95,116	93,143
N (national/world identifiers)	57712	12625	147289	113530	80,141	45,957
% identifying (of total respondents)	36.86	8.06	95.21	76.28	84.26	49.34
%male	50.03	50.19	47.91	48.64	47.65	48.14
%female	49.97	49.81	52.09	51.36	52.35	51.86
Mean age (SD)	40.13(15.36)	37.23(14.56)	41.85(16.46)	40.97(16.17)	43.76(16.58)	42.65(16.37)
18-30 years (%)	32.86	40.07	31.25	32.94	26.62	28.72
31-50 years (%)	42.13	41.13	38.88	39.25	39.05	39.67
51-99 years (%)	25.01	18.80	29.87	27.81	34.33	31.60
Low (%)	30.95	22.41	29.01	28.78	54.59	53.95
Medium (%)	45.18	46.28	46.24	45.87	37.24	37.26
High (%)	23.87	31.30	23.36	25.35	8.17	8.78

Note. For Period 1 (G001), the total N refers to all respondents who answered the geographical identification question; the national and global subgroups reflect only those who selected “country” or “world” as their primary identity.

Table 2. Logistic regression results for global identification trends across all periods.

	Period 1 (1981-2004)				Period 2 (2005-2016)				Period 3 (2017-2022)			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
	B(SE)	B(SE)	B(SE)	B(SE)	B(SE)	B(SE)	B(SE)	B(SE)	B(SE)	B(SE)	B(SE)	B(SE)
Linear time trend	.063(.061)	.010 (.043)	.268 (.087)**	.151 (.162)	.145 (.049)**	.296 (.079)** *	.121 (.040)**	.054 (.040)	-.285 (.003)***	-.257 (.002)***	-.375 (.002)***	-.212 (.001)***
Quadratic time trend	-.003(.002)	-.001 (.002)	-.009 (.003)**	-.005 (.005)	-.016 (.006)*	-.032 (.010)**	-.012 (.005)*	-.006 (.005)				
Sex	-.093(.025)***	-.187 (.051)***	-.038 (.033)	-.024 (.046)	.005 (0.214)	.005 (.028)	-.037 (.026)	.060 (.040)	-.012 (.020)	-.020 (.039)	-.025 (.027)	.039 (.030)
Age	-.013(.001)***	-.015 (.002)***	-.013 (.002)***	-.009 (.002)***	-.004 (.001)***	-.004 (.001)**	-.005 (.001)***	-.004 (.001)**	.001 (.001)	.000 (.001)	.002 (.001)	.004 (.001)*
Education category(ref. 1)												
0	.199 (.121)								.262(.133)*			
1												
2	-.024(.077)				.053 (.056)				.055(.054)			
3	.211(.085)*				.052 (0.61)				-.012(.082)			
4	.374(.089)***				.123 (.068)				.037(.107)			
5	.309(.086)***				.178 (.063)**				.045(.097)			
6	.450(.085)***				.204 (.069)**				.225(.107)*			
7	.602(.095)***				.265 (.068)***				.432(.106)***			
8	.782(.094)***				.280 (.078)***				.340(.163)*			
9					.385 (.076)***							
Country dummy	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v
Pseudo R ²	0.0917	0.1061	0.0841	0.0724	0.1109	0.1244	0.1122	0.1041	0.0711	0.0871	0.0787	0.0596
N	151,511	63,450	57,843	30,218	148,747	49,886	64,023	34,838	93,101	28,990	39,796	23,581

Note. Model 1 = full model; Model 2 = low education; Model 3 = medium education; Model 4 = higher education. For Periods 1 and 3, category 0 represents missing education and category 1 (low education) is the reference. In Period 2, missing cases were included in the lowest education category, coded as 1 (reference). Higher categories indicate higher educational levels. $p < .05$, $p < .01$, $p < .001$. v indicates that a variable was included as a set of dummies but not displayed.

Table 3. Logistic regression results for national identification trends across all periods.

	Period 1 (1981-2004)				Period 2 (2005-2016)				Period 3 (2017-2022)			
	Model 1 B(SE)	Model 2 B(SE)	Model 3 B(SE)	Model 4 B(SE)	Model 1 B(SE)	Model 2 B(SE)	Model 3 B(SE)	Model 4 B(SE)	Model 1 B(SE)	Model 2 B(SE)	Model 3 B(SE)	Model 4 B(SE)
Linear time trend	-.099(.041)*	-.057 (.041)	-.044 (.139)	-.366 (.176)*	.054(.079)	.110 (.114)	-.412 (.102)	.052 (.083)	-.416(.004)***	-.291 (.003)***	-.493 (.004)***	-.479 (.000)***
Quadratic time trend	.003(.002)*	.002 (.002)	.002 (.005)	.013 (.006)*	-.012(.030)	-.017 (.013)	.000 (.015)	-.012 (.010)				
Sex	-.048(.016)**	-.080 (.023)**	-.019 (.021)	-.048 (.026)	.060(.002)*	.024 (.044)	.084 (.055)	.067 (.046)	-.040 (.029)	-.063 (.038)	-.044 (.044)	-.008 (.042)
Age	.006(.001)***	.004 (.001)***	.006 (.001)***	.008 (.001)***	.013(.002)***	.013 (.003)***	.012 (.003)***	.014 (.003)***	.014 (.001)***	.010 (.002)***	.017 (.002)***	.012 (.002)***
Education category(ref. 1)												
0	-.010(.099)								-.380(.161)*			
1												
2	.210(.053)***				.314(.113)**				.250(.084)**			
3	.185(.055)**				.385(.088)***				.348(.099)***			
4	.305(.069)***				.307(.118)**				.411(.097)***			
5	.305(.069)***				.481(.095)***				.424(.104)***			
6	.272(.066)***				.390(.091)***				.453(.107)***			
7	.368(.077)***				.384(.094)***				.517(.108)***			
8	.357(.068)***				.372(.112)**				.538(.113)***			
9					.384(.095)***				.281(.128)*			
Country dummy	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v
Pseudo R ²	0.0555	0.0734	0.0485	0.0545	0.0688	0.0609	0.0782	0.0779	0.0741	0.0808	0.0762	0.0741
N	153,511	64,535	58,469	30,507	153,543	52,930	38,695	61,334	95,072	29,885	40,541	23,872

Note. Model 1 = full model; Model 2 = low education; Model 3 = medium education; Model 4 = higher education. For Periods 1 and 3, category 0 represents missing education and category 1 (low education) is the reference. In Period 2, missing cases were included in the lowest education category, coded as 1 (reference). Higher categories indicate higher educational levels. $p < .05$, $p < .01$, $p < .001$. v indicates that a variable was included as a set of dummies but not displayed.

Trend analysis

Period 1

Global identification.

The results for global identification during Period 1 are presented in Table 2. In Model 1, neither the linear time trend nor the quadratic term is statistically significant, indicating no overall trend in global identification during this period.

Only Model 3 shows a significant linear time trend for the medium-educated group (Model 3: $B = 0.268$, $SE = 0.087$, $p < .01$), while no significant trend is observed among the low- or highly educated. Additionally, the medium-educated group displays a significant curvilinear pattern, as evidenced by a negative quadratic term ($B = -0.009$, $SE = 0.003$, $p < .01$), suggesting a rise followed by a decline in global identification over time. Based on the estimated coefficients (linear $B = 0.268$; quadratic $B = -0.009$), the peak in global identification for the medium-educated group occurred approximately 15 years after 1981 (around 1996). While the quadratic term indicates a curvilinear trend with a subsequent decline, the calculated end point (1.403) remains higher than the starting level (0), implying a modest overall increase in global identification over the period.

Although this group exhibits a significant curvilinear trend, interaction effects (see Appendix 2) show that this pattern does not significantly differ from the trend among the low-educated group. Likewise, no significant differences emerge between the low- and highly educated, indicating that there was no substantial educational divide in these trend patterns during this period.

Age is consistently and significantly negatively associated with global identification across all models, indicating that older individuals are less likely to identify globally. A significant gender effect is observed in the full model (Model 1), where women report slightly

lower odds of global identification compared to men ($B = -0.093$, $SE = 0.025$, $p < .001$); however, this effect remains significant only among the lower-educated group.

Finally, the education dummy variables show a clear gradient: compared to the lowest educated group (reference category), higher levels of education are associated with progressively higher odds of global identification. This trend is statistically significant from education category 3 onwards, with the strongest effect found among the most highly educated (category 9: $B = 0.782$, $SE = 0.094$, $p < .001$).

National identification.

The results for national identification in Period 1 are presented in Table 3. In Model 1, the linear time trend is significantly negative ($B = -0.099$, $SE = 0.041$, $p < .05$), and the quadratic term is also significant and positive ($B = 0.003$, $SE = 0.002$, $p < .05$). This suggests a curvilinear trend in national identification, with an initial decline followed by a modest rebound later in the period.

In Model 4, only a significant curvilinear pattern is observed among the highly educated. This linear trend is significantly negative ($B = -0.366$, $SE = 0.176$, $p < .05$), and the quadratic term is also significant positive ($B = 0.013$, $SE = 0.006$, $p < .05$). Based on the estimates (linear $B = -0.366$; quadratic $B = 0.013$), the trajectory for the highly educated group shows a minimum (the point of turnaround) around 1995. Although the positive quadratic term indicates a slight upward correction afterwards, the calculated end point (-1.541) remains lower than the starting level (0), implying an overall decline in national identification for this group over the entire period.

Interaction effects confirm that this curvilinear trend among the highly educated differs significantly from that of the lower-educated groups. No significant differences are found between the low and medium-educated groups, indicating similar trajectories for these groups.

Age is a consistent and significant positive predictor of national identification across all models ($p < .001$), suggesting that older individuals are more likely to report stronger national identification. A significant gender effect is also present in the full model (Model 1), with women showing slightly lower national identification than men ($B = -0.048$, $SE = 0.016$, $p < .01$). This effect, however, remains significant only among the lower-educated group.

Finally, the education dummy variables show that individuals in education categories 2 through 8 report significantly higher national identification compared to those in the lowest education category. The strongest effect is found for category 7 ($B = 0.368$, $SE = 0.077$, $p < .001$).

Period 2

Global identification.

In Period 2, global identification followed a significant curvilinear trajectory. Model 1 reveals a positive linear time trend ($B = 0.145$, $SE = 0.049$, $p < .01$) alongside a negative quadratic term ($B = -0.016$, $SE = 0.006$, $p < .05$), indicating an initial increase in global identification followed by a subsequent decline.

When examining trends by educational level (Models 2–4), significant curvilinear trends were found among respondents with low and medium education. For the low-educated (Model 2), both the linear trend ($B = 0.296$, $SE = 0.079$, $p < .001$) and the negative quadratic term ($B = -0.032$, $SE = 0.010$, $p < .01$) were significant, indicating a pronounced inverted-U shape. Similarly, the medium-educated group (Model 3) showed a positive linear trend ($B = 0.121$, $SE = 0.040$, $p < .01$) and a significant curvilinear pattern. Among the highly educated (Model 4), neither the linear nor the quadratic term reached significance.

For the overall trend, as well as for the low- and medium-educated groups, global identification followed a significant curvilinear trajectory, peaking around 2009–2011.

Specifically, the peak occurred approximately in 2009–2010 for the overall sample and low-educated group, and around 2010–2011 for the medium-educated group. However, in all three cases, the end point was lower than the starting point, with the estimated net change by the end of the period being -0.341 (overall), -0.616 (low-educated), and -0.121 (medium-educated).

Interaction effects confirm that the trajectory of the highly educated differs significantly from that of the low-educated reference group, whereas no significant difference is found between the low- and medium-educated groups. This suggests that these two groups followed a similar curvilinear trend, while the highly educated deviated from this pattern.

Turning to the control variables, age is consistently and significantly negatively associated with global identification across all models ($p < .001$), indicating that older individuals are less likely to identify globally. Gender does not have a significant effect in any of the models. Finally, the education dummy variables reveal a clear gradient: relative to the lowest education category (reference), higher education levels are significantly associated with stronger global identification. This association becomes significant from education level 4 ($B = 0.178$, $SE = 0.063$, $p < .01$), with the strongest effect observed for education level 9 ($B = 0.385$, $SE = 0.076$, $p < .001$).

National identification.

In Period 2, national identification did not exhibit statistically significant changes over time. In the overall model (Model 1), neither the linear time trend nor the quadratic term reached statistical significance, which suggests that national identification may have remained relatively stable during this period. Similarly, none of the time trends across the educational subgroups (Models 2–4) were statistically significant, pointing to an absence of clear temporal change across education levels.

Nevertheless, the interaction effects indicate significant differences between education groups, even though the overall time trends for these groups are not significant. For example, individuals in the second-lowest education category (level 2) show a significantly more negative trend relative to the lowest education group. However, this more negative difference does not consistently increase with higher education levels: some mid-level categories show weaker or non-significant differences from the reference group, while certain higher levels show stronger and significant negative interaction effect.

Age was positively and significantly associated with national identification in all models (e.g., Model 1: $B = 0.013$, $SE = 0.002$, $p < .001$), indicating that older individuals are more likely to report higher levels of national identification. Gender does not significantly predict national identification in any of the models.

Finally, the education dummy variables show a somewhat inconsistent relationship with national identification. The strongest effect is observed for education level 5 ($B = 0.481$, $SE = 0.095$, $p < .001$). However, higher, and lower education levels do not consistently show stronger associations, as some levels display weaker or non-significant effects. This suggests that the relationship between education level and national identification is not linear.

Period 3

Global identification.

Period 3, global identification exhibited a significant decline over time. In the overall model (Model 1), the linear time trend is negative and significant (Model 1: $B = -0.285$, $SE = 0.003$, $p < .001$). This declining pattern was consistent across all education subgroups: among the low-educated (Model 2: $B = -0.257$, $SE = 0.002$, $p < .001$), medium-educated (Model 3: $B = -0.375$, $SE = 0.002$, $p < .001$), and high-educated individuals (Model 4: $B = -0.212$, $SE =$

0.001, $p < .001$). Interaction effects show that these differences in decline are not statistically significant, indicating a similar downward trend across all education levels.

Regarding the control variables, age is positively associated with global identification among the highly educated (Model 4: $B = 0.004$, $SE = 0.001$, $p < .05$), suggesting that older individuals in this subgroup were slightly more likely to identify globally. Gender does not significantly predict global identification in any of the models.

Examining the education dummies in Model 1, higher education emerges as a significant and consistent predictor of global identification. With the low-educated group (category 1) as the reference, several higher education levels show statistically significant positive associations. The strongest effect is observed for the highest education category (category 9), with a coefficient of $B = 0.340$ ($p < .05$), followed by category 8 ($B = 0.432$, $p < .001$) and category 7 ($B = 0.225$, $p < .05$).

National identification

In Period 3, the linear time trend was negative and significant in the overall sample (Model 1: $B = -0.416$, $SE = 0.004$, $p < .001$), as well as within all education groups (Model 2: $B = -0.291$, $SE = 0.003$, $p < .001$; Model 3: $B = -0.493$, $SE = 0.004$, $p < .001$; Model 4: $B = -0.479$, $SE = < .001$, $p < .001$). Interaction effects show that these declines do not significantly differ across educational groups, suggesting that the decrease in national identification occurred at a comparable pace regardless of education level.

Age was consistently and positively associated with national identification across all models, indicating that older individuals were more likely to identify nationally (e.g., Model 1: $B = 0.014$, $SE = 0.001$, $p < .001$). Gender did not significantly predict national identification in any of the models during this period.

Examining the education dummies and taking the low-educated group (category 1) as the reference, all higher education categories display positive and statistically significant effects on national identification. The strongest effects are observed among the highest education levels: category 9 ($B = 0.538, p < .001$), category 8 ($B = 0.517, p < .001$), and category 7 ($B = 0.453, p < .001$). Medium education levels as category 3 ($B = 0.411, p < .001$) also show significant positive associations.

Conclusion

This study explored long-term global trends in national and global identification across educational groups from 1981 to 2022. Although the dataset does not allow for a perfectly consistent trend analysis, due to differences in variables and sampling, it offers a first indication of how identity patterns have evolved across time and educational strata.

Contrary to the initial hypotheses, which predicted an increase in global identification accompanied by a corresponding decrease in national identification (or vice versa), no such uniform patterns were found. Therefore, hypotheses 1 and 2 can be rejected.

This research found that the expected negative relationship between these identities is not evident in these long-term trends and that neither national nor global identification has consistently evolved in parallel with globalization over time. Moreover, this research underscores that results may vary considerably depending on the specific time period examined. Although this study does not directly measure the impact of globalization on identification, it does show that identity patterns can differ across periods. Together, these insights highlight the complexity of the relationship between globalization and identification, providing a rationale for the diversity of theoretical perspectives and mixed empirical findings in existing literature.

Looking at global identification, the data show an irregular and nonlinear trajectory, marked by curvilinear patterns: an overall rise in the first period among the middle-educated, an initial increase but ultimately lower endpoint in the second period among the lower and middle-educated, and a decline across all groups in the most recent period. This undermines the notion of a straightforward, unidirectional development alongside the growth of globalization.

Interestingly, national identification shows a pattern of stability followed by a downward trend: a significant decline among the highly educated in the first period, relative

stabilization across all groups in the second period, and a clear decline for all education groups in the most recent period. This study does not find empirical support for the widely discussed ‘backlash theory,’ which posits a resurgence in national attachment in response to globalization. However, neither do these findings fully support theories that claim national identity will remain unchanged: although national identification is consistently higher than global identification across all socio-demographic groups, the highly educated show clear declines, and among the lower and medium educated, a decline emerges in the final period. Consistent with Bieber (2018), this study finds no evidence of a widespread resurgence of national identification at the population level. Instead, the perception of rising nationalism appears to reflect the increased political success and visibility of nationalist actors in some contexts, rather than a universal increase in nationalist sentiment.

In the last period a simultaneous decline in national and global identification was found among all groups. Since neither form of identification increases as the other declines, as the hypothesis predicted, this may indicate a broader trend toward alternative identity frameworks. Future research should explore whether individuals are increasingly aligning themselves with more localized or individualized identities, or other dimensions not captured in this study, such as religious identities. Wang (2016) and Abdelrahim (2024) have already shown that globalization is positively associated with individualism, suggesting that greater exposure to global influences may reinforce more individual-centered values.

The hypothesis expected that highly educated individuals would increase in global identification as they are the so-called winners of globalization and distance themselves from national identification(H3). Conversely, among lower-educated individuals, national identification was expected to remain stable or even increase, while global identification was expected to remain low (H4). As expected, highly educated individuals consistently reported stronger global identification, but no significant increase was found within this group over

time. Notably, there was substantial growth in global identification among the middle-educated in the first period, and during the second period, this increase extended to both medium- and low-educated individuals. This indicates that this form of cultural capital has gradually become more accessible across broader segments of society. This diffusion may have been facilitated by technological advancements such as social media, improved global infrastructure, and the rapid growth of international tourism (Bearce et al., 2023; Statista, 2024). A similar trend was identified by Ollroge (2023), who, using International Social Survey Programme data, demonstrated that as globalization increases, the attitudinal divide between so-called winners and losers of globalization narrows. This is primarily because individuals with lower and medium education levels become more supportive of globalization, while the attitudes of highly educated individuals remain relatively stable. Interestingly, although more globalized countries show a smaller gap, this is not caused by globalization itself but likely by other structural or contextual country characteristics. Together, these findings indicate that both hypotheses H3 and H4 can be rejected. Moreover, they challenge the expectations embedded in the "winners and losers of globalization" theory, which typically predicts increased identification among the global elite but stagnation or resistance among the lower-educated.

The relationship between education and national identification appears more complex than global identification. While higher-educated individuals generally have higher odds of identifying globally, middle- and higher-educated individuals also tend to report stronger national identification compared to the lowest education group. However, this pattern is irregular and does not follow a clear linear gradient across education levels.

Sex did not appear to be a sociodemographic factor influencing identification, but age did. For national identification, across all periods, older individuals were more likely to identify nationally. For global identification, younger individuals were generally more likely

to identify globally, except in the most recent period, where older individuals within the highly educated group reported higher global identification. This pattern may suggest that younger generations in the most recent period increasingly express their sense of belonging through other forms of identity not captured in this study.

It seems that some of these patterns are related to global events. When considering the three periods together, a clear decline in global identification among middle- and low-educated groups can be observed starting around 2010. This decline follows a period of notable growth in global identification within these groups, suggesting that global engagement had become more widespread before reversing course. The timing of this reversal coincides with the global financial crisis of 2007–2009, which disproportionately affected lower- and middle-income populations. These groups also show the steepest decline in the most recent period and may have felt particularly vulnerable, distancing themselves from global identification as a result. Similarly, the decline in national identification among highly educated individuals began around 1995, aligning with a phase of rapid globalization.

The results of this study should be interpreted with caution. One important limitation is the inconsistency in measurement across periods. In the first period, respondents were asked to choose only one identity (global or national), whereas in later periods, identification was measured using a Likert scale. This difference limits the comparability of trends over time. Furthermore, the first period covers a relatively long time span and includes fewer less developed countries in its earliest years than the later periods, making cross-period comparisons less reliable. Additionally, the last period was too short to fully capture potential curvilinear patterns. Moreover, the international scope of the data introduces cultural variation in how people interpret concepts such as “feeling like a global citizen” or “belonging to the nation,” which may differ significantly across sociocultural contexts. To better capture nuanced shifts in identification patterns, future analyses could benefit from subdividing the

timeline into shorter, more consistent periods, allowing for more precise detection of turning points or fluctuations that may be obscured in broader time spans. Furthermore, only a limited number of control variables were included in this study. Incorporating a broader range of relevant controls in future research could yield more precise and robust insights into the drivers of global and national identification. Finally, maintaining consistent survey questions on identity in future research would allow for much more reliable statements about how identities evolve over time.

Overall, these findings point toward a multifaceted and stratified evolution of identity over time in the age of globalization. The complexity and variability observed across time and educational levels emphasize the importance of moving beyond binary assumptions of global versus national identity, and instead highlight the shifting, multidimensional nature of belonging in a rapidly changing world. This study demonstrates that cosmopolitan cultural capital, once concentrated among the highly educated, has gradually diffused into broader segments of society, challenging the notion that a global identity remains the exclusive domain of the global elite. Based on this research, global identity has the potential to be embraced across all layers of society. Although recent trends indicate a decline, it remains important to continue monitoring the development of these identities, especially given their association with traits that may prove beneficial in addressing global challenges. Ultimately, belonging beyond borders appears not only possible for all segments of society but also increasingly necessary in today's interconnected world. To ensure that this sense of belonging becomes a reality for all, it remains essential to keep studying how it evolves and to explore how we can actively nurture it.

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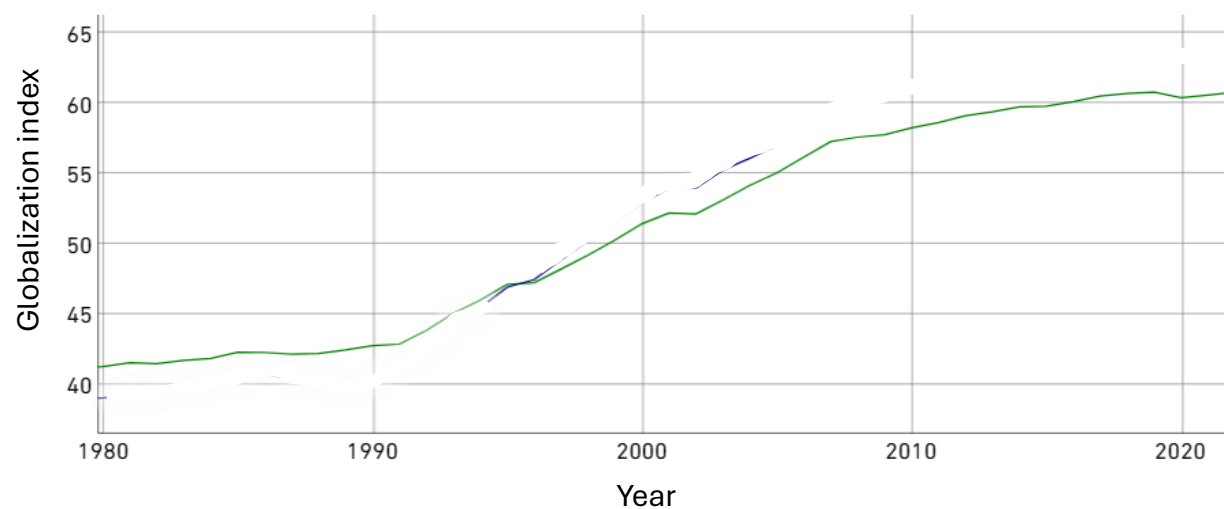
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APPENDIX 1

Figure 1

Global globalization index from 1981 to 2022.



Note. Adapted from the KOF Globalization Index data (Gygli et al., 2019). Data source: KOF

Swiss Economic Institute, ETH Zurich. © 2022 KOF Swiss Economic Institute.

APPENDIX 2

Table 4. Interaction effects between education and time predicting global and national identification across all periods.

	Period 1 (1981-2004)		Period 2 (2005-2016)		Period 3 (2017-2022)	
	Global B(SE)	National B(SE)	Global B(SE)	National B(SE)	Global B(SE)	National B(SE)
Linear time trend	.301(.164)	.079(.142)	.241(.082)**	.236(.129)	-.296(.039)***	-.429(.045)***
Quadratic time trend	-.009(.005)	-.001(.005)	-.024(.010)*	-.030(.014)*		
Sex	-.092(.025)***	-.048(.015)**	.004(.022)	.061(.031)*	-.011(.020)	-.040(.029)
Age	-.013(.001)***	.006(.001)***	-.004(.001)***	.014(.002)***	.001(.001)	.014(.001)***
Education category(ref. 1)						
0	2.628 (1.264) *	1.738 (.055)	.	.	-.219 (.375)	-.345 (.324)
1						
2	-.652 (1.386)	1.412 (.906)	017 (.155)	598 (.247) *	-.053(.131)	.306(.206)
3	2.072 (1.327)	.927 (1.074)	.129 (.159)	.606 (.179) ***	-.002(.178)	.428(.235)
4	-.373 (1.220)	1.214 (1.080)	.361 (.177) *	.611 (.255) *	.126(.235)	.647(.230)**
5	1.063 (1.478)	1.552 (1.035)	.290 (.165)	.733 (.213) ***	.202(.232)	.603(.257)*
6	1.564 (1.334)	2.706 (1.102) *	.264 (.172)	.834 (.270) **	.170(.262)	.608(.262)*
7	1.477 (1.197)	4.000 (1.733) *	.492 (.162) **	.541 (.270) *	.386(.249)	.781(.259)**
8	3.428 (1.573) *	2.364 (1.440)	.666 (.190) ***	.829 (.249) ***	.534(.242)*	.631(.264)*
9			.753 (.173) ***	.720 (.232) **	.386(.039)	.479(.278)
Education x Time(ref. 1)						
0	-.314 (.167)	-.170 (.141)			-.124 (.346)	-.251 (.324)
1						
2	.089 (.173)	.124 (.110)	-.011 (.059)	-.259 (.132) *	.113(.107)	-.019(.174)
3	.200 (.171)	-.030 (.134)	-.048 (.061)	-.127 (.094)	.014(.104)	-.093(.178)

4	.123 (.162)	-.056 (.136)	-.128 (.065)	-.215 (.134)	-.123(.156)	-.253(.190)
5	-.079 (.185)	-.134 (.121)	-.048 (.061)	-.157 (.106)	-.143(.166)	-.143(.228)
6	-.125 (.169)	-.252 (.129)	-.058 (.068)	-.257 (.127) *	-.105(.193)	-.172(.247)
7	-.071 (.167)	-.433 (.205) *	-.124 (.064)	-.108 (.129)	-.212(.177)	-.294(.234)
8	-.336 (.196)	-.200 (.169)	-.181 (.087) *	-.291 (.129) *	-.145(.176)	-.044(.218)
9			-.143 (.077)	-.235 (.116) *	-.088(.305)	-.101(.247)

Education x Quadratic
Time(ref. 1)

0	.010 (.005)	.004 (.004)			-.026 (.057)	.068 (.053)
1						
2	-.003 (.005)	.003 (.003)	.003 (.006)	.029 (.014) *	-.018(.018)	-.003(.028)
3	.005 (.005)	.003 (.003)	.005 (.007)	.012 (.010)	-.004(.014)	.018(.026)
4	-.005 (.005)	-.001 (.004)	.011 (.006)	.022 (.014)	.025(.023)	.044(.029)
5	.002 (.006)	.000 (.004)	.003 (.006)	.016 (.019)	.021(.025)	.020(.036)
6	.003 (.005)	.003 (.003)	.006 (.007)	.024 (.013) *	.021(.030)	.032(.041)
7	.001 (.006)	.006 (.004)	.011 (.007)	.011 (.012)	.041(.027)	.053(.038)
8	.010 (.006)	.012 (.006) *	.015 (.009)	.029 (.012) *	.029(.028)	.005(.034)
9		.005 (.005)	.010 (.009)	.025 (.012) *	.021(.061)	.007(.039)

Country dummy	v	v	v	v	v	v
Pseudo R^2	0.0926	0.0563	0.1116	0.0692	0.0715	0.0745
N	151511	153511	148747	153543	93101	95072

Note. $p < .05$, $p < .01$, $p < .001$. v = variable included as a set of dummies but not displayed.

CHECKLIST ETHICAL AND PRIVACY ASPECTS OF RESEARCH

INSTRUCTION

This checklist should be completed for every research study that is conducted at the Department of Public Administration and Sociology (DPAS). This checklist should be completed *before* commencing with data collection or approaching participants. Students can complete this checklist with help of their supervisor.

This checklist is a mandatory part of the empirical master's thesis and has to be uploaded along with the research proposal.

The guideline for ethical aspects of research of the Dutch Sociological Association (NSV) can be found on their website (http://www.nsv-sociologie.nl/?page_id=17). If you have doubts about ethical or privacy aspects of your research study, discuss and resolve the matter with your EUR supervisor. If needed and if advised to do so by your supervisor, you can also consult Dr. Bonnie French, coordinator of the Sociology Master's Thesis program.

PART I: GENERAL INFORMATION

Project title: Belonging beyond borders

Name, email of student: Mila Hesseling, milahesseling01@gmail.com

Name, email of supervisor: Arjen Leerkes, leerkes@essb.eur.nl

Start date and duration: February 2025-June 2025

Is the research study conducted within DPAS

YES - NO

If 'NO': at or for what institute or organization will the study be conducted?
(e.g. internship organization)

PART II: HUMAN SUBJECTS

1. Does your research involve human participants. **YES -NO**

If 'NO': skip to part V.

If 'YES': does the study involve medical or physical research? **YES -NO**

Research that falls under the Medical Research Involving Human Subjects Act ([WMO](#)) must first be submitted to [an accredited medical research ethics committee](#) or the Central Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects ([CCMO](#)).

2. Does your research involve field observations without manipulations that will not involve identification of participants. **YES -NO**

If 'YES': skip to part IV.

3. Research involving completely anonymous data files (secondary data that has been anonymized by someone else). **YES - NO**

If 'YES': skip to part IV.

PART IV: SAMPLE

Where will you collect or obtain your data?

World Value Survey

Inglehart, R., Haerpfer, C., Moreno, A., Welzel, C., Kizilova, K., Diez-Medrano, J., Lagos, M., Norris, P., Ponarin, E., & Puranen, B. (eds.). (2022). World Values Survey: All Rounds - Country-Pooled Datafile. Madrid, Spain & Vienna, Austria, version 3.0.0 [Dataset]. JD Systems Institute & WVSA Secretariat. <https://doi.org/10.14281/18241.17>

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

What is the (anticipated) size of your sample?

Approximately 442,473 respondents.

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

What is the size of the population from which you will sample?

The national adult population in the participating countries and survey years.

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

Continue to part V.

Part V: Data storage and backup

Where and when will you store your data in the short term, after acquisition?

In the short term, after acquisition, the data will be securely stored on my personal computer. The computer is password-protected, and access to the data is restricted to authorized users only.

Note: indicate for separate data sources, for instance for paper-and pencil test data, and for digital data files.

Who is responsible for the immediate day-to-day management, storage and backup of the data arising from your research?

I will do this myself(Mila Hesseling).

How (frequently) will you back-up your research data for short-term data security?

Every day I am working on my research.

In case of collecting personal data how will you anonymize the data?

Not applicable, since only anonymized secondary data is used.

Note: It is advisable to keep directly identifying personal details separated from the rest of the data. Personal details are then replaced by a key/ code. Only the code is part of the database with data and the list of respondents/research subjects is kept separate.

PART VI: SIGNATURE

Please note that it is your responsibility to follow the ethical guidelines in the conduct of your study. This includes providing information to participants about the study and ensuring confidentiality in storage and use of personal data. Treat participants respectfully, be on time at appointments, call participants when they have signed up for your study and fulfil promises made to participants.

Furthermore, it is your responsibility that data are authentic, of high quality and properly stored. The principle is always that the supervisor (or strictly speaking the Erasmus University Rotterdam) remains owner of the data, and that the student should therefore hand over all data to the supervisor.

Hereby I declare that the study will be conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the Department of Public Administration and Sociology at Erasmus University Rotterdam. I have answered the questions truthfully.

Name student: Mila Hesseling

Name (EUR) supervisor: Arjen Leerkes

Date: 20-06-2025

Date:

