Quality of Life  
Negative Case by Alisa Stringer



Multiculturalism is a way for us to respect others. This case focuses on the belief that people who live in supportive communities will have a better life. We live in a world where cultures are constantly clashing. We can either work to diminish other cultures for fear of collision, or we can learn to value other cultures as unique pictures of what it means to be human.

The framework for this case is set up for contingencies. Debaters will probably not need every resolutional analysis or definition in every round, but the ones included here are likely to come up often. The negative has the advantage of seeing the affirmative case before they have to make their own. Use that to your advantage.

The negative value is quality of life. However, this is purposefully described in broad terms. It is likely that negative debaters will be able to accept affirmative values. If debaters can do so, accepting values is a smart course of action, because there are far more interesting and impactful arguments that can be made for negative if debaters avoid the value-clash black hole.

The most emotionally impactful argument in this case is first application, which involves American Indian boarding schools. Debaters should be careful with this application, as with any application that involves minority groups that have faced discrimination. That being said, this application carries a lot of weight, since it is a close-to-home example of the more drastic forms of assimilation.

Multiculturalism can seem like a nebulous topic when first explored, but there are some strong arguments for why it should be valued. Multiculturalism acknowledges the complexity of the world, and works to build from diversity, rather than hindering it. Our culture is one of many, and we can learn from one another, if we are willing to recognize the value of other cultures.

Quality of Life

In 1987, Harlem-born Jamaican-American activist and poet, June Jordan wrote on what it would be like to live in a truly multicultural society.

Elaine G. Schwartz 1995 *"Crossing Borders/Shifting Paradigms: Multiculturalism and Children's Literature."* Harvard Educational Review, Harvard U, 1995, [www.hepg.org/her-home/issues/harvard-educational-review-volume-65-issue-4/herarticle/multiculturalism-and-children-s-literature\_299](http://www.hepg.org/her-home/issues/harvard-educational-review-volume-65-issue-4/herarticle/multiculturalism-and-children-s-literature_299)

“If we lived in a democratic state our language would have to hurtle, fly, course and sing, in all the undeniable and representative and participating voices of everybody here. We would make our language conform to the truth of our many selves and we would make our language lead us into the quality of power that a democratic state must represent.”

As Jordan understood, the dynamic beauty that comes from diversity is worth the challenges that come from living in a multicultural society. We as a culture ought to value multiculturalism over assimilation.

# Framework

## Definitions

The Oxford English Dictionary defines culture as,

Oxford University Press, June 2019, [www.oed.com/view/Entry/45746](http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/45746) Accessed 5 July 2019.

“The distinctive ideas, customs, social behavior, products, or way of life of a particular nation, society, people, or period. Hence: a society or group characterized by such customs, etc.”

Assimilation and multiculturalism are anthropological terms. As such, they should be defined according to anthropologists, in order to provide the clearest terms for this round. In *The Essentials of Cultural Anthropology*, assimilation is defined as,

Kenneth J. Guest 2018 *Essentials of Cultural Anthropology: A Toolkit for a Global Age*, 2018. Print. Pp 166.

“the process through which minorities accept the patterns and norms of the dominant culture and cease to exist as separate groups.”

The same source goes on to describe multiculturalism as,

“a pattern of ethnic relations in which new immigrants and their children enculturate into the dominant national culture yet retain an ethnic culture.”

## Resolutional Analysis: Culture is a group *and* an idea

Culture is a notoriously difficult concept. It is something that we live within, unconsciously accept, and rarely examine. In this debate, it is important that we understand that ‘culture’ sometimes refers to ideas and ideologies, but it can also refer to the group that propagates those ideas.

## Resolutional Analysis: Majority versus Minority

In order for the resolution to have meaning, there must be a conflict between a minority culture and a majority culture. If the two were in agreement, or if there was only one culture, then the word ‘assimilation’ would be meaningless, as assimilation requires an acceptance of a dominant culture and a rejection of a minority culture.

## Resolutional Analysis: Integration is not Assimilation

In day to day life, it is easy to equate integration with assimilation. The two ideas are not the same. Assimilation, as previously discussed, involves minority groups lose their distinct cultures as they accept the dominant cultural sentiments. Integration, according to Oxford English Dictionary, involves,

Oxford University Press, June 2019, [www.oed.com/view/Entry/97356. Accessed 22 July 2019](http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/97356.%20Accessed%2022%20July%202019).

“The bringing into equal membership of a common society those groups or persons previously discriminated against on racial or cultural grounds.”

Integration should be a priority no matter which side of the resolution we choose. It is important that we realize that integration is not inherently tied to either assimilation or multiculturalism.

# Value: Quality of Life

Every society should be striving to provide the best quality of life for their people. Some of the most important factors of quality of life include freedom of speech, privacy, health, happiness, and safety.

## Criterion: Social Belonging

When it comes to cultural ideologies, quality of life is best achieved when we encourage a sense of social belonging. Individuals who are in meaningful relationships with people they trust are able to reach out when they need help and return the favor when they are called upon. Our need for community is essential to who we are as human beings, and when we are in community, we thrive.

# Contention 1: Assimilation Destroys Quality of Life

To be clear, assimilation itself is not a problem. If an individual of a minority community chooses to adopt certain cultural patterns to better communicate and integrate with the majority community, that is their prerogative. The problem is that we are asked whether culture should value assimilation over multiculturalism. When the power is put into the community’s hands, we are now dealing with a dangerous strain of assimilation, known as forced assimilation.

## Application: Native American Boarding Schools

To modern Americans, discussions of interactions between Native Americans and colonialists are distinctly uncomfortable. In the early years of settlement, it was not enough for many colonists to take land, dignity and life. Instead, settlers also felt it necessary to strip American Indians of their culture and heritage through forced assimilation.

Charla Bear 2008 *"American Indian Boarding Schools Haunt Many"* National Public Radio, 12 May 2008, [www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=16516865](http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=16516865) Accessed 11 July 2019.

“According to Tsianina Lomawaima, head of the American Indian Studies program at the University of Arizona, the intent was to completely transform people, inside and out. "Language, religion, family structure, economics, the way you make a living, the way you express emotion, everything," says Lomawaima. Lomawaima says from the start, the government's objective was to "erase and replace" Indian culture, part of a larger strategy to conquer Indians.”

The problem here is that a dominant culture determined that their way of life was superior to others. The culture chose assimilation, regardless of what individuals wanted. American Indians still feel the devastating effects of that choice, as it isolated an entire generation, resulting in dying languages, arts, and beliefs. Assimilation destroys quality of life.

# Contention 2: Multiculturalism Strengthens our Sense of Belonging

By nature, multiculturalism involves respecting different cultures. This helps to foster a sense of empowerment and pride, which in turn increases our sense of belonging. But the beneficial effects are not limited to the minority communities. When people are allowed to keep their ethnic cultures, they feel more comfortable supporting the majority culture in turn.

## Application: Canada’s Civic Integration

In terms of multicultural policies, Canada has done more than nearly any other country. This has had a demonstrable positive impact on immigrant integration. As Dr. Irene Bloemraad wrote in an article for the Migration Policy Institute,

Irene Bloemraad 2011 *"The Debate Over Multiculturalism: Philosophy, Politics, and Policy"* Migration Policy Institute, 22 Sept. 2011, [www.migrationpolicy.org/article/debate-over-multiculturalism-philosophy-politics-and-policy](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/debate-over-multiculturalism-philosophy-politics-and-policy)

“According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 89 percent of working age (15 to 64) immigrants who had been living in multicultural Canada for at least ten years had adopted Canadian citizenship by 2007 — a large share compared to the citizenship acquisition of the same population of immigrants in countries with few multicultural policies. By 2007, only 57 percent of such immigrants in Denmark took on Danish citizenship, 47 percent in France became French citizens, and 37 percent in Germany adopted German citizenship. To the extent that taking on citizenship is an indicator of civic incorporation and a facilitator of further integration, either in politics or through access to certain jobs, we find greater integration in countries with more developed multicultural policies.”

Furthermore, Professor Irene Bloemraad explained that,

“Immigrants living in countries that adopt multicultural policies are more likely to engage in nonviolent political activities directed at their country of residence rather than their homeland, more likely to report trust in government, less likely to report discrimination based on their group membership, and more likely to become citizens.”7

In other words, multiculturalist policies make immigrants feel safer and more welcome in their new countries. In return, they become more engaged and active in their new communities. Multiculturalism strengthens our sense of belonging, and therefore improves the lives of everyone involved.

Opposition Brief: Quality of Life

# Civic Integration

Multiculturalism Isolates Immigrants

Gonzalez, Mike. "There Is a Better Way to Help Immigrants Assimilate." Time, 17 Jan. 2017, time.com/4626002/multiculturalism-assimilation-immigrants/.

Harder to dismiss will be Dame Louise Casey’s recent 200-page report in the United Kingdom. It is based on more than 800 interviews conducted across Britain over several months and amounts to a blistering indictment of previous policies—or the absence thereof. In one anecdote, it found that some Muslim students are so segregated that they believe the country is 90 percent Muslim. “As some communities have become more segregated, the increased pace of immigration has added new pressures, leaving long-standing communities struggling to adjust to the changes around them,” the report said. Yet, “too few leaders in public office have dealt with this key issue, perhaps hoping it might change or worrying about being labeled racist; or indeed fearing that they will lose the support of minority communities.” Far from resulting in a more liberal Britain, the rush to implement multicultural policies has led to some fairly illiberal results. As Dame Casey wrote: “Too many public institutions, national and local, state and non-state, have gone so far to accommodate diversity and freedom of expression that they have ignored or even condoned regressive, divisive and harmful cultural and religious practices, for fear of being branded racist or Islamophobic.”

Multiculturalism Drives Immigrants Away

Carafano, James Jay, and Mike Gonzalez. "Assimilation, Not Integration, Prevents Young Immigrants from Turning to Terrorism." The Heritage Foundation, 7 Mar. 2017, www.heritage.org/immigration/commentary/assimilation-not-integration-prevents-young-immigrants-turning-terrorism. Accessed 9 July 2019.

Turkey’s president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, understands the difference between integrating and assimilating. He tells Turkish immigrants to other countries to do the former but not the latter. In Dusseldorf in 2011, he told them, “Yes, integrate yourselves into German society, but don’t assimilate yourselves.” That mindset has now become a national-security problem. Former British prime minister David Cameron understood it. In 2011 in Munich, he told a gathering that the tendency of many young Muslims in the West to take up terrorism “comes down to a question of identity. These young men find it hard to identify with Britain because we have allowed the weakening of our collective identity.” Writing in the Times of London, Cameron added that “all too often, because of what I would call ‘passive tolerance,’ people subscribe to the flawed idea of separate development. It is time to change our approach.” Separate development is what our schools teach, however. In what many consider the gold standard of academic research on this subject, sociologists Alejandro Portes and Rubén Rumbaut find that students experience a shift in identification after four years of high school, “toward a more militant reaffirmation of the immigrant identity.” Self-identification as “American” diminishes over time. Children of immigrants, they say, seem “to adopt the ethnoracial markers into which they are persistently classified by the schools and other U.S. institutions.”

Multiculturalism Isolates Minorities

Malik, Kenan. "Multiculturalism Undermines Diversity." The Guardian, 17 Mar. 2010, www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/mar/17/multiculturalism-diversity-political-policy. Accessed 13 July 2019.

The irony of multiculturalism as a political process is that it undermines much of what is valuable about diversity as lived experience. When we talk about diversity, what we mean is that the world is a messy place, full of clashes and conflicts. That's all for the good, for such clashes and conflicts are the stuff of political and cultural engagement. But the very thing that's valuable about diversity – the clashes and conflicts that it brings about – is the very thing that worries many multiculturalists. They seek to minimise such conflicts by parcelling people up into neat ethnic boxes, and policing the boundaries of those boxes in the name of tolerance and respect. Far from minimising conflict what this does is generate a new set of more destructive, less resolvable conflicts. To say that clashes and conflicts can be good does not mean, of course, that every clash and conflict is good. Political conflicts are often useful because they repose social problems in a way that asks: "How can we change society to overcome that problem?" We might disagree on the answer, but the debate itself is a useful one. Multiculturalism, on the other hand, by reposing political problems in terms of culture or faith, transforms political conflicts into a form that makes them neither useful nor resolvable. Rather than ask, for instance, "What are the social roots of racism and what structural changes are required to combat it?" it demands recognition for one's particular identity, public affirmation of one's cultural difference and respect and tolerance for one's cultural and faith beliefs. Multicultural policies have come to be seen as a means of empowering minority communities and giving them a voice. In reality such policies have empowered not individuals but "community leaders" who owe their position and influence largely to their relationship with the state. Multicultural policies tend to treat minority communities as homogenous wholes, ignoring class, religious, gender and other differences, and leaving many within those communities feeling misrepresented and, indeed, disenfranchised.

# Quality of Life

Multiculturalism Offers False Promises

Noack, Rick. "Multiculturalism Is a Sham, Says Angela Merkel." The Washington Post, 14 Dec. 2015, www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/12/14/angela-merkel-multiculturalism-is-a-sham/. Accessed 9 July 2019.

The speech that followed, however, may have surprised supporters of her policies: "Multiculturalism leads to parallel societies and therefore remains a 'life lie,' " or a sham, she said, before adding that Germany may be reaching its limits in terms of accepting more refugees. "The challenge is immense," she said. "We want and we will reduce the number of refugees noticeably." Although those remarks may seem uncharacteristic of Merkel, she probably would insist that she was not contradicting herself. In fact, she was only repeating a sentiment she first voiced several years ago when she said multiculturalism in Germany had "utterly failed." "Of course the tendency had been to say, 'Let's adopt the multicultural concept and live happily side by side, and be happy to be living with each other.' But this concept has failed, and failed utterly," she said in 2010. Repeating those ideas on Monday was meant to calm her supporters who have grown increasingly weary of the influx of refugees. Newcomers, Merkel stressed, should assimilate to German values and culture, and respect the country's laws.

Multiculturalism Threatens Prosperity

Keller, Jan. "What Multiculturalism Hides." Gatestone Institute, 16 Oct. 2018, <http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/13128/multiculturalism>. Accessed 13 July 2019. Prof. Jan Keller is a Czech Social Democrat Member of the European Parliament, sociologist, analyst, commentator and author

Under these circumstances, the nature of multiculturalism has changed. It has become a means to exert fierce psychological pressure primarily on the middle- and lower-income sectors in Europe. One form this pressure has taken is the equating of the plight of the current refugees to emigrants escaping to the West from behind the Iron Curtain. The comparison, however, does not really apply. The Eastern European at that time emigrants did not aspire to achieve "multicultural status". Their goal was to integrate -- to adapt to a society that was so generous as to have accepted them. In short, mass waves of migrants represent statistically significantly greater risks than opportunities. They do not serve to boost prosperity. Our insurance systems, which were founded by, and developed for, the nation states whose populations they were meant to serve, were simply never designed to cover them. The proponents of the new multiculturalism want to share their welfare states with masses of refugees who -- through no fault of their own -- will be unable to participate in financing themselves for a long time to come.

Multiculturalism Divides Countries

Burns, John F. "Cameron Criticizes 'Multiculturalism' in Britain." New York Times, 5 Feb. 2011, www.nytimes.com/2011/02/06/world/europe/06britain.html. Accessed 13 July 2019.

Faced with growing alarm about Islamic militants who have made Britain one of Europe’s most active bases for terrorist plots, Prime Minister David Cameron has mounted an attack on the country’s decades-old policy of “multiculturalism,” saying it has encouraged “segregated communities” where Islamic extremism can thrive. Speaking at a security conference in Munich on Saturday, Mr. Cameron condemned what he called the “hands-off tolerance” in Britain and other European nations that had encouraged Muslims and other immigrant groups “to live separate lives, apart from each other and the mainstream.” He said that the policy had allowed Islamic militants leeway to radicalize young Muslims, some of whom went on to “the next level” by becoming terrorists, and that Europe could not defeat terrorism “simply by the actions we take outside our borders,” with military actions like the war in Afghanistan. “Europe needs to wake up to what is happening in our own countries,” he said. “We have to get to the root of the problem.” In what aides described as one of the most important speeches in the nine months since he became prime minister, Mr. Cameron said the multiculturalism policy — one espoused by British governments since the 1960s, based on the principle of the right of all groups in Britain to live by their traditional values — had failed to promote a sense of common identity centered on values of human rights, democracy, social integration and equality before the law.

# Social Belonging

Multiculturalism Divides Countries

Heneghan, Tom. "Sarkozy Joins Allies Burying Multiculturalism." Reuters, 11 Feb. 2011, www.reuters.com/article/us-france-sarkozy-multiculturalism-idUSTRE71A4UP20110211. Accessed 13 July 2019.

France has stood out in Europe by proudly refusing to bend to some unfamiliar practices, most notably the Muslim veils it has outlawed in public and headscarves it banned from schools. Germany has been more flexible and Britain much more so. Despite their differences, all three say they have a problem with the integration of Muslims and their statements on multiculturalism clearly focus on those minorities. “It’s a failure,” Sarkozy said of multiculturalism. “The truth is that, in all our democracies, we’ve been too concerned about the identity of the new arrivals and not enough about the identity of the country receiving them.” “This raises the issue of Islam and our Muslim compatriots,” he said. “Our Muslim compatriots should be able to live and practice their religion like anyone else ... but it can only be a French Islam and not just an Islam in France.” Cameron said last week that multiculturalism had failed and left young British Muslims vulnerable to radicalism. Amid a heated debate about Muslim immigration last October, Merkel denounced the approach and said newcomers must integrate.

Multiculturalism Decreases Civic Health

Jonas, Michael. "The Downside of Diversity." New York Times, 5 Aug. 2007, www.nytimes.com/2007/08/05/world/americas/05iht-diversity.1.6986248.html. Accessed 13 July 2019.

It has become increasingly popular to speak of racial and ethnic diversity as a civic strength. From multicultural festivals to pronouncements from political leaders, the message is the same: our differences make us stronger. But a massive new study, based on detailed interviews of nearly 30,000 people across America, has concluded just the opposite. Harvard political scientist Robert Putnam -- famous for "Bowling Alone," his 2000 book on declining civic engagement -- has found that the greater the diversity in a community, the fewer people vote and the less they volunteer, the less they give to charity and work on community projects. In the most diverse communities, neighbors trust one another about half as much as they do in the most homogenous settings. The study, the largest ever on civic engagement in America, found that virtually all measures of civic health are lower in more diverse settings. "The extent of the effect is shocking," says Scott Page, a University of Michigan political scientist. The study comes at a time when the future of the American melting pot is the focus of intense political debate, from immigration to race-based admissions to schools, and it poses challenges to advocates on all sides of the issues. The study is already being cited by some conservatives as proof of the harm large-scale immigration causes to the nation's social fabric. But with demographic trends already pushing the nation inexorably toward greater diversity, the real question may yet lie ahead: how to handle the unsettling social changes that Putnam's research predicts. "We can't ignore the findings," says Ali Noorani, executive director of the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition. "The big question we have to ask ourselves is, what do we do about it; what are the next steps?

Multiculturalism Threatens Security

Bjarnadóttir, Ingunn. “Multiculturalism, Security and Stability in the International System: The Case of Migration.” (2012). http://hdl.handle.net/1946/10479

In order to protect future security and stability within nation states as well as the international system, the creation of some kind of a common framing or overarching identity within a multicultural society could possibly help to draw together all the different groups that are living within it. Governments should concentrate on factors that bind all the different groups together, something that they all have in common so they can be united in a common identity where they can all feel a sense of belonging. This solution will demand a certain degree of integration on the part of immigrants, but as mentioned before, as long as their purely cultural practices and traditions do not go against or harm core values in the host community they should be accepted and tolerated. This will reduce the risk of intolerance and racism as migrants will not be seen to be violating the core values of their host society, and along with the positive expression of a common identity it can increase social cohesion and solidarity in the community as a whole. Multicultural communities have to stop focusing on sameness and realize that people do not all have to be the same in order to have something in common. A step has to be taken away from nationalism and the belief that a common or national identity can only be created through outward uniformity in values and norms, to realizing that most of the biggest problems and threats that modern societies face - such as environmental and climate change, natural disasters, pollution and major epidemics - are common to all of the world’s citizens. By focusing on this as something that binds all groups together and by encouraging collective actions against it, a common set of security values followed by some kind of a common identity can possibly be found. Governments have to work towards making all their citizens see the big picture by fostering an intensified discussion on these common problems as something that threatens all cultures and groups equally. Further it is important for governments to seek a better understanding of the public view on multiculturalism as that can bring a more precise analysis of different views and values between groups. That knowledge can then be used to further improve theoretical discussion and solutions. From the arguments that have been raised throughout this dissertation it is clear that multiculturalism can harm security and stability in the international system when it is not managed in a successful and effective way, and when there is a lack of tolerance and understanding between different groups and cultures. When multiculturalism goes out of control within nation-states, its harmful effects can easily spread into the international system. As increasing terrorist attacks on the West over the last decades have shown, no country is secure from activities that are happening within another country, while many of the attackers were citizens of and brought up within Western societies. Nation-states therefore have to cooperate in order to protect security in the international system and develop collective approaches and policies towards migration in order to obtain the desired control over migration processes and their multicultural effects. Furthermore there is a need for an honest and continuous dialogue between hosting and migrant communities in order to prevent migrants‟ identity from becoming a security threat to the host state and society, as well as to the international system as a whole.