Quality of Life
Negative Case by Steven Errico



When I’m in my hometown, my old stomping ground, I often feel like I’m in my own little world. I know all the shortcuts and the secrets, as well as many of the people. I love the feeling of being in a place I can call home, most people do. There are so many things about home that are unique and special, and we don’t ever want them to go away.

This case is about home, and whether or not a society can actually provide a home for people from diverse backgrounds rather than just houses.

Be sure to focus on the concrete examples and application. They are going to be your strongest and most persuasive arguments.

Quality of Life

Everyone wants to be accepted. Everyone wants to be loved. And everyone wants to feel like they’re truly at home. The ultimate goal of any society should be to be able to provide home for its people.

# Definitions

## Culture

Cambridge. *Cambridge English Dictionary*. Accessed September 20, 2019. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/culture>

Culture noun (WAY OF LIFE): the way of life of a particular people, esp. as shown in their ordinary behavior and habits, their attitudes toward each other, and their moral and religious beliefs: He studied the culture of the Sioux Indians.

## Assimilation

Encyclopedia Britannica. *Encyclopedia Britannica.*Accessed September 20, 2019. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/assimilation-society>

Assimilation, in anthropology and sociology, the process whereby individuals or groups of differing ethnic heritage are absorbed into the dominant culture of a society. The process of assimilating involves taking on the traits of the dominant culture to such a degree that the assimilating group becomes socially indistinguishable from other members of the society. As such, assimilation is the most extreme form of acculturation. Although assimilation may be compelled through force or undertaken voluntarily, it is rare for a minority group to replace its previous cultural practices completely; religion, food preferences, proxemics (e.g., the physical distance between people in a given social situation), and aesthetics are among the characteristics that tend to be most resistant to change. Assimilation does not denote “racial” or biological fusion, though such fusion may occur.

## Multiculturalism

Oxford. *Lexico: Powered by Oxford*. Accessed September 20, 2019. <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/multiculturalism>

The presence of, or support for the presence of, several distinct cultural or ethnic groups within a society.

# Value: Quality of Life

Oxford. *Lexico: Powered by Oxford*. Accessed September 20, 2019. <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/quality_of_life>

The standard of health, comfort, and happiness experienced by an individual or group.

## Reason to Prefer: End Goal of a Culture

The reason Quality of Life should be our highest value today is that every sustainable culture’s highest goal is to provide its citizens with a good quality of life.

# Criterion: Diversity

By diversity, I simply mean the inclusion and celebration of a variety of customs, values, practices, and lifestyles. I am going to be arguing that diversity in a culture is necessary to have the best quality of life.

# Contention One: Valuing Diversity Increases Quality of Life

This is true both for immigrants and natives. Immigrants have their home cultures protected, and natives are given more opportunities for cross-cultural experiences.

## Application: Little Brazil

Jeffery A. Tucker, 2016. “What's So Great about Assimilation Anyway?” *Foundation for Economic Education*, 21 Oct. 2016.

<http://fee.org/articles/whats-so-great-about-assimilation-anyway/>

“They were all clumped together in a single small strip mall. Why? Because of city planning? No. There are network effects that produce advantages for locating where they do. A conjectural history goes something like this: a few immigrants arrive and choose to live in a certain area. Friends and family, looking to avoid search costs, choose the same area. Then their friends and family arrive too. They need products and retain affections for the home country, and feel comfortable around their compatriots. The stores open. More open and locate in the same area. This attracts more residents. Pretty soon a single national/ethnic group has “taken over” a part of town and together they create a cultural experience for everyone in the city. Do I really want to live in a country where places like Little Brazil are not possible, where every single neighborhood is like every other one, all homogenized and unified? For me or any visitor, the result is a wonderful free adventure into another world. Now I go routinely just for the experience. I drive 20 minutes and find myself in Brazil, thrill to the music, the food, the people, the culture. I take in everything I can, loving every minute. Then – and this is the strange thing – I hop in my car and leave Brazil, returning to the world of my choosing. And I do it all without a passport, a plane ticket, customs authorities, or even any expense beyond the gas it took me to get there and the cost of the Brazilian delectables I purchased. In other words, this experience adds vastly to my quality of life. So as I look at this, I have to wonder: what precisely is gained and what is lost by this incessant demand to acculturate? Do I really want to live in a country where places like Little Brazil are not possible, where every single neighborhood is like every other one, all homogenized and unified? That actually sounds terrible to me. The diversity we gain from the stubborn unwillingness to adapt is a beautiful thing. It puts on display what is most magical and wonderful about the liberal order: its capacity to create peaceful and productive outcomes based on radical heterogeneous inputs. In contrast, the demand for acculturation in the course of 100 years has done so much to reduce our liberties, violate human rights, and build a large state apparatus that benefits no one but the ruling class. So here’s to the unwillingness of people to fully assimilate: the unmeltable ones make our world and our lives much more rich and adventurous.”

**IMPACT: The diversity of multiculturalism not only benefits incoming people but also the residents of the host country.**

# Contention Two: Valuing Assimilation Harms Quality of Life

It’s not a mystery that no two people are exactly alike. The question is, will we respect and celebrate those differences or not? I believe the time has come for us to recognize that our mindset and goal should not be to make others like us, but rather to meet others where they are.

## Application: The History of Immigration in the U.S.

History can tell us a lot about the present. In particular, when we consider immigration, history teaches us a lot about what happens when a culture values assimilation.

Stanford 2017. “What History Tells Us about Assimilation of Immigrants.” *Stanford University*, Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research, 25 Apr. 2017. <http://publicpolicy.stanford.edu/news/what-history-tells-us-about-assimilation-immigrants>

“However, the pace varied significantly depending on country of origin. Immigrants from Norway, Sweden, and Denmark were among the quickest to adopt American-sounding names, followed by Italians and other Southern Europeans. Russians, including many Russian Jews, and Finns had the slowest rates of name-based assimilation. This convergence of names chosen by immigrant and native populations is suggestive evidence of cultural assimilation. But the fact that immigrants didn’t fully adopt native naming patterns suggests that many valued retaining a distinct cultural identity. Having an American-sounding name was a badge of assimilation that conferred genuine economic and social benefits. We looked at census records of more than a million children of immigrants from 1920, when they lived with their childhood families, through 1940, when they were adults. Children with less-foreign-sounding names completed more years of schooling, earned more, and were less likely to be unemployed than their counterparts whose names sounded more foreign. In addition, they were less likely to marry someone born abroad or with a foreign-sounding name. These patterns held even among brothers within the same family. The data suggest that, while a foreign-sounding name reinforced a sense of ethnic identity, it may have exposed individuals to discrimination at school or on the job.”

**IMPACT: Even though many immigrants valued their cultural heritage and showed it, the citizens of the dominant culture used it as a means to discriminate and flatten the natural cultural differences between people.**

Every culture must value and celebrate the unique differences between its people. If people are to feel at home, they must first feel accepted.

Thank you.

Opposition Brief

**Multiculturalism Puts Immigrants at a Disadvantage**

Cordero, Michelle, and Michael Gonzalez. “Heritage Explains: Why Is Patriotic Assimilation so Important?” *The Heritage Foundation*, 2018

<http://www.heritage.org/immigration/heritage-explains/heritage-explains-why-patriotic-assimilation-so-important>

“It is a balance and every immigrant wave has made its own way to the balance right. Nobody pretends that you have to stop loving grandma's cooking. Neither you shouldn't speak to your grandmother in her language. This is something that has always been a part of America and people are individuals. This is not a coercive thing. What you do say to them is as a civic nation with a civic sense of country, there is a common project that you should join. You should be able to understand the culture of the country, you should be able to partake in the culture of the country, you should be able to understand the history of it. And that actually helps you succeed in life. Don't forget that when we don't teach cultural knowledge to immigrants or to people who are disadvantaged. What we do is we give a great advantage to the children of the rich.”

**Multiculturalism Creates Dangerous Factions**

Gonzalez, Mike. “After Paris Attacks, It's Clear France Has Paid High Price for Abandoning Assimilation.” *The Daily Signal*, 17 Nov. 2015.

<http://www.dailysignal.com/2015/11/17/after-paris-attacks-its-clear-france-has-paid-high-price-for-abandoning-assimilation/>

“Many people think the tradition of assimilating immigrants into society is solely an American thing, something not practiced in “blood and soil” Europe. But one European nation used to take immigrants from around the world and turn them into fervent patriots. Then, just as it happened here, that country’s elites decided to indulge in self-defeating ennui and gave up on assimilation. That country was France. Reports that some of the Paris terrorists last week were French-born and raised show the high price the nation has paid for abandoning assimilation.”

**Multiculturalism Divides the Country**

Gonzalez, Mike. “The Left Needs To Get Over Multiculturalism After This Election.” *The Federalist*, 15 Nov. 2016.

<http://thefederalist.com/2016/11/14/left-needs-get-multiculturalism/>

“I am a conservative, but if I can offer my liberal friends advice, it is this: drop your misguided pursuit of a multicultural society. It will continue to get you nothing but heartache. Let me hasten to add that I don’t mean a multiethnic society, obviously. That exists, and in fact it has always existed in America. Only cranks would decry it. No, I mean *multiculturalism*, the idea that several cultures and national identities should co-exist under one American roof and even be cultivated by our government and institutions. The bureaucracy creates multiple cultural groups out of thin air (Hispanics, Asians, soon to come: Middle-East and North-African Americans), and before you know it they acquire ascribed statuses and group rights, and even their own congressional districts. America meanwhile drifts further in an ethnic proportional system akin to Lebanon’s. We have certainly had our problems recently, but this is not the model we want to follow. The people promoting this view are blowing through the historical compromise that allowed America to remain united and have a strong national identity even as it took in immigrants. That was called assimilation.”

**Multiculturalism Impedes Quality of Life**

Gonzalez, Mike. “Multiculturalism and the Fight for America's National Identity.” *The Heritage Foundation*, 13 Nov. 2016

<http://www.heritage.org/civil-society/report/multiculturalism-and-the-fight-americas-national-identity>

“Multiculturalism matters because what is at stake is nothing less than our sovereignty, self-determination, political unity, and ability to hold our leaders accountable—in other words, our very freedoms. It may be a truism and a tautology, but it is worth repeating that constitutional republicanism as we know it can only exist through the active participation of one united people working within the confines of the nation-state. It is the finite unit at which people have debates and come together to agree on principles. The sharing of a common culture and language creates the trust quotient that is necessary to succeed. Francis Fukuyama wrote an entire book on how high-trust nations enjoy enormous economic and cultural advantages due to lower transaction costs. Robert Putnam at Harvard and many others have written about what happens when neighborhoods diversify: Individuals volunteer less, mistrust more—hunker in. Volunteerism is a crucial component of America’s identity. I can vouch for this after living in seven or eight countries as a foreign correspondent. America’s identity is rooted in a unique culture that includes an exceptional attachment to volunteerism, constitutional government, and deriving satisfaction from a hard day’s labor—virtues intricately linked to America’s abundant freedom and prosperity.”

**Multiculturalism Desensitizes People**

Dalrymple, Theodore. “The Effects of Multiculturalism.” *Psychology Today*, Sussex Publishers.

<http://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/psychiatric-disorder/201507/the-effects-multiculturalism>

“One of the strange psychological effects of multiculturalism as a doctrine or ideology is that it renders people peculiarly uninterested in or insensitive to the ideas or feelings of people of cultures other than their own.”

**Tribalism and Historical Precedent**

Miller, Abraham. “America Is Still Multiethnic and Not Multicultural: Be Thankful: The American Spectator: Politics Is Too Important To Be Taken Seriously.” *The American Spectator*, 16 Apr. 2018.

<http://spectator.org/america-is-still-multiethnic-and-not-multicultural-be-thankful/>

“If white nationalism emerges as a societal threat, it won’t be because of white nationalists’ organizational and leadership skills. It will be the result of policies of those who would abhor such a development. Tribalism is a persistent human emotion. Overarching nationalism that appeared to be long embraced collapsed in a single night, replaced by a resurgence of tribalism. As the Soviet Union unraveled, each nationality sought its own independence. The collapse of Yugoslavia brought violence between neighbors who had existed in comity for generations. Croat killed Serb and Serb killed Muslim and each killed one another. Aside from Switzerland, no *successful*multicultural society has ever existed. America, despite its embrace of multicultural mantras, is still a multiethnic culture with many subcultures swimming in the sea of a dominant culture. If America becomes a true multicultural society, it will have the stability of Lebanon, the efficiency of Belgium, and the tolerance of Rwanda. America’s unique success as a multiethnic society is the consequence of having been, for decades, the destination of people who chose to leave their former loyalties behind and adopt new ones. For those that didn’t, their children eagerly did.”