Equality
Affirmative Case by Mark Csoros



This case is mainly centered around proving that multiculturalism is a really bad idea. It does that through the value of equality, and an underlying assumption that equality is the hallmark of a well-functioning society.

To kept his narrative alive, you’re going to need to defend your definitions tooth and nail. The definitions used here, especially the definition of multiculturalism, are fairly strong in their wording. By that, I mean that the definitions push assimilation and multiculturalism to opposite ends of the spectrum, as opposed to defining them as two mildly different approaches. Multiculturalism is described as officially sanctioned acknowledgements of differences, and the definition of assimilation highlights cultural absorption to the point of indistinguishability. A lot of negative debaters will want to water down those definitions, and take much of the strength away from your case.

It’s important that you keep your definitions in play, because the rest of the case depends upon your ability to draw broad distinctions between the sides of the resolution. Multiculturalism is a divided force that’s inherently unequal. Assimilation is a unifying force that eliminates distinctions and views all people as equal. If you can keep that in the forefront of the judge’s mind, you’ll have a much easier time winning the round.

If you keep your definitional ground, you can hammer the impacts of inequality. Apartheid in South Africa, religious persecution during the Spanish Inquisition, China’s treatment of religious and ethnic minorities, and the unequal representation that led to the American Revolution are just a few of the thousands of examples you can bring up to prove just how insidious division, and the inequality that stems from it, truly is. Keep referencing the fact that seeing someone as the “other” will inevitably lead to injustice, and reminding the judge of the terrible repercussions of cultural division. That’s the heart of this case, and rounds will be won or lost based on your ability to display this principle at work.

Equality

On August 28th, 1963, Reverend Martin Luther King Jr, stood on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial and addressed, from the depths of his heart, the quarter million Americans gathered in front of him. In that address, he said these words:

*“I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream…”*

Because I believe in the dream of Reverend King, because we should strive for equality and not for division, I stand **Resolved** that **culture ought to value assimilation over multiculturalism.** Before we explore reasons to support that resolution, it’s important that we define our key terms.

**Definitions**

**Assimilation:**

The Encyclopedia Britannica. *“Assimilation.” Accessed September 21st 2019 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*](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/culture) of a society. The process of [*assimilating*](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/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.”

## Multiculturalism:

The Encyclopedia Britannica. *“Multiculturalism.” Accessed September 21st 2019 www.britannica.com/topic/multiculturalism*

“Multiculturalism, the view that [cultures](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/cultures), races, and [ethnicities](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ethnicities), particularly those of [minority](https://www.britannica.com/topic/minority) groups, deserve special acknowledgement of their differences within a dominant political [culture](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/culture). That acknowledgement can take the forms of recognition of contributions to the cultural life of the political [community](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/community) as a whole, a demand for special protection under the law for certain cultural groups, or [autonomous](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/autonomous) rights of [governance](https://www.britannica.com/topic/governance) for certain cultures.”

With our key terms established, we need a guiding principle to aim for, something that can focus the debate round onto what’s most important. That’s why I present the…

## Value: Equality

By this, I don’t mean equality of outcome, but equality of opportunity and equality before the law. I mean that no one should be treated differently because of what they look like or where they come from, but that everyone should, as much as possible, be judged on their merits. This idea is at the heart of every functioning justice system, legal code, and constitution in the world. Equality means that we judge on character, not on skin color, and it’s the value that we should seek to uphold in this debate round.

Now, you might be wondering what this has to do with assimilation and multiculturalism. Let’s unpack that in the contentions, starting with…

## Contention 1: Multiculturalism is inherently unequal

Remember the definition of multiculturalism: giving special acknowledgement to minority groups on account of their differences. The Encyclopedia said that these acknowledgements could include special recognition, special protections, or even specially granted rights of governance, based entirely on differences in culture. That’s the opposite of equality. That’s the opposite of judging on merit. That’s giving undue preference to some groups while withholding it from others, and that’s the opposite of the values we want to espouse. In Contention 2, we’ll see how multiculturalism is not only inherently unequal, but contributes to further inequality as well.

## Contention 2: Multiculturalism creates inequality

This argument has two parts. The first part can be written down as…

## Link 1: Multiculturalism creates division

Harvard Ph.D. in Government Mark Lilla, November 18th, 2016. *“The End of Identity Liberalism”; The New York Times* [*https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/20/opinion/sunday/the-end-of-identity-liberalism.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/20/opinion/sunday/the-end-of-identity-liberalism.html)

“But the fixation on diversity in our schools and in the press has produced a generation of liberals and progressives narcissistically unaware of conditions outside their self-defined groups, and indifferent to the task of reaching out to Americans in every walk of life. At a very young age our children are being encouraged to talk about their individual identities, even before they have them. By the time they reach college many assume that diversity discourse exhausts political discourse, and have shockingly little to say about such perennial questions as class, war, the economy and the common good. In large part this is because of high school history curriculums, which anachronistically project the identity politics of today back onto the past, creating a distorted picture of the major forces and individuals that shaped our country.”

A focus on special recognition because of cultural identity creates a self-absorbed, divided populace. This undue focus on multiculturalism creates inequality, which we’ll see in…

## Link 2: Division creates inequality

The best way to describe this phenomenon is with an example, so let’s take a look at…

## Application 1: Jim Crow Laws

Jim Crow laws enforced segregation in the postbellum American South. Black Americans, who had just gotten freedom under the 13th Amendment, citizenship under the 14th Amendment, and voting rights (at least for men) under the 15th Amendment, were forcibly kept apart from the rest of society. By law, black Americans couldn’t go to school with white Americans, drink from the same water fountains as white Americans, or have the same employment opportunities as white Americans. That enforced multiculturalism created unjust inequality. Fortunately, there is a better path.

## Contention 3: Assimilation creates equality

Stanford Ph.D. Candidate Cristina Lash, 2018. *“Making Americans: Schooling, Diversity, and Assimilation in the Twenty-First Century”; The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences* [*https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7758/rsf.2018.4.5.05#metadata\_info\_tab\_contents*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7758/rsf.2018.4.5.05#metadata_info_tab_contents)

*According to the political scientist Elizabeth Theiss-Morse, national members are able to recognize each other based on social boundaries that define the prototypical or core national (2009; see also Miller*[*1995*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7758/rsf.2018.4.5.05#refg29)*). These social boundaries are often based on ascriptive characteristics, including race, ethnicity, and language (Theiss-Morse*[*2009*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7758/rsf.2018.4.5.05#refg44)*; Smith*[*1991*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7758/rsf.2018.4.5.05#refg42)*; Anderson*[*1983*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7758/rsf.2018.4.5.05#refg2)*), but may also be based on more civic attributes and political beliefs, such as liberalism and individualism (Smith*[*1991*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7758/rsf.2018.4.5.05#refg42)*; Smith*[*1997*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7758/rsf.2018.4.5.05#refg43)*). This mutual recognition is necessary for nationals to believe they belong together as a group, though they will never meet most of their compatriots (see also Anderson*[*1983*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7758/rsf.2018.4.5.05#refg2)*). As the political theorist David Miller notes, “nations are not aggregates of people distinguished by their physical or cultural traits, but communities whose very existence depends upon mutual recognition” (1995, 23, emphasis added).*

 Nations are communities whose very existence depends upon mutual recognition. Let’s think back to our definition of assimilation. The definition said thatassimilation 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. Assimilation creates mutual recognition. Mutual recognition allows for equality before the law, for equal opportunity, for the essence of nationhood. When culture values assimilation over multiculturalism, and aims to create a society driven by belonging, not by division, equality can flourish.

Opposition Brief

**Multiculturalism, not Assimilation, Creates Integration**

Ph.D. Eddie Ng, July 20 2015 “Multiculturalism Around the World”; Psychology Today <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/diverse-and-competitive/201507/multiculturalism-around-the-world>

“In general, countries that embrace multiculturalism report more positive outcomes in the form of better integration of ethnic minority immigrants.  Conversely, societies that demand immigrants to assimilate report poorer ethnic minority integration and experience backlash from its citizens.  For multiculturalism to be effective, assimilationist societies must be prepared to change elite and public attitudes and implement policies that do not produce backlash among the native-born majority population.”

**Example: Canada**

Ph.D. Eddie Ng, July 20 2015 *“Multiculturalism Around the World”; Psychology Today* [*https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/diverse-and-competitive/201507/multiculturalism-around-the-world*](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/diverse-and-competitive/201507/multiculturalism-around-the-world)

“In Canada, multiculturalism is a source of national identity (and a tool to unite French and English-speaking Canadians), so much so that multiculturalism is cited as the second greatest source of pride among Canadians (after democracy and freedom).”

**Assimilation Harms Unity**

Ph.D. of Economics Vasiliki (Vicky) Fouka, May 26th, 2019 *“Backlash: The Unintended Effects of Language Prohibition in U.S. Schools after World War I” Published by Oxford University Press on behalf of The Review of Economic Studies.* [*https://academic.oup.com/restud/advance-article-abstract/doi/10.1093/restud/rdz024/5472346?redirectedFrom=fulltext*](https://academic.oup.com/restud/advance-article-abstract/doi/10.1093/restud/rdz024/5472346?redirectedFrom=fulltext)

“This article examines how a specific assimilation policy—language restrictions in elementary school—affects integration and identification with the host country later in life. After World War I, several U.S. states barred the German language from their schools. Affected individuals were less likely to volunteer in World War II and more likely to marry within their ethnic group and to choose decidedly German names for their offspring. Rather than facilitating the assimilation of immigrant children, the policy instigated a backlash, heightening the sense of cultural identity among the minority.”

**The Constitution Protects Multiculturalism**

The Washington Post, January 27th 2015 *“The American tradition of multiculturalism”; by Eugene Volokh* [*https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/volokh-conspiracy/wp/2015/01/27/the-american-tradition-of-multiculturalism/?noredirect=on*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/volokh-conspiracy/wp/2015/01/27/the-american-tradition-of-multiculturalism/?noredirect=on)

“The Constitution and the Bill of Rights — especially the Free Exercise Clause — contemplate a country with a considerable range of religious views and even religious cultures. Many of the Founding-era American denominations were distinct cultural groups, such as the Quakers, and some of them lived in relatively homogeneous enclaves. American religious freedom has always included religious tolerance — the willingness to let religious groups live free of deliberate persecution. But it has also always included some degree of religious accommodation, which is to say exemption of religious observers from certain kinds of generally applicable laws. The Constitution itself embodies one such accommodation, in the provisions stating that a person taking the oath of office may affirm instead of swearing; that was intended to allow Quakers and other groups to participate in civic life without giving up their religion. Other early accommodations included exemptions from the military draft, exemptions of the clergy from the duty to testify, exemptions of Jews in Rhode Island from laws banning uncle-niece marriages, and more.”

**Multiculturalism Reflects Basic Freedoms**

The Washington Post, January 27th 2015 *“The American tradition of multiculturalism”; by Eugene Volokh* [*https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/volokh-conspiracy/wp/2015/01/27/the-american-tradition-of-multiculturalism/?noredirect=on*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/volokh-conspiracy/wp/2015/01/27/the-american-tradition-of-multiculturalism/?noredirect=on)

“The Free Speech Clause, coupled with protection for private property and — more broadly — freedom of movement and action, likewise facilitates multiculturalism and especially the preservation of immigrant cultures. When people come to America, they can live near others from the old country, speak their language with one another, celebrate their old festivals, and start up businesses that cater to their fellow immigrants.”