



## The Multicultural Cult

Somebody eventually had to say it — and German chancellor Angela Merkel deserves credit for being the one who had the courage to say it out loud. Multiculturalism has “utterly failed.”

Multiculturalism is not just a recognition that different groups have different cultures. We all knew that, long before multiculturalism became a cult that has spawned mindless rhapsodies about “diversity,” without a speck of evidence to substantiate its supposed benefits.

In Germany, as in other countries in Europe, welcoming millions of foreign workers who insist on remaining foreign has created problems so obvious that only the intelligentsia could fail to see them. It takes a high IQ to evade the obvious.

“We kidded ourselves for a while,” Chancellor Merkel said, but now it was clear that the attempt to build a society where people of very different languages and cultures could “live side-by-side” and “enjoy each other” has “failed, utterly failed.”

This is not a lesson for Germany alone. In countries around the world, and over the centuries, peoples with jarring differences in language, cultures and values have been a major problem and, too often, sources of major disasters for the societies in which they co-exist.

Even the tragedies and atrocities associated with racial differences in racist countries have been exceeded by the tragedies and atrocities among people with clashing cultures who are physically indistinguishable from one another, as in the Balkans or Rwanda.

Among the ways that people with different cultures have managed to minimize frictions have been (1) mutual cultural accommodations, even while not amalgamating completely, and (2) living separately in their own enclaves. Both of these approaches are anathema to the multicultural cultists.

Expecting any group to adapt their lifestyles to the cultural values of the larger society around them is “cultural imperialism” according to the multicultural cult. And living in separate neighborhoods is considered to be so terrible that there are government-financed programs to take people from high-crime slums and put them in subsidized housing in middle-class neighborhoods.

Multiculturalists condemn people’s objections to transplanting hoodlums, criminals and dysfunctional families into the midst of people who may have sacrificed for years to be able to escape from living among hoodlums, criminals and dysfunctional families.

The actual direct experience of the people who complain about the consequences of these social experiments is often dismissed as mere biased “perceptions” or “stereotypes,” if not outright “racism.” But some of the strongest complaints have come from middle-class blacks who have fled ghetto life,





Written by [Thomas Sowell](#) on October 19, 2010

---

only to have the government transplant ghetto life back into their midst.

The absorption of millions of immigrants from Europe into American society may be cited as an example of the success of multiculturalism. But, in fact, they were absorbed in ways that were the direct opposite of what the multicultural cult is recommending today.

Before these immigrants were culturally assimilated to the norms of American society, they were by no means scattered at random among the population at large. On New York's lower east side, Hungarian Jews lived clustered together in different neighborhoods from Romanian Jews or Polish Jews — and German Jews lived away from the lower east side.

When someone suggested relieving the overcrowding in the lower east side schools by transferring some of the children to a school in an Irish neighborhood that had space, both the Irish and the Jews objected.

None of this was peculiar to America. When immigrants from southern Italy to Australia moved into neighborhoods where people from northern Italy lived, the northern Italians moved out. Such scenarios could be found in countries around the world.

It was in later generations, after the children and grandchildren of the immigrants to America were speaking English and living lives more like the lives of other Americans, that they spread out to live and work where other Americans lived and worked. This wasn't multiculturalism. It was common sense.

*Related article:* [The Multicultural Cult, Part II](#)

*To find out more about Thomas Sowell and read features by other Creators Syndicate columnists and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate web page at [www.creators.com](http://www.creators.com). Thomas Sowell is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University, Stanford, CA 94305. His Web site is [www.tsowell.com](http://www.tsowell.com).*

**COPYRIGHT 2010 CREATORS.COM**



## Subscribe to the New American

Get exclusive digital access to the most informative, non-partisan truthful news source for patriotic Americans!

Discover a refreshing blend of time-honored values, principles and insightful perspectives within the pages of "The New American" magazine. Delve into a world where tradition is the foundation, and exploration knows no bounds.

From politics and finance to foreign affairs, environment, culture, and technology, we bring you an unparalleled array of topics that matter most.



### What's Included?

- 24 Issues Per Year
- Optional Print Edition
- Digital Edition Access
- Exclusive Subscriber Content
- Audio provided for all articles
- Unlimited access to past issues
- Coming Soon! Ad FREE
- 60-Day money back guarantee!
- Cancel anytime.

**Subscribe**