Affirmative: Quality of Life

By Steven Errico

Resolved: Economic stability is more important than economic growth.

This case is built on the idea that the quality of life of the citizens in a country is heavily dependent upon whether or not they live in a stable economic environment. Growth is important, yes, but make it clear that stability is a necessary prerequisite for growth. Without stability everything falls apart.

The criterion of standard of living simply serves to make the measurement of success more precise since quality of life in and of itself can be vague. This criterion will be especially useful when interacting with your applications. However, feel free to run the case without the criterion if it complicates things or confuses you.

In order to be successful with this case, you have to stress the primacy of stability. This can be used to turn most of your opponent’s arguments, especially their applications, because what you’ll find is that most of them presuppose the existence of stability already.

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Affirmative: Quality of Life

When someone wants to start investing, usually they ensure that they have a steady flow of income and money saved up to keep them safe from potential unforeseen circumstances. Then and only then can they chase the increase of their wealth. The same is true for our economy. Stability is more important than growth because it provides a safety net for the people and provides a foundation from which we can then chase growth.

DEFINITIONS

Economic Stability

Business Dictionary “Economic Stability” <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/economic-stability.html>

A term used to describe the financial system of a nation that displays only minor fluctuations in output growth and exhibits a consistently low inflation rate. Economic stability is usually seen as a desirable state for a developed country that is often encouraged by the policies and actions of its central bank.

Economic Growth

Investopedia updated 2019 (Jim Chappelow holds a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from the University of Alaska and Master's from the University of Maine. Jim was awarded the 2013 Douglas E. French Prize for excellence in the study of Austrian economics.)“Economic Growth” <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/e/economicgrowth.asp>

Economic growth is an increase in the the production of economic goods and services, compared from one period of time to another. It can be measured in nominal or real (adjusted for inflation) terms. Traditionally, aggregate economic growth is measured in terms of gross national product (GNP) or gross domestic product (GDP), although alternative metrics are sometimes used.

VALUE: Quality of Life

Definition

Wordnik “Quality of Life” [https://www.ahdictionary.com/word/search.html?q=human+rights](https://www.ahdictionary.com/word/search.html?q=human+rights&submit.x=34&submit.y=23)

The general well-being of individuals and societies, including not only wealth and employment, but also the built environment, physical and mental health, education, recreation and leisure time, and social belonging.

Reason to Prefer: Incentivizes Participation

The economy has a direct effect on the quality of the lives of the citizens in a country. An ideal economy is one that makes life better for those who participate in it. And in turn that encourages more participation in the economy.

CRITERION: Standard of Living

Definition

Investopedia “Standard of Living” <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/standard-of-living.asp>

A standard of living is the level of wealth, comfort, material goods, and necessities available to a certain socioeconomic class or a certain geographic area. The standard of living includes basic material factors such as income, gross domestic product (GDP), life expectancy, and economic opportunity. The standard of living is closely related to quality of life, which can also include factors such as economic and political stability, political and religious freedom, environmental quality, climate, and safety.

Reason to Prefer: Concrete Standard

Since quality of life is difficult to quantify on its own, standard of living will make evaluation much easier.

CONTENTION 1: A stable economy increases quality of life

Economic Stability Provides Longevity

Economic Development Corporation of Lea County copyright 2020 (Established in 1963, the Economic Development Corporation of Lea County (EDCLC) is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to recruiting new, quality businesses to Lea County and assisting with the retention and expansion of existing industry.) “3 Ways Economic Development Improves Quality Of Life” <http://edclc.org/3-ways-economic-development-improves-quality-of-life/>

**Job Creation**  
As companies come into a community, jobs are created which can lead to increased disposable income for a family or individual. Disposable income is often put back into the community through shopping, property investments, dining out, and travel. New industries also increase a community’s long-term stability in the face of economic downturn which in turn can pass on that stability to its employees.

**Population**  
With job creation often comes an influx in population within a community. A growing population also leads to an increased need for housing, improved healthcare, restaurants, and other quality of life initiatives. Retail opportunities frequently are tied to the population of a community as well. The greater the population, the more likely a location is to attract retail stores.

Impact: Even in the face of economic downturn, economic stability can provide enough longevity for a community to survive

Application 1: Canada and The Best Countries Rankings

U.S. News 2020 (The 2020 Best Countries Rankings were formed in partnership with BAV Group and the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania) “Quality of Life” <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/quality-of-life-rankings>

The 2020 Best Countries rankings, formed in partnership with BAV Group, a unit of global marketing communications company VMLY&R, and the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, are based on a study that surveyed more than 20,000 global citizens from four regions to assess perceptions of 73 countries on 75 different metrics. The Quality of Life subranking is based on an equally weighted average of scores from nine country attributes that relate to quality of life in a country: affordable, a good job market, economically stable, family friendly, income equality, politically stable, safe, well-developed public education system and well-developed public health system. The Quality of Life subranking score had a 17% weight in the overall Best Countries ranking.

People consistently view a small group of nations as best providing for their citizens. For the fifth consecutive year, Canada ranks No. 1 overall for providing a good quality of life. Survey respondents view the North American country as No. 1 for being politically stable, No. 4 for having a well-developed public education system, and No. 2 for having a good job market, a perception supported by independent research. The North American country is seen as possessing the most well-developed public health care system. In fact, Canada is rated in the top 10 in all but one of the nine attributes, affordability, where Asian countries dominate.

CONTENTION 2: An unstable economy decreases quality of life

Economic instability is a social determinant of health

Kansas Department of Health and Environment 2013 (Written by Dr. Susan Mosier, Acting Secretary and State Health Officer Kansas Department of Health and Environment and Paula F. Clayton, MS, RD, LD Director of the Bureau of Health Promotion, KDHE) “Economic Instability: A Social Determinant of Health” <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/social/meetings/egm6_social_integration/documents/SOCIALJUSTICE.ECONOMIC%20STABILITY.pdf>

The social determinants of health, including social, economic and physical environments mold a person’s opportunity to achieve optimal health. Economic instability is an important contextual aspect of the social determinants of health framework. Unemployment, housing insecurity, food insecurity and poverty are the indicators of economic instability. This report assesses the prevalence of unemployment, housing insecurity, food insecurity and poverty in Kansas and examines the impact of these indicators on health risk behaviors and chronic health conditions.

Application 1: Healthcare Decisions during the Financial Crisis of 2008-2009

Pharmacy & Therapeutics 2009 (Dr. Randy Vogenberg is Principal at the Institute for Integrated Healthcare in Sharon, Massachusetts, and Adjunct Instructor at the University of Rhode Island’s College of Pharmacy in Kingston, Rhode Island, and Senior Fellow in Health Policy at Thomas Jefferson University–Jefferson Medical College, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He is also an editorial board member of P&T. Mr. Stephen Cutts is a pharmacy student at the University of Rhode Island’s College of Pharmacy in Providence) “Economic Instability and Its Impact on Decision Making in Health Care” <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2700637/>

It’s no secret that the current economic crisis is having a major effect on the myriad financial decisions that individuals and families are facing. This is especially true in terms of health care usage.[1](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2700637/#b1-ptj34_1p024) The situation has posed tremendous difficulties for working and retired people, forcing many to forgo some basic needs, such as food and housing. Those who are fortunate to be financially stable enough to continue to afford basic necessities are now being forced to choose between health care and other basic needs, and people who were once financially secure are feeling the strain from increasing health care costs and decreasing economic security.[2](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2700637/#b2-ptj34_1p024) Cost has prompted a perceptible shift in our traditional societal view of the priceless nature of life toward a view that now requires us to attach a *value* to life, often in the form of a price tag. This dilemma is particularly troublesome for patients with chronic illnesses, whose medical costs account for a substantial portion of annual health care spending in the U.S.[3](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2700637/#b3-ptj34_1p024)

Impact: The economic uncertainty at the time caused people to make healthcare decisions that were harmful to quality of life for people who desperately needed healthcare.

Negative Counter-Brief: Quality of Life

In order to counter this affirmative case, you’ll have to be specific. If the affirmative does their job, their arguments will sound great in theory, so your job is to emphasize how this works in the real world. To this effect, I’ve included a number of counter applications you can use to illustrate your position to the judges. Additional information and examples can be found in the negative quality of life case.

Economic stability is good BECAUSE it produces economic growth

The Heritage Foundation 2009 (Karen A. Campbell, Ph.D., is Policy Analyst in Macroeconomics in the Center for Data Analysis at The Heritage Foundation.) “The Economic Role of Government: Focus on Stability, Not Spending” <https://www.heritage.org/monetary-policy/report/the-economic-role-government-focus-stability-not-spending>

Having an orderly governing body allows private citizens to make long-term investment decisions about their personal resources. A credible governing body contributes to the economic growth of a nation and provides the best opportunity to accomplish its national investment and growth goals through the entrepreneurial spirit of all its citizens. Making fundamental changes to the rules and agencies that have become outdated and opaque will provide economic stability and give potential entrepreneurs the confidence to work toward meeting the ever-changing needs of society.

Counter Application: Finland

OECD copyright 2020 (The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development’s Better Life Index is designed to let you visualise and compare some of the key factors – like education, housing, environment, and so on – that contribute to well-being in OECD countries. It’s an interactive tool that allows you to see how countries perform according to the importance you give to each of 11 topics that make for a better life.) “Human Rights and Development” <http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/countries/finland/>

Money, while it cannot buy happiness, is an important means to achieving higher living standards. In Finland, **the average household net-adjusted disposable income per capita is USD 29 943 a year**, lower than the OECD average of USD 33 604 a year. There is a considerable gap between the richest and poorest – the top 20% of the population earn almost four times as much as the bottom 20%.

In terms of employment,**70% of people aged 15 to 64 in Finland have a paid job**, above the OECD employment average of 68%. Some 72% of men are in paid work, compared with 69% of women.In Finland,**almost 4% of employees work very long hours**, much less than the OECD average of 11%, with 6% of men working very long hours compared with just 2% of women.

Counter Application: Indonesia

Lowy Institute 2018 (Roland Rajah is the Lead Economist and Director of the International Economics Program for the Lowy Institute)“Indonesia’s Economy: Between Growth and Stability” <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/indonesia-economy-between-growth-and-stability>

Views of the Indonesian economy oscillate between optimism that it is set to become the world’s next economic giant and fear of renewed instability. Such views, however, get the story backwards. Indonesian policymakers have consistently prioritised stability over growth. The more concerning issue is that the economy is now heading into its fifth consecutive year of subdued growth. Although growth is solid at about 5 per cent a year, it is inadequate in terms of the job creation and economic modernisation required to meet Indonesia’s development needs and ambitions. The problems are structural. Indonesia is hemmed in by the need to protect stability while its growth model has struggled to deliver the productivity gains necessary to grow faster within this constraint. Left unaddressed, even the ‘new normal’ of slower growth will not last.

Counter Application: Canada

U.S. News 2020 (The 2020 Best Countries Rankings were formed in partnership with BAV Group and the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania) “Canada” <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/canada>

Canada is a high-tech industrial society with [a high standard of living](https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/quality-of-life-rankings). Trade agreements in the 1980s and 1990s dramatically bolstered trade with the U.S., and now the two counties are each other's largest trading partner. While the service sector is Canada’s biggest economic driver, the country is a significant exporter of energy, food and minerals. Canada ranks third in the world in proven oil reserves and is the world’s fifth-largest oil producer.

Counter Application: Denmark

U.S. News 2020 (The 2020 Best Countries Rankings were formed in partnership with BAV Group and the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania) “Denmark” <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/denmark>

Denmark’s economy is based on the flexicurity model, which combines a flexible labor market with a policy for the unemployed. This flexicurity model allows for [businesses to establish inexpensively and quickly](https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/best-start-a-business), as there is scarce government oversight regarding matters such as terminations or work hours. The Danish corporate tax rate is 24.5 percent, but its income tax rate is among the highest in the world.

Counter Application: Flexicurity proves there doesn’t have to be conflict between stability and growth

Reut Group 2010 (The Reut Group is a non-profit organization that was founded in 2004 by Gidi Grinstein as the Reut Institute to become a leadership, strategy, and impact organization. Reut creates and scales innovative models that tackle critical challenges facing the State of Israel, Israeli society and the Jewish world.) “The Flexicurity Approach” <http://www.reut-institute.org/en/Publication.aspx?PublicationId=3823>

**Definition**

Flexicurity is based on the approach that in the labor market[1](http://www.reut-institute.org/en/Publication.aspx?orderBy=PublicationId&orderByDir=1&showActive=&orderBy=PublicationId&orderByDir=1&searchQuery=&addToQS=showActive%3D%26orderBy%3DPublicationId%26orderByDir%3D1%26searchQuery%3D" \l "_ftn1" \o "_ftnref1), a balance should be achieved between:

Employees' Security - the ability of employees' to adapt to changes in the market that might affect them negatively, such as layoffs or wage cuts; and

Employers' Flexibility - the ability of employers to adjust the use of human capital - such as the number of people employed, salaries, working hours or training - to the market's changing needs.

The core of the flexicurity approach is the fostering of human capital, as a competitive edge in the global market[2](http://www.reut-institute.org/en/Publication.aspx?orderBy=PublicationId&orderByDir=1&showActive=&orderBy=PublicationId&orderByDir=1&searchQuery=&addToQS=showActive%3D%26orderBy%3DPublicationId%26orderByDir%3D1%26searchQuery%3D" \l "_ftn2" \o "_ftnref2) - This approach is based on the understanding that it will be harder for a flexible labor market to develop a sustainable competitive edge unless it provides its workers with security in the form of developing their human capital. This is the source of the perception that sees security and flexibility as necessary and complementary factors in the global economy, rather than as opposing factors.

**Background**

The need to possess a competitive labor market that provides its workers with financial security caused Denmark[3](http://www.reut-institute.org/en/Publication.aspx?orderBy=PublicationId&orderByDir=1&showActive=&orderBy=PublicationId&orderByDir=1&searchQuery=&addToQS=showActive%3D%26orderBy%3DPublicationId%26orderByDir%3D1%26searchQuery%3D" \l "_ftn3" \o "_ftnref3) to develop the flexicurity model[4](http://www.reut-institute.org/en/Publication.aspx?orderBy=PublicationId&orderByDir=1&showActive=&orderBy=PublicationId&orderByDir=1&searchQuery=&addToQS=showActive%3D%26orderBy%3DPublicationId%26orderByDir%3D1%26searchQuery%3D" \l "_ftn4" \o "_ftnref4) that combines flexibility with security[5](http://www.reut-institute.org/en/Publication.aspx?orderBy=PublicationId&orderByDir=1&showActive=&orderBy=PublicationId&orderByDir=1&searchQuery=&addToQS=showActive%3D%26orderBy%3DPublicationId%26orderByDir%3D1%26searchQuery%3D" \l "_ftn5" \o "_ftnref5). The Danish flexicurity model is comprised of four components: a flexible labor market, life-long learning, effective active labor market policies for weaker groups in society and a work-oriented welfare system. A number of member states in the European Union have embraced the notion of flexicurity while adopting it into their labor markets' special characteristics. [6](http://www.reut-institute.org/en/Publication.aspx?orderBy=PublicationId&orderByDir=1&showActive=&orderBy=PublicationId&orderByDir=1&searchQuery=&addToQS=showActive%3D%26orderBy%3DPublicationId%26orderByDir%3D1%26searchQuery%3D" \l "_ftn6" \o "_ftnref6)

**Context: fostering human capital as a means to leapfrog**

Leapfrog requires combining high and sustainable growth rates with inclusiveness - 'Leapfrog' means accelerated development, which reduces disparities in quality of life relative to other leading countries[7](http://www.reut-institute.org/en/Publication.aspx?orderBy=PublicationId&orderByDir=1&showActive=&orderBy=PublicationId&orderByDir=1&searchQuery=&addToQS=showActive%3D%26orderBy%3DPublicationId%26orderByDir%3D1%26searchQuery%3D" \l "_ftn7" \o "_ftnref7). A leapfrog requires a combination of sustainable high growth, which enlarges the pie, as well as inclusiveness, which distributes the fruits of growth in a way that increases the quality of life of all citizens (inclusive development).[8](http://www.reut-institute.org/en/Publication.aspx?orderBy=PublicationId&orderByDir=1&showActive=&orderBy=PublicationId&orderByDir=1&searchQuery=&addToQS=showActive%3D%26orderBy%3DPublicationId%26orderByDir%3D1%26searchQuery%3D" \l "_ftn8" \o "_ftnref8)

Sustainable high growth is the product of a unique and global development policy - A unique and global development policy focuses on innovation and securing the market's competitiveness. This policy aims to systematically exploit strong global trends through the country's unique assets.

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Investopedia “Standard of Living” https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/standard-of-living.asp

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Pharmacy & Therapeutics 2009 (Dr. Randy Vogenberg is Principal at the Institute for Integrated Healthcare in Sharon, Massachusetts, and Adjunct Instructor at the University of Rhode Island’s College of Pharmacy in Kingston, Rhode Island, and Senior Fellow in Health Policy at Thomas Jefferson University–Jefferson Medical College, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He is also an editorial board member of P&T. Mr. Stephen Cutts is a pharmacy student at the University of Rhode Island’s College of Pharmacy in Providence) “Economic Instability and Its Impact on Decision Making in Health Care” https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2700637/

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Reut Group 2010 (The Reut Group is a non-profit organization that was founded in 2004 by Gidi Grinstein as the Reut Institute to become a leadership, strategy, and impact organization. Reut creates and scales innovative models that tackle critical challenges facing the State of Israel, Israeli society and the Jewish world.) “The Flexicurity Approach” http://www.reut-institute.org/en/Publication.aspx?PublicationId=3823