

The emergence of xenophobia and racism history essay



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For hundred years now, modern societies have seen the emergence of xenophobia and racism. Many countries have noticed the rise of new political parties defending conservative and xenophobic ideologies like the Front National in France and the Freedom Party of Austria. Racism could be defined as the assumption that ethnic group accounts for differences in human personality or competence, and that a particular race is above others; and it includes xenophobia. According to the UNESCO, an agency of the United Nations, xenophobia “ comes from the Greek language” and is the “ attitudes, prejudices and behaviour that reject, exclude and often vilify persons, based on the perception that they are outsiders or foreigners to the community, society or national identity” (www. unesco. org). In *Xenophobia: The Violence of Fear and Hate*, Jamie Bordeau, a writer, claimed that global terrorism, immigration, nationalism and economic difficulties are the main causes of these phenomena and that they especially affect the United States of America, Europe and South Africa (Bordeau, books. google. com; 6). In these parts of the world, the cohabitation and the friendly relationship between the different cultures are more and more complicated and tense what endangers the population and the society’s progress and development. This paper aims to demonstrate that xenophobia and racism destroy a society’s level of tolerance as it supports the practice of antagonism and violence.

In the following pages, the fact that xenophobia is a blind generalization of group of people will be analysed, then turn to racism’s and xenophobia’s role in hatred’s and brutality’s appearance in community, before finally

examining the evidence that they provoke the society's division and collapse.

At the beginning, to demonstrate that xenophobia and racism have a harmful function in societies of modern states, we will focus on the fact that these two ideologies are based on the sightless judgments of the other cultures.

Firstly, xenophobic and racist ideas are especially constituted by the education received by people in their societies. During the period of Nazism in Europe, Adolf Hitler, dictator and former chancellor of Nazi Germany, decided to institute a paramilitary organization called the Hitler Youth, which was in charge of the indoctrination of Aryan young boys and girls in anti-Semitism. It had a fundamental role in Adolf Hitler's totalitarian system because it was allowing him to create the superior race he desired to have in his dream of constructing a perfect state. In the article, Hitler Youth, Hitler expresses his ambition of establishing a new order:

My program for educating youth is hard. Weakness must be hammered away. In my castles of the Teutonic Order a youth will grow up before which the world will tremble. I want a brutal, domineering, fearless, cruel youth. Youth must be all that. It must bear pain. There must be nothing weak and gentle about it. The free, splendid beast of prey must once again flash from its eyes... That is how I will eradicate thousands of years of human domestication... That is how I will create the New Order (www. historyplace. com).

Moreover, xenophobia and racism have seen their rise because of the omnipresence of stereotypes and clichés. For a decade now, the world has seen the emergence of terrorism and extremism which are generally from the Islamist branch. Its symbol is the September 11th attacks in 2001 when Al-Qaida hijacked four airplanes and crashed them against the Pentagon in Washington, Virginia, and the World Trade Centre in New York, New York. This shocking event had several critical consequences on the American society and policy. Every people started to have another opinion about Islamic and Arab populations, and assumptions and reproaches concerning them began to grow. In his short story *Flight Patterns from Ten Little Indians*, Sherman Alexie, a Native American poet and writer, illustrates this fear of Islam and Arabs:

However, no matter how much he tried to laugh his fear away, William always scanned the airports and airplanes for little brown guys who reeked of fundamentalism. That meant William was equally afraid of Osama bin Laden and Jerry Falwell wearing the last vestiges of a summer tan. William himself was a little brown guy, so the other travelers were always sniffing around him, but he smelled only of Dove soap, Mennen deodorant, and sarcasm (52).

Therefore, the United States has definitely an image concerning Muslims of “brown-skinned man with dark hair and eyes” who have only one goal, to be harmful to the interests and to the welfare of America and its people (Alexie, 52).

Those facts totally show the fact that xenophobia and racism are not based on proved assumptions. Moreover, these blind generalizations lead to the appearance of hatred and brutality.

Then, to illustrate the damaging impact of xenophobia and racism on every modern society, we will aim attention at the fact that supporting xenophobic and racist ideas causes the rise of hate and violence in communities.

Firstly, xenophobia and racism sparks off the increase of hate crimes in these different parts of the globe. The spread of xenophobic and racist opinions brings anxiety and hatred to the people, they start thinking that the predominant causes of their suffering in their country are the other populations living in it. For several years, hate crimes directed towards the other communities rise more and more, especially towards representatives of the African-American population in the United States. According to the article " Violence Based on Racism and Xenophobia":

A review of the record of anti-Black hate crimes in 2007 and the first half of 2008 reveals a pattern of both serious crimes-including murder, sexual assaults, and beatings-and of everyday violence affecting daily lives of ordinary people, often at the hands of neighbours, co-workers, or fellow students; in their homes, schools, churches, and elsewhere in their own communities ([www. humanrightsfirst. org](http://www.humanrightsfirst.org)).

The main origins of these offenses against this race are believes that black people are inferior to the white people, that they are not allowed to live as freely as them; and especially because of their stereotypes concerning them and their manners. Furthermore, this is not the only community to be hit so <https://assignbuster.com/the-emergence-of-xenophobia-and-racism-history-essay/>

much by these crimes in the United States. “ In other racist and xenophobic attacks,” claims the article, “ hate crimes targeting people of Hispanic or Latino origin rose nationwide by one third since 2003” (www.humanrightsfirst.org).

Moreover, xenophobic and racist ideas engender genocides. During the first half of the 20th Century, Adolf Hitler, leader of the National Socialist German Workers Party and Chancellor of Germany, supported the theory that the Aryan race was superior to the other races, and decided to constitute a new order where Nazi German would control Europe and would have a larger territory. The dictator decreed that he had to promulgate laws against them, especially against the Jewish people, like the Nuremberg laws which are anti-Semitic laws banning Jews from numerous rights in order to isolate them; and then to exterminate the groups in numerous concentration and death camps all over Germany and Austria by categorizing them with stars of several colors and confining them inside these camps in dreadful conditions.

According to Donald L. Niewyk, an American writer and professor of History in the Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas; in The Columbia guide to the Holocaust:

The Holocaust is commonly defined as the mass murder of more than 5, 000, 000 Jews by the German during World War II. Not everyone finds this a fully satisfactory definition. The Nazi also killed millions of people belonging to other groups: Gypsies, the physically and mentally handicapped, Soviet prisoners of war, Polish and Soviet civilians, political prisoners, religious dissenters, and homosexuals (Niewyk, books. google. com; 45).

Besides, this tragic event exposes the fact that losing control and his mind is still possible in a world where people think they are civilized. “ In a message to mark Holocaust Memorial Day...” stated one online newspaper that the Holocaust was the moment of the “ loss of humanity that remains in our mind to this day” (www. times. am).

These assertions exhibit xenophobia’s and racism’s harmful function in causing hatred and violence in contemporary societies. Their presence in several countries like the United States shows their frightening impact on people as they provoke hate crimes and genocides. Moreover, their simple existence clearly tends to the society’s dissolution and downfall.

Finally, to expose the danger that includes the occupancy of xenophobia and racism in every population, we will highlight the fact that defending these types of opinions and thesis generates the community’s rupture and disruption.

Basically, xenophobia and racism produce the exclusion of all the different groups. During the second half of the 20th Century, South Africa’s government instituted a new political system called the Apartheid, which has seen the racial segregation and the complete expulsion of the “ non-white” groups in absolute depraved and loathsome areas with very few rights and services. There was even a colored classification. This period long of almost half a century caused a lot of damages to the South African society, and had a devastating effect on the discriminated communities. In South Africa: The Rise and Fall of Apartheid, Nancy L. Clark, a professor from the Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, balances the books:

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By the early 1980's, South Africa ranked as the country the most inequitable distribution of income in the world, with the bottom 40 per cent of the population earning only 6 per cent of national income. This gap between whites and other communities did not simply result in lowered standards of living, but also threatened lives. The mortality rate for African and Colored infants was 13 times higher than for whites. As many as 25 per cent of African and Colored children died before their first birthday (Clark, books. google. com; 63).

Even though in the early 1990's, Apartheid in South Africa has been dismantled progressively thanks to Nelson Mandela, their future president for five years and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, xenophobic and racist behaviors are still existing since the immigration of African populations. The reason of this attitude is the fact that the Southern African people think they are not concerned with the other populations of Africa (Hadland, www. hsrc. ac. za).

Then, promoting these intolerant theories and concepts conveys to the neglect of the other populations own culture in order to conform to the leading one. For more than a century now, Native Americans live in peace with the white American. For a hundred years, they have the right to become American citizens. However, in the past, Native Americans were always persecuted because of the white American xenophobic ideas and stereotypes, and desire of land's and gold's conquests. Besides, as the years passed, the Native Americans started conforming to the Americans' culture in order to avoid the famishment and the oppression they knew. Nowadays, their acculturation is clearly obvious. In his short story Flight Patterns from <https://assignbuster.com/the-emergence-of-xenophobia-and-racism-history-essay/>

Ten Little Indians, Sherman Alexie illustrates explicitly Native Americans' cultural assimilation:

William wondered what ever happened to Donna Fargo, whose birth name was the infinitely more interesting Yvonne Vaughn, and wondered why he knew Donna Fargo's birth name. Ah, he was the bemused and slightly embarrassed owner of a twenty-first-century American mind. His intellect was a big comfy couch stuffed with sacred and profane trivia. He knew the names of all nine of Elizabeth Taylor's husbands and could quote from memory the entire Declaration of Independence. William knew Donna Fargo's birth name because he wanted to know her birth name (49).

Furthermore, this population has mainly lost its customary values and has assimilated the American lifestyle, behavior and manners. "...and threaded his long black hair into two tight braids-the indigenous businessman's tonsorial special-" asserted the narrator, " and dressed in his best travel suit, a navy three button pinstripe he ordered online" (Alexie). The Native Americans' negligence of their culture and assimilation to the leading culture is not a positive solution because it does not solve the issue of the Americans xenophobic ideas concerning them, there will always be people discriminating them and believing that their values and customs are downright inferior to the American ones; moreover, they lose their traditions.

Those arguments prove that xenophobia and racism incline to the society's breaking; they literally provoke the rejection of the minorities and the neglect of their own culture.

In conclusion, xenophobia and racism are harmful doctrines penalizing modern societies as they annihilate their degree of open-mindedness by reinforcing the use of brutality and opposition.

We have found that xenophobia and racism are especially blind judgments of populations established on erroneous beliefs. Moreover, one of the more significant findings to emerge from this study is that these ideologies are culpable of the rise of violence and abhorrence in every country, and lead sometimes to the loss of control and to the coming of disastrous events. Finally, this paper has revealed the harmful function of these doctrines in contemporary societies as they cause the separation of a community or even, not to say the rejection of the minor groups of people.

Clearly, further research is necessary to understand exactly how much xenophobia and racism increase the practice of attacks and antagonism, and damage all the societies by destroying their height of tolerance. The findings of this study show that xenophobia and racism are responsible of the increase of hate crimes against several communities in numerous parts of the world. And also that its presence in societies engenders the distrust and the suspicion of populations, whereas people's convictions about one culture or another is based on nothing.

In spite of its preliminary character, this research suggests to be more tolerant and to try to understand the other cultures in order to avoid crimes and stigmatizations. In plain English, people have to discover the others individually and not to judge before knowing them.

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