

# Theory of social darwinism and the impacts on indigenous australians



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Social Darwinism is a social theory that Natural Selection in Darwin's Theory is used to human society. Social Darwinism is evaluated from Darwin's Theory. However, Social Darwinism is a belief and it is popular in the late Victorian ear in England, America and elsewhere. The purpose of this essay is to analyze the theory of Social Darwinism and its impacts on indigenous Australians. This essay will firstly have a brief introduction. Following it, it will discuss the theory of Social Darwinism. After that, it will explain the impact of Social Darwinism on indigenous Australians. Finally, it will be a conclusion of the essay.

## **Theory of Social Darwinism**

The theory of Social Darwinism was put forward by Herbert Spencer in 19th century. Social Darwinism is the general term which applies to several different ways in which people (not biologists) tried to apply a distorted and narrow interpretation of the concept of natural selection to human cultural systems. (Peter, 2003) The popularity of Social Darwinism lasted from 19th century to World War II. Some people even think modern biology can be classified into Social Darwinism. The concept of Social Darwinism firstly appeared in American Historian Richard Hofstadter's book in 1944-< > (Thomas, 2009)

Social Darwinism is a kind of concept. This concept thinks that the core of Darwinism-natural selection is a common phenomenon in the human society. Theory of Social Darwinism thinks that natural selection plays an important role in the human evolution and development. Social Darwinism has ever been used by its supporters to name on the social inequality, racism and imperialism. Social Darwinism itself is not a political tendency. Some Social  
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Darwinists use this concept to illustrate the social progress and inevitable change. Some Social Darwinists think that human degradation is inevitable. As the same as Theory of Evolution, Social Darwinism is usually involved in the debate on Eugenics.

Social Darwinism also derived some concepts, including competition, eugenics and racism.

### Competition

A simplified view of Social Darwinism is that people, especially for men, have to compete to survive in the future. They can not give any assistance to the poor because they must feed themselves. Most of Social Darwinism in 21st century supports the improvement of working conditions and higher wages in order to give the poor the opportunity to feed themselves, so that self-sufficiency is better than those who are lazy, weak or poor.

### Eugenics

Another social interpretation of Social Darwinism is Eugenics. This theory is developed by Darwin's cousin, Francis Galton. Galton believes that people's physical characteristics are significantly from generation to generation. Therefore, the human brain qualities (genius and talent) have the same principle. Then the community should have a clear genetic decision to improve eugenics.

### Racism

The racial superiority and competition ideology in the end of 19 century and early of 20 century are associated with Social Darwinism. The basic race concept of Social Darwinism is that white race should educate other races of people in the world by a civilized way.

Darwin's Evolution Theory divides the race on the basis of Genetic Bifurcation and Natural Selection Theory. Genetic Bifurcation is a group of genetic material which isolated with each other, so they can develop its own unique genetic characteristics. This theory is applies to all living organisms. Because of gene bifurcation, people have different races and ethnic groups.

### **Impacts on of Social Darwinism on indigenous Australians**

Theories of Social Darwinism brought the disaster to indigenous Australians. Australian continent appeared before 60, 000 years ago. Most of the indigenous Australians were isolated from the rest of world before Europe settled in Australia. After the settlement of British, population of indigenous Australians reduced by 90%, which is also influenced by Social Darwinism.

In the early of the twentieth century, Social Darwinism was also popular in Australia. The Racial Theories of Social Darwinism were used to justify settler treatment of the indigenous Australians, as ' subhuman', ' primitive' and an ' inferior race'. Social Darwinism accelerated the death of indigenous Australians. As the skin color of indigenous Australians is similar to black, people are easy to link them to Blacks. Racism discrimination emerged with the popularity of Social Darwinism. The Aborigines Protection Act 1909 established camps to provide a place for the ' doomed race to die off' as indigenous Australian would ' inevitably become extinct'. (Eleanor, 2002)

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Even cruel is that indigenous Australians were treated like experimental animals, which were allowed by settle policy. Between 1920 and 1930, thousands of indigenous Australians were used to 'scientific' investigation into brain capacity and cranium size. Australian fascination with eugenics is similar to the obsession of Nazi Germany society in relation to the Jews in the 1930s and early 1940s. (Geoffrey, 2004)

Eugenics Theory of Social Darwinism also impacted on indigenous Australians. Children of mixed indigenous Australians and Europeans descent were called "half-castes" and a threat to so-called "racial purity". (Dickens, 2000) According to the Eugenics Theory, the policy took these children far away from their parents to "breed the blackness out of them". Based on Eugenics Theory, about 100,000 children with indigenous blood were taken away from their families. Parents did not know where their children were and were not allowed to trace them. At the same time, these children did not know who were their parents and thought they were orphans. The racist government thought the problem could be solved if indigenous Australians were dying out. As a result, these children were called "Stolen Generations". Settler policy believed that white, Christian families and boarding schools was the best environment in which to raise Aboriginal children. They believed they were doing what was 'protecting them' and was 'best for them', whether the children or their parents liked it or not. (Read, 2001)

## **Conclusion**

Conclusively, Social Darwinism is a popular social evolution theory in 19th century. The theory itself did not contain any political position and it has ever been linked with politics. Influenced by the theories of Social Darwinism, <https://assignbuster.com/theory-of-social-darwinism-and-the-impacts-on-indigenous-australians/>

many indigenous Australians were treated cruel and populations of indigenous Australians were reduced very much. Today, indigenous Australians share equal rights with other racial people in spite of existence of racial discrimination. It is wished that the world could eliminate the racial discrimination in future and every person could be treated equally.