

The multicultural society essay



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The Multicultural Society Today we have multicultural societies all over the world. Some say multiculturalism is a failure, while others think the opposite. Is multiculturalism really a failure? What are the positive aspects and what are the negative aspects of a multicultural society? The UK is a classical example of how a multicultural society is formed. In the UK, diverse groups of immigrants have disembarked over the last 200 years. Jewish people escaped from Russian and Polish pursuit, Irish settlers attempted to flee from poverty and 500 Jamaicans were brought to the UK in 1948.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi immigrants came to the UK. When people from different cultures live together, they form a multicultural society, and as the immigration to the UK continued to develop, the UK became culturally diverse. The UK becoming culturally diverse has both its benefits and its detriments. First of all, what is common for most multicultural societies is mutual misunderstanding, which is often caused by mutual ethnocentrism.

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This could also be entitled culture clash, which is a condition in which people from dissimilar cultures have fairly incorrect expectations of one another, and therefore they misconstrue the significance of the message that is being exchanged. The short story A Horse and Two Goats by R. K. Narayan is a good example of how mutual ethnocentrism causes mutual misunderstanding. In the short story we meet an old Indian man and an American man who attempt to communicate thinking they comprehend each

other, but they end up having incorrect interpretations of each other's messages.

In a multicultural society some people often stick to their own ethnic group. They do not interact with other groups. This behavior constructs the contrary of a united society. A lot of immigrants find it hard to integrate to the new society. This could be one of the reasons why immigrants choose to live where their own ethnic group has its section. In the cosmopolitan London, for instance, the society is variously mixed with different cultures. The Chinese live in Chinatown, the Russians live in the Russian section and the Polish in the Polish section.

Consequently this leads to lack of integration. Immigrants, who do not interact with other than their own ethnic groups, do not get to learn the English language properly, and they find it tough to communicate with other people. The lack of communication will then lead to misunderstanding, which again will lead to ethnocentrism. In the movie East is East we see how some Muslims try to keep their traditions alive in the new society. George is a strict Muslim man who tries to make his family live up to the Pakistani traditions that include a conservative and very strict view of life.

He is married to an English woman, and he tries to avoid his family getting too influenced by the English life, and too integrated in the English society. He sends them to the mosque, makes them go through religious customs, and at some point in the movie he abuses them. Leaving ethnocentrism untreated, it can lead to prejudice, fear, violence and stereotyping. During the later parts of the 1900s, the newcomers who immigrated to the UK were

met by cultural prejudice. Many immigrants ended up on the bottom of the social ladder. Their dark skin color added racism to the prejudice that met them.

The immigrants often had unskilled, poorly paid jobs in areas with poor accommodation and minor public services. These disadvantages, unfortunately, led to the ethnic communities we find in London. The detriments were also passed on to the immigrants' children, which led to violence in some cases, high crime rates, and even terrorist organizations. In turn, this has confirmed pessimistic opinions and created negative stereotypes. The London riots, that started because a young man was shot by the police, triggered thousands of youths to riot against the government.

One of the reasons for the riots was people being fed up with the political system and the poor living conditions that many youths are facing today. In spite of all the negative outcomes of multiculturalism, there are also positive results of immigration. It is said that everything in modern UK has been shaped by different ethnic communities, cultures and social groups. The most central positive aspect of multiculturalism is that it allows people to widen each other's views by introducing a larger audience to the traditions of their own cultures and countries.

Music, literature, cuisine, and language can be shared and experienced by people outside their own ethnic groups. In the UK the curry houses are now a traditional part of the English life. Ethnic cuisine has become a part of the British diet. A wide variety of different dishes and spices is available in restaurants and supermarkets. New forms of music like Bhangra and Hindi

fusion from Indian roots or Reggae from the Caribbean are being included in ethnic cultural charity. Literature by authors like Salman Rushdie and Hanif Kureishi has become famous in the

English-speaking world. The novel *White Teeth* has been written by one of today's best selling British authors; Zadie Smith. Her novel discusses how the younger generation handles the problems they meet in England. The health service is also improved as newcomers come to the UK to work as health workers. One third of London's doctors are of New Commonwealth heritage. The working capacity is also improved in general, not only in the medical system. Educated people from all over the world travel to the UK in order to work.

Cultural-diversity-also-makes-countries stronger-and more able to compete in the global economy. People from different ethnic communities bring new ways of thinking, creative solutions to difficult-problems and-consulting-skills. In addition, multiculturalism could help us understand each other and form a comfortable relationship. Communication helps us treat ethnocentrism so that the prejudice and racism will be avoided. If people understand each other, communicate with each other and stop thinking of themselves as superior to other people, we will be able to form a society of tolerance and friendship.

When different faiths and cultures are brought together, and people feel comfortable with being open and social, that is when people will start feeling confident about their own culture. Communication will also help people feel less alienated, and more welcome to the new society. The short story

Neighbours by Tim Winton discusses this matter very well. It is about how a newly-wed young couple that has moved into a new neighborhood creates a comfortable relationship with their new neighbors as they start communicating. It would appear then that where different cultures meet and mix together there will always be some conflicts.

Sometimes people will lose their tempers, violence will flare, and the fear of developing a multicultural society will rise. Prejudice and racism will also rise along with fear. However, it is highly imperative for us to think of all the possibilities that come along with multiculturalism. It is on the borders where different societies meet that we gain new insights and see new opportunities. This illumination is what helps us see the positive aspects of the multicultural society. Sources * John Anthony, Access to International English (pp. 72-99). Oslo 2007: J. W. Cappelens Forlag AS. * UK in Norway: