

Xenophobia in the US: Causes, Effects, and Mitigation

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America is considered the most diverse nation in the world, with immigrants from all over the world. Xenophobia has always existed in other countries, but the United States (US) has experienced a surge in recent years (Harun & Shah, 2013). Harun and Shah (2013) defined xenophobia as the fear or hatred of foreigners in a country, leading to mistreatment, abuse, violence, or discrimination against a particular race, community, or individuals. Immigrants in the US have often struggled to obtain unconditional acceptance amidst continued intimidation, humiliation, and unjust treatment from Native Americans (Harun & Shah, 2013). Political conflicts, economic uncertainty, and religious intolerance are some of the causes of xenophobia in the US. Xenophobia causes violence, hatred, and at times the loss of innocent lives. Fighting xenophobic feelings requires people to broaden their experience and appreciate people's cultural diversity.

Economic shifts and regional development transformed the US during the 19th century, leading to the global desire to move to the country. Growth in transport and communication sectors, availability of jobs, and a strong currency significantly attracted immigrants into the country. Accordingly, Native Americans struggled to secure employment as some immigrants had more qualifications and skills in the workplace (Harun & Shah, 2013). The economic situation in the country prompted Native Americans to fight for their space in their country (Vrsanka et al., 2017). The stiff workplace competition led to economic uncertainty among Native Americans, causing a negative attitude and hatred for immigrants. Political conflicts between the world's countries have also contributed to heightened cases of xenophobia in the US. Immigrants from countries perceived to be in political conflicts with the US encounter stronger xenophobic reactions from some Native Americans (Harun & Shah, 2013). Similarly,

religious intolerance among some Native Americans has led to xenophobic reactions against foreigners. According to Cox (2020), perceived cultural beliefs, values, and beliefs of some religious sects have contributed to the Native Americans resenting others.

Xenophobia can have insidious effects on individuals and communities. Intense hatred can lead to physical assaults, emotional turmoil, and political unrest. People living in xenophobic countries, such as the US, have reported various physical assault and emotional abuse cases. According to Massey and Magaly (2010), immigrants encountered rejection and hostility from some Native Americans, some instances leading to physical confrontations and injuries. On the same note, people in xenophobic countries grapple with emotional distress as they cannot access social services, interact with people, and enjoy the luxuries of life that Natives relish.

Recognizing and appreciating cultural diversity is a positive step towards mitigating xenophobic feelings. Karlsson (2020) suggested that awareness of differences in culture, race, values, and political ideologies is instrumental in shaping people's perceptions of others. The US should create public awareness of the importance of cultural diversity, which is a strength and not a threat to the Americans' very existence. In the same breadth, broadening one's experience through international travels, education, religious conferences, and other global social events can positively impact their understanding of the international community.

By and large, xenophobia continues to be a social problem in the US, with immigrants being the targets of this behavior. The unexplained feeling of hatred and resentment towards foreigners can cause conflicts and deaths. It can deny people the opportunity to integrate freely. Broadening one's experience and accepting humanity's diversity are approaches that can mitigate the prevalence of xenophobia in the US. Travels, multilateral trade, international

conferences, and global events that bring together various people worldwide can reduce xenophobia in the US.

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