XENOPHOBIA

Why Do We Fear 'Others'?

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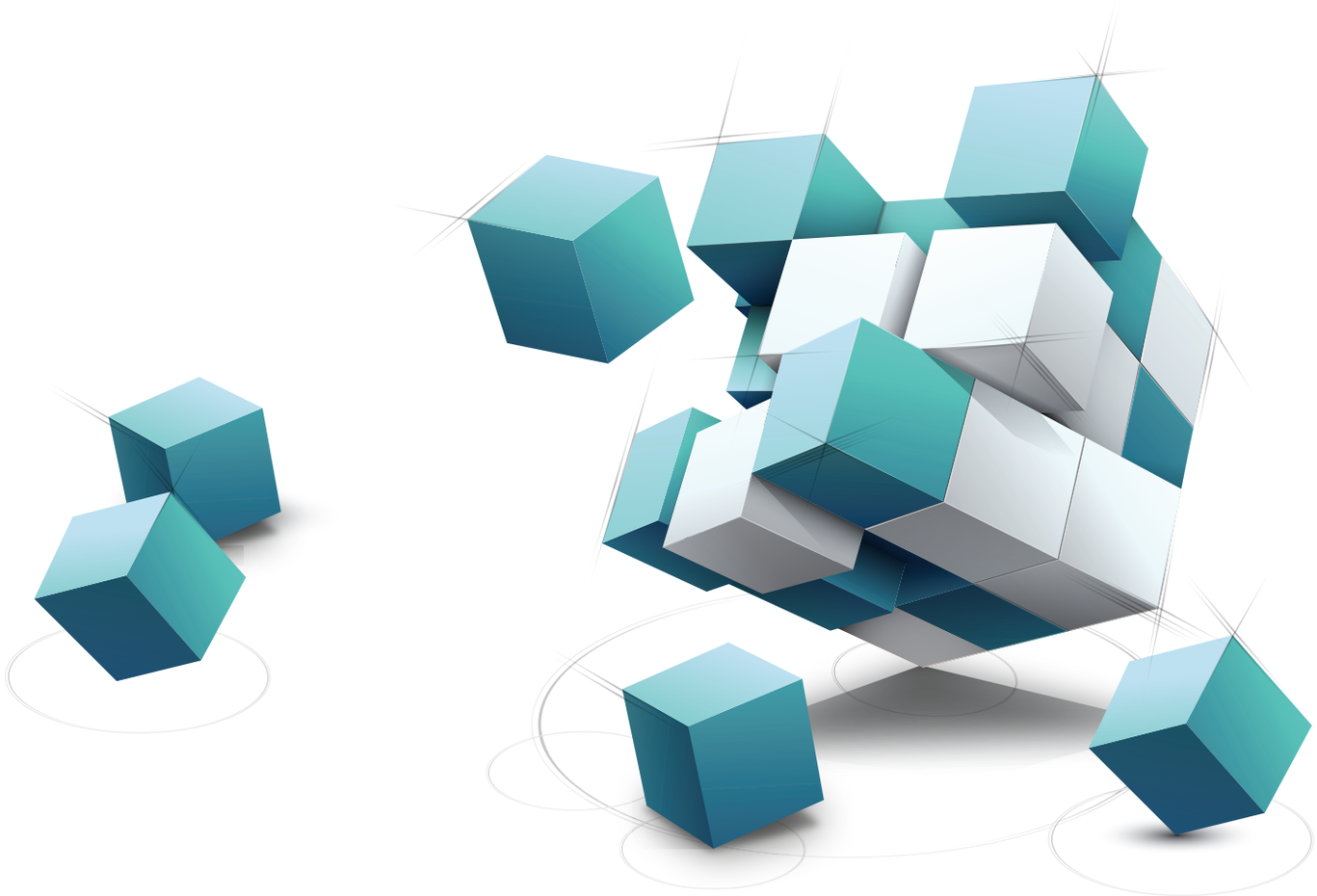

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The views expressed in the report do not necessarily represent the views of Peace Islands Institute. This report is an edited transcript of the "XENOPHOBIA: Why Do We Fear 'Others'?" symposium held at University at Buffalo, SUNY's North Campus on April 4th, 2012.

The symposium was organized by

- Inter-Cultural Understanding Club, University at Buffalo, SUNY
- Peace Islands Institute, Upstate New York Branch

Peace Islands Institute (PII) is a non-profit organization which is dedicated to promote unity, education, welfare, and progress worldwide. PII aims to develop original and alternative perspectives on the global and social phenomena, presents explanations and solutions and support successful practices in order to achieve world peace by creating the realms of peaceful coexistence, or "peace islands".

Peace Island Institute's headquarter is in New York with branches in New Jersey, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Upstate New York.

XENOPHOBIA

Why Do We Fear 'Others'?

Peace Islands Institute Report, Issue: 3

Editor

Huseyin Ozen

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Summary Report

The Inter-Cultural Understanding (ICU) Club at SUNY Buffalo, together with the Peace Islands Institute, organized a panel discussion about Xenophobia on April 4, 2012.

Xenophobia is defined as "an unreasonable fear of foreigners or strangers". Distinguished speakers from the Department of Political Science and the Department of Anthropology at SUNY Buffalo addressed the roots, spread, and effects of xenophobia on both the individual and international levels.

Prof. Phillips Stevens from the Department of Anthropology indicated that xenophobia is an absolutely universal trait that can be found among any human group. It is shaped around the classification of group identities as "we" (the insiders) and "they" (the outsiders). Attitudes toward other groups are shaped by cultural teachings and, in early childhood, through socialization. However, during times of social anxiety, the stress caused by economic, political, and environmental concerns might dominate social behavior. Prof. Stevens also noted that psychologists have identified a human need for a scapegoat. Scapegoating can be mean and hurtful, but it also has positive psychological implications. For one, it relieves stress by deflecting blame away from us; for another, it provides an explanation for misfortunes and bad luck in a confusing world, even if the explanations are spurious and dangerous.

Prof. Claude Welch, SUNY Distinguished Service Professor and Professor of Political Science focused on times of dramatic global upheavals; major wars. As an African specialist, Prof. Welch focused on the brutal colonization of the African continent and genocides by colonizers. Because of a social context of fear of the "outsider," an economic setting of hyperinflation and great depression caused democratic countries to eliminate plurality in their societies, as in the case of Nazi Germany. Not only Jews but also people with disabilities and the Roma (or "gypsy") population suffered from legally imposed issues post-WWI. Prof. Welch also noted that when the Versailles Treaty was discussed, the proposal declaring racism inappropriate was resigned by the US. After WWII, the United Nations was established to prevent the crime of genocide. However, the US ratified the proposal in the late 1980s, forty years later, and the other Western developed countries responded similarly. The end of the Cold War opened new opportunities for reexamining questions of racism, xenophobia, and related forms of intolerance. Unfortunately, major countries boycotted the World Conference Against Racism, Xenophobia, and Related Forms of Intolerance. After the tragic events of 9/11, a Sikh was shot just because he looked like a Muslim. "We might not be able to overcome xenophobia totally", indicated Prof. Welch, "but we can try our best for ourselves, our children, and our grandchildren".

Huseyin Ozen, a political science graduate student at SUNY Buffalo, presented evidence that different ethnic and religious groups have been scapegoats in different periods of time, and the current trend is Muslims. Today, xenophobia is highly correlated with Islamophobia and is on the rise in both Europe and the USA. Economic depression and social polarization in Europe have caused a rise in right-wing extremist parties' influence and sentiments that have forced centrist parties to have a more exclusive agenda. However, Islamophobia has reached a critical point in which Islamophobes have become a threat not only to Muslims but also non-Muslim Europeans. The massacres that took place in Norway, the Neo-Nazi murders in Germany, and most recently the massacre in Toulouse, France, proved that xenophobia has become a 'real' threat to the European continent. Mr. Ozen states that xenophobia is deeply rooted in ignorance, meaning the fear of the unknown or foreigner. Basically, people who do not know each other fear

each other the most. Looking for possible solutions, Mr. Ozen stated that there must be an effective worldwide solution for such a global threat. “I think the *Hizmet* (Service) Movement is a great example of how to concretize such solutions,” says Mr. Ozen. Inspired by M. Fethullah Gulen, a highly respected Turkish Muslim scholar, the Hizmet Movement has initiated a global network of volunteers who are united around values such as ‘humanity’, in which service to humanity is considered as service to God. The Hizmet Movement has identified the sources of conflict and found reasonable solutions for the most challenging global problems long before its counterparts. According to the Hizmet Movement, there are three basic sources of conflict among people: schism, ignorance, and poverty. The solutions for these problems are unity and dialogue, education, and work and capital, respectively. In that regard, over 1000 schools have been built worldwide; hundreds of institutions have been established to promote interreligious and intercultural dialogue; and dozens of philanthropic foundations have been established to help disadvantaged people in different parts of the world. Mr. Ozen also criticized the mainstream media for its manipulation of global social issues and noted that “it is somehow interesting how little public knows about such global peace and dialogue movements, whereas the demonized figures of some radicals are presented to us repeatedly.”

Introduction

Due to developments in the means of technology and communication, many people have become more familiar with the concept of "foreigner" by having more interactions with these foreigners. However, increased interaction does not necessarily mean that these interactions will bring more tolerance and contribute to coexistence. Sometimes such interactions lead to conflict and discrimination within a society.

When a man planted a bomb in a government building in Oslo that killed 8 people and shot 69 people, mostly teenagers, at a Labor Party youth camp on Norway's Utoya Island on July 22, 2011, numerous mainstream media outlets, including *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Atlantic*, speculated about an Al Qaeda connection and "jihadist" motivation behind the attacks. However, by the next morning it was clear that the attacker was a 32-year-old, white, blond-haired and blue-eyed Norwegian named Anders Breivik. He was not a Muslim, but rather a self-described Christian conservative. Breivik claimed responsibility and told the court that violence was "necessary" to save Europe from Marxism and "Muslimization." In his 1,500-page manifesto, which meticulously details his attack methods and aims to inspire others to extremist violence, Breivik promised "brutal and breathtaking operations which will result in casualties" to fight the alleged "ongoing Islamic Colonization of Europe."

Additionally, the so-called Neo-Nazi "doner" murders in Germany, committed from 2000 to 2007, caused the deaths of eight Turkish men, one Greek and one German policewoman. Moreover, in the 2012 massacre in Toulouse, France, three Jewish children, one rabbi and three French soldiers of North African heritage were shot dead. These incidents all demonstrate how xenophobia has become a "real" threat to the European continent.

After the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001, xenophobia has been on the rise in the United States. According to a Zogby poll in 2007, 76% of young Arab Americans reported that they had personally experienced discrimination in the past because of their ethnicity. More recently, 49% of Americans held an unfavorable view of Islam, according to a Washington Post-ABC News poll in 2010. There have also been numerous attacks on mosques and Islamic cultural centers.

Speakers from the Department of Political Science and the Department of Anthropology of SUNY Buffalo will focus on different aspects of xenophobia both on the individual and international levels. They will also address the roots, spread, and effects of xenophobia both in the US and Europe.

Xenophobia: An Anthropological Approach

Phillips Stevens, Jr.[1]

Discussions of topics like xenophobia and last year's ("A Decade After 9/11: Lessons Learned & Future Challenges"), which is also relevant, are valuable contributions to the life of the University community. The Intercultural Understanding Club deserves appreciation for these presentations.

This talk will make some brief and general observations from anthropology and social psychology. The focus of cultural anthropologists is human culture. Anthropologists study culture at three levels: 1) the system of beliefs, behaviors, and products shared by a group (the ethnographic level); 2) that whole body of characteristics made possible by symbolic communication that distinguishes human beings from other animals (the ethnological level); and 3), as the capacity for culture is based in our brains, we recognize the evolutionary neurobiological basis. When we find that an aspect of culture is universal, found in all human groups, that may suggest that it is a fundamentally human trait, inherent in our species. Xenophobia is one such universal trait, and there is some evidence that it is a product of our evolutionary biology.

The word comes from two Greek words, xenos – stranger or foreigner, and phobos – fear. The latter word is used quite broadly, from a simple aversion to a deep-seated anxiety disorder with clinical implications. It is the parent term for a family of specific negative attitudes toward others, outsiders, people classified by your culture as different from you. Consider, for example, homophobia, racism, anti-Semitism, and other minority-directed antipathies th can result in hate crimes.

These antipathies are all psychologic ly related. All are manifestations of a c tural definition of WE, normal people, a THEY – others, outsiders, or potentia dangerous people.

This cultural construction is univers All cultures consider themselves to be rig correct, normal, and hence in some wa superior to others. This trait is called *ethr centrism* by anthropologists. Such attitud serve the positive functions of group uni support, and cooperation, all of which v presume were of critical importance to ea groups of *Homo sapiens*. Because sus cion of outsiders had adaptive value to t group, it is logical to suggest that the tr became innate to our biology, along w other adaptive reactions, for example t fear of the night, instinctive responses danger to children, reactions to flowi blood and open wounds, and others whi are potentially dangerous to the continu survival of the group – including fear death.

In 2005 the journal *Science* reported study that showed what clinical psycho gists call the "startle reaction," measured aberrations in brain waves among subje when shown photographs of various hum faces (Öhman 2005).

The startle reaction is univers Recognition of differences between "us" a "others" is normal. Reaction to these diff ences varies, depending on 1) cultu teachings, and 2) what else is going on the time. Attitudes toward different othe are inculcated in children during their soci ization and are learned from the wider c ture throughout life.

During times of social anxiety, perio of stress caused by any number of concer – economic, political, environmental – su innate instinctual reactions may emerge dominate and drive social behavior.

[1] Professor, Department of Anthropology, University at Buffalo, SUNY.

Psychologists have also identified as universal the human need for a scapegoat, which is also found in animals. Children do it to each other: "see what you made me do!" Neighbors do it to each other, and whole groups do it to other groups. Scapegoating can be mean and hurtful, but it has positive psychological implications: 1) it deflects blame from us, and 2) it provides an explanation for misfortune. Scapegoating exists in all primate groups; it seems to be a normal product of the tensions that inevitably develop between people in close living situations.

Under prolonged stress previous social attitudes of live-and-let-live turn into suspicion, and a number of standard allegations can develop in a community, beginning with personal attributes – "those people are really strange;" "those people are rude;" "they are cruel to their children;" "they are really lax with their children, they let them do anything!;" "those people are dirty, they don't bathe" – and so on.

Such sentiments can degenerate into fears: "those people are taking what is ours;" "those people hate us and are plotting against us;" "those people want to take over." These suspicions can become truly bizarre, degenerating further into allegations of behavior contrary to our most fundamental notions of what it means to be human: "those people are kidnapping our children, and they are subjecting our children to terrible ordeals including sexual torments." There may even develop a terrible allegation so widespread that it has a name: The Blood Libel, which suggests that they kill our children and use their blood in terrible rituals. "They are working for Satan!" And more, accusations that those people engage in horrible sexual orgies, with each other, with children, with animals; they engage in cannibalism and vampirism; they thrive on killing, they train their children to kill, their religion tells them to kill others - ultimately resulting in the worst type of conspiracy theory that can generate mass persecution of the sort we have called witch hunts.

In normal times, people are naturally skeptical of such allegations against others, and their attention focuses on the accuser rather than on the accused. "What's wrong with him? What's bothering him?" However, as social anxiety grows, skepticism and reason decline and credulity and irrationality increase. As the desire for scapegoats becomes stronger, people become more willing to believe previously unbelievable things about others, and the standards of due process are overturned, rules of evidence and presumptions of innocence are ignored, and simple accusations are themselves evidence of guilt; accusations of really terrible things are sufficient to generate mob action.

These processes are evident throughout history and around the world. For immigrants, especially refugees, discrimination and indignities are part of life. Workers at Journey's End on Buffalo's West Side, including UB students, attest to the reactions of local residents to the influx of newcomers in tight economic times. The little daily indignities are not news. When xenophobia builds to its potential tragic end, it is news: The terrible murders of over 70 people in Norway last July; the murders in a Jewish school in France a few weeks ago; the brutal murder of an Iraqi woman last week in California; and the Trayvon Martin case – yet another in a long shameful history of racism in America – the list, really, is endless.

Today it's Islam. The history of Muslims in America is like the experience of many foreign minorities living quietly and productively for generations – indeed, for centuries – until some event causes the majority to focus on them. Muslims have been in the Americas since the 16th century, and have participated in all of the great projects of engineering – the Union Pacific railroad, the Erie Canal, the Panama Canal, even in the building of the new Freedom Tower at Ground Zero, which by next week should

surpass the Empire State Building in height. Yemeni Muslims have lived in the Buffalo suburb of Lackawanna since the 1930s. The famous American welcome to immigrants, i.e., the verses on the Statue of Liberty, are mythologized and are part of every schoolchild's instruction.

However, with increasing unrest in Muslim communities in the Middle East, Indonesia, Africa, and elsewhere, acts of violence against perceived oppressors and enemies of Islam, and then the attacks of 9/11, western attitudes have changed radically. People looked around them and saw Muslims, as if for the first time. I refer everybody to the 2011 CNN film, "Unwelcome: The Muslims Next Door," describing popular reactions in Murfreesboro, Tennessee to plans by the community's Muslims to build a new mosque and cultural center. The type of situation depicted in the video has been repeated in many other places in America and Western Europe.

Xenophobia is natural, as it is simply a product of our evolutionary biology, but xenophobia can be very, very dangerous.

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Xenophobia: Its History and Development

Claude E. Welch, Jr.[2]

To understand ethnocentrism, xenophobia, and related human rights abuses, it is needed to focus upon times of dramatic global upheavals, such as major wars. A positive perspective will be presented, arguing that our conflict has produced some positive steps, and as a result, the world of 2012 differs markedly from that prior to World War II, not to forget September 11, 2001.

World War I prior to decolonization is a good point to start with. Africa was brutally affected by slavery and colonization. The continent also witnessed the first genocide of the twentieth century, which occurred in Namibia (located in southwest Africa) among the Herero people. This slaughter of innocents was carried out by Germany in 1908. The governor general, named Heinrich Ernst Goering, was the father of Hermann Wilhelm Goering, who was Hitler's right-hand man in World War Two. The genocide, carried out in this unnoticed corner of Africa, said to other countries, "all right, you can get away with such mass killings" without international censure or punishment.

With the rise of Hitler, stigmatization of specific groups intensified within Germany. Many groups were affected, most notably Jews. Others also suffered because they belonged to groups the Nazis considered 'sub-human' in some fashion. These included Gypsies (now known as Roma), homosexuals, persons with mental or physical disabilities, or Slavic peoples. All of them were subjected to "legally imposed" deprivation of basic rights. They were discriminated against, tortured and executed without trial of any sort, simply because of their social groups. Historians assert that these exclusions occurred because of a social context of fear of outsiders, of hyperinflation and the Depression and, above all, the rise of Adolf Hitler and the Nazis. The NSDAP, known as the Nazi Party, was among the most racist groups ever known. Nonetheless, it became the most popular political party in a socially, economically and politically divided country. Xenophobia had reared its ugly head in what was considered one of the most 'civilized' countries of Europe.

World War I might have addressed another human rights problem. The 1919 Versailles Conference had the opportunity to address racism, which is often linked with xenophobia. Interestingly enough, when the Versailles Treaty ending that war was discussed, a representative of Japan proposed that its Covenant contain a clause condemning racism American President Woodrow Wilson, who chaired the negotiations, ruled the motion out of order, even though a two-thirds majority favored it. I think it is really distressing to see how American attitudes toward race were projected onto the global stage and the League of Nations was thereby weakened.

World War II is another remarkable period. By then the United Nations had learned many great lessons. The negotiators of the San Francisco Treaty, which created this institution atop the ashes of the former League of Nations, were profoundly influenced by the horrendous acts of World War II. They were concerned, in particular, about genocide, discrimination based on race, aggressive warfare and the like. What were the consequences? The Preamble to the United Nations Charter states, "We the peoples of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human

[2] Professor, Department of Political Science, University at Buffalo, SUNY.

person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small…" The UN was thus born in an atmosphere of international hope for effective future cooperation leading to dramatic improvements for all citizens of the world, irrespective of their individual status.

The United Nations also went on to ratify a series of conventions (international treaties) addressing numerous human rights abuses. The very first of them was the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in 1948. In the same year, the UN adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (often commonly known as the UDHR), widely recognized as the global foundation for a series of other legally binding agreements. The spread of the UDHR can be seen in the fact that it has been translated into more than 400 languages!

Since that time, there have been many other international agreements. Among them, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination requires particular attention. Should you read it, you would find a very broad set of ideas explaining the duties of governments that ratify the Convention. People are required to be treated equally by their governments in terms of dignity and rights without distinction as to race, color, sex, language, religion, national origin and many other factors. States become responsible to the international community as a whole for their domestic actions – quite a step away from the classic conception that each government had unrestrained sovereign power within its own boundaries. You understand the gap. Noble intentions indeed can be found in the global treaties, but actual accomplishments remain well behind the rhetoric.

The last two decades are also important to understand the issue of xenophobia. The end of the Cold War opened a new opportunity for reexamining the questions of racism, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance. How so? Some of the issues that had surfaced as a result of Cold War rivalries evaporated, at least temporarily. There was a "peace-dividend" as the superpowers significantly reduced military expenditures. Nuclear arsenals were reduced in some countries, totally eliminated in others. Argentina, Brazil, Libya and South Africa ended programs that might have resulted in atomic weapons. According to a BBC report aired in 2012, only nine countries possessed nuclear military capability.

Further, there was a sense that the United Nations might move ahead to facilitate global cultural understanding by open discussion of xenophobia. Unfortunately, progress was marred, not only by bloody civil conflicts in the 1990s (notably by genocides in the former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda) but also by failures in international negotiations. I refer here specifically to the 2001 World Conference against Racism, Xenophobia, and Related Forms of Intolerance, often known simply as WCAR. Launched with great hope and held in one of South Africa's major cities, the Conference collapsed in mutual recriminations. Several major players publicly criticized it in advance, given what appeared to them as a highly politicized agenda. (Major issues included reparations for slavery and colonialism, as well as condemnation of Zionism.) The United States and Israel both withdrew their delegations, and many other countries remained critical, despite several modifications in the final declaration. It was a very tough time for Mary Robinson, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, who spoke here on campus on Wednesday. She refused to accept the final document produced by the Conference.

9/11 shocked the United States and led to events such as Professor Stevens mentioned. For example, a Sikh wearing a turban was assassinated because of the assumption that anybody who dressed in such a fashion was an "enemy." Similar stigmatization occurred at this campus, as a Muslim member of this campus community twice

had swastikas carved in the door of her car. Examples like this do not belong to anywhere in the world. It is the task of us as citizens to be aware of what is in our own minds, as well as the minds of others. We have natural pride in our background, but we must also recognize that narrow pride can lead to xenophobia and similar negative behaviors undercutting or potentially even destroying others.

As a famous African revolutionary says, “La Luta Continua!”, meaning “the struggle continues”. The struggle includes self-examination, to “know yourself,” as Socrates allegedly said; to know one’s own culture; and, even more important, to develop a willingness to learn from others. That is because only by open hearts and minds can true intercultural dialogue be achieved and xenophobia resisted. Will it be overcome totally? No. But here, we can try our best efforts for ourselves, for our children, for our grandchildren.

Xe-no-phobia: Why Do We Fear 'Others'?

Huseyin Ozen[3]

Due to developments in the means of technology and communication, many people have become more familiar with the concept of "foreigner" by having more interactions with these foreigners. However, increased interaction does not necessarily mean that these interactions will bring more tolerance and contribute coexistence. Sometimes, such interactions lead to conflict and discrimination within a society.

Xenophobia is defined as "an unreasonable fear of foreigners or strangers". Human beings have been interacting with each other for millennia. Thanks to social, political, and economic globalization, today this interaction has reached its peak. Historically speaking, people of different ethnic, religious, or cultural backgrounds have interacted with each other mostly through migration. People tend to migrate from their homeland due to unfavorable conditions that endanger their security, economic, political, religious concerns, and they tend to immigrate to places that they anticipate will have more opportunities and better living conditions. However, this logic contains a paradox because the aforementioned concerns become visible again when the "outsiders" or "newcomers" interact with "insider" people and cultures. Simply, the immigrants face the very same problems that motivated them to emigrate. "The newcomers" or "outsiders" become the scapegoats of the social, political, and economic depressions of the place they have immigrated to.

[3] Department of Political Science, University at Buffalo, SUNY

Xenophobia vs. Islamophobia

Throughout history, different ethnic and religious groups have been the scapegoats in different periods of time and the current trend, unfortunately, is the Muslims. Today, xenophobia is highly correlated with Islamophobia and is on the rise in both Europe and the USA. Economic depression and social polarization in the European countries have stiffened the rise in right-wing extremist parties' influence and sentiment that has forced even centrist parties to have a more exclusive agenda. However, Islamophobia has reached a critical point at which Islamophobes have become a threat not only to Muslims but also the European and American continents. The massacres that took place in Norway, the Neo-Nazi murders in Germany, and the most recent massacre in Toulouse, France, demonstrates that xenophobia has become a 'real' threat to the European continent.

When a man planted a bomb in a government building in Oslo that killed eight people and shot 69 people, mostly teenagers, at a Labor Party youth camp on Norway's Utoya Island on July 22, 2011, numerous mainstream media outlets, including *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Atlantic*, speculated about an Al Qaeda connection and a "jihadist" motivation behind the attacks (Rubin 2011; Goldberg 2001). by the next morning it was clear that the attacker was a 32-year-old, white, blond-haired and blue-eyed Norwegian named Anders Breivik. He was not a Muslim, but rather a self-described Christian conservative (Ali et al. 2011).

Breivik claimed responsibility and told the court that violence was "necessary" to save Europe from Marxism and "Muslimization." In his 1,500-page manifesto, which meticulously details his attack methods and aims to inspire others to extremist violence, Breivik vows "brutal and breathtaking operations which will result in casualties" to fight the alleged "ongoing Islamic Colonization of Europe." Breivik's manifesto contains nu-

merous footnotes and in-text citations to American bloggers and pundits, quoting them as experts on Islam's "war against the West." This small group of anti-Muslim organizations and individuals wields great influence in shaping the national and international political debate. Their names are heralded within communities that are actively organizing against Islam and targeting Muslims in the United States.[4] According to a recent report (August 2011) by the *Center for American Progress*, $42.6 million flowed from seven foundations over the last ten years to misinformation experts to generate false facts and to provoke Islamophobia. In other words, there are people and groups that are paid to 'create' a fake conflict among civilizations.

Solution vs. Hizmet Movement

The incidents related to xenophobia, racism, discrimination, and related forms of intolerance are not limited to a minority of people. It is deeply rooted in society and has become a daily issue for all its members. According to a Zogby poll in 2007, 76% of young Arab Americans reported that they have personally experienced discrimination because of their ethnicity. More recently, 49% of Americans held an unfavorable view of Islam, according to a Washington Post-ABC News poll in 2010 (Cohen and Dropp 2010).

It is crucial to be aware of the fact that xenophobia is deeply rooted in ignorance, meaning fear of the unknown or foreigner. Unfortunately, such a disease cannot be cured by simple prescriptions. However, a combination of dialogue and coexistence policies, education, laws and regulations may present a possible framework. Yet, those Islamophobes who killed innocent people were very much aware of legal restrictions and punishment. They have most likely thought about life imprisonment, as well. That is why it is more realistic to consider the social and civic side of the issue rather than political and legal regulations. Basically, people who do not know each other fear each other the most**.** If we are determined to solve such a global issue, we need to find global and long-term solutions. But how?

It would be helpful to mention the *Hizmet* (Service) Movement as a great example of how to concretize such solutions. Inspired by a philosophy that is based on dialogue and peaceful coexistence of a highly respected Turkish Muslim scholar, M. Fethullah Gulen, the Hizmet Movement has initiated a global network of volunteers who are united around values such as 'humanity' in which service to humanity is considered to be service to God. The movement has identified three sources of conflict and found reasonable solutions for the most challenging global problems long before its counterparts. According to Mr. Gulen, there are three basic sources of conflict among people. These are schism (disunity), ignorance, and poverty (Genc 2012). The solutions for these problems are unity and dialogue, education, and work and capital, respectively. In that regard, over 1000 schools with secular curricula have been built worldwide; hundreds of institutions have been established to promote interreligious and intercultural dialogue; and dozens of philanthropy foundations have been established to help disadvantaged people in different parts of the world. It is interesting how little the public knows about such global peace and dialogue movements, whereas the demonized figures of some radicals are presented to us repeatedly.

Last but not least, human history has been all about the history of wars and conflict but not of peace. However, in a global village in which people of different ethnic, religious, and ideological backgrounds have become more interdependent on each other, neither isolation nor regional peace can be perpetual. For that reason, a focus on peace and coexistence is needed more than ever. What we need is neither a nightmare nor a daydream, but a global vision with

necessary actions. The Hizmet Movement came to such a conclusion long ago. Now, it is time to make other people aware of it.

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PEACE ISLANDS INSTITUTE

Mission

Peace Islands Institute (PII) aspires to facilitate a forum of mutual respect and collaboration, both welcoming and accepting varied viewpoints and voices with the intent to develop original and alternative perspectives on vital issues that our society is facing, generate solutions to these issues, support successful practices, thus promoting education, friendship and harmony and acting as an island of peace for all peoples in a society of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds.

Vision

In a diverse world, where even the farthest point is a click away, every culture, race, religion, tradition and nation become neighbors. We have to live and interact together in this “global island” we call Earth. Peace Islands Institute (PII) serves to act as the soil for fruitful dialogue, peace, and civil service just as the soil on this “global island” gives forth flowers of different colors, scents and shapes. PII envisions a world becoming an island of peace in the ocean of our universe; a community in which people from all walks of life interact with each other and cooperate to serve their communities, thereby strengthening civil society and promoting the development of human values.

Goals

- Facilitate unity for building peace, education to eradicate ignorance, welfare to fight against poverty and hunger, progress to promote development
- To develop original and alternative perspectives on global and social issues as they relate to our lives, as well as present explanations and solutions.
- Support successful practices in peace building.
- Build relationships among diverse cultures and traditions.
- Unite different point of views on common global issues
- Provide educational platforms for global and social challenges.
- Encourage people to actively engage in solving social and global problems of humanity.
- Encourage business owners to be part of a philanthropic economy to end problems like poverty and hunger.
- Provide an atmosphere of peace and understanding for all people, regardless of race and cultural tradition.
- Prepare annual reports for both non-governmental agencies (NGOs) and governmental agencies on social issues.

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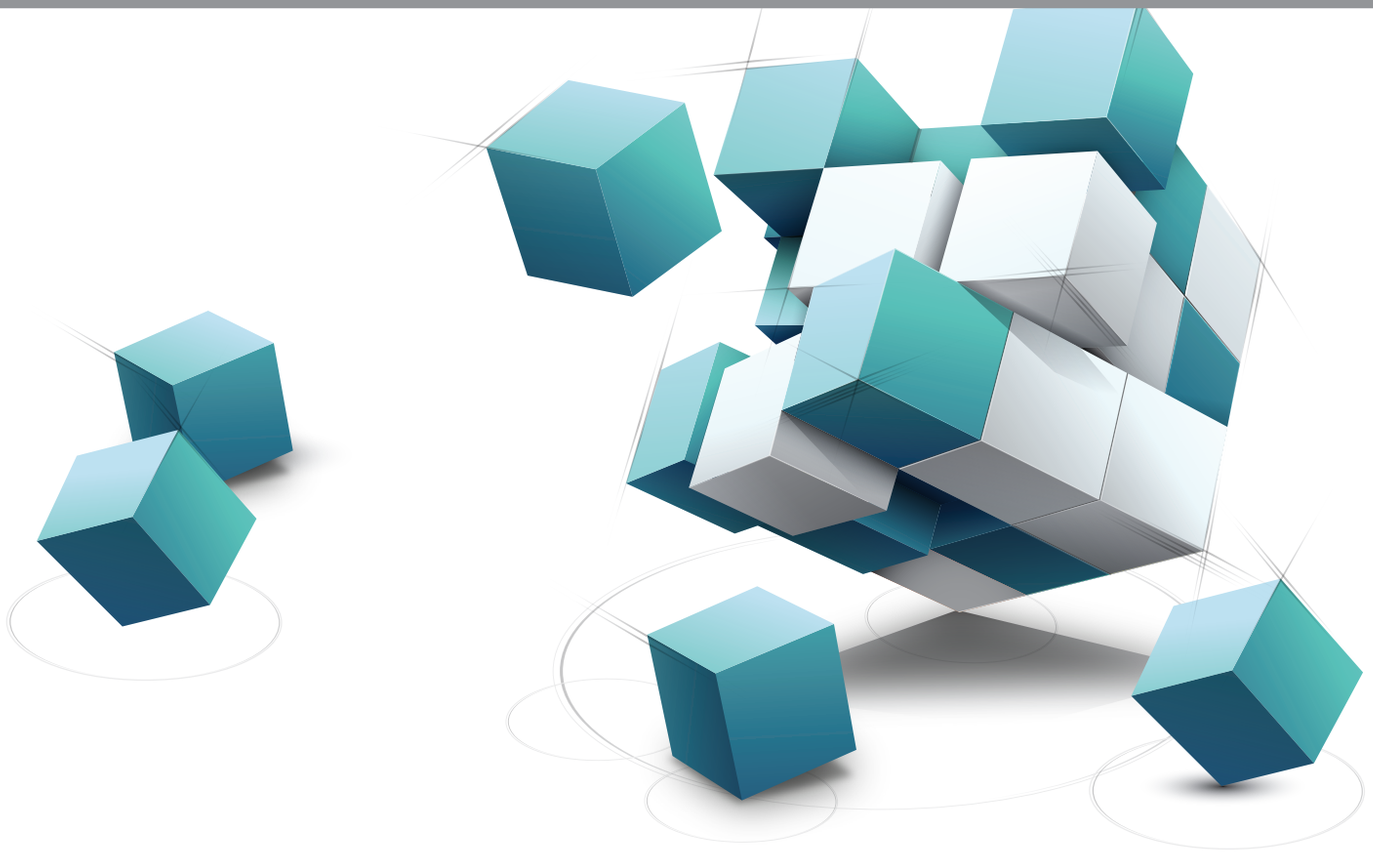
XENOPHOBIA

Why Do We Fear 'Others'?



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