

Learning about Power, Privilege and Oppression

Xenophobia

Xenophobia is the fear and hatred of strangers or foreigners. In contrast, racism has a broader meaning set, including "a belief that racial differences produce the inherent superiority of a particular race." Although they are similar, they are different enough that one can be both xenophobic and racist.

There are two types of xenophobia:

- **Cultural xenophobia** - Those who are xenophobic are against the objects and elements of a culture, such as clothing or language.
- **Immigrant xenophobia** - This type of xenophobia occurs when an entire group is not considered part of society. This usually results from mass immigration by one group into a country, though xenophobia can be present concerning groups that immigrated to the community quite some time ago. It can result in hostility and violence on a micro level or lead to greater persecution of the group that goes as far as genocide.

Examples of this include:

- The treatment of the Native Americans by colonists is considered the result of xenophobia. Native Americans' skin color, way of life, and religious beliefs were foreign to the colonists, who feared and hated them before ultimately harming them and driving them away.
- The murder of Black families by the Ku Klux Klan, a white supremacist hate group that targets black people, is another horrific illustration of xenophobia.
- Exhibits of humans from Africa, the Philippines, and tribal pygmies were displayed in the 19th century in human zoos. Such dehumanizing actions are horrifying illustrations of xenophobia.

Responding to Oppression in Our Work

- The Holocaust of World War II is a horrific example of xenophobia. It was an effort to exterminate the Jewish people due to their religious beliefs and practices.

Additional reading and resources:

- [“Examples of Xenophobia”](#) by Mary Gormandy White
- [“Xenophobia’ vs. ‘Racism: Where they overlap and how they differ”](#), Merriam-Webster Dictionary, Usage Notes

For more resource and reading, see our [Anti-Oppression Reading and Discussion Resource List](#).