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GA3 - The question of the rise of xenophobia and ultranationalist movements

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Forum: GA3 Social, Humanitarian & Cultural

Issue: The question of the rise of xenophobia and ultranationalist movements

Student Officers: María Margarita Oribe & Luciano Prato

Position: Chairs of GA3: Social, Humanitarian & Cultural.

Introduction

Conscious of the refugee crisis that primarily Middle East countries are currently facing, countries have taken different perspectives that either help solve the problem, or create a new one. After travelling countless hours, refugees get to their host countries only desiring to be accepted, in order to make the process of moving out of the country less tedious. Social norms have been disrespected due to labelling and prejudice, leading to stronger issues such as xenophobia. On the other hand, ultranationalism derives from the need of isolating the country in question from the rest, due to a feeling of superiority. Both of these issues have led to civil wars and are the threat that must be tackled in order to avoid potential future conflicts. With the excuse of the rise of terrorist groups, people are acting immorally towards certain ethnicities, races and religions, increasing the tension of xenophobia and ultranationalism.

Nowadays, more and more nations tend to have problems with the rise of xenophobic violence coming from their inhabitants. The most common claims are that immigrants use public education or healthcare without either being official residents/citizens or not paying taxes. Other times people point out that these migrants are applying or taking jobs that could be given to native citizens. However, the issue that moves governments towards xenophobic measures is the constant fear to terrorist attacks, which leads to widely illegal, racial profiling and detentions.

In the past anniversary of the Rwandan Massacre, on the 7th April, the UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres expressed his concern about the rise of racism, hate speech and xenophobia around the world. In his speech for the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, he urged member states to follow the Universal Declaration of Human

Rights and its 1st article, which reaffirms that "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."

Not only did Mr. Guterres acknowledge the alarming rise in xenophobia and racism, but also the disturbing amounts of ultra-nationalist, far-right and neo-Nazi parties all through Europe, as an answer to people's complaints against refugees, whose rights are being denied by these groups

Even though actions have been taken by member states, in the practice we can see that not simply is xenophobia not decreasing, but expanding and taking place in governments.

Definition of key-terms

Xenophobia:

The irrational fear or hate to something or someone different, foreign or strange. It is a political term, not a mental disorder or "Phobia". Not the same that "racism", as xenophobia is used as to refer to a foreign migrant, independently of the person's raze. This fear mainly relates to economic, cultural, and security threats that could be abstract or realistic in their nature.

Virtual xenophobia:

Someone who uses the internet through SMS, Text, and apps, or online in social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content to harm or frighten another person, particularly aimed to foreigners, their customs, their religions, etc.

Racism:

The hate or violence against people from a different raze or ethnic group. Racism has been used through history as to segregate groups and criticize their capacities, used by governments to bring majorities together and gain power (institutional racism). Examples of institutional racism are the Holocaust and the Apartheid.

Ultranationalism:

Refers to the extreme devotion to or advocacy of the interests of a nation, especially regardless of the effect on any other nations. It promotes the interests of one state or people above all others. It's a social, economic and political system based in identity of the people for their countries' self-sovereignty. Economic ultranationalism is usually linked with isolationism, as it involves the idea of a nation being able to self-supply and be independent from foreign commerce.

Fascism:

An authoritarian, right-wing, ultranationalist system of government which appeared in early 1900's in Italy, after First World War. Fascist parties during the 20th century used institutional racism to gain majority's support, like Hitler and Mussolini did.

General Overview

Brief history and context:

Even though xenophobia and ultranationalism both appeared before the 20th century, we should put our minds to the modern shapes they have. Xenophobia, as we know it, appeared in the 19th century. We say this because from then onwards is when we have a clear idea of nations and immigration. As regards to ultranationalism, we can point out that one of the main causes of its rise in the 20th century in countries like Italy or Germany was way different that the actual ones. At that time each of the ultranationalist parties had its own reasons to grow, while nowadays almost every one of them have the same reasons:

-Opposing unions (for example, the European Union)

-Opposing immigration as they describe it as a cost that the inhabitants are paying

-Opposing the entrance of Refugees or Asylum Seekers as they see them as a threat to national security and national culture

Tomas Rafa gave a practical example of what happens when ultranationalism is installed, for example, in Europe: "Slovaks don't like Hungarians, Czechs don't like Slovaks, Poles dislike Germans. Funnily enough, when it comes to ultra-nationalism, people are willing to overcome any differences and tensions, and they unite to fight against the common enemy, be it Syrian refugees, Muslims, homosexuals, or Romani." The problem nowadays is that these ultranationalist parties which are rising and taking over elections is that they do not encourage peaceful solutions to actual inconvenient, but violent responses to benefit their selves.

Governments that are plagued with ultranationalism today have the same ideas, closing borders to Muslim immigrants, suspending trade deals, withdrawing international aid to developing countries and reducing imports heading towards self-supply.

Xenophobia in the streets, fomented by ultranationalist and right-wing parties, has often leaded to violent attacks and hate crimes. Not only governments have to face the increasing rates of violent attacks but also the problem of the control over the number of attacks, as only one every four assaults (25%) is reported. Countries like Great Britain, the number of hate crimes in 2016 was a 40% higher than the same period of time in 2015, and

others like Germany (where the third most important political party is an ultranationalist and xenophobic organization) have reported over a 70% rise from 2014 to 2015.

Recently, we have witnessed the spectacular rise of far-right ultranationalist parties with high results in elections all through Europe. The French case is one of the most serious, with the Front National's breakthrough exceeding even the most pessimistic predictions. What these nationalist movements have in common is their chauvinist nationalism, their opposition to globalization (as a cause of diversification of religion, more specifically Islam) and to any form of European unity. Moreover, Europeans have been facing economic crisis since 2009, when interest rates on government bonds in Greece, Cyprus, Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Ireland skyrocketed. Economies were crumbling, debts were growing, and many welfare systems were not sustainable. A connection has been pointed out by Dr. Daphne Halikiopoulou, who remarked that "anybody who is economically insecure is considered to be a far-right party supporter", and therefore most of the countries suffering economic instability or expectations of instability tend to throw their votes over to far-right nationalist parties which promise to end up economic arrangements with the European Union (like the Brexit).

Major parties involved and their views

UNESCO:

Since 1949, the United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization has been constantly putting efforts to combat and reduce racism, anti-semitism and xenophobia, following the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (General Assembly resolution 217 A, 1948). As early as 1966, UNESCO recognized Apartheid as a "crime against humanity", and has implemented Human Rights education in the scholar curricula globally.

Germany:

Alternative for Germany (Alternative für Deutschland) is a German, right-wing, ultranationalist party which counts with 91 members (out of 709) in the Bundestag, the German Parliament. It also has 158 out of 1821 seats in the State Parliaments and 1 seat in the European Parliament. These rising numbers have worried the international community as Germany is not only one of Europe's most influential countries when it comes to economy but also as it is an important member state receiving refugees. If the number of ultranationalist parties' representatives keeps on rising, the status of those refugees may come to danger.

Numbers in respect to xenophobic attacks keep on rising:

- 3,533 attacks on migrants and asylum hostels in 2016

- 2.545 attacks on individual migrants

- 560 people injured, including 43 children

- 988 attacks on housing

- 217 attacks on refugee organizations and volunteers

South Africa:

During the last decade, South Africa has faced several violent incidents tied to xenophobia, even though the government has repeatedly stated that they got eyes on the matter. Last 24th February, South African police used stun grenades, rubber bullets and water

cannons to try to disperse anti-immigration protesters in the capital, Pretoria, and keep them from foreign nationals who had gathered to express alarm about recent attacks.

Israel:

Despite Israel's has large amounts of minorities, there has always been a latent conflict between the Israelis and de Arabs. This problem has grown in the last years due to expansion of terrorist diffusion, which as a consequence, has dragged groups to perceive the Palestinians citizens as a "hostile minority" and a "security risk". Even though Israel is recognized as a pro-immigration country, the most orthodox Jews, who tend to participate in Right-wing, nationalist parties have been accused of denying the entrance of Syrian refugees' boats in the past.

United States of America:

United State's president, Donald Trump, has clarified in several occasions that he will not only increase immigration controls and border security, but that he will also create a Deportation Task Force, suspend visas and impose an "extreme vetting". He insisted on establishing "screenings" (cyber-surveillance) on visa applicants as to get an "ideological certification", attempting against the right to privacy, to freedom of thought and to free speech.

Donald trump has temporarily banned the entrance of immigrants and refugees coming from Chad, North Korea, Venezuela, Iraq, Syria, Iran, Libya, Somalia and Yemen during his mandate, however, he has withdrawn many of the visa vetoes.

United Kingdom:

Since the "Brexit" plebiscite was carried out, the Home Office has declared a rise in hate crime rates of 41%, with 5468 incidents recorded. The idea of Great Britain leaving the European Union, and therefore being able to deny the entrance of refugees, led to a diffusion of 'anti-foreigner' sentiment.

Organization of American States (OAS):

The OAS has permanently been fighting towards healthy immigration and the eradication of xenophobia. In December 2017, the OAS together with the International

Migration Organization (IOM) have launched several campaigns, spreading the benefits of immigration in American countries, as to reduce de increasing rates of xenophobia.

Human Rights Watch (HRW):

HRC is an international Non-Governmental Organization that publishes reports on several different topics and compiles an annual World Report presenting an overview of the worldwide state of human rights.

Timeline of important events/Documents

1776-1789: The first clues of modern nationalism can be traced to the United States independence and the French Revolution.

1810: Beginning of nationalism in Latin-America with the formation of the first elected government in Argentina

1914: Beginning of World War 1

1917: Bolshevik Revolution

1919: Benito Mussolini creates the Fascist Party, afterwards invited to form part of the Italian government in 1921

1933: Adolf Hitler assumes power as Chancellor by the Nazi Party

1938: Beginning of World War 2

1947: Beginning of the Cold War

1948: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is redacted and ratified.

1948: Declared beginning of the Apartheid

1957: The USSR launches Sputnik, the first artificial earth satellite that would mark the first step of the space race and intense nationalism in both the USSR and the USA

2001: 11 of September attack on the World Trade Center, New York.

2001: The 2001 World Conference against Racism (WCAR), also known as Durban I

2009: Durban Review Conference, also known as Durban II

2011: Durban III Conference

2011: Beginning of the Syrian Civil War, leaving more that 5.6 million refugees and thousands of asylum seekers

UN involvement

Relevant UN treaties and events

General Assembly resolution adopted on 12 December 1997, establishes the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination and the convening of a world conference on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (A/RES/52/111)

General Assembly Resolution adopted on 7 September 2010, claiming the Status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia, and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia (A/RES/64/296).

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 19 December 2017, reaffirming the Freedom of religion or belief (A/RES/72/177)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 19 December 2016 in order to combat intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief (A/RES/71/195)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 19 December 2017, in order to combat intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief (A/RES/72/176)

World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, from 31 August to 8 September 2001, recognizes the fundamental importance for States, in combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance, to consider signing, ratifying or acceding to all relevant international human rights instruments, with a view to universal adherence.

Previous attempts to solve the issue

In Resolution 52/111, the General Assembly reaffirms its objectives as set forth in the Charter of the United Nations of achieving international cooperation in solving problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.

In Resolution 64/296, the General Assembly recalls all relevant Security Council resolutions on Georgia relating to the need for all parties to work towards a comprehensive peace and the return of internally displaced persons and refugees to their places of origin.

In Resolution 72/177, the General Assembly emphasizes that the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief applies equally to all persons, regardless of their religion or belief and without any discrimination as to their equal protection by the law and strongly condemns violations of freedom of thought.

In Resolution 72/176, the General Assembly calls for strengthened international efforts to foster a global dialogue for the promotion of a culture of tolerance and peace at all levels, based on respect for human rights and diversity of religions and beliefs.

In Resolution 71/195, the General Assembly condemns any advocacy of religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, whether it involves the use of print, audiovisual or electronic media or any other means.

In the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance the General Assembly recognizes that xenophobia against non-nationals, particularly migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers, constitutes one of the main sources of contemporary racism and that human rights violations against members of such groups occur widely in the context of discriminatory, xenophobic and racist practices;

Possible Solutions

The issue of xenophobia and ultra nationalist movements is still a complex problem to tackle in the 21st century. For solutions to be possible, major parties involved, countries, influence groups and organizations such as the UN must be willing to collaborate. Hence, measures aiming to tackle the rise of xenophobia and ultra nationalist movements will have to address the complex and deeply rooted causes behind it.

The General Assembly recognizes that racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance occur on the grounds of race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin and that victims can suffer multiple or aggravated forms of discrimination based on other related grounds such as sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, social origin, property, birth or other status.

It calls upon all participants in the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (2001) to intensify their efforts to establish a durable peace, to commit to enhanced confidence-building measures and to take immediate steps to ensure respect for human rights and create favorable security conditions to include minority groups.

Education can act as a mean to eradicate or diminish ultranationalist movements and xenophobia. There should be an intensive education by the Civic education missions in the various countries, such as the National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE) in Ghana to help educate their citizens on how to treat and live with foreigners living among them in their respective countries.

The issue does not include the tangible foreigners but also, and more effectively, 'Virtual' ones. People's fear is that refugees will come to a host country with the objective of imposing their culture, traditions and religion. Especially if we are referring to refugees from the Middle East, countries where most people are Islamic, they are automatically associated with violence and people that have no care whatsoever with human rights. The fact that Christians, Jews, Hindus, etc. can commit the same crimes as a person following the Islamic religion is, for some reason, discarded. A possible solution is to tackle the issue of virtual xenophobia and ultranationalist movements.

Most of these attacks are as a result of the large entry of foreigners either legally or illegally into a country, and it through that brings about a lot of economic and social burden on a country. Therefore, there is a need by every country to strengthen its immigration laws so as to help control the inflow of foreigners, and thus prevent or reduce it's counter effects on their economy and social life. Subsequently, the strengthen of the immigration laws will also help deter the immigrants from engaging in activities that they are not supposed to involve themselves in, such as elections, retail trade, illegal mining activities and others.

The General Assembly urges all Governments to take all necessary measures to combat new forms of racism, in particular by adapting constantly the means provided to combat them, especially in the legislative, administrative, educational and information fields.

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