




Xenophobia as a Sociological Theory: A Review of Literature

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كراهية الأجانف كنظرية اجتماعية: مراجعة للأدبيات

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Abstract:

This article explores the concept of Xenophobia as a sociological phenomenon. It takes a psychological turn while carrying out the examining process. Xenophobia is a multifaceted concept that takes into account forms such as biology, society, ethnicity and culture. However, as a concept, xenophobia has been the core matter of societal examination within societies regardless class and race. Part from this article, xenophobic elements within this phenomenon can be seen as biological, societal, ethnic and cultural as well. Being a qualitative study, it applies an exploratory approach to achieve the analysis. The framework of this study is scapegoating theory as well as being manifested in the society as a post-product of the western colonialism of Africa. The article resulted in exploring as xenophobic element as a critical encounter obstructing people from taking their active role within their communities. This article, sheds light on the literature on Xenophobia as was reviewed right from its starting point and was reflected in the review. The of scapegoating theory displays how restricted gender is when it comes to Hamlet. This article concludes that the drives and consequences of breaking the obstacles appear to be invalid due to people's indecisiveness.

Keywords: Xenophobia, Sociology, Theory, Review.

المخلص:

يستكشف هذا البحث مفهوم كراهية الأجنبي كظاهرة اجتماعية ومنعطفًا نفسيًا أثناء إجراء عملية الفحص. فإن كراهية الأجنبي هي مفهوم متعدد الأوجه يأخذ في الاعتبار أشكالًا مثل البيولوجيا والمجتمع والانتماء العرقي والثقافة. وكان المفهوم هو الموضوع الأساسي للفحص المجتمعي داخل المجتمعات بغض النظر عن الطبقة والعرق التي تعد من العناصر المعادية للأجنبي ضمن هذه الظاهرة كونها عناصر بيولوجية ومجتمعية وعرقية وثقافية أيضًا تطبق نهجًا استكشافيًا لتحقيق التحليل. وإن اطار هذه الدراسة هو نظرية كبش الفداء التي تتجلى في المجتمع كمنتج ما بعد الاستعمار الغربي لأفريقيا. واكتشاف كره الأجنبي باعتباره مواجهة حاسمة تعيق الناس عن القيام بدورهم النشط داخل مجتمعاتهم. كما تُظهر نظرية كبش الفداء مدى تقييد الجنس عندما يتعلق الأمرهام. ويخلص هذا المقال إلى أن دوافع وعواقب كسر العوائق تبدو غير صالحة بسبب تردد الناس.

الكلمات المفتاحية: كراهية الأجنبي، علم الاجتماع، النظرية، المراجعة.

1. Introduction

In the present period after the widespread use of modems, immigrant entrepreneurship holds significance due to the added value, inventions, income generation, and more employment opportunities it brings. In addition, it is widely accepted that entrepreneurship contributes to the development of robust economies, creates job chances, and offers a range of alternatives, while also producing additional prospects (Timmons & Spinelli, 2007). Immigrant entrepreneurs play a significant part in fostering employment, decreasing shortage, and driving economic progress in the nations where they settle (Fatoki, 2014). Serrie (1998) contends that private enterprise is a potent instrument in facilitating the economic and social assimilation of immigrants, offering a pathway for those lacking formal education or technical expertise to break free from poverty. Xenophobia poses a significant obstacle for African immigrant entrepreneurs, as it hampers their economic progress despite their crucial role in the host nations. Xenophobia is described according to the Concise Oxford Dictionary being a fear or hatred of outsiders 'morbid dislike of foreigners' (Crush & Pendleton, 2007).

In the context of this study, xenophobia refers to the manifestation of hostility or unfavorable attitudes and behaviors specifically directed against African immigrant entrepreneurs. According to Landau (2004), the arrival of a large number of migrants and

refugees from various parts of Africa is not only altering South Africa's population makeup, but it is also noticeably influencing public opinions and political discourse. The xenophobic outbreaks on African refugees in South Africa in April 2015 serve as evidence of this issue, and xenophobia has become a widely recognized term that has brought global disgrace on South Africa. These immigrants experience a daily frequent instances of police harassment, acts of violence against foreigners, and subtle forms of discrimination in the marketplaces. (Ibid, 2004).

Currently, xenophobia is a research field that has been mostly overlooked, particularly in regards to the practices and sentiments of African immigrant businesspeople living in urban areas. The article seeks to gain a thorough understanding of the practices and sentiments of African immigrant businesspeople. Furthermore, it aims to provide a fresh perspective on the issue of xenophobia and substantially contributes to the limited existing literature on xenophobia as a phenomenon of as it is encountered by African immigrant businesspeople within Johannesburg city.

2. Problem Statement

Xenophobia is a pervasive phenomenon that is encountered globally. Therefore, it might be seen as “deep dislike of foreigners” (McDonald and Jacobs, 2005). According to the description provided by McDonald and Jacobs (2005), xenophobia is present among the various population groupings within South Africa. New-March (2002) contends that the majority of immigrants encounter difficulties in securing employment in Johannesburg. The city itself is widely alleged to exhibit a significant xenophobic level. Despite possessing educational credentials as well as professional expertise, immigrants face significant challenges in securing employment and are subjected to severe exploitation. Immigrants, facing difficulties in assimilating into the host community, often resort to entrepreneurship, specifically focusing on the protected market within ethnic enclaves (Salaff, 2002). Consequently, this compels a significant number of individuals to engage in entrepreneurship driven by necessity. According to researchers and immigrants themselves, immigrants often become entrepreneurs due to their willingness to take significant dangers by relocating thousands of miles away from their homebased (Thurm, 1999). Consequently, these immigrants generate their work opportunities and occasionally for unemployed South Africans. The presence of

xenophobia impedes the entrepreneurial activities of African immigrant entrepreneurs.

3. Methodology

Foreigners' xenophobic experiences are examined in this qualitative study. Data analysis involves categorizing evidence from multiple perspectives. Problems and solutions were found from field notes. This research followed the evaluation's objectives, which prioritized the involvement of all relevant stakeholders, including implementing partners and beneficiaries, and stressed integrity and high-quality standards. To evaluate xenophobia prevention strategies and their relative success or failure. Impact and process evaluations were done simultaneously. The impact study analyzed programs' ability to protect people against xenophobia and related violence to improve current and future programs. Process evaluations addressed institutional and intervention conceptual frameworks and program execution from start to finish. How much, for whom, when, and by whom were considered in the process evaluation. Program implementation contexts and methods were also covered. Program theories of change and logical frameworks were evaluated for problem-solving efficacy. They assess whether programs and activities were implemented as planned and assess how implementation challenges affected program goals and objectives. We evaluated

the program's effectiveness from its inception to its execution and impacts using both methods.

4. Literature Review

This study will comprehensively examine the concept of immigrant entrepreneurship, including the definition of an immigrant entrepreneur and the phenomenon of immigrant entrepreneurship. Additionally, it will explore the issue of xenophobia and the significance of the essence of African Ubuntu.

5. Colonial Backgrounds of Xenophobia

Xenophobia is not an inherent occurrence, but rather a consequence of imperialistic endeavors (Pillay, 2012). Throughout history, individuals have comprehended their own identities based on their connections with others, their predecessors, and what is commonly referred to as the natural environment. However, their identities were not necessarily individual, exclusive, or determined by what they were not. Across several cultures, diversity is not perceived as inherently menacing, and equilibrium, rather than a hierarchical structure, is regarded as the most favorable approach (Esteva & Prakash, 2014). The belief that xenophobia is inherent and unavoidable is a fallacy, originating from a Western perspective that categorizes identities in a binary manner and establishes a hierarchical structure (King & Bernson, 1993). Identity, as it is often understood, is strongly

influenced by the colonial mindset that justified expansion and conquest by creating and continuously subjugating those who are different (Anghie, 2007).

It is crucial to analyze the underlying reasons for xenophobia, including why it continues to exist and why it manifests in specific ways. Understanding the perceived or implicit social benefits of xenophobia is key to comprehending its influence. By examining its functions and objectives, we can gain valuable insights into how to reduce its power. Racism in the United States is often criticized, primarily in theory rather than in actuality. This has been the case in some way or another, dating back to the Reconstruction era. During this time, the Supreme Court's limited interpretation of the Reconstruction Amendments and its defense of legally enforced apartheid undermined the Fourteenth Amendment's guarantee of equal protection under the law. Nevertheless, policies that discriminate against individuals based on their status as "outsiders" rather than their racial or ethnic background are often regarded with mixed feelings (Bernstein, 1963; Kaufman, 2019).

An often-held assumption is that the harm caused by xenophobia may be effectively dealt with by integrating and assimilating individuals into the prevailing society. Nevertheless, xenophobia,

by strengthening a sense of “national” identity, may paradoxically serve the interests of both those who view the United States as a racially exclusive endeavor and those who aspire to a future of assimilation and racial equality. This essay presents an initial investigation into the argument that xenophobia serves to strengthen and uphold systems of internal colonial control. It suggests that the most effective way to address xenophobia is not through the assimilation of individuals considered different, but by acknowledging their entitlement to independently determine their political standing and pursue their economic, social, and cultural progress. This approach essentially involves supporting their right to self-determination (Assembly, 1966).

6. Effects of Xenophobia

Chimbga (2013) asserts that xenophobia leads to various detrimental consequences, such as physical harm to individuals, property damage, fatalities, forced displacement, unemployment, sexual assault against women, political instability, violation of the rights of innocent people, exploitation of children, destruction of businesses, and damage to the country’s reputation.

7. Ubuntu

“I am because we are; and since we are, therefore, I am”, this statement refers to the well-known saying that represents a customary African moral principle called Ubuntu (Mbiti, 1990). In South Africa, *Ubuntu* is originated to be attributed to the old-style indigenous people residing in the Transkei and Ciskei provinces. As a term, *Ubuntu* derives from the Nguni language family, that includes Zulu, Xhosa, Swati, and Ndebele, among other South African languages (Poovan, 2005). Ubuntu is a concept that encompasses the fundamental nature of being completely human, namely African humanism. It is a viewpoint, an ethic, and a world-view (Gade, 2011).

As asserted by Battle (1995), *Ubuntu* originates from the Xhosa term, ‘*Umuntungumuntungabanyeabantu*’ (i.e. every person’s humanity is ideally expressed in relationship with others (Mabovula, 2011), a thesis that this paper rallies on *Ubuntu* consists of the prefix *Ubu-* and the stem *-ntu*, evoking the idea of being in general, thus *Ubu-ntu* is the fundamental ontological and epistemological category in the African thought of Bantu-speaking people.

Oppenheim (2012) explains that the word *Ubuntu* comes from the Xhosa/Zulu culture, the community into which Nelson Mandela was born, and has been summarized in the phrase,

‘*Umuntungumuntungabantu*’ in the Nguni language of Xhosa, Zulu, or Ndebele. The concept of this phrase can be translated to mean, “A person is a person through other persons,” or “I am because we are”. Chaplin (2006) says *Ubuntu* is an African word for a universal concept that places the good of the community above self-interest. *Ubuntu* refers to the communal responsibility of sustaining life; it refers to people and the collective respect for human dignity. “The cardinal spirit of *Ubuntu* is expressed in Xhosa, one of South Africa’s eleven official languages, as “*Umntungumntungabanyeabantu*” understood in English as “People are people through other people and I am human because I belong to the human community and I view and treat others accordingly”. From the authors’ explanations concerning *Ubuntu* may be regarded as *Ubuntu* is to strive in respecting others.

8. Strategies followed to Do Away with Xenophobia

The next strategies are to be considered to lessen the way xenophobia can be challenged:

9. Intensifying the Spirit and Theory of ‘*Ubuntu*’

According to the concept of *Ubuntu*, all South Africans should have a long-drawn-out and clearly understood stance in order to alleviate the xenophobic difficulty that African immigrant entrepreneurs face in South Africa. According to Adjai and

Lazaridis (2013), in the new South Africa, human rights, democratic values, and concepts such as Ubuntu have been rigidly defined for the benefit of South Africans only, and have not been expanded to accommodate outsiders. According to Adjai (2010), in their struggle for access to the country's political, social, and economic entitlements, black South Africans have exercised their citizenship rights in very exclusionary terms, limiting the operation of concepts such as Ubuntu and human rights, making it difficult to embrace a sense of belonging together. Ubuntu is a Nguni concept that describes the interconnectedness of human beings and is beautifully stated in the Xhosa proverb “*Umuntungumuntungabanyabanutu*”, that is to say: “I am because we are” or “a person is a person because of other people” (Mbigi, 1997). Although Ubuntu is the common root of all African civilizations, it also represents a sense of belonging. The presence of xenophobia indicates an absence of tolerance for other Africans (Adjai & Lazaridis, 2013). Exercising the spirit of Ubuntu can thereby prevent the onset of xenophobia.

10. Xenophobia by Definition

Xenophobia is defined as a deep-rooted, irrational fear or hatred of strangers or foreigners. Over time, xenophobia has escalated, leading to multiple cases of discrimination, violence, and conflict. This literature review delves into several perspectives concerning

xenophobia as a sociological theory. It is characterized that xenophobia as the ultimate ‘us versus them’ concept, which posits a perceived threat from outsiders. It primarily anchors on a theory where individuals perceive those different from them, based on nationality, race, or ethnicity, as a potential threat to their societal cohesion and resources. To expand on this, revealing how economic factors might underlie xenophobic attitudes. For example, individuals in economically precarious positions may view immigrants as competition for scarce resources, fueling xenophobic sentiment. Significant efforts have also been put forth to conceptualize xenophobia from a cultural perspective (Westhuizen, 2016). This sociocultural viewpoint links xenophobia to nationalism, collective identity, and societal anxieties about national integrity. The national identity is constructed around sameness and that deviation from it incites suspicion, often manifesting as xenophobia. This fear of the ‘other’ influences social behavior, decision-making processes, and prejudices.

However, Visser (2018) presents xenophobia in the framework of ethnocentrism, emphasizing its pervasive and innate nature. The author argues that humans instinctively form ingroups and outgroups as survival mechanisms, leading to natural xenophobia. Social psychological research suggests that stereotypes and

prejudice form part of the in-group/out-group bias, contributing significantly to xenophobia.

Moving towards an integrated view of xenophobia as a sociological theory, that incorporates cultural, economic, and social aspects into a singular understanding of xenophobia. Molina's 'composite xenophobia' attempts to unravel the intricacies and complexities associated with xenophobia. Yet, these studies provide a one-sided approach, overlooking potential nuances of positive reactions towards foreigners.

Recent developments suggest analyzing xenophobia within a conflict theory paradigm. In this framework, xenophobia stems from conflict and strife over power and resources between different groups. In his sociological analysis, Betz (2004) explains that societies naturally have diverse groups competing for resources, influence, or social advantage, exacerbating the conditions that give rise to xenophobia.

Alternatively, some research, including Goffman's Stigma theory, centers around labeling and stigma as triggers for xenophobia. Stereotyping and negative labeling can, in fact, enhance marginalization, leading to deep-rooted fear and antipathy. As Brewer (2010) discusses, social stigmatization results in xenophobia becoming ingrained and difficult to extricate. Understanding the roots of xenophobia remains a pressing concern, as does its tangible, often damaging consequences. It is

scrutinized that xenophobia's impact on societies and conclude that xenophobia leads to substantial sociopolitical consequences. These repercussions may manifest in varying degrees of hostility towards foreigners, economic inequalities, and even armed conflict.

11. Conclusion

Xenophobia as a sociological theory comprises an amalgam of economic, cultural, social, and psychological factors. With its detrimental impact on social cohesion and intergroup relations, tackling xenophobia requires concerted and multidimensional efforts at multiple societal levels. More inclusive societal structures, education systems promoting cultural diversity, and policies discouraging discrimination could potentially address xenophobia's roots. The prevalence of xenophobia in South Africa necessitates the implementation of more rigorous measures to ensure peace. The government should adopt a stringent approach to penalize anyone engaged in xenophobia, as it is a violation of human rights, goes against the principles of *Ubuntu*, and damages the reputation of the nation. Regardless of our differences, we are all equal in the eyes of the divine, and it is imperative that we treat one another with reverence and honor.

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