Exploring Xenophobia in South Africa through Sociocultural Len

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Abstract

This paper addresses the problem of Xenophobia in South Africa. The purpose of this paper is to find out the factors that caused Xenophobia, the challenges, and solutions for rebuilding social cohesion and reducing inequality in South Africa. The research is based upon theoretical concepts of social identity by Henri Tajfel and John Turner, relative deprivation of Runciman, Galtung's violence and conflict triangle, and the scapegoating hypothesis of Duncan. The library research method was used and literature, reports, and documents were analyzed. The preliminary findings are the social problems such as unemployment, lack of housing, and prejudice over business rival immigrants, and the cultural factors comprising language, clothing, music, and traditions of black immigrants; the driving factors causing Xenophobia. This paper concludes that public sector commitment to engage in skill development for employment, administering the provision of affordable housing, and promoting cultural diversity with structural transformation, can help heal Xenophobia, alleviate discrimination, and promote equality in divided South Africa.

Keywords: Social Identity, MA Kwerekwere, Xenophobia, Scapegoating Hypothesis, Structural Transformation

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สำรวจภาวะเกลียดชังชาวต่างชาติผ่านเลนส์สังคมวัฒนธรรมแอฟริกาใต้

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บทคัดย่อ

บทความนี้กล่าวถึงประเด็นปัญหาเรื่องภาวะเกลียดชังชาวต่างชาติในประเทศแอฟริกาใต้ วัตถุประสงค์ของบทความคือ เพื่อหาปัจจัยที่ก่อให้เกิดภาวะเกลียดชังชาวต่างชาติ ความท้าทายและแนวทางการแก้ปัญหาเพื่อฟื้นฟูความเชื่อมแน่นทางสังคมและลดความเหลื่อมล้ำในประเทศแอฟริกาใต้ โดยใช้แนวคิดวิจัยเรื่อง อัตลักษณ์ทางสังคมของเฮนรี ทาจเฟลและจอห์น เทอร์เนอร์ ประกอบกับความขาดแคลนเชิงสัมพันธ์ของรันซิแมน สามเหลี่ยมความรุนแรงและความขัดแย้งของกัลตุง และสมมุติฐานเรื่องแพะรับบาปของดังแคน ทั้งนี้เป็นการวิจัยเอกสารร่วมกับการวิเคราะห์วรรณกรรม รายงานและเอกสาร โดยผลการวิจัยหลักที่พบคือ ปัญหาสังคม เช่น การว่างงาน การขาดที่อยู่อาศัย อคติต่อผู้ย้ายถิ่นที่เป็นคู่แข่งทางธุรกิจ อีกทั้งปัจจัยทางวัฒนธรรม ได้แก่ ภาษา การแต่งตัว ดนตรีและประเพณีของผู้ย้ายถิ่นผิวดำ ล้วนแต่เป็นปัจจัยผลักดันให้เกิดภาวะเกลียดชังชาวต่างชาติ โดยสรุปคือ ความพยายามจากภาครัฐในการพัฒนาทักษะเพื่อการทำงาน บริหาร การจัดที่อยู่อาศัยราคาประหยัดและส่งเสริมความหลากหลายทางวัฒนธรรม ด้วยการเปลี่ยนแปลงโครงสร้าง จะสามารถลดภาวะเกลียดชังชาวต่างชาติบรรเทาการเลือกปฏิบัติและส่งเสริมความเท่าเทียมกันจากการแบ่งแยกภายในประเทศแอฟริกาได้

คำสำคัญ: อัตลักษณ์ทางสังคม มาเควียรี่ เควียรี่ ภาวะเกลียดชังชาวต่างชาติ แพะรับบาป สมมุติฐานการเปลี่ยนแปลงโครงสร้าง

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Problem statement

South Africa in 1994 emerged as a new democratic nation with multiculturalism and ethnic diversity, the post-apartheid society. Intra-regional armed conflicts within Africa; the 60s and 70s civil war in Nigeria, the Congo war, the Rwandan genocide in the 90s, and the Ethiopian and Eritrean war in 1999, all fostered human mobility in the region. (Bakken & Rustad, 2018). Political instability, security threats, and governance challenges exacerbate poverty, leading people to desert their place of origin in search of a more secure destination. (Kaziboni, 2019). Being an emerging nation with constitutions anchored in the rules of law, respect for human rights, and a better economy, South Africa appealed to most migrants to move in. It has become the highest recipient of migrants in the region. (Chikalogwa, 2018)

Escalating urban development introduced rapid industrialization which resulted in urbanization and labor migration. As in any developing country, industrialization in South Africa attracted migrant laborers from neighboring countries in search of better employment. Black foreigners competing with locals in the job market contributed to serious social tension. The massive influx of people into the cities created housing problems. Increased migration legal or illegally placed pressure on people fighting for scarce resources, resulting in increased unemployment and impoverishment in the dislocated communities. Social intolerance of immigration from other African countries has been rising, creating a growing rate of physical violence and crime in big cities. Inter-ethnic and interracial tension worsened in South Africa.

The attitudes towards non-nationals, especially black foreigners living and working in South Africa were heavily influenced by the ideology of **Makwerekwere,** the non-belonging. The cultural differences are consequently perceived as otherness rooted in prejudice, inflated contempt, and bred violence. The fear of migrants taking jobs, housing, and retail businesses caused hostility toward foreigners. The anti-immigrant movement started in 2000, however, the evening of 11 May 2008 in Alexandra township of Johannesburg intensified to the stage of aggression and violence, spreading all over the region, causing severe destruction, deaths, and displacement. The Xenophobic violence in South Africa was the most harmful and damaging in history and persists.

Research questions

There are push and pull factors ranging from social, economic, structural, institutional, political, and cultural as root causes of Xenophobia. The research looked at the problem from a sociocultural aspect and explored the two answers for the following;

1. What are the sociocultural factors and challenges causing Xenophobia in South Africa?
2. What are the solutions for rebuilding a cohesive society in South Africa?

Research purpose

The main purpose of the research is to identify the factors of xenophobia from the sociocultural dimension. Economic factors have mainly been studied to respond to the problem, however, the sociocultural dimension is critical if the challenges are to be comprehensively analyzed, and solutions to strengthen social cohesion in South Africa to be completely addressed.

Analytical framework

Various documents are approached and data analysis is carried out examining the root causes of xenophobia in South Africa and how it affects the society. Solutions for rebuilding a cohesive society are induced through the interpretation and assessment of the collected information. The research is conducted applying the following analytical framework.
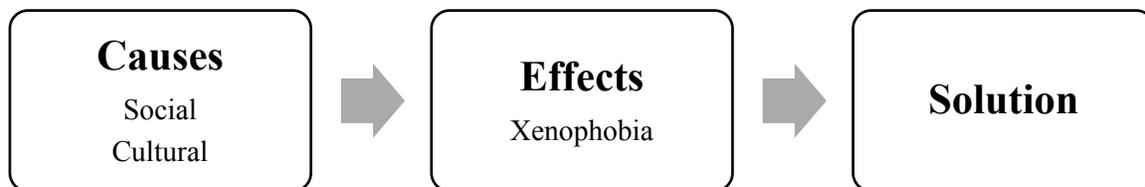
Causes
Social
Cultural

→

Effects
Xenophobia

→

Solution

Figure 1: Cause, Effect and Solution

Definition of terms

The followings explain the terms; Social identity, MA kwerekwere, Xenophobia, Scapegoating hypothesis, Structural transformation

Social identity is a term proposed by Henri Tajfel (1970) to refer to a person's cognitive perception of who they are and which group they belong to in terms of physical, social, and mental characteristics in a society. The perception gives a person a sense of belonging regarding social standing and it plays an important role in shaping the attitude and behavior of that particular person. Belonging facilitates valuational significance to the member and sometimes enforces negative aspects of the other group, to enhance their social image.

Makwerekwere is a derogatory expression referring to black immigrants in South Africa regarded as strangers, foreigners, and non-belonging. The locals considered them the out-groups, treated and excluded them as foreigners who did not have the rights to formal and informal benefits of citizenship. The expression identified foreignness, the specific strange sounds of foreign languages, especially languages spoken by African foreigners in South Africa, and has become an indication of social differentiation and discrimination.   (Isike, 2013, p. 95)

Xenophobia originally is a Greek word combined with Xenos which means strangers or guests and Phobo meaning fear or panic. It is the dislike of or prejudice against people of other countries. It is an extreme feeling towards people considered to be strangers and the intense disapproval of their customs, and cultures unusual and unknown to the locals. The Xenophobic effect is the avoidance and rejection of anyone considered an outsider. The superiority perceived by the locals condescended to people of other cultures or countries negatively. Xenophobia is not just a sentiment but also entails acts of violence physical, as well as psychological, and social (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2022)

Scapegoating hypothesis explains the anger and hatred of the local population directed towards the black foreigners blaming them as the primary cause of all the hardship and difficulties they suffer. The sentiment of the South African is that the African immigrants have nothing to offer to the country and have only come to take out and cause problems. The growing unemployment rates, inequality in income among the blacks, and endemic impoverishment evoke hostility towards foreigners in the belief that one is getting less than one feels entitled to. The poverty-stricken urban informal settlements left the marginalized indigenous population with the perception of being deprived of the social benefits they are entitled to. (Duncan, 2012, p.107)

Structural transformation in the case of Xenophobia in South Africa refers to the changes required of the political, economic, and social structure causing inequality and discrimination. As the county was heading toward a globalized and highly internationalized economy, the development of institutions, organizations, and governance is critical. Insufficient capabilities, development in

technology and digitalization, and lack of well-designed and effective industrial and economic policies resulted in power asymmetries. The focus of this paper is on the sociocultural dimension, however, interlocking impacts such as increased corruption and maladministration were founded to have rooted resentment giving rise to Xenophobia.

Literature review

Social identity theory; the cause of conflict

The social identity theory of Tajfel and Turner uncovered the dimension that causes xenophobic violence in South Africa. Social psychologists Henri Tajfel and John Turner in the 1970s formulated social identity theory in which individuals define their own identities by the social group they belong to. The groups have become their source of pride and self-esteem. The belief, values, and practices of the in-group have a great influence on the members, they tend to behave uniformly adjusting to the group members. Appropriate behavior, manner, and character are defined by the norms of the group. With the identification, arise the segregation of in-group and out-group. The emphasis has been centered on the differences the out-group holds. The negative consequences lead to social categorization where people are judged based on the group rather than as an individual. The in-group usually looks for the negative aspects of the out-group to enhance their superiority. The similarities share in the in-group becomes favorable social standing to discriminate and breed prejudice over the out-group.

Social identification invested self-esteem in the group member and maintains positive favoritism of their group and against the out-group. Members usually adopt the identity of the social group they categorize themselves to belong to and conform to the norm of the group. People tend to think positively about the group they belong to and that leads to rejection and hostility towards the out-group. The social comparison often perceives the in-group as having a higher social status viewing the out-group as inferior and significantly marginalizing the out-group to derogate them. The in-group identifies the out-group as a rival and begins to see them as competitors. Especially when viewing oneself as having lower social status in comparison to the out-group, the social competition becomes intense. The prejudice may turn into extreme resentment and hatred; the negative attitude is triggered into violent acts. The discrimination resulting from stereotyping and self-protection escalates further to hostility and conflicts. (Tajfel & Turner 1978, p 40)
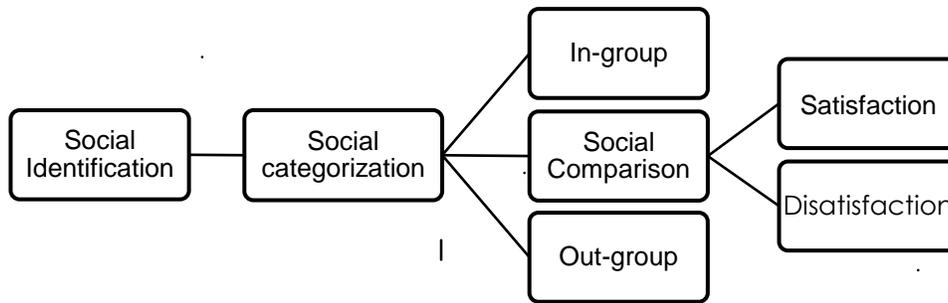
Figure 2: Social Identity Theory

Source: Tajfel & Turner. The social identity theory of intergroup behavior. (1978, pp 9-24)

The impact of Relative Deprivation in society

The xenophobic attacks in South Africa have always been associated with social comparison between locals and fellow African immigrants. The social comparison can further be linked to the theory of relative deprivation. The discomfort and dissatisfaction in life, pressure a person to compare one's relative situation to that of the other. The perception is that the person may feel he or she deserves to have the good thing in life as those others enjoy. The feeling of inability and exclusion to access the good things in life was expressed in the theory of relative deprivation by sociologist Runciman (1966). It is a judgment that one is deprived of social requirements in contrast to the standards some others possess resulting in anger and resentment. The impact of relative deprivation is so influential on attitudes and behavior that it tends to produce unwanted stress and aggressiveness. People upwardly compare themselves to the other group and perceive the disadvantages and assert it as unfair. The subjective evaluation leads to frustration, anger, and hostility. Relative deprivation is somehow considered the root cause of looting, rioting, terrorism, and armed conflicts. When people feel they are denied the resources they are entitled, their behavior can turn to socially disordered acts claiming their grievances.

Runciman started with a person feeling about the lack of resources in life. The dissatisfaction triggered the feeling of envy after discovering that the other person possesses the thing he or she lacks. The ardent desire to take hold of the thing and the belief that they are entitled to have that, cause the feeling of unfairness and inequality. The discrepancy between life's expectations and the actualities gives rise to discontent and consequently evolves into protest, instability, and violence. Regarding relative deprivation, Runciman came up with two distinct characterizations; egoistic and fraternalism. The egoistic relative deprivation is bounded to the individual and it is personal. The unfavorable social

status in contrast to other better-off members causes the feeling of deprivation and envy. The perception of inequality by the individual exists within the group. Contrarily, fraternal relative deprivation is associated with massive social groups feeling devoid of their rights. The demanding and redressing of grievances can turn into social movements, spark a revolution, and cause social unrest.

Addressing the elements of violent conflict

The theory of conflicts triangle by Galtung gives a more comprehensive understanding of Xenophobia in South Africa and the conflicts caused. Conflicts, according to Galtung involve persons, groups, or societies. Intergroup conflicts involve two or more groups confronting each other with disagreement, tension, and hostility. Competition is one of the main factors contributing to intergroup conflicts. Intercultural conflict occurs between two groups, usually the dominant majority and the minority. The different cultures entail contrasting values imposing conflicting rules that have great impacts on attitude and behavior. Diverse cultures in society give rise to intolerance and crisis.

There are three factors if combined and worked together, result in violent conflict. According to Galtung's conflict triangle theory, behavior, attitude, and contradiction are the three elements that contribute to conflict around the world. (Galtung, 1969, p.72). Attitudes and assumptions such as racism and discrimination at the latent level do not cause conflict yet, a factor to infer it. It is not visible but deep down, it is the root cause of the conflict. Accumulated conflict experiences in the past heap up negative perceptions and produce a bitter personality thereby resulting in resentment. However, the hidden subconsciousness can be observable in the action and behavior of a person. Conflicting parties may recognize the latent emotion underlying the behavior of others and even their own. Attitudes of the conflicting parties tend to become more defensive or even hostile as the conflict escalates. Attitude in conflict situations influences one's behavior. Sometimes attitude can also be affected or even changed by the behavior of others. The dominant group usually monopolizes their culture and asymmetrically inflicts language, customs, traditions, and norms, cross-pressuring the minority. The conflict atoms as termed by Galtung, the contradiction deep inside lead to harm and destruction if the problem is highly solution resistant. The intolerance in its extreme form can turn into violent killing or in a milder reaction, socially marginalizing the other group.

Contradiction is one of the components of conflict, that exists between conflicting parties due to irreconcilable differences. Pursuing the same goal, one has it and the other is deprived of it. Competing for scarce resources turns into disputes. Disagreement and debating on belief, opinions,

and concerns escalate aggressive energy within, stimulates negative emotion, and transmits significant tension. Contradiction in the form of inequality and disputes internalizes within and brews aggressiveness to the surface. The incompatible value or goals of the opponents result in frustration when the goal of one is blocked by the other. The opposing positions set the conflicting parties as enemies. The contradiction arises through the clash of interests and intentions between the parties. This leads to aggressiveness and from there to aggression which is in the form of destructive behavior. When aggressiveness accumulates it turns into hostility. Both elements; attitudes and contradiction, at the manifest level erupt into observable behaviors such as violence, insurgency attacks, and discriminatory acts. The destructive behavior tears down hurts and harms. Similar to a fire breaking out when three elements namely oxygen, heat, and fuel combine, the conflict also requires a negative attitude, aggressive behavior, and contradiction to trigger the bitter end. At the manifest level all the underwatered icebergs, here, the hidden unseen attitude surfaced and become visible. The dynamic contradiction evolves into destructive actions and violence, empirical and observable.
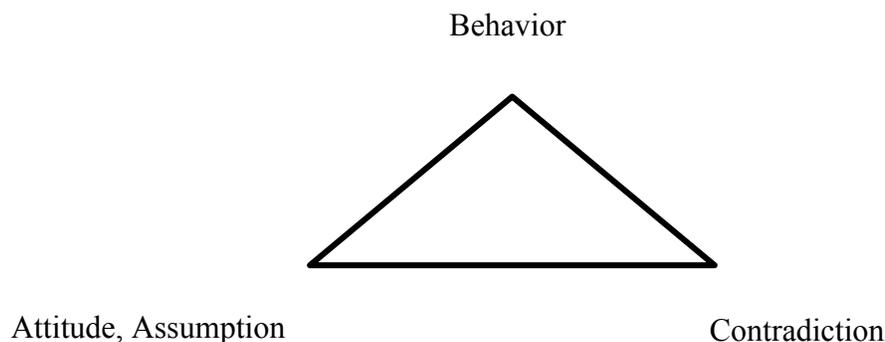
Behavior

Attitude, Assumption   Contradiction

Figure 3: The conflict triangle
Manifest Level: Empirical, observed, conscious
Latent Level: Theoretical, inferred, subconscious
Source: Galtung, J. Peace by Peaceful Means. (1996, p.72)

Uncovering the root of violence

The root causes of violence occurring in South African society can be traced through the violence triangle model presented by Galtung. The triangle can also be used to identify the violence, whether the manifestation is at an individual level or structural in society. Violence means harming and hurting. (Galtung, 1969. P2). It is an emotional, verbal, or physical action aiming to dominate, destroy or diminish others and even the own self. It takes root in attitude and transforms into behavior.

It can either be institutional or structurally embedded in policies and systems. Violence according to Galtung is constructed of three dimensions; direct violence, structural violence, and cultural violence. Direct violence is visible and could be identified easily. Direct violence is exercised by an actor to combat the receiver as an enemy. It can either be in a form of physical such as assault and killing or it can also be psychological causing trauma, anxiety, or stress. Galtung stressed that direct violence impairs people of their fundamental human needs and impedes them to meet their needs and reach their full potential. Sometimes violence is in a form of a threat to enforce asymmetric power.

Structural violence in the form of social stratification usually discriminates and deprives a certain group of people of their needs, welfare, and rights. It is like the part of an iceberg below the waterline which is not visible, yet it is embedded in society in the form of laws and institutions. Structural violence occurs when the established set of principles are discriminatory and exclusive when individuals and groups are being treated differently. The intertwining of an economic system with social relationships set off complex relationships of power. Those in power gain access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making, and some other groups suffer marginalization and discrimination with their rights infringed. Political repression and economic exploitation do not cause direct harm to the body and mind, yet create discomfort and affect a person or group of people physically and mentally. People in power take advantage of their status and retain benefits for themselves at the expense of those with less political power. Rich people or nations invest in the business and exploit the poor for their economic gains. The economic policy and the social system cause unfair distribution of wealth and injustice in society. The effect of structural violence is not distinctively visible and the purpose seems unintentional. It makes reality opaque that the act of violence is not seen as violent and legitimate. The entrenched structure in society produces a protracted impact and causes severe damage in a long run.

Cultural violence, as stated by Galtung, involves religion, ideology, language and art, empirical science, and formal science, all the distinctive and established norms become absolute and are exercised uncritically by the dominant groups. (Galtung, 1969.P 201) It is rooted in stereotypes and prejudices; the by-products of prevailing attitudes and beliefs and consequently causes incontrovertible violence either direct or structural in nature. The majority forces to imprint their own culture on the minority to gain asymmetric influence and gradually devour them completely. The autonomous culture takes so strong a grip that it has become unquestionable. The injustice done thereby prevails. Culture has become the great legitimizer of violence. The ideology of just war does

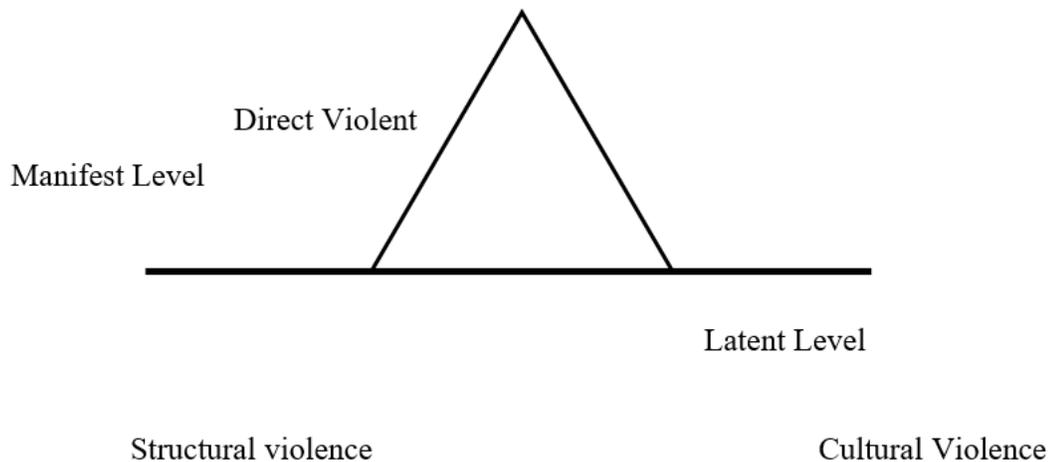not see killing as criminal activity anymore. The marginalization and exclusion inevitably lead to violence.

Figure 4: The violence triangle

Source: Galtung, Johan. Cultural violence. (1990, p 295).

The blame game; scapegoating hypothesis

Scapegoat terminology and its origin can be traced back to the time of the Old Testament when the goat was symbolically taken as a replacement for the transgression committed and was sent to the desert carrying the community's sins. It is an act of accusing some other person of the failure and problem oneself. It serves as an excuse to explain the incapability while the person can still sustain a positive image.

Scapegoating hypothesis states that xenophobia occurs when indigenous populations encounter economic hardship and difficulties turning their anger against foreigners and placing blame on them. That happened primarily because the foreigners snatched the limited resources such as housing, education, health care, and employment when the locals hold high expectations during the transition. The foreigners become a target to blame for ongoing deprivation and poverty, and the cause of all their difficulties. (Duncan, 2012, P.107). The growing population of black immigrants flocking to the cities in search of jobs and employment, economically depressed the locals into desperate and brutalized poverty.

The growing urban communities live in cramped areas and makeshift shacks with very low incomes. The poverty-stricken urban community with informal settlements condemns the African for

their impoverishment and their prejudice against the immigrants grows day by day. (Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC, 2008). As the society is plagued by protracted economic crisis and resources have fallen short, the situation escalates contempt towards the black foreigners for all the troubles encountered. The locals under socioeconomic depression with little access to wealth and power, scapegoat the immigrants as trouble igniters and impose all the blames on them. The prejudice extended to disliking the language, culture, and way of life and the resentment grew further as intermarriage pervades the community.

Duncan related his hypothesis to the former isolation during the apartheid where South Africa was detached from the international and regional community. The country closed itself to the rest of the world regarding foreigners as threats to the politics, economy, and the nation. The resentment inflicted by the apartheid could not be erased after the post-conflict era and transformed itself into disbelief and prejudice towards any foreigners including fellow African. Endemic poverty according to Duncan, was the driving force for the scapegoating. The economically and socially depressed South African in brutalized poverty was entrapped and in finding an escape the black immigrants have become fertile ground for Xenophobia allegation. To add to his hypothesis, he also cited relative deprivation as another actor for scapegoating. The perception of fellow African snatching scarce resources and feeling of inequality and deprivation led to insulting the outer group. Finally, he speculated that the legacy of racism and the impact of colonialism and apartheid retain the exercise of scapegoating. The social segregation whether a person is an entitled citizen or excluded from membership, the nationhood causes all the proclamation that foreigners are toxic.

Methodology

The research employed a qualitative approach and was done using the library research method. The triangulation strategy is applied to gather data and interpret information from various sources such as newspapers, video records, journal articles, reports, prior research by scholars, and documents. Being an outsider, a careful look into different documented lived experiences of insiders helps to increase the validity and reliability of the findings. Documents are then analyzed and an in-depth understanding of the research questions was induced through a comparative analysis of the sources. The sources served as foundations for analyzing root causes and challenges.

Findings

Xenophobia in South Africa

The 1994 reformation of South Africa to a democratic country introduced industrialization and stabilized the economy. The increasing arrival of immigrants following the development laid an economic burden on the local population. (Isike, C & Isike, F, 2013). Competing for scarce resources for instance, employment which is taken away by the cheap labor, securing ownership of houses originally aimed for South Africa employing corruption, influencing local retail business, the foreigners committing the crime, rape, theft, and fraud in the country and cultural factors such as marrying South Africans, dominating and diluting the culture, all trigger the xenophobia. Though the European foreigners do not pose an issue, the black Africans are regarded as throwaways who have nothing good to offer to the country. (Ggola, 2008 & Matsinhe, 2011)

The discriminatory attitude was frequently encountered daily by the other African nationals and immigrant shopkeepers were attacked from time to time on purpose. Looting, destroying of houses and shops, door-to-door searches and personally intimidating foreign residents were disturbingly common. The attacks in Alexandra were the worst to sparkle hostility, leaving 62 people dead, 670 wounded, and 100,000 displaced (Misago. et al., 2010, p. 20). The Xenophobic violence in South Africa varied in the form of murder, assaults, looting, robbery, arson attacks, displacement, intimidation, and threats. From 2008 to 2015 up to 350 foreigners were killed. The inflammatory remarks from the Zulu monarch, King Goodwill Zwelithini in March 2015, asking foreign nationals to pack their belongings and go back to their countries, spurred another widespread wave of attacks and the Xenophobia prolonged onto the present**.**

The sociocultural causes and challenges

Employment

South African locals always argue that foreigners are taking jobs from them. ("BBC News", 2015). Due to school dropouts, lack of higher-level education, and overage, native participation in the labor market was surpassed by the immigrants. Most of the immigrants coming to South Africa were educated persons, skilled professionals, and economic refugees escaping conflicted areas. (Foko, 2015). International migrants in South Africa are more likely to take jobs that locals are not willing to do. Opportunities in the informal sectors in such professions as mechanics, construction laborers, traditional medicine practitioners, electricians, plumbers, and tavern and shebeen operators have become major attractions for the migrants. (Masikane, C.M, et al., 2020, p.8). The government's inability to control and prevent low-wage labor from neighboring countries from entering and working in South Africa caused troubles in the labor market. The South African placed blame on black

foreigners for the country's high unemployment problems, yet the economy partially has to rely on foreign workers for the skill requirement. There was a growing unemployment rate from 22.5% in 2008 to 25.1% in 2014. The Migrating for Work Research Consortium (MiWORC) released a report in 2014 stating that 82% of the working population aged between 15 and 64 were "non-migrants and only 4% could be classed as "international migrants". The discrepancies between perception and reality are distinctively high. According to research, international migrants are far more likely to run their businesses. Eleven percent are "employers" and 21% are classed as "self-employed".

The labor market is demanding an increasingly skilled and productive workforce and the weakness of South African human capital policies is limiting opportunities for those who were particularly disadvantaged and poor. The government still was unable to address human capital upgrading in education and skill training, and scapegoating the immigrants for taking the jobs remained in the perception of the locals. The South African government itself has very weak control over the regulations without meeting stringent immigration laws. (Tati, 2008). With the economic upheaval, foreign nationals have become scapegoats. To add to the adversity, government leaders often ignite resentment with their election slogan to get rid of illegal foreigners and misleading the crowds and provoking hatred. Political leaders commonly cited xenophobic tropes about foreigners taking jobs and falsely accusing them of mischief and crimes. With the remarks, the situation worsened and the immigrants were threatened, harassed, and humiliated by locals, leading to the xenophobic attacks that followed.

Housing

Housing inadequacy, according to UN-Habitat 2015, is caused by population growth and rural-urban migration. People who could not make a living from farming moved to urban areas in search of jobs. Urban lifestyle seen as the cradles of civilization attracted many people from rural areas dreaming to improve the quality of life. Urbanization in South Africa raised the challenge of accommodating the increased population. The government that came into power in 1994 had given an electoral promise to work on building a house for every South African (Bradley, 2003). African National Congress, 1994 affirmed that one of the Reconstruction and Development Program's priorities was to provide the homeless with housing. The high expectation fostered people from rural areas and farms to mobilize into towns in the hope of getting free houses.

Housing finance institutions were not accessible to the majority of poor and low-income families. The urban poor could not afford housing and weak governance in policy and

planning, particularly regarding land and urban management resulted in land speculation and grabbing. African Public Service Distribution and Performance Review (APSDPR, 2021). Corruption also hinders the delivery of affordable housing. The corrupt activities of some government employees lead to people not being on housing waiting lists or people who do not qualify for government houses, like foreigners being granted preference in the allocation of houses. (Maluleke, et al., 2019). The incapability to tackle housing problems in the urban area led to the growth of slums and poorly serviced informal settlements in the cities. Many urban residents from 75% to 99% live in squalid slums of ramshackle housing. The majority of the non–nationals pay a higher rent than the locals to secure housing. (Sadie and Borger, 2004). The monthly rental cost is far greater than what they can afford and with the limited fund, they are forced to accommodate their non-working relatives cramming them under one roof. (Belvedere et al 2003). The extremely overcrowded district cut off from infrastructure, urban utilities, and services such as water and electricity, left the residents with negative effects on their health and security. The locals were devastated by the economic and living conditions they are experiencing – poverty and inequality, chronically high unemployment, high crime rates, and poor public services.

Interracial Marriage

The widespread and ingrained belief of South African that immigrants are stealing their women has been a key black-on-black racism stirring up jealousy and hatred. Anti-immigrant attitudes can prominently be seen in the fight and competition for women by black African immigrants and black South African men. African women generally say that South African men are lazy, after accusing immigrants of taking all their jobs for lesser pay. They do not work but waste their time drinking, sleeping, and playing dice. Unemployed men are not able to support the family, therefore, women looking for men who can make money and this happens to be the immigrant. (Tafira, 2014, p.159). South African women living in poverty-stricken, slum-like conditions with poor access to financial support, usually look for men who can provide them with physical and financial security. Women who married African migrants were criticized and blamed for not choosing South African men. Their fellow South African men expressed resentment about their women being lured with money and taken by migrants. They accused the women of the love of money and giving themselves up to be sold out to foreigners.

The South African men expressed their sense of ownership and regarded the act of intermarriage as a betrayal. (Sindane, 2019, p.50) It made the women feel guilty, and their decision

was regarded as inappropriate. The interracial married woman suffers social discrimination and exclusion from the family circle and community. African immigrants are perceived and treated as being different from South African people and this forced the individual to a difficult position where social integration is unimaginable. The marriage evokes prejudice among fellow locals. Conflicting views on raising children, methods of disciplining children, and choosing religious affiliation for them have become crucial issues that can trigger social conflict anytime.

Physical Appearance and Behavior

The South African mining industry was one of the sources that have been attracting large numbers of migrant workers from neighboring countries, such as Mozambique, Malawi, and Lesotho. In reality, the South African and the outer groups termed black immigrants of neighboring countries do not have many distinctive differences in skin color and socioeconomic status. They share historical ancestries, similar traditions, and slightly differing languages in the region. However, the biocultural differentiation stressed the visible otherness and placed uneven loathing on the African foreigners. The physical features, their bearing, the clothing style, and the inability to speak the indigenous language, make the Congolese and Nigerians easily identifiable as the others.

South African's psychological differences of African foreigners as having big noses, big lips and round heads, having a complexion too dark or too black, dressing funny, walking in certain different ways and having inoculation marks, having big bodies, and huge shoulders are the main cultural factors for identification. (Harris, 2002). African foreigners are imagined as primitives who emit foul body odors. (Matsinhe, 2011, p 305). Racism, the attitude towards cultural differences at a latent level breeds contempt but often surfaced onto hostility and violence. The physical features that are distinctly strange were taken as an advantage to victimize the African foreigners. Since immigrants are looked down upon, crime and violence against them are culturally acceptable. The complexion, the dress, the walking style, and the accent are the determining factors for South African police to suspect and arrest undocumented migrants. People's physical appearance determines their citizenship, nationality, and legality. The South African Police Service and the Department of Home Affairs take these identifications for granted to treat the African foreign nationals as illegals, criminals, and drug traffickers

Language

Language has become another determining factor for differentiation. With diverse races and linguistic varieties, social integration and cohesion have become a barrier. South Africa is a place where 11 official languages are spoken and most of its migrants are from the neighborhood like Mozambique, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, and Namibia. Usually, migrants adopted the destination language where they settle down. The government did not attempt to integrate the migrants on the linguistic level. The consequences of ignoring the fact result in the social marginalization of language.

The accent of the person acts as a crucial signifier of authentic nativity or strangeness. The reaction of the natives changes significantly upon hearing the different accents as they realize the non-South African, "makwerekwere". The accent always poses as a test of nativity or legality. (Matsinhe, 2011, p. 305). If the accent does not sound like authentic nativity, it is subject to scrutiny. Speaking the language, pronouncing, and mastering the accents does not guarantee sufficient signifiers of the nativity. The non-nationals were frequently harassed and arrested because they speak the indigenous language differently. The inquisitive police officer can additionally ask thorough questions for further information. African immigrants thus restrain themselves from speaking their languages not to encounter problematic persecution. Not speaking the local indigenous language has become a crime to be humiliated and tormented. The hatred is so intense that these contradictions stay at a latent level, with all these trapping practices surfacing to hostility and causing violence.

Solutions for rebuilding a cohesive society in South Africa

Tackling unemployment

Sociocultural factors causing Xenophobia unleashed in the research, have to be addressed to eliminate its consequential effects that are damaging South African society. Unemployment is partly due to qualification deficiency, hence, educational institutes such as technical and vocational colleges have to be made accessible to improve workforce skills. Public sector commitment to upgrading skill development and educational qualification plays a crucial part in reducing the unemployment rate. To tackle the unemployment issue, the labor policy on the right to work has to be re-engineered. To tackle the low-paid job issue, the national minimum wage has to be implemented. Tax incentive for the employee requires to be monitored correctly. Increasing publicly subsidized employment and channeling investment resources into low-income areas can help mitigate economic desperation and raise the level of disposable income for low-income people. (Bond, et al, 2009, p. 30). Remodeling of economic empowerment policy is essential to promote and safeguard ownership of the Black people.

Housing solution

South Africa needs an efficient, formidable, and incorruptible department to administer the housing sector and monitor the project. The established anti-corruption strategy requires working well in fighting against the endemic. The housing development agency under the department of human settlements needs to engage the private sector, state-owned enterprises, provinces, and municipalities to find out land suitable for human settlements development, then provide housing, especially for low-income groups at government-subsidized rates. Promoting land reform to address geospatial inequalities has to be necessitated. The government itself requires to make public services accessible and equitable striving to provide quality services.

Promotion of cultural diversity

The Ban on interracial marriage has already been lifted since 1985. The research found that negative perceptions and social challenges faced by interracial married couples came about from external stressors rather than the expected cultural differences. The rejection and acceptance of the couple's intermarriage play an important role in their marriage life. Social support from family circles and friends including people from religious affiliations will certainly increase social cohesion and eliminate conflicts between the locals and migrants. Open communication regarding cultural differences between married couples is inevitable and it will help reduce conflict and confront challenges. (Sindane, 2019, p.57). The cultural identity of the immigrants and the distinctive features of the foreigners, serve as the justification for discrimination. The Xenophobic prejudice could be relaxed only if the South African state commits itself to promote cultural diversity and the 'melting pot' of regional citizenries within South Africa. (Bond, et al, 2009, p.32). The government needs to create an action plan to combat racism and implement non-discrimination on culture and language, safeguarding the identity rights of the minority.

Xenophobia regarding race and extreme nationalism must be addressed through education. Society must strive for multicultural integration, deal with cultural diversity, language acquisition, and language rights, and understand the benefits of coexisting in harmony. Introducing shared values in the community and promoting equality will eventually reduce prejudice. Law to facilitate access to justice has to be institutionalized to develop the exercise.

Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations

Summary and Conclusion

Sociocultural factors such as unemployment, housing, interracial marriage, physical appearance and behavior, and language are the major causes of Xenophobia in South Africa. The government is responsible for structural transformation in the economy to cope with rapid growth. With globalization, development has to be steered, adjusting the social, cultural, and political dimensions. Education, skill development, quality healthcare services, advanced knowledge, and innovation will enhance the transformation. Reintegration of the country into regional and international levels opens up opportunities to boost sustainable development and set it on the right path to combat the persisting Xenophobia.

The divided societies need to work on reducing the hate and fear of foreigners to rebuild a cohesive society. The post-apartheid South Africa, a democratic country, suffered a severe impact of Xenophobia and all the various root causes required to be tackled effectively to rebuild the nation into a peaceful and conflict-free society. Regardless of ethnic identity, race ability, and class, multiculturalism and inclusivity of all members of the population in South Africa can help uplift the nation to equality and dignity.

Recommendation

The root causes of Xenophobia in South Africa were usually described as socioeconomic problems. Competition for scarce resources usually intensifies into conflicts. Historically prejudice and resentment against contradicting groups tend to grow and transform into violence. Exerted competitive pressure gradually turns into ruthlessness. It is to acknowledge that Xenophobia is the eruption of the underneath iceberg, the sentiment towards fellow African migrants, and its persisting problem. The local government is required to take steps further to promote its agencies in protecting the rights of migrants of foreign origin, especially from neighboring African nations. Labor disparities between locals and black foreigners must be tackled, opportunities have to be shared, and partnership needs are encouraged to solve the employment issues. The corruption fight has to be fostered to accelerate government services and address housing issues and impoverishment. Discrimination and exploitation should be stopped, government officials, authorities, and police officers must be prevented from exercising inequitable acts and refrain from escalating xenophobia.

Cultural diversity is the key element in rediscovering social cohesion and priority must be given to finding the solution for the contradictions and compromise. Education plays an important

role and the government must introduce multiculturalism in the learning curriculum to establish a peaceful and cohesive society in a long run. It must be accountable for institutional transformation and work together with civil society to resolve conflicts and eradicate protracted Xenophobia.

The sociocultural conflicts entrenched in Asia are relatively like South Africa. Similarly in Myanmar Xenophobia cases have been witnessed in the 2015 Rohingya crisis and the protracted fights between Ethnic Armed Organizations the Bamar Army proved that Xenophobia is embedded in mishaps. The inequality imposed by social discrimination in each country caused historical damages and persists. The research unleashed cultural dimension as a critical factor playing a crucial role in the conflicts. Socio cultural is only one Len to look into the root causes. Culture has various dimensions in playing the parts in Xenophobia. Further research on cultural factors will enhance understanding of Xenophobia and how to mitigate its effect on society.

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