

Rise of Xenophobia in the West: Indian Exploitation and its Implication on Pakistani Diaspora

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ABSTRACT

The world is witnessing the rise of xenophobia in the Western society and culture that is massively deteriorating the social fabric of the western society and creating a gulf between the natives of different countries and the locals. A considerable number of Political Scientists including the famous Noam Chomsky are of the view that it is nothing but a planned manipulation of minds of the local people by the ruling elite for getting their electoral gains and portray Muslims as a monster that are serious threat for the stability and security of the Western society. The paper intends to unfold the xenophobic trends and the Indian role in fueling the xenophobia against the Pakistani Diaspora. The theoretical lens that will magnify the literature would be the Social Constructivism. The paper will highlight the exploitation of minds by the Western political parties that ultimately help them to get the desired results in the electoral process with primary focus on the Pakistani Diaspora. The paper will also illuminate the fears of the Western society about the decaying trends in their culture and linguistics.

Key Words: **Xenophobia, West, Indian role, Pakistani Diaspora**

Introduction

To have own identity remains an innate desire of humankind. The very basis of nationhood stems out for the love of homogeneity of a society in terms of ethnic, linguistic and religious beliefs. The modern-day political discourse stems from Westphalian state system arising from the Treaties of Westphalia in 1648. It refers to a system of states or international society comprising of sovereign state entities possessing the monopoly of force within their mutually recognized territories. Later in 18th century French Revolution gave a new meaning of nation hood in form of nation state and gave birth to the modern-day nationalism.

Post WWII environment witnessed a bi-polar world with USA and former USSR leading the world basing on the theories of Capitalism and Communism; however, with the fall of Communism at the twilight of 20th century saw the

emergence of a new unipolar world with US the sole super power. Liberal Democracies thrived all around and the idea of free world governed by the principles of democracy was believed to be the pinnacle of political growth of human race. In post-cold war era, globalism has remained the buzz word and has defined the nature of international relations. Ironically, globalism led to shrinking relevance of territorial borders, economic disparity, and fears of losing cultural identity. Globalism in essence challenged the very basis of nation state concept i.e. nationalism. As the globalization of the world was encouraging migrations from around the globe towards developed world, simultaneously these developed parts became the land hope for the refugees fleeing the conflict zones from Africa and Middle East. This inflow of immigrants and refugees did impact domestic economies. However, concerns about immigrants and immigration have surfaced far beyond the economic arguments, and the outcome of this phenomenon on the prevailing social fabric with primitive cultures is very massive, so much so that they are now unavoidable. England, France, Germany, Hungary and many other countries of Europe have been tenaciously using race politics to gain political mileage from certain domestic demography. With growing nationalist sentiment in West, the debate is more about integration than immigration of already settled Muslims in the West? With Islamophobia in post 9/11 world, the status of Muslim communities in West has come under question. Any act of alleged terror further shrinks the already challenged space for Muslims, and they end up being the victims of prejudice. This environment has led to the birth of xenophobia. An emotion causing further polarization in West and has the potential to overpower the rational thought. The Muslim communities including Pakistani Diaspora in West is increasingly getting marginalized in the overall makeup of social construct of West which will have implications for Pakistani Diaspora and Pakistan.

Theoretical framework

Constructivists believe that life is not a pre-determined entity. The structure of the world and the actions of mankind are historically and socially constructed. According to them states and the people build narratives that manifest their common threats and interests. In cold war era, USA designed a discourse against Communism that framed the minds of American people which eventually depicted in Hollywood movies and serials where the Russians were portrayed as potential threat to the National Security of USA and its allies. Similarly, in the post-cold war era when USA wanted to get rid of the Islamic forces fighting for them in Afghanistan, the American establishment again crafted a rhetoric that the Islamic militancy would turn out to be a monster for their national security. Therefore, under the clouds of historical events the current research will be sailing in the tides of “Social Constructivism” which is aiming to unwind the phenomenon of xenophobia in the West and its possible outcomes.

What is xenophobia?

The rejection to diversity is tantamount to the rejection of democracy. Today's far right nationalism advances a toxic new xenophobia, one that threatens to fracture our societies but first let's get to know what xenophobia really is, "Xeno meaning stranger and phobia meaning fear two words taken from the original Greek Xenophobia combined it means fear or dislike of strangers". Xenophobia beyond its literary meanings can be explained as an emotion or sentiment which exudes immense dislike and even fear for unknown individuals, people of other countries and origins. Xenophobia is a type of fear or hatred towards alien entities. Xenophobia can incorporate ideas of a particular segment of population toward another segment considered foreign and has the potential to manifest itself in doubt of the agendas of others, and an inclination to eradicate their existence to achieve an assumed wholesomeness and may consider to an apprehension of losing own national identity. Xenophobia can also be displayed in the form of an unsuspecting adulation of another culture in which a culture is attributed an illusory, stereotype and unusual quality. According to UNESCO, "the terms xenophobia and racism do overlap at times, but vary in how the latter includes a prejudice based on physical characteristics while the former is generally centered on behavior stemming from the notion of a specified group being adverse to the culture or nation" (UN, 2015)

History of xenophobia

History of xenophobic trends and emotions in western culture can be traced back to Ancient Greek times. Deprecation of foreigners as barbarians, the conviction within Greeks that they were the descendants of a superior race and their culture was supreme than others and the succeeding idea that barbarians were ought to be slaved was one manifestation of xenophobia.

Ancient Romans also had the belief of being superior than all other races and peoples, such as in a speech attributed to Manius Acilius, "There, as you know, there were Macedonians and Thracians and Illyrians, all most warlike nations, here Syrians and Asiatic Greeks, the most worthless peoples among mankind and born for slavery". (John, 2012)

Leading causes for increasing xenophobia

With increased hype of xenophobia in recent times, often ill-informed explanations as to its cause abound. The frequently made correlation between economic crisis and the rise of xenophobia does not stand empirical testing; there are cases in which xenophobia has grown without economic crisis (in Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands). There is much confusion between causes and symptoms. Globalization, inequality and fears of loss of cultural identity emerge as the usual culprits.

Loss of identity

As per Socrates, human soul has three parts, desire, reason and thymos. Thymos is the part which relates to dignity, anger and pride and is a seat of today's identity politics. The concept is gaining primacy every passing day, fueled with increased globalization and mass media. As an indicator, the term 'self-esteem' was virtually absent from UK newspapers in 1980s, but references to low self-esteem began to rise steadily well over 3300 appearances by the year 2000 (UNESCO, 2018). Individual self-esteem is related to the esteem conferred on the larger group with which one is associated; thus the political would affect personal. Rural people, who are backbone of xenophobic movements often, believe that their traditional values are under severe threat by cosmopolitan, city based elites and immigration. (Ahmad, 2001)

Economic crisis

Scholars argue that hyper-globalization and economic shocks have led to higher unemployment, lower wages and economic insecurity for the locals in Western countries. This is used by xenophobic segments for blaming elites and promising short-term protection which further decreases political trust in mainstream parties (Thomas, 2003).

Anti-immigrant sentiment and xenophobia in the West

The unparalleled wave of migrants reaching European shores from the conflict hit regions of Middle East and North Africa is leading to a populist backlash in different European Union member countries. The emergence of far right nationalist political entities and xenophobic rhetoric in all such member states is adding political unrest as this has emerged as a potential humanitarian crisis in the West.

Xenophobia however, has different roots in various parts of the world – ranging from identity crisis to disenchantment from elites and from political rhetoric to economic disparity.

Exploitation of xenophobic sentiment by politicians

The politicians often find xenophobia as an opportunity to mould people's concerns and fear into an intoxicating amalgamation of rage and dominance. It convinces timid voters under the banner of Brexiteers that they can expel the foreigners and can have the control back of their country. The demographic distribution makes xenophobia even more precarious, Most of the Western land is been occupied by a diverse society. Only the Hispanics presence is accounted for 17.61% of the American population. Similarly 1/3rd of the Britishers were born outside England. Moreover 10% of the French population consists of Muslim and

another astonishing factor is that the 20 percent of the German's population have immigrant background. Under such circumstances when politicians launch their election campaign by promoting hostile and employ isolation tactics among communities, they embedded the seeds of hatred and animosity within their own culture and society. Candidates when repeat the same stance by calling Muslims a potential threat for the safety and security of Western community as it has been previously done during the Brexit and election campaign of Donald Trump, it eventually surge the anti-Muslim detest crimes. Though xenophobia is an extreme emotion with reference to foreigners and outsiders; however, the new wave of populism has the potential to exploit this strong emotion to make electoral gains and impact the makeup of the complete society. (Thomas, 2003)

Fundamental grounds of populism

The fundamental grounds which form the basis for the rise of populism appear to be very elementary with reference to human psyche and which are:-

Elites are being perceived all the same

Even more important is elites are being perceived all the same and an apt example is what we see in French politics with the phenomenon of UMPS. Historically there has been a two party system in France with UMP the right wing and PS the left wing political party. The right wing populists predominantly the Front National have put them together as UMPS as a single entity in order to mock the supposedly interchangeable character of these two parties, and point they deliberate is that those elites who claim to be different are the same in essence and in reality they are all corrupt. When they talk about politics it's not about three parties i.e the UMP, PS or Front National. It's about Front National the voice of the people versus UMPS the block of elite.

Charismatic leaders

Although, the phenomenon of Populism has surfaced on various occasion. A unique commonality between all the demonstrations of populism is the rise of charismatic leadership who single handedly manages to mobilize the populist sentiments and control the strings of political unit at their back. Moreover Populist leaders embed their spot on the canvas of global and national history that has the indelible impact on the regional and global politics. They skillfully articulate a forged bond with their voters and followers that often fail to include religious and moral overtones. (Bhatnagar, 2007)

Exploitation by populist leaders

Populist style relies on charismatic leadership to partly bypass established ways of doing politics. As per Muller, populism is undemocratic and anti-pluralist movement spearheaded and personified by politicians like Donald Trump, Marine LePen and Viktor Orban. It is exclusionary against elites and common people who do not share the views of the populists (hence anti-pluralist). The American President Donald Trump is probably among the very few billionaires in contemporary history who frames out a claim to have his roots in the masses and being the “man of people” and openly assert to speak on behalf of many rather than the few. Theresa May claimed governing in favor of ‘left-behinds. Narendra Modi wants to impose perceived Hindu superiority over all ‘other people’ (Thomas, 2018).

Xenophobia in language

Xenophobia often leads to language discrimination against immigrants in West. According to Safi (2010), Nandi et al. (2016), Schmitt et al. (2014, cited in Reino, 2020) when a group is discriminated unrightfully in a society, it puts a negative impact on their well-being and mental health. Reino (2020) in her paper titled “Migrants and discrimination in the UK” reports that in 2018, 18 % of Europe born and 7 % of non-Europe born individuals affirmed that they have been discriminated on the basis of language, face, race, religion etc. and in the same paper she affirmed that 13% of people who were born in foreign countries faced humiliation due to the same factors as mentioned above.

Over 38 years of research in this domain proved that a person’s social identity is comprised of his/her accent (Edwards, 1999; Giles & Johnson, 1987; Gluszek & Dovidio, 2010; Lippi-Green, 1997, as cited in Souza et al. 2016) and non-standard accents are typical of the immigrants who relocate to a country for living, work, study etc. (Souza et al. 2016).

Munro (2003) emphasizes that differential attitudes towards the speakers with distinguishable accents have been subjects of many researchers in American studies for the past 30 years. Moreover, Munro (2003) explored the phenomenon accent-based discrimination in Canada and found out that accent discrimination exists in Canadian human rights cases and L2 accented speakers are dealing with three types of accent-based prejudice such as 1) employment discrimination owing to bad accent 2) discrimination based on accent cliché and 3) harassment due to inappropriate accent.

Souza et al. (2016) argues that only bigoted individuals discriminate accented speakers because they believe that people with standard accent are considered qualified than the speakers with noticeable accent. To prove this stance, she carried out a research on impact of accent-based discrimination against immigrants, the findings endorsed the hypothesis that only bigoted individuals had differential attitude towards accented speakers and secondly, it also revealed that

the effect of discriminatory accent was due to deemed quality of accent. Brennan & Brennan (1981, cited in Munro, 2003), pointing out factors for negative reaction toward inappropriate accent, expounds that sometimes people are biased against a specific community, therefore, whenever they hear a speech pattern related to that group they react unfavorably.

In a study on language diversity and discrimination in the American workplace conducted by Cavico et al. (2013) it has been argued that America has a rich ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity and this diversity is prominent in the workplace. He further asserts that employers in America set forth the “English Only” “policy at workplace which not only affects the linguistic diversity of the employees but also their ethnicity and cultural diversity. The author adds that such discriminations will lead to intensified tensions and clash between employers and employees in the workplace. It has been suggested by the author that employers should restrict the policy only during work time and allow the employees to speak their native language during breaks, at meals and free times (pp. 33-34). Dietz (2014), while investigating issues on employment discrimination against immigrant, presents a special issue which is discrimination on the basis of accent, he refers to a study conducted by Hosada and Stone-Romero who state that immigrants are often exposed to such discriminatory treatments based on their accents (p. 109).

Exploitation by Indians

The Muslims and Hindus share a common history of being ruled by British Raj and the world has seen the rivalry between the two since 1857. The Hinduism is not merely a community but a mindset that aims the mass extermination of Muslims from the society. The foundation of hostility laid down by Hindus can be traced back to 1857 when the causes of the war of independence was put on the shoulders of Muslims, The Urdu-Hindi controversy of 1867 that sowed the seeds of hatred among the minds of Muslims was pen down by the historians, similarly the partition of Bengal 1905 was not digested by Hindus and they resultantly launched massive protested to revoke the partition and ultimately the British government could not sustained the pressure and surrendered that consequently brought back the status of Bengal to pre 1905 position. Keeping in view the antagonistic attitude the Indians did not lag behind in promoting xenophobia in the minds of Western people in post 9/11 fiasco.

It is a known fact that Indians have managed to reach at the world’s renowned software houses of Silicon valley and the world’s biggest search engine i.e. Google was headed by an Indian for a couple of years, therefore they have the hands on practice to hire bloggers and in launching the anti-Muslim campaigns on social media. The Indians have paved their indecent mentality in the post 9/11 era and manage to create a hype against Muslims through a socially constructed rhetoric that Muslims are terrorists and they are an acute threat to the Western culture and

society. Moreover the recruitment of ISIS from the Western society further strengthened the Indian discourse and Muslims have left with no other option except to see their complete isolation in the Western world.

Xenophobia and Pakistani diaspora

Negative fallout on diaspora

There are approximately 8.8 million Pakistanis around the globe. Out of which, 2.21 million are in Europe including 1.47 million people in the United Kingdom and Scotland. 1 million Pakistanis are also residing in the United States. With far right nationalist politics getting more space in Europe and America, there is all the likelihood of negative fallout on Pakistani Diaspora. Political developments like Brexit signify the fast changing ground realities where the natives believe that ownership of the land belongs to them and they enjoy the right over its resources. The rise of xenophobia will further aggravate the already challenged socio-political environment for Pakistani Diaspora (Adamec, 2006).

Economic implications

With shrinking scope for the Muslim Diaspora in West, and the sentiment of xenophobia on rise, Pakistani migrants will find it increasingly difficult to hold on to their space in the developing socio-economic structure of western societies with likely following implications.

Reduction in remittances

Less jobs and business meaning thereby, less income, which will adversely affect the remittances sent back home.

Return of immigrants

The majority of Pakistani Diaspora is unskilled, uneducated labor and faces the stereotype of being Muslims. The impetus of populism is likely to cause polarization in the society and may lead to a crisis of return of Pakistani Diaspora back to home which will be no less than a conundrum for the state of Pakistan to absorb all those who return back. This scenario will have serious economic implications for Pakistan (Ahmad, 2001).

Conclusion

The mainstream political parties in Visegrad and Western Europe are spreading the xenophobic sentiments and polluting the minds of the native Europeans that consequently carve out a minatory situation for the democracy in Visegrad four because they have supported the securitization of existing debate. Knitted with a

debilitating institutional structure with meager checks and balances and it is right to say that these democracies are facing the potential “dangerous cocktail”.

However, it cannot be envisaged that how long these political actors would use the securitization card for their vote bank, in the absence of immigrants the exploitation of minds could lose its appeal and the attention of voters could be gone towards other policy issues. The Hungarian government is exhausting all means to keep the issue of immigrants alive however the parties in opposition are trying to highlight some other issues (e.g., corruption, education, and healthcare). Moreover the securitization rhetoric is being played in the hands of far right political parties “these forces also benefitted from voters’ discontent and anti-establishment sentiment stemming from corruption scandals and the lack of reforms in education and healthcare”. Irrespective of the fact that the long-term success of the securitization approach, the political actors have already crafted the xenophobic rhetoric that spontaneously fueled the fear mongering. The fear of squeezing of opportunities and the decrease in the social status among masses are the factors that make the populist political forces successful. Therefore drastic measures that could possibly tone down the xenophobic rhetoric is need of the hour (Acharaya, 1997).

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