

Socioeconomic Consequences of Somalis' Immigration on Security of South Africa

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Abstract

Nowadays one of the issues interesting for researchers of political, social, and economic sciences is to investigate immigration from different angles. Accordingly, they use a diverse range of instruments, different types of graphs, descriptive indices and complex mathematical models. Immigration has always been one of the paths helping humans in their own efforts for getting compatible with the environment and coping with difficulties. Nevertheless, if this issue has been considered as an instrument regulating resources and species automatically, in the present era, its negative aspects have been evident and socioeconomic consequences of immigration in the framework of development economy and security has attracted scholars' attentions. One of the countries attracting for immigrants particularly in the continent of Africa is South Africa. Statistics indicates that this country is the most attractive one for refugees. Somalis are one of the most important and largest groups seeking refuge in South Africa because they are usually merchants who earn money in the poor places. However, business in the poor places endangers their lives and properties because of high rate of crimes and xenophobia. As a result, the target countries face a lot of socioeconomic and security problems. The present study tries to investigate the issue of Somali immigration using network models.

Keywords: Socioeconomic consequences, Immigration, Security, Somalis, South Africa.

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Statement of the problem

The issue of immigration, the main subject of the present study, is one of the most critical and important concepts in contemporary human societies. Immigration means the displacement of human beings from one land to another. Immigration also means leaving a land, friends, and relatives and locating in another region or land. Many reasons and factors are effective on the occurrence of immigration. In fact, immigration has a lot of social, economic, and security consequences.

South Africa is one of the countries specifically attractive for immigrants. Other than its beautiful landscapes and mild climate, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) describes its laws as “favorable” for refugees. These laws provide the right to work and educate as well as opportunities for absolute citizenship after some years. Maybe the most important issue for making South Africa attractive for refugees is that they can reside everywhere they want. According to UNHCR, in 2015 South Africa hosted 576,113 refugees and immigrants from all over the Continent of Africa among which 27000 were Somalis. But, according to an official resource, the number of Somali refugees even were about 50 thousand people (S. Amir, personal communications, April 20, 2015), and more than 200 thousand Somalis are waiting for receiving responses about their applications for asylum (UNHCR, 2015).

Most of refugees are seeking a better life in South Africa and travel there, but they are to spend the costs of living in this country. Now, the risk of living in South Africa is the issue of security. One of the reasons and motivations of insecurity in South Africa may be immigrants themselves. Currently, May Fair Neighborhood in the western part of Johannesburg, the economic capital of South Africa, has been named as Mogadishu by Somali asylum seekers. One of the reasons for residence in this region is its nearness to the Central Business District (CBD) (Sadouni, 2009). The reason for their presence in this region is its neighborhood with South African Indian Muslims and having common religious identity with them. (Jinnah, 2010).

The significant presence of immigrants in South Africa has made the unemployed native people in this country because foreigners and immigrants (Kalitanyi & Visser, 2010) have occupied most of the job opportunities in suburbs and poor towns. Therefore, natives have become angry and consequently behave aggressively with immigrants and retailers, fire their shops and houses (Charman, Petersen, & Piper, 2012). This problem has become a critical issue for security of South

Africa. Intensification of invasions and aggressions against foreigners in all over South Africa in 2008 resulted in the displacement of thousands of those immigrants. This issue caused the death of 67 Somali immigrants in Soweto (Dixon, 2006). Although violence gradually disappeared from the front pages of newspapers, violence itself never stopped. In January 2014, the UNHCR recorded the violent death of 100 refugees in South Africa and those conditions continued (UNHCR, 2014). This issue has had socioeconomic and security problems, both for the refugees and South Africa.

The present study is to investigate socioeconomic consequences of Somalis' immigrations on security of South Africa and using the Network Model and evaluate the strategies for solving this critical problem.

Review of literature

Since the Somali Civil War having reached its peak in the early 1990's, and the great drought covering large parts in the south of this country resulting in devastating famine, about 500 thousand people of this country died and more than 3 million of them were displaced (Ahmed, 1999).

Somalis had to leave their country due to climatic difficulties as well as ethnic and political violence resulting in human rights violations in this country (Gastrow & Amit, 2013). Civil war and crises in this country have had negative effects on economy of Somalia and resulted in its economic insufficiency (Leeson, 2007).

Fundamental and infrastructural damages, the lack of main services such as banking services, permanent violence and instability, etc. resulted in the marginalization of economic activities in this country. There is no accurate information how many Somalis had been in South Africa before the civil war, but the first wave of immigrants and refugees of Somalis to South Africa started since the Post-apartheid era, and the other wave started since the civil war and violence in Somalia (Gastrow& Amit, 2013, Jinnah, 2010, Lindley, 2010).

In the apartheid era, no significant immigration to South Africa occurred, but political upheavals in South Africa created an environment enabling African immigrant to freely move inside South Africa and having access to business and professional opportunities. By announcing the Immigration of Refugees in 1998, the right of enjoyment of employment and business in South Africa facilitated

immigration to this country. Those conditions provided African immigrants, especially Somalis this possibility to migrate to South Africa (Landau, 2006).

Theoretical framework

Since the advent of human beings and their concerns about finding food, immigration and movement from one place to another have been considered. Although the significance of immigration is more highlighted, is when immigration appeared due to the Industrial Revolution in European societies and because of fundamental socioeconomic changes in those societies as a social problem. Because of low population growth in Europe on the one hand and attraction of immigrants in the emerging urban industries on the other hand, population displacement is the first main problem for those societies. However, in the third-world societies, because of fast population growth on the one hand, and unequal distribution of facilities as well as slow and unequal economic growth on the other hand, many waves of human immigrations whether from villages to cities, towns to big cities, or to other countries have resulted in main problems and challenges.

Regarding an issue that which rule or mechanism the movement of human waves follows or what are motivations for such humans, or in general, whether a certain rule can be considered for human movements or immigrations, there are different ideas and views in social sciences and sociology. In the present study, the network model is applied to investigate the issue of immigration in South Africa and the case of Somali immigrants in this country.

The Network model

The Network model was proposed in the early 1980 has and then developed by other scholars. In this theory, costs and benefits of migration are explained in the framework of immigration networks. According to the theorists of this view, immigration networks consists of bonds among individuals who connect previous immigrants and non-immigrants in the sources and target places via kinship and friendship links as well as common social statuses. Inside these networks, immigration movements increase because costs reduce threats of immigration and increase its benefits. In fact, communications of such networks is a kind of social capital by which individuals achieve better professional situations. In this theory, two factors are highly emphasized; one is

reduction of costs and the other is reduction of threats. Both of these factors organize movements of immigrations.

- a. Reduction of costs: immigrants who leave their home for the first time and reside in new places are lacking in supportive social links making immigrations low-cost for them. Nevertheless, when they migrate for the second time, potential costs of immigration reduce for themselves and their families because the nature of kinship and friendship structures, each new immigrant creates new social links in the target place. As a result, a network of communication is created among migrants and non-migrants, and immigration will gradually be with reductions in material and spiritual costs by implicit supportive commitments created inside the networks for individuals.
- b. Reduction of threats: immigration networks can provide jobs for new immigrants as easily as possible; thus, immigration mostly becomes a reliable resource for earning incomes. In this process, each immigrant develops the immigration network and reduces all threats of other people who demand immigration and depend on him or her. Although this theory has been mostly planned and used for international immigrations, it can be expresses some realities about domestic immigrations.

It should be considered that this theory could be used for Somali immigrants in South Africa. According to this model, costs and threats of the first group of Somali immigrants in South Africa were higher than the next groups of immigrants; when a group of immigrants move to a place, they create facilities and relationships by building networks of friends, relatives, their peers with the same language and religion, etc. those relationships can be facilitate utilization of the new place. It seems that this issue depends on the parameter that how immigrants are accepted in target countries? In addition, it seems that with regard to behaviors and events occurring in reality, the passage of time may cause reduction in costs in South Africa, but it has failed in case of reduction in threats. The general rule in the Network model has some exceptions in case of South Africa and even the passage of time and with the increase in the number of immigrants and consequently the sense of threats of natives of South Africa for losing their jobs and facilities, critical and worrying events and upheavals-which not only endangers immigrants' security, but also that of South Africa-have occurred. According to the statistics presented by South African police, there were 660 aggressive and violent events in 2004 and there were averagely about 5 cases per a day or 1993 aggressive events in 2015 were committed against immigrants in South Africa. In this regard, 1500 Somali immigrants have been killed in South Africa since 2002 (Dixon, 2006). This issue shows that among African immigrants in South Africa, Somalis have been more victims of xenophobes.

According to this model, the presence of Somali immigrants in South Africa might have been with reduction in costs, but not with reductions in threats.

Discussing Social and Economic Repercussions

Immigration cannot only affect volume and growth of population, but also can it impose considerable changes on construction and distribution of it. When different cultures are got together from different regions and diversity of values exist, each individual or group would act according to their set of rules¹. Hence, when environment around people change, they would no more stay liable to rules and values; in such case, chaos would occur (Avalizadegan, social and cultural repercussions of city-village immigration).

In many previous studies, the main motivator for immigration has been reaching a better job position. In this sense, immigrants would change the labor supply and would influence career market. However, the amount of effect that immigration can have on the target market is dependent on many factors. Many studies have shown that this effect is dependent on the size and geographical zone of the immigrating population along with specialties of the immigrating population as compared to the natives (Borjas, 2002).

In addition, effects of immigration can be either short-term or long-term. In short-term, stable physical investment and the time required for optimal use of human resources is limited for the immigrants. In long-term, though, the assumption stands true that different types of investment have been acknowledged in the sense that physical investment can have be transferred from one place to another if needed. In addition, in long-term, the possibility proves true for the immigrants to increase their status by promoting education and language proficiency (Dustmann, 2002; Greenwood, 1822).

On the other hand, economic status of the target country can also be very important. In case the target country is experiencing its economic growth, not only immigration does not limit natives' jobs, but also it can compensate for the lack of specific skills. However, if the country is having stagnation, immigrants can cause serious problems in the market and threaten employment of native workers. Economists believe that effects of immigration in countries with good employment are very different from those with unemployment. In countries experiencing unemployment, finding a job is a reward given to the immigrating work force (Borjas, 2002). In each case, change in

native's payment because of employment can pave the way for investigation of the effects of immigration on work labor.

Socially speaking, immigration can have negative effects on the target country. In this regard, mention can be made of South Africa where Somalian immigrants and refugees. Despite many cultures, language and skin colors in South Africa and the consensus and agreement between different peoples in it, problems in Somalia mostly concern economy, more than social. These economic repercussions have colored security in this country.

However, despite the many social-economic problems in African countries, the effect of refugees on environment, social services and other aspects is deep, and this has created many problems in different countries. About 680000 Somalian people have emigrated to nearby countries such as Kenya, Yemen, Djibouti, Eritrea, Tanzania and Uganda. Near 1.5 million people were also homeless in the country. Only it was in 2010 when more than 100000 Somalian escaped to neighboring countries and this was because violence continued. In each of these countries, Somalian refugees and homeless people created its own troubles, which still require investigation. The difference between situations and South Africa is that in the latter does not have a specific shelter for refugees and so they can travel and live wherever they want. As it was mentioned earlier, most of them inhabit in Muslim-sitting areas of Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban. Their access to simple jobs and small businesses has led the natives to think that immigrants have stolen their jobs. This has caused the spread of anti-foreigner thoughts; immigrants have been invaded, their houses ruined and their shops abolished. Another result has been lack of security and unsafely in immigrating cities. These repercussions not only have been bad for South Africa, but also they have ruined the image of Africa in the global arena. Due to this when one talks about insecurity, South Africa would unconsciously come to our minds, especially Johannesburg.

Conclusion

Somalia is one of three most immigrating counties, the other two being Iraq and Afghanistan. Although these immigrants are in all regions all over the world, the majority of them are in African counties. Other African countries have shelters for refugees and this is due to their specific policies, but South Africa is an exception to this because of its rules of immigration. In this paper, Immigration Web Model is introduced and analyzed according to South Africa concerning Somalian

immigrants. Then, the paper aimed to investigate the social-economic repercussions they would have on employment and payment of native workers from a theoretical viewpoint.

From the above, it has become obvious that economic repercussions of immigration depend on immigrants' skills and scope of investment. If investment could be wide enough, new jobs and occupations would be added to the previous ones as far as immigrants would be as skillful as the natives would. In this way, economy would well absorb the new work labor and therefore immigration would not influence native people's jobs.

Our expectation of employment and income would be reasonable only when they have different skills and proficiencies. If immigrants are different in skill from natives and we forget any modifications, absorbing them would balance incomes. This strategy states that immigration would cause a redistribution of incomes, which is beneficial for some and harmful for others. Nevertheless, the point that who benefits and who is harmed would be related to the proportion of the range of natives' skills to those immigrants' skills. Influence of immigration on average wage is dependent on investment supply. If investment supply is strong enough, average wage would not be reduced. Even when immigration flows are strong enough, average wage would raise and the reason could be that extra population would exist. If investment supply were not strong, the guest economy would profit. However, investors who benefit from immigration. An important latent point here is that similar flows of immigration might influence countries differently and this highly related to work labors of the natives and immigrants. However, findings of conducted studies for different countries indicate that effects of foreign immigration on the market would be something ambiguous and depends on different factors such as level of economic growth, time of the study, immigrants' level of specialty, policy toward immigration, etc. Conclusions of this study was that immigration of Somalian was effective on natives' welfare and this effect was as far as they could not tolerate the situation; they decided to adopt an anti-immigrant position and throw them out of country. These movements, contradictions, and uprisings, which were followed by blood, violated Immigration Web Model. Not only has not this been able to reduce expenses of immigration to South Africa, but also this has raised these expenses. These expenses have resulted in losing a family member, murder, plunder, robbery, etc.

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