

# **THE IMPACT OF EDUCATION ON XENOPHOBIA IN AN AFRICAN SOCIETY**

## **AN ABSTRACT**

by

Eugene K. Campbell  
Department of Population Studies  
University of Botswana, Botswana  
and  
Ngianga-Bakwin Kandala  
University of Warwick  
Warwick Medical School  
Coventry, England

### **Introduction**

This paper seeks to address a question on education and social development in an African society. Specifically, it investigates the relationship between xenophobia and education in Botswana. Survey data is used to test the education-xenophobia hypothesis. Campbell (2003) found earlier that group attitudes in the country were being manifest in seemingly xenophobic actions. An interesting feature of these actions was its prevalence within modern educational and administrative institutions where, it is expected, the educational value of the staff should minimize xenophobic attitudes. It is widely acknowledged that education has moderating influence on discriminatory attitudes and behavior (Cummings, 1980; Fetzer, 2000; Hjerm, 2001; Halperin et al., 2007). Haerper and Wallace (1998) found that in East and Central Europe, poorly educated people were more likely to feel threatened by immigrants than the highly educated. Meanwhile, it has been noted that the academia is vulnerable to discriminatory influences where existing ideas are threatened by new ones (Sibley, 1995; Campbell, 2003). Education is expected to improve the intellectual, social and economic wellbeing of individuals and societies; and its optimization should lead to commitment to objectivity and rationality (hence the truth). That this has not been quite the case in Africa has been seemingly lost to many scholars and policy makers because the generalization of Western theories has often influenced scholars to become too literal and too preoccupied with direct comparisons between the behaviour of people in African and Western societies. But whereas progression on the modernity scale should erase the traditional perception of value, the reality may be different in post-colonial Africa. This paper seeks to examine the extent to which education influences xenophobia in Botswana.

The data was obtained in 2001 by random sample survey of individuals in urban areas in Botswana, using cluster sampling. The sample was taken from males and females aged 16 years and over. Total number of people enumerated is 781 (347 male and 434 female). Enumerators were employed from students in the university, they were adequately supervised and data editing was done in the field and place of data analysis. SPSS was used for the analysis of data. Chi square was used in bivariate analysis and logistic regression was applied to test for relationship

between the response and independent variables. Three indices of xenophobia were computed. The first index was computed with five variables while the second and third included twelve and sixteen variables, respectively. All dependent variables are classified as low to moderate xenophobia (coded 0) and high xenophobia (coded 1). The results in Models 1 and 2 support the theory that education moderates xenophobia. People with primary and secondary education were three times more likely to be xenophobic than those with tertiary education (with  $p < 0.001$ ). Meanwhile, city and other urban dwellers seemed less xenophobic than rural dwellers. However, when the response with 16 variables was analyzed, the results indicated that city and other urban dwellers were significantly more xenophobic than rural dwellers. This is not an isolated case as it has been observed elsewhere in that educated people may be more discriminatory than rural ones. Discussion of this will follow in the full paper.

### **References**

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