Chapter 9

Experiences of Somali Women Enterpreneurs in South Africa

"Somali women's entrepreneurial skills represent an unexploited opportunity that could enhance their socio-economic integration."
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Abstract

The involvement of Somali women migrants in trade within South Africa has attracted antagonism and gender-based violence from a section of black South Africans. The phobia, predominantly directed at Somali women, complicates their social and economic integration and consequently hinders sustainable entrepreneurship among refugee women. This study seeks to answer two questions: (1) What Afriphobia-related barriers hinder sustainable entrepreneurship and economic empowerment of Somali women refugees in South Africa? (2) What strategies could Somali women adopt to forge sustainable social and economic integration and development to curb Afriphobia? This qualitative study comprised forty purposively selected subjects and was anchored on social network theory and feminist intersectionality. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were used to gather data. The study area was Gauteng, which harbours the largest population of Somali women and is sporadically affected by significant Afriphobia. This Chapter advances the idea that Somali women possess numerous untapped potentials and skills that could enhance their sustainable development and socioeconomic integration in South Africa. It postulates that empowering refugee women through creating an enabling environment is a prerequisite to sustainable economic development for migrant entrepreneurs.

Keywords: *Afriphobia, migrants, Somali women, South Africa, violence*

Introduction

South Africa has witnessed an unprecedented influx of migrants in recent times, with Somali migrants forming one of the largest communities. This wave of transnational migration is driven by intermittent clan-based wars in Somalia and the pursuit of better opportunities. Upon arriving in South Africa, Somali women have carved out a niche in transboundary trade to support their families back home and within the host country. However, their involvement in trade has provoked antagonism and gender-based violence from some Black South Africans, who perceive the entry of Somali migrants as a threat to human security, job opportunities, and the already scarce basic services.

The phobia, predominantly directed at Somali women, complicates their social and economic integration and consequently hinders sustainable entrepreneurship among Somali refugee women. This study seeks to answer two questions: 1. What Afriphobia-related barriers hinder the sustainable entrepreneurship of Somali women refugees in South Africa? 2. What strategies could Somali women adopt to forge sustainable social and economic integration and development in order to curb Afriphobia? This qualitative study comprised forty purposively selected subjects and was anchored on the Social Network Theory. Data were gathered through semi-structured, in-depth interviews conducted in Gauteng Province — a region where a considerable number of Somali migrants reside and which is notably affected by sporadic Afriphobia.

This Chapter advances the idea that Somali women possess numerous untapped potentials/skills that, if harnessed, could enhance their sustainable development and socioeconomic integration in South Africa. It postulates that empowering Somali women by creating an enabling environment is a prerequisite for sustainable economic development for migrant entrepreneurs.

Refugees are among the most vulnerable populations in South Africa, facing crime, Afriphobia, and overt or covert cultural-related challenges. Somali refugees, in particular, experience an elevated level of crime and Afriphobia. The Somali women entrepreneurs in South Africa endure various forms of crime, gender-based violence, and discrimination, which inflict psychological harm and affect their entrepreneurial activities. Their distinct dress, language, and Islamic attire in a predominantly Christian community further exacerbate their antagonism by some locals. Some members of the Black South African population view refugee entrepreneurs as competitors for scarce opportunities in a nation still grappling with the legacy of apartheid, described by Ramphele (2008) as living with the *"ghosts of apartheid —the authoritarianism, ethnicity, racism and sexism."* These elements and scarce opportunities lead to some Black individuals directing their frustrations at Somali entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneurship is critical to refugee socio-economic integration, providing a lifeline for those forcibly displaced by war. Refugee women are often responsible for sending remittances home and caring for their households, particularly in female-headed homesteads. In their efforts to re-establish themselves while seeking refuge, Somali women venture into small businesses that can sustain them. Restrictive policies in South Africa, which rarely absorb refugees into mainstream employment, push these women into the informal sector, where they become self-employed. Despite their passion and entrepreneurial acumen, Somali women refugees face numerous hurdles. Addressing these challenges could positively impact the broader South African economy. This study is significant as it highlights potential areas for policy improvement in South Africa and other refugee-hosting nations, recognizing refugees as essential contributors to national economies despite their often unnoticed and unappreciated presence.

Research Methodology

This qualitative study involved in-depth interviews with forty Somali women from Gauteng Province. Gauteng was selected due to its significant population of Somali women migrants and its prominence as the epicentre of violence targeting Somalis. Additionally, Gauteng serves as a gateway for most refugees entering South Africa.

Given the need for well-informed participants on the subject matter, purposive sampling (judgment sampling) was employed. As an outsider to the community and unfamiliar with its population, I found adopting this non-random technique imperative. This approach facilitated the identification of Somali

women who were knowledgeable about Somali welfare. The study also enlisted two key informants from within the Somali community leadership. Interview participants were further identified through SASOWNET (South African Somali Women Network), which guided the interview process.

Data were gathered using semi-structured interviews, which were chosen for their ability to foster formalized dialogues while allowing for digressions where necessary (Adedoyin, 2020). The focus on the Somali community was due to their status as the most targeted group by Afriphobia in South Africa, mainly because many run businesses perceived to compete with those of local shop owners.

Ethical considerations were paramount, considering the nature of this study, which involved human subjects. Pseudonyms were used to protect the identities of the participants. Ethical clearance for the study was obtained from the University of KwaZulu-Natal Ethical Committee.

Theoretical Framework

i. Social Network Theory

This Chapter adopts the Social Networks theory, which posits that migrants develop interpersonal ties that enhance their ability to navigate the host country's social, economic, and political landscape. Migrants become entrenched in a strong web of interactions and social relations, which enhances their negotiation into the migratory space (Borgatti et al., 2009). Poston and Bouvier (2010, p. 213) argue that these interpersonal networks increase the newcomers' opportunities to access employment, accommodation, and other resources vital for their survival in unfamiliar territory. For Somali entrepreneurs in South Africa, their businesses thrive on strong networks that enable them to secure capital to start Spaza shops and protect their enterprises. The Social Network Theory cannot be overlooked in the South African context, where migrants experience sporadic Afriphobia every year. Consequently, interpersonal cliques among Somali migrants provide them with some assurance of safety and support.

ii. Feminist Intersectionality

This theory, coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, asserts that intersecting social, economic, and political factors of oppression shape women's lives. The theory claims that women face inequalities resulting from multiple overlapping factors that work together to cause their oppression. Thus, women's oppression cannot result from one single factor but various interconnected social, economic, and political factors (Carastathis, 2014; Hanklvsky, 2014). In our context, this theory is relevant as it aids in understanding how multiple factors (gender, nationality, religion, race, language) work together to construct barriers to the socioeconomic integration of women refugees in South Africa.

Literature Review

Somali Migration to South Africa

Somali women have been renowned worldwide for their mobility for decades. Their movement, ascribed to their traditionally nomadic lifestyle, enhances interregional and intraregional migration. This mobility manifests in their traversal of the Kenya-Somali border for trade, connection to their families, and movements in other territories such as South Africa, America, and Europe. While many Somalis are farmers and traders, a large population engages in pastoralism, bolsters fluid mobility. Somalia's poor status quo, sustained by wars, famine, and insecurity, impacts its migratory trends.

"Migratory patterns are also influenced by inter-clan feuds, with majority clans economically marginalizing minority clans" (Chonka & Healy, 2021). Despite the nation's inroads, Somalia remains fragile due to clan divisions. However, the migration pattern is gradually changing, with Somalis returning to Somalia and Kenya.

Political instability in Somalia remains a major force driving Somali nationals to leave East Africa (particularly Somalia and Kenya) and migrate to South Africa. Somalis from the northeastern parts of Kenya (Mandera, Wajir, Garissa, and Moyale) and Nairobi (Eastleigh) migrate to South Africa and other countries to escape famine in these dry and marginalized zones (Thompson, 2015). They are driven by the democratic space of the recipient nation, where they can access opportunities to improve their living standards. Moret, Baglioni and Efionayi-Mäder (2006) highlight that Somalis migrated to South Africa because they lacked education, employment, health, and hope for a better Somalia. The North Eastern region of Kenya has been discriminated against by post-independence governments that perpetuated inequitable policies inherited from the colonial masters. This unequal resource sharing has caused negative sentiments between migrant and local communities.

Kalitanyi and Visser (2010) point out that although the Somali population in South Africa is estimated to be 27,000 to 40,000, it is impossible to have an accurate figure because many enter South Africa illegally, using connections from the Somali diaspora. Somali women in South Africa are mainly found in Cape Town, Pretoria, and Johannesburg. They possess high entrepreneurial skills, which is evident in their businesses operating in towns and various locations.

Somali Women's Mode of Doing Business

Somali women are well-known for their entrepreneurial skills, allowing them to harness significant capital through domestic trade and foreign remittances. Their high entrepreneurial acumen determines their potential places of settlement in South Africa. For instance, many in Gauteng province are in Mayfair, a few kilometres from the Johannesburg Central Business District. Somalis are also found in townships among the Black Communities, where they set up the Spaza shops. Those shops have brought competition to the local shop owners, who see them threatening their livelihood. Somali businesses enable them to sell commodities at considerably lower prices, attracting customers who prefer cheaper options, much to the chagrin of local shop owners. Somalis business owners strategically demand a small profit per item but reap significant profits by selling in large quantities to many township customers who prefer to buy items at a lower price. Moreover, most Somalis organize themselves to buy wholesale supplies from fellow Somalis and then divide them among themselves, a strategy that eventually reduces the cost of the retail commodity. Ibrahim (2016) argues that Somalis in South Africa have collective bargaining power, helping them reduce the cost they would incur in retail purchasing. They also pack their commodities in smaller quantities, allowing customers who cannot afford the whole product to buy smaller portions. For instance, they will sell half a loaf of bread instead of the whole one.

The Constitution of South Africa

The Constitution of South Africa (1996) is praised as one of the world's most progressive, particularly in upholding individuals' rights and privileges (Nyane, 2024; Jacobs & George, 2021). It was crafted after negotiations aimed at addressing post-apartheid injustices that denied the Black population social and economic opportunities in the country. Before its creation, an interim Constitution guided the nation during the transition period that followed Nelson Mandela's election as the first Black

South African president. The new Constitution enshrines the population's rights in the Bill of Rights section.

Due to the inherent dignity of individuals, the Bill of Rights within the Constitution upholds the fair treatment of every person living in South Africa, regardless of race, gender, cultural, religious, and national identities (Adams, 2020; Albertyn, 2019). Although the Constitution emphasizes the equal enjoyment of rights and freedoms, citizens have the prerogative of defining the modus operandi for disseminating the resources and opportunities provided by the state. While the tone of inclusivity, which guarantees the protection of non-nationals, is eloquently expressed in the Constitution, its implementation has not been fully realized. Some individuals, particularly women, have pointed out flaws in its implementation. For instance, Fatima shared her experience:

> "South African authority disturbs Somalis in terms of documents. A section within the constitution says that the country belongs to everybody who lives in it, but they do not adhere to it. I have lived in South Africa for over 15 years. The Constitution is just a right in a book, but it is very unreal. Look! I am here as an asylum, yet there are constitutional provisions that permit an asylum seeker to get a permit without encountering what I go through in the country. I am still an asylum." (Fatima, personal communication, n.d).

South African Migration Policy

The migration Policy governing the mobility of foreigners into South Africa was initially referred to as 'the Aliens Control Act.' The South African apartheid regime purposefully designed the term 'aliens' to remind the migrants that they were strangers in a racially divided land (Carciotto,2021). The primary significance of this ignominious Act was to regulate their mobility in the country while simultaneously reminding foreigners that they were outsiders. The Act was developed and radicalized by the Apartheid government (Moyo & Botha, 2022) to the extent that migrants' capacity to integrate into the zones dominated by white people was among the chief requirements. The discriminatory policy only allowed migrants from African nations to come to South Africa as labourers in white-owned farms and gold mines. The regulation of the migrant workers was also evidenced in the manner in which they were issued with contracts allowing them to stay in the country for a specified duration before leaving upon the expiry of their indenture.

The African Immigration Act of South Africa, notably enshrined in the Immigration Act of 2002, is currently the most important document concerning the admission of foreigners into the country. Thus, its focus cannot be underestimated, as the Act and South African Refugees Law determine foreigners' admissibility into South Africa. The restrictive nature of the 2002 Act is evident in its requirement that any foreigner coming to South Africa for employment must prove that the occupation they applied for is indeed a workforce need. This selective admission into the country demands that those entering the country must be professionals or skilled personnel. This selective nature, which is not open to unskilled persons, endorses a policy that is highly restrictive to Black Africans (Khan, 2007; Siddiqui, 2004). Similar to the *Aliens Control Act,* migrants are perceived as aliens or outsiders whose entry should be heavily regulated in the name of safeguarding the available opportunities meant for the citizens.

Local People's Perception of Somali Migrants as a Problem

Foreigners in South Africa have often been perceived as a problem rather than a blessing. The negative narrative of immigrants being regarded as *'job stealers'* or *'opportunity snatchers'* has fuelled hate and violence against them (Mutanda, 2022; Niyigena, 2013). Despite having enormous

entrepreneurial skills and potential, Somali women in South Africa are perceived as despicable beings. This animosity is evident in derogatory labels such as *'Amakula'* or *'Kwerekwere'* (Isike & Isike,2012; Mavengano, 2022). The pejorative name *'Amakula',* initially used for Indian nationals who started businesses in the country, is now also used for Somali women. Their lighter complexion and soft hair features dissimilar to most Black South Africans, leading some locals to mistakenly perceive them as originating from Asia. The derogatory labels of *'Amakula'* or *'Kwerekwe'* serve to remind those women that they are both foreigners and non-Africans in South Africa. During interviews, it was revealed that the term *'Amakula'* is also used to convey to Somalis and Ethiopians that their origin is ambiguous and is seen as a problem. As a result, Somalis suffer from the intersectionality of race and nationality.

Notable Somali Initiatives vis-à-vis Antagonistic Narratives

One of the narratives that has attracted antagonism against Somalis doing business in South Africa is the perception that they are in the country for business only, without contributing to the well-being of the local populace. Somali entrepreneurs are accused of taking money out of the country and having an insignificant impact on South African locals despite generating significant revenue for the South African economy. Their engagement in economic building and community engagement has been underrated. Afriphobia discourses often overlook the socio-economic contribution of Somali entrepreneurs.

Beyond being a potential source of revenue for South Africa's economy, Somali businesses provide employment opportunities (Gastrow & Amit, 2013). Some locals earn a living working for Somali entrepreneurs, who employ them to communicate better with customers in their vernacular language. In Pretoria, Somali entrepreneurs have acted as a bridge between supermarkets in towns and densely populated Black South African townships. Despite the competition they bring to local businesses, the township community appreciates the affordability of their commodities sold at lower prices.

Challenges to Somali Women's Integration and Socio-Economic Development

In South Africa, Afriphobia is a common phenomenon that sporadically happens nearly every year, thus challenging the refugee's integration and economic development. Afriphobia is the selective antagonism and hostility directed towards Black people of African origin. The locals easily identify foreigners because of their body hue (dark complexion), accents, dress, hair type/styles and body size. The physical attacks arising from hatred by Black South Africans complicate the socio-economic integration of these individuals into the South African community.

The Feminist Intersectionality theory argues that women migrants often encounter overlapping factors facilitating their suffering. In this context, gender, nationality, race, and language interlock to facilitate antagonism from some local Afriphobes. Migrants from African countries are seen as *'despicable outsiders'* while the nationals from the Western world are perceived as desired friends who come as tourists or investors to add value to the South African economy.

The perception of some locals towards Somali women hampers their integration into the South African context, as Somali nationals are often considered contributors to economic impoverishment, crime (including women trafficking and abductions), and drug trafficking. Although Afriphobia results from several interconnected factors, the economic dimension plays a significant role, where some locals compete with Somali migrants for available opportunities.

Afriphobia primarily manifests itself in deprived areas where some locals feel that Somali entrepreneurs are taking away their economic opportunities. Somali shopkeepers are the main targets of recurrent Afriphobia in South Africa because they set up their businesses among poor populations, where they are perceived as competitors for customers. The high number of Somali shops in South African townships compared to other foreign nationals and the increasing number of Spaza shops bring competition with locals that have traditionally monopolized business in those zones.

The Somali migrants face challenges in building intercultural relations with the local communities. Intercultural relations are paramount for foreign nationals' social and economic integration (Mogweku, 2005). Through the lens of Feminist Intersectionality, this study argues that religion, nationality, language, and gender simultaneously hinder the integration of Somali migrants into the local community, consequently affecting their ability to run businesses. Conflicts are inevitable when a community cannot appreciate, accommodate, and understand people from different cultures due to low intercultural communication. This study reveals that Somali migrants are highly attached to their religion and culture, so much so that it becomes difficult for them to integrate with the local and other African communities.

Kuresh, a Somali woman residing in Pretoria West, shared that if a man decides to marry a Somali woman, despite sharing the same language, he will need to compromise his religious affiliation for such a relationship to ensue. When asked whether she would permit me to marry her daughter if I fell in love with her, Kuresh said:

> "We don't have any problem with marrying somebody from outside our community. After all, if you ask a hand in marriage for my daughter or sister, I have no problem so long as you are a Muslim. We Muslims can marry anyone so long as he is willing to follow our faith" (Kuresh, personal communication, n.d).

Language barriers contribute to misunderstandings between migrants and local communities. People who do not understand the language spoken by the other party may harbour resentment, possibly believing the other party is gossiping about them, which may not be true. This complicates their integration into the local community.

Aisha reports that interaction between Somali migrants and South African nationals, as well as other migrants, will continue to be a significant problem due to language barriers. Aisha asserts:

> *"When you don't comprehend what the other person is talking about, she could tell you thank you, but you quickly judge her that she is telling you to leave the place. The main problem is that we do not have the language, and thus we cannot understand what the local nationals are saying. In the townships, lack of the language is even worse because Somalis do not have the community there."*
> Aisha, personal communication, n.d.

Most of the Somali population exhibits little interest in learning South African languages, which has led to religious and socio-cultural misunderstanding between these communities. Niyigena (2013) asserts that the Somali community is a *'closed community'* that does not integrate much with other communities in the country. This reluctance to learn the local language constrains the integration of Somalis with South Africans and limits their ability to sell their commodities to local communities.

When I asked why they were reluctant to learn the local language, many Somalis indicated that their cultural and religious practices played a role. Some Somali women mentioned that religion and culture restrained them from integrating with other communities. Pretty claims that there is little political will to learn the local language, which contributes to misunderstandings between Somalis and local communities.

The inability of Somalis to speak the local language deters them from participating in local community functions. Despite the social significance of those functions, where everyone is expected to participate, the Somali community did not attend. While local shops remained closed during communal events like weddings, funeral vigils, and burial ceremonies to participate in those functions, Somali Spaza shops remained open. The local community regarded this as disrespectful.

Pretty claims:

> "If you came to my place, am I the one supposed to learn your language, or you are the one supposed to learn the language that I speak? [She poses]. I believe that the outsider should take the initiative to learn my language so that she/he can find it easy in living with the locals who are the majority, anyway. It is unfortunate that most of the Somalis living in South Africa cannot speak the South African languages, yet they work in the midst of the local communities of the locations where local languages are predominantly spoken. This is not right. Also, they are never involved in the community ceremonies because they do not have the language to intermingle with them. The locals complain a lot for the Somalis not able to get involved in their social functions like the funeral." (Pretty, personal communication, n.d).

This study establishes that clan politics among Somali women significantly hinder their integration into South Africa. Clan plays a crucial role in placing persons within a certain group in the Somali community (De Waal, 2020). The gendered geographies of power theory argue that individuals are born and raised in a particular social location that provides them with various privileges and disadvantages (Pessar and Mahler, 2003:816). Divisions along clan lines disadvantage women as they hinder their social and economic integration. Although several members of the Somali community who were interviewed downplayed the clan difference, leaders from SASOWNET and the Action Support Centre pointed out that clan division was ubiquitous among the Somalis in Gauteng. Pretty, an official at the Action Support Centre, averred that clan differences were one of the major challenges encountered when working with the community and an impediment to the expansion and development of SASOWNET. She reported that clan politics had become manifest at numerous events organized by the Somali Women's Network. The dominant clans in South Africa include Isaaq, Abgaal, Habargidir, Mareexaan, Ogaden, and Majeerteen.

In the context of clans, the theory of Social Location maintains that their clan categorization impacts the insertion of the migrant community into the region. A dominant clan such as Ogaden, with a significant population of Somalis in the Province of Gauteng, would integrate better into the transnational territory due to several clan members whom they can interact with, compared to a minority group such as the Somali Bantus. The history of these dominant clans exemplifies their privilege over minority clans such as the Somali Bantus. This privilege grants them power to resources and the ability to negotiate within the transnational territories. Similarly, being the predominant clan in Gauteng ensures strong networks. These interpersonal links enable newcomers to secure jobs and access resources that facilitate *'doing businesses'* in host nations (Poston & Bouvier, 2010).

Nevertheless, clan division politics are evident, though covertly. Pretty claimed that every time SASOWNET convenes a meeting, Somali women tend to invite their clan members. The strategy avoids differing opinions or criticisms that might arise in their gatherings. Pretty lamented the clan differences among SASOWNET members and questioned why they would leave their war-torn countries only to continue fighting each other in South Africa. Additionally, Pretty asserted that clan differences also predominate in the community's leadership. She confessed that the Somali Community Board of South Africa (SCBS) and the Somali Association of South Africa (SASA) do not mingle with one another due to clan divisions. She says:

> "My brother, SASA and SCBS do not mix, because of the clan difference. Even the SASOWNET we are having a big challenge of how to strengthen its structure throughout South Africa because every clan wants to be on their own. We ask them "why did you all ran from Somali and then came here to fight one another along your clans? How will it help?" And they laugh and say that they are trying to ensure that there is peace among clans. South Africa has its own challenge but if you bring your own fights from Somalia how is that going to help?" (Prety, personal Interview, n.d)

The lack of employment complicates the integration and settlement of migrants in the host country. In the South African context, Somali women find it difficult to access employment opportunities even after attaining refugee status. Despite the formal skills they have acquired from their home countries, they face discrimination based on their nationality. Their formal skills become informal in South Africa because their foreign qualifications are not recognized in the South African context. Thus, obtaining employment with non-South African qualifications becomes problematic (Dahlberg & Thapar-Björkert, 2023; Moyo & Zanker, 2022).

Similarly, acquiring permits (e.g., work permits temporary residence) requires authentication that is linked to one's immigration status. Therefore, the documentation process is crucial for Somalis seeking a sense of belonging and integration into South African society. The need for recognition and access to opportunities such as healthcare, education, and employment drives many Somalis to prioritize obtaining permits. This helps them avoid arrests and facilitates their integration into the country.

Nevertheless, the Somalis reported that their status quo did not change significantly even after obtaining permits from the Home Affairs Department. These women pointed out that in South Africa, they could not secure employment despite attaining refugee status. Amina, who received a refugee permit after several months of waiting, asserted that although she had the right to access opportunities in the country, except for voting, she still could not find employment. She reported that most women like herself ended up working in Somali-owned businesses because they could not be absorbed into the South African employment system. The women migrants voiced their anxiety about recognition and access to many opportunities in the country. This voice is eloquently expressed by Ayan, who says:

> "I long for that day when I will possess proper documents enabling me to access education, medical care and other opportunities which South Africans enjoy. I request that any institution intervene in my situation. I am in fear always because I have no means of accessing a health facility if I get sick today because I do not have any valid documents to show. They will not treat me and therefore, I will just die. I can also be arrested by police force at anytime. They are always looking for migrants with no documents and term them criminals. Anytime I can be deported back to Somalia. My inability to access health is my greatest fear".

Opportunities for Migrant Integration

Somali women migrants have numerous opportunities awaiting exploration to enhance sustainable socio-economic integration and their economic empowerment. However, Somali migrants can only utilize these opportunities in collaboration with essential stakeholders such as the South African government, faith-based organisations, and civil society organisations (CSOs).

In Gauteng, it was noted that most businesses run by Somalis employ mainly members from their community. This hiring strategy helps new arrivals adapt to the unfamiliar environment. However, Most Somali migrants prefer to hire members from their own community due to commonalities in language, nationality, religion, and clan. However, this selective employment has limited business skills transfer to the broader migrant population. Given the high unemployment rate in South Africa, Somali women's entrepreneurial skills represent an unexploited opportunity that could enhance their socio-economic integration.

There is a need for Somali leaders to work with the state to enhance skills acquisition for unemployed South African youths. This would require the South African government to first take stock of the informal and formal skills migrants possess. This study establishes that the state has focused heavily on legitimizing businesses to increase revenue collection and ensure compliance with the municipality by-laws. This focus affects small businesses, including Spaza shops owned by Somali migrants. Liendman et al. (2013) argue that while regulating Spaza businesses is necessary, such undertakings can create operational barriers for foreign businesses.

The South African government needs to revisit onerous business regulations to facilitate the smooth transfer of Somali women's entrepreneurial skills. The State could offer bonuses or incentives to the migrant businesses that hire locals or provide skills training to South African youths.

The cultural orientation of the locals is a prerequisite for healthy coexistence with migrants (Bozdağ 2020). Migrants often face rejection from host communities, which impedes women's economic empowerment, adaptability, and socioeconomic integration into the host country. When a cohesive and migrant-friendly environment is cultivated through a warm reception by the locals, migrant's ability to contribute to the host nation and eventually their integration is significantly bolstered.

Besides citizens' cultural orientation, migrant's orientation into South African contexts is also necessary to remedy culture-based tensions. Many Somalis enter the country with unrealistic expectations of a *"perfect nation,"* complicating their economic empowerment and socio-economic integration into South African contexts. To avoid such unmet expectations, both pre-departure and post-departure cultural orientation of migrants is essential. To actualize this cultural orientation, the government must collaborate with Somali organisations such as SASOWNET (South African Somali Women Network) to create platforms for orientation.

In South Africa, the influx of youth migrants is rising exponentially. Gauteng province comprises a vast population of young women migrants who utilize available social networks to navigate the transnational space. The South African government, in collaboration with migrant communities, should concentrate on access to ICT among migrants. Although ICT literacy skills have less impact on the migrant's employability in the South African context, it remains an untapped opportunity for their integration into the host country. ICT access would enable women to utilize the online space to do business activities.

Moreover, most migrants lack information about the processes of enrolling in tertiary institutions, accessing healthcare, justice, rights, and permit information. ICT initiatives could serve as an e-enabled intermediary, providing migrants with the necessary information to improve their quality of life as they pursue their business endeavours.

On the other hand, young people, potential key agents of either violence or peace, could use ICT to interact with the local community. Such interactions are necessary to dispel preconceptions about migrants and host communities. This would go a long way in preventing Afriphobia, which ultimately frustrates entrepreneurial activities in South Africa.

A robust body of knowledge demonstrates that acquiring a language familiar to locals is integral for migrants' socio-economic integration (Marangu, 2020; McHugh & Doxsee, 2018). In South Africa, the English language and any other local language (IsiZulu, Xhosa, and Sesotho) are significant for migrant women's economic empowerment, as these languages enable them to express themselves to South African locals while working. It allows them to communicate with health workers, immigration workers, South African police, and the local community, without which navigating the transnational space would be problematic.

Language is also a key factor that builds the cultural identities of both the group and individual members of the migrant community. Marangu (2020) asserts that learning the language of the local community is crucial, as it enables migrants to develop a sense of belonging, forge identity, and reconstruct their way of life. Just as our clothing, music, and religious beliefs function as identity markers, languages are imperative elements that create cultural and social distinctions in the host country. The use of migrants' vernacular languages, unfamiliar to host communities, may lead to host communities questioning the cultural identities of migrants, potentially triggering tensions.

The Somali community needss to enroll in English or local language classes to ensure acceptance by South African locals. When Somali migrants learn the host community's language, it can signal allegiance and loyalty to the South African communities, attracting acceptability. Somali refugees' access to education and formal employment is hindered by non-recognition or absence of foreign qualifications. Mwamba (2019) asserts that some employers deny migrants opportunities to work in their enterprises due to low regard for foreign certificates from other African institutions outside South Africa. Refugees might have lost their certificates or had them stolen during migratory routes (e. g., Home Affairs, refugee waiting camps, police stations). Cognizant of the circumstances surrounding refugee lives, South Africa has an opportunity for alternative credentialing to allow fair and just assessment of foreign qualifications. This alternative credentialing could entail establishing examinations geared towards assessing their competencies. The South African Department of Higher Learning has an opportunity to set up a committee of experts to provide background information on assessing these competencies.

The South African nation has numerous grassroots faith-based organizations (Vähäkangas, 2020; Van Der Merwe, 2020) that can facilitate interreligious and intercultural relations between migrants and local communities. The joint action of those faith-based organizations (FBOs) to bring harmony between the two groups can potentially ameliorate migrant's socioeconomic integration. Their credibility among migrant communities is strengthened by their involvement in humanitarian initiatives that improve migrant's livelihoods (health, education, welfare projects, etc.). The FBOs have a wide network outside South Africa that can attract a significant pool of resources for human promotion. This extensive network is also crucial for offering entrepreneurship opportunities and psychosomatic support among migrant populations, which could facilitate their integration.

Policy Recommendations

1. Recognition by South Africans that foreigners come to South Africa with entrepreneurial skills and opportunities to build the local economy is the first prerequisite to enhancing the development of young people willing to venture into businesses. This could be done through media, highlighting the contribution of Somalis to the country's micro and macro economy.
2. The government, Civil Society Organizations, faith-based institutions, and the foreign business community should collaborate to create friendly platforms that foster trust among locals and foreign businesses.
3. Reviewing policies regulating foreign businesses is indispensable to avoid hurting their investment. More research is needed to establish better strategies that could regulate businesses and simultaneously motivate foreign entrepreneurs.
4. The government should provide incentives to foreign entrepreneurs to encourage them to teach young people ways of doing businesses. The support incentives provided to local entrepreneurs by the government need to be extended to foreign businesses. Such incentives, which include soft loans and skills training could attract more businesses, generating significant revenue for the South African economy.
5. Institutions of Higher Learning should partner with businesses owned by foreign nationals to allow students to understand Somali models that maximize profits while simultaneously selling commodities at lower price.
6. This study recommends the protection of Somali businesses during Afriphobia attacks and compensation for losses they incur. Political leaders who orchestrate Afriphobic attacks need to be held accountable for the losses incurred after looting.

Conclusion

The exponential influx of migrants into South Africa due to socio-political and economic pressures has attracted antagonism from some locals. In particular, Somali migrants have suffered significant antagonism despite their contributions to the economy. This study argues that Somali women's economic empowerment and skills transfer are key strategies to enhance sustainable entrepreneurship among foreigners in the South African context. Overt and covert Afriphobia pose a significant threat to sustainable entrepreneurship, primarily as an economic problem that can be mitigated by strategies such as job creation.

The study suggests that Somali business models, including lower prices, bulk buying, small packaging, and support systems, could be taught to the locals with motivation from the State. The South African government must ensure the implementation of business-friendly policies that protect and support foreign entrepreneurs. Additionally, a quantitative study is recommended to numerically quantify the contribution of Somali migrants to the local economy.

A collaborative approach involving the Somali community, civil society organizations, and local leaders is recommended to reach out to the local community, fostering integration opportunities. Local leaders and civil society organizations could organize platforms to exchange ideas on how the Somali business community could involve local youth in their business programs.

Programs aimed at women's empowerment and migrant integration should be introduced in South Africa. Intercultural workshops, along with games and sports events, can help improve relations between migrants and South Africans by addressing phobia towards Somali nationals. Key Somali festivities such as Independence Day and Iftar could also serve as prime opportunities to amplify women's voices, reach out to the South African community, and aid vulnerable populations.

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