



## **THE GLOBAL IMPLICATIONS OF DOMESTIC XENOPHOBIA: THE CASE OF CHINESE AMERICANS**

**Fauzan Akbar Wicaksana<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Islamic University of Sunan Ampel Surabaya,  
Surabaya, Indonesia  
[fauzanakbarwicaksana77@gmail.com](mailto:fauzanakbarwicaksana77@gmail.com)

### **ABSTRACT**

This study explores the detrimental effects of xenophobia on diplomacy and international relations, focusing on the U.S.-China relationship and the broader Asia-Pacific region. Xenophobia, the fear or hatred of foreigners, has significantly strained bilateral relations, fostering mistrust and hindering cooperation on crucial issues. It has shaped negative public perceptions of China, leading to a climate of fear and intolerance. Economically, xenophobia can lead to protectionism, trade barriers, and a decline in economic activity. It can also disrupt cultural exchange, undermining efforts to build understanding and trust between different cultures. Xenophobia can escalate regional tensions, erode trust among nations, and weaken regional organizations. To address these challenges, regional leaders must prioritize tolerance, understanding, and collaboration. By combating harmful stereotypes, promoting cultural exchange, and addressing economic concerns, they can mitigate the negative impacts of xenophobia and create a more harmonious and cooperative environment for diplomacy and international relations in the Asia-Pacific region.

**Keywords:** Xenophobia, US, China, Culture, Foreigners

### **INTRODUCTION**

The word "xenophobia" itself comes from American language, where this word is divided into 2 parts, namely "Xeno" which comes from Greek, namely xenos, which means foreigner, while phobia comes from the word Phobos, which means fear. When you combine these two words, it means will mean that excessive fear will occur towards strangers. keep in mind that xenophobia is different from racism. Racism itself is the belief that one race is superior to another, while xenophobia is hatred of other people based on fear. Although racism and xenophobia are often considered the same, it is also possible that people of the same race will have xenophobia as well, as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) explains on its website, Racism is prejudice based on differences in physical characteristics, such as skin color, hair type, and facial features. Xenophobia has been making headlines at a

disproportionate rate, as many countries around the world experience rapid change. The population composition and cultural identities of countries on every continent are changing as a result of globalization and mass immigration. As these changes occur, acts of xenophobic violence have occurred throughout the world, especially in the United States, Europe, and South Africa. (Bordeau, 2009) The Chinese Exclusion Act, the first federal law to specifically target an ethnic group, effectively prohibited Chinese immigration for nearly 70 years. This discriminatory policy was motivated by economic fears and racial prejudice, reflecting broader xenophobic sentiments prevalent in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Even after the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943, Chinese Americans continued to face discrimination in various aspects of life, including housing, employment, and education. Stereotypes and negative perceptions of Chinese Americans persisted, often fueled by economic competition and cultural differences. What is unique about this phenomenon is that it has had quite an impact on bilateral relations between China and the USA itself, where this sentiment made people from the USA at that time reluctant to collaborate with Chinese companies, for fear of strong reactions or reputational damage. which can hinder economic collaboration and joint growth. Xenophobia targeting Chinese Americans is a domestic issue with international implications, affecting diplomacy, trade, and cultural relations. Addressing this requires a collective effort from individuals, societies, and governments to cultivate understanding, tolerance, and respect for diverse cultures. The history of xenophobia against Chinese Americans is a complex issue with many facets and far-reaching consequences. Understanding this historical context and the contemporary challenges faced by the Chinese American community is crucial to addressing the global implications of domestic xenophobia and fostering a more inclusive and tolerant society. (Manke, 2018)

## **METHOD**

This research employs a descriptive qualitative method to outline and explore how xenophobia can influence bilateral cooperation between the United States and China. This approach aims to investigate and reveal phenomena or events occurring in the field by describing their characteristics, nature, and context. The article utilizes a literature review that involves a systematic exploration of research and studies related to the concept of xenophobia, U.S.-China cooperation, and their outcomes. The type of data used is secondary data, including academic articles, reports, and information from the official websites of Stop AAPI Hate and the U.S. Government Publishing Office, to obtain a comprehensive analysis. Additional sources include books published by academics to gather credible and up-to-date data. The authors obtained data not through interviews, but from official documents such as memoranda of understanding to provide an in-depth analysis.

## **RESULTS & DISCUSSION**

### **The Impact of Xenophobia on Diplomacy and International Relations**

Xenophobia has a profound impact on diplomacy and international relations, influencing how nations interact, collaborate, and resolve conflicts. It can create an atmosphere of distrust between countries, hindering diplomatic efforts and cooperation on crucial global issues. When a nation perceives another as a threat due to xenophobic attitudes, it tends to avoid constructive dialogue or collaborative initiatives. This loss of trust can complicate negotiations on issues such as trade, security, and climate change, making it difficult to reach mutually beneficial agreements. For example, anti-foreign sentiment can derail trade negotiations and lead to retaliatory tariffs, as seen in recent US-China trade tensions. Furthermore, xenophobia can fuel a clash between nationalism and globalism. As xenophobia rises, it can gradually undermine the globalist principles underpinning modern international relations. Nations prioritizing national interests over international cooperation may adopt isolationist policies that disrupt global supply chains, reduce international trade, and exacerbate tensions between countries. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated this, as heightened xenophobia and nationalism led to hoarding of resources like vaccines and travel restrictions, impacting the global health response.

Xenophobia can also escalate conflicts. When leaders employ xenophobic rhetoric to garner domestic support, it can provoke other nations and exacerbate diplomatic crises. The rise of xenophobic nationalism in Europe before World War I played a significant role in creating geopolitical instability and conflict. Nationalist movements often emphasized ethnic identity and cultural homogeneity, leading to xenophobic sentiments against minorities and neighboring nations perceived as "different." This was particularly evident in multi-ethnic empires like Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire, where nationalist aspirations fueled animosity among various ethnic groups. The growing Slavic nationalism in the Balkans, driven by the desire for independence from Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire, exacerbated tensions in the region. The quest for self-determination often manifested in xenophobic attitudes towards ethnic minorities, creating fertile ground for conflict. (Lee, 2000) xenophobia has far-reaching consequences for diplomacy and international relations, fostering distrust, hindering cooperation, and escalating conflicts. Addressing xenophobia at both the national and international levels is crucial for fostering a more cooperative and stable global environment.

### **The Implications For Broader Diplomatic Efforts In Asia-Pacific Region**

Xenophobia, the fear or hatred of foreigners, has become a pervasive issue in many parts of the world, including the Asia-Pacific region. This phenomenon has significant implications for broader diplomatic efforts in the region, as it can undermine

trust, cooperation, and regional stability. Xenophobia can have a contagious effect, spreading from one country to another within the region. When one country experiences a rise in xenophobic sentiment, it can influence public opinion and government policies in neighboring countries. For example, if a country in Southeast Asia experiences a surge in anti-Chinese sentiment, it may embolden similar sentiments in other countries in the region. Xenophobia can erode trust and cooperation among countries in the Asia-Pacific region. When there is a climate of fear and distrust, it becomes more difficult for governments to negotiate and collaborate on shared challenges such as climate change, economic development, and security. This can lead to a breakdown in regional cooperation mechanisms and a weakening of regional institutions. Xenophobia can also have a negative impact on regional security. When countries are preoccupied with domestic issues and driven by xenophobic sentiments, they may be less willing to cooperate on security matters. This can create a security vacuum that can be exploited by non-state actors and other threats to regional stability. Xenophobia can hinder economic integration efforts in the Asia-Pacific region. When countries are divided by fear and distrust, it becomes more difficult to negotiate trade agreements, investment deals, and other forms of economic cooperation. This can limit the economic benefits that can be derived from regional integration. To mitigate the negative effects of xenophobia and promote regional cooperation, it is essential for regional leaders to take a proactive approach. They can a good regional leaders can promote tolerance and understanding among different cultures and societies. This can help to break down stereotypes and prejudices that fuel xenophobic sentiments. Regional leaders can work to build bridges of cooperation between countries, fostering dialogue and understanding on shared challenges. This can help to create a more positive and constructive regional environment. And the last one, Regional leader can address the underlying causes of xenophobia, such as economic inequality, social injustice, and political instability. By addressing these issues, they can help to create a more inclusive and equitable society. (Liu, 2016).

### **The Economic Implications of Xenophobia**

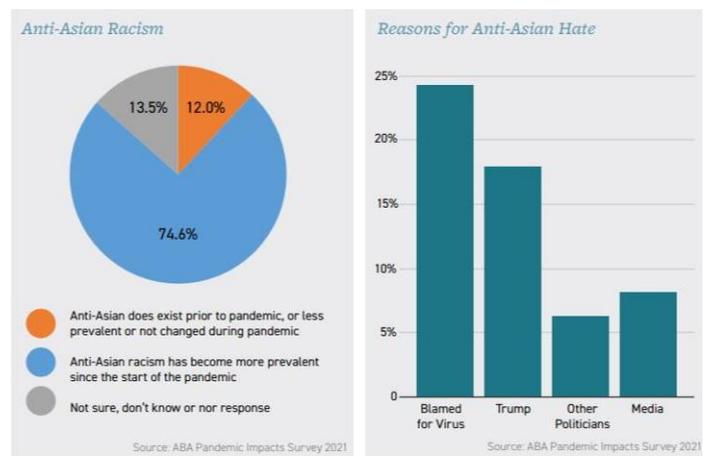
Xenophobia, the fear or hatred of foreigners, can have significant economic consequences, particularly in the context of US-China relations. the economic implications of xenophobia, drawing on existing academic literature. One of the most direct economic consequences of xenophobia is its impact on trade and investment. When there is a climate of fear and distrust, businesses may be reluctant to invest in or do business with countries or individuals perceived as foreign or threatening. This can lead to a decline in trade, investment, and economic growth. Xenophobia can also influence consumer behavior. If consumers are afraid of foreign products or services, they may be less likely to purchase them. This can have a negative impact on businesses and industries that rely on foreign trade. Xenophobia can also have a

negative impact on labor markets. If there is a fear of foreign workers, it can lead to discrimination and prejudice, making it difficult for foreign workers to find employment. This can have a negative impact on economic growth and productivity. Xenophobia can also create uncertainty and instability in financial markets. When there is a fear of economic or political turmoil, investors may be less likely to invest in a particular country or region. This can lead to a decline in stock prices, currency values, and other financial indicators. In the long term, xenophobia can hinder economic development. When countries are closed off to foreign trade and investment, they may miss out on opportunities for growth and innovation. This can lead to a decline in living standards and economic prosperity. (Wang, 2021).

Xenophobic sentiments can engender increased trade barriers, such as tariffs, quotas, and non-tariff measures. These barriers can render it more arduous and expensive for businesses to engage in trade with foreign countries, diminishing the overall volume of trade. Moreover, xenophobia can create a climate of uncertainty and instability, discouraging businesses from participating in cross-border trade. Xenophobia can also deter foreign investment. When investors perceive a country or region as hostile or unstable due to xenophobic sentiments, they may be less inclined to invest there. This can result in a decline in capital inflows, which are indispensable for economic growth and development. Xenophobia can disrupt global supply chains, leading to elevated costs and reduced efficiency. If businesses are unable to procure essential inputs or components from foreign suppliers due to xenophobic restrictions or uncertainty, they may be compelled to seek alternative sources, which can increase costs and lead to delays. Reduced trade, investment, and supply chain disruptions can have a deleterious impact on economic growth. When businesses are less willing to invest and trade, it can lead to a decline in job creation, consumer spending, and overall economic activity. Despite facing xenophobia, many Chinese American businesses have developed strategies to thrive in challenging environments. These businesses often rely heavily on strong community support networks and ethnic ties for resilience. To reduce their dependence on potentially prejudiced local customers, they have diversified their business models, such as by leveraging e-commerce or targeting broader markets. Additionally, Chinese American entrepreneurs have united with other Asian business owners and formed coalitions to promote mutual support, share resources, and advocate against discrimination. These collective actions have proven effective in helping businesses withstand periods of heightened xenophobia in the United States, demonstrating the power of community and resilience. (Cheung, 2016).

Additionally, xenophobia can contribute to economic nationalism and protectionism in several ways. Economic nationalism prioritizes domestic industries and economies over foreign competition, often leading to protectionist policies such as tariffs, import restrictions, and subsidies for local businesses. As xenophobia reinforces the idea that foreign entities, workers, and businesses

pose a threat to national identity, jobs, and economic stability, it can fuel calls for protectionist measures. In the U.S.-China context, xenophobic sentiments, driven by fears of Chinese economic dominance, have contributed to demands for tariffs and restrictions on Chinese goods. This has led to a surge in economic nationalism as a defense mechanism against perceived foreign threats. Studies have shown that framing foreign nations as economic enemies often involves racial or ethnic biases to garner public support for protectionist policies. (PAUL ONG, 2021).



Xenophobia has also driven various other negative narratives that continue to blame immigrants and foreign workers for unemployment or wage stagnation in the U.S. For example, in countries like the U.S., many political elites and the media often blame Chinese immigrants and Chinese companies for the loss of jobs in key industries, such as the manufacturing sector. This can create a feedback loop where protectionist policies are implemented, supposedly to "protect" domestic workers from foreign competition. However, these protectionist policies are not actually designed to protect domestic workers but are instead based on a misconception about the real causes of job loss. Specifically, xenophobia can lead to the belief that immigrants or foreign trade are the main causes of economic difficulties, such as unemployment or wage stagnation. As a result, governments may implement protectionist measures such as tariffs, import restrictions, or anti-immigration policies to safeguard domestic workers.

## **Cultural Implications of Xenophobia**

Xenophobia can significantly hinder cultural exchange and understanding by creating barriers that prevent open communication, interaction, and mutual respect between different cultural groups. It fosters suspicion and fear of people from other countries or cultural backgrounds. These negative perceptions discourage individuals from engaging in cultural exchange, such as learning languages or exploring traditions. Once someone has formed a negative opinion of a group, it becomes difficult to foster interaction, let alone achieve cultural understanding and trust. For example, anti-Chinese sentiment during the COVID-19 pandemic led to fear and avoidance of Chinese symbols and people, even in areas where they had been historically integrated. This demonstrates the challenges multiculturalism faces when many people hold rigid views. It results in the rejection or devaluation of foreign cultural practices, hindering cultural exchange. Instead of embracing diversity, xenophobic societies may promote cultural isolationism or homogenization, where dominant cultures seek to eliminate or marginalize minority traditions. In xenophobic environments, art, literature, music, and cuisine from other cultures may be viewed with suspicion, and people may be reluctant to adopt or explore cultural practices outside of their own. This undermines the potential for cross-cultural appreciation and idea sharing that often arises through education, tourism, and the arts. (Gee, 2009).

Another consequence is that student exchange programs, which rely on openness and curiosity, are also hindered. When societies and governments are xenophobic, they may limit or reduce such programs. This reduces the flow of knowledge and hinders global cooperation in fields like science, arts, and social studies, limiting opportunities for people to understand different cultural perspectives. For instance, during periods of increased international tensions, such as the US-China trade war, exchange programs and international student enrollment may decline due to concerns about espionage or job competition. Therefore, xenophobia restricts access to diverse educational experiences, further limiting cultural understanding. Furthermore, xenophobia reinforces harmful stereotypes, perpetuating misunderstandings between cultures. Instead of fostering curiosity or empathy, it reinforces an "us versus them" mentality, leading to polarization. Not only does it limit existing cultural exchange, but it actively undermines it by distorting the true nature of foreign cultures. These negative stereotypes create biases that can prevent people from seeing the richness and diversity of other cultures, making them more resistant to cultural exchange initiatives such as language learning, artistic collaborations, or even business ventures."

### **How Xenophobia can contribute to Stereotypes and Prejudice.**

Xenophobia often stems from a fear of 'the other' and can lead people to generalize negative traits or behaviors observed in a few individuals to an entire cultural, ethnic, or national group. These stereotypes create harmful beliefs. For

example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, some people associated the virus with individuals of Chinese descent, leading to a rise in anti-Chinese and anti-Asian stereotypes globally. Stereotypes born from xenophobia often portray foreign groups as dangerous, untrustworthy, or inferior. This results in sweeping judgments about people from certain cultures or countries, reinforcing inaccurate and harmful assumptions that persist over time. Xenophobia also diminishes empathy for those perceived as outsiders. It's a feeling-based mindset where individuals, due to differences in ethnicity or nationality, are less likely to empathize with others' struggles or view them as equal members of society. This dehumanization contributes to entrenched prejudice, as it becomes easier to justify discriminatory actions or beliefs against those deemed as 'other'. Xenophobia frequently leads to social and economic marginalization of specific groups, reinforcing the cycle of stereotypes and prejudice. When a group is excluded from economic or social opportunities due to xenophobic attitudes, they may be seen as outsiders who are unwilling or unable to integrate, further reinforcing the stereotype that they are 'different' or 'inferior'. This self-reinforcing cycle makes it difficult for marginalized groups to escape negative perceptions. (Takeuchi, 2007).

## **Conclusion**

Xenophobia, the fear or hatred of foreigners, has emerged as a significant challenge to diplomacy and international relations, particularly in the context of U.S.-China relations and the broader Asia-Pacific region. This study has examined the multifaceted impacts of xenophobia, highlighting its detrimental effects on bilateral ties, public perceptions, economic cooperation, and cultural exchange. One of the most prominent consequences of xenophobia is its ability to strain bilateral relations and hinder cooperation on critical issues. The rise of anti-Asian sentiment in the United States, fueled by xenophobic narratives, has created a hostile and distrustful environment, making it difficult for the U.S. and Chinese governments to engage in constructive dialogue. Negative stereotypes and prejudices have shaped public opinion, making it challenging to maintain positive bilateral relations and negotiate on important matters such as trade, climate change, and regional security. Furthermore, xenophobia has significant economic implications. It can lead to protectionist policies, trade barriers, and a decline in economic activity. By fostering a climate of fear and uncertainty, xenophobia can deter foreign investment, disrupt global supply chains, and reduce job creation. These economic consequences can have a detrimental impact on both domestic and international prosperity. Beyond its economic implications, xenophobia also has profound cultural consequences. It can hinder cultural exchange, erode trust, and undermine efforts to build understanding between different cultures. Xenophobia fosters a climate of fear and suspicion, making it difficult for individuals to engage in cross-cultural interactions and appreciate the richness of diverse cultures. This can lead to the rejection or devaluation of foreign cultural practices, hindering the

potential for cultural exchange and mutual understanding. Moreover, xenophobia can escalate regional tensions and erode trust among nations in the Asia-Pacific region. By promoting a competitive environment and hindering cooperation, xenophobia can weaken regional organizations and destabilize the region. The contagious nature of xenophobia means that it can quickly spread from one country to another, further exacerbating tensions and undermining regional stability. To address the negative consequences of xenophobia, it is crucial for regional leaders to prioritize tolerance, understanding, and collaboration. By fostering a climate of respect and acceptance for different cultures, leaders can challenge harmful stereotypes and promote cultural exchange. Building bridges of cooperation and strengthening diplomatic ties can help to mitigate tensions and foster trust among nations. Additionally, addressing economic concerns through policies that promote growth and development without resorting to protectionism is essential. In conclusion, xenophobia is a multifaceted challenge with far-reaching consequences for diplomacy, international relations, and cultural exchange. To overcome these challenges, regional leaders must work together to promote tolerance, understanding, and cooperation. By addressing the root causes of xenophobia and fostering a more inclusive and harmonious environment, it is possible to mitigate its negative impacts and build a more stable and prosperous future for the Asia-Pacific region.

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