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Xenophobia in South Africa

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Xenophobia has developed as a consequence of the eradication of the apartheid system in South Africa (University of Pretoria. Centre for human rights, 2009). Studies have investigated the causes of xenophobia with varied reasons emerging. Recurrent themes are those that portray foreigners as an economic threat, taking jobs opportunities and social services meant for the locals. The studies have also identified that xenophobia is caused by perceptions of foreigners as threats to physical security, political scapegoats, racism, isolation and nationalism (University of Pretoria. Centre for human rights, 2009). In the media foreign nationals in South Africa are associated with crime, drugs, HIV AIDS, trafficking (both human and drug trafficking) and diseases. Negative perceptions of foreigners have caused the likeliness of foreign nationals to be victims of crime compared to its perpetrators. The South African Human Rights Commission takes the view that xenophobic sentiments are based on lack of knowledge of foreigners and their rights (University of Pretoria. Centre for Human Rights, 2009). There is a close link between immigration and xenophobia. For example those who migrate to South Africa are prepared to do the work which South Africans refuse to do and therefore they find themselves unemployed and they take their anger on foreigners for taking their jobs whereas the truth is South Africans have the opportunity to take the job before the 'migrant'. The lack of governmental forces on migration policies is the influence the perceptions of the public about foreigners. A study in 2006 by South African Migration Project (SAMP) revealed that South Africans are intolerant of non-South Africans (McConnell, 2009). Crush and Pendelton (2007) did a research study in 2001-02 otherwise known as the National Immigration Policy Survey (NIPS) they came up with the following results:

- The citizens of a country tend to overestimate the number of non-citizens in their country
- Citizens see the migration of other people into their area as problematic rather than a challenge
- 'Scapegoats' are often targeted

Tadjo (2008) compares the presence of xenophobia in South Africa and the rise of Ivoirite in Cote d'Ivoire. She explains that Ivoirite was reconceptualised from colonialism by the Ivorian elites in order to define national legitimacy by stigmatising foreigner. She further explains that excluding foreigners is one of the recurrent methods involved in strategies for preserving political power. In the recent history of Cote d'Ivoire, the concept of identity has been manipulated to refer to local territory rather than national territory. Cited in (Duponchel, 2009). A parallel can be drawn in contemporary South Africa where not only are foreign born but migrants coming from the poorer Northern province; in this case xenophobia cannot be interpreted as the struggle amongst the poor rather a competition between the poorer and the richest (Duponchel, 2009). The laws made during apartheid were deliberate laws that caused division between people and migrants to be considered as outsiders. Outsiders are not meant to be part of the insiders. The enemy has been defeated however it is resurfacing even at the collapse of the apartheid.

Key words: xenophobia, racism, race, SAMP, apartheid, migration, foreigners, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Nigeria, ANC, NIPS

Introduction

This essay is set to discuss and explore the validity of xenophobia in South Africa. A country that was once a victim of brutality, slavery and hatred towards the black minority. The essay will explain the concept of race and racism and xenophobia of and how it has affected South Africa as a country, its citizens and other countries surrounding it. The word race has been used in different ways, nevertheless the old uses have often continued to side by side with the new ones (Banton, 1980). It has been used interchangeably. In the nineteenth century

this idiom was extended through the identification of race with nation (Banton, 1980). Scholarly work in the area of race identified the concept of race as a biological fact, with a common understanding drawing towards different skin colours and physical attributes, which explain cultural differences including language, nationality and religion (Essed,2002; Gilroy, 2006; Ramon,2000) cited in (Vandeyar and Vandeyar,2014). Todorov (2000) explains race as human groupings whose members possess common physical characteristics; or rather for the differences are self-evident, it consists in affirming the relevance and the significance of the notion. As cited in (Back and Solomon, 2000). Race/s is not simply groups of individuals that look alike. Race has always been a Sociological theme from the founding field and the formulation of classical theoretical statements (Winant, 2007). Sociological perspectives about race have changed and developed since the nineteenth century (Winant, 2007). Controversy over the meaning and significance of race was intensified after the Second World War.

Racism and xenophobia

Racism is a type of discrimination or prejudice based on race, a belief that race is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities (Webster's dictionary) cited in (Vandeyar and Vandeyar, 2014). Race is a social construction that invented people. It is first and foremost a discursive category, the organizing category of those ways of speaking, systems of representation and social practices which utilize a loose, often unspecified set of differences in physical characteristics (...)in order to differentiate one group socially from another (Hall,1992) cited in (Vandeyar and Vandeyar,2014). In our understanding of what racism is differ as in some nations racism is denied to be existing. Racism is the belief that one race is superior or inferior to another. A person's social and moral traits are determined by his or her biological characteristics. Authors such as Hannaford (1996) define racism as the social and cultural significance assigned to a group of people who are recognized as sharing common physical or physio-gnomic characteristics. Spickard (2005) argues that racism comprises of two core elements in all historically and geographic situation, it purposes that some concept of race is being mobilized and involves negative attribution of a specified racial group. In the 1960s racism was given a new meaning as designating the use of beliefs and attitudes and control a category of people defined in racial terms (Banton, 1999). Racism has influenced wars, slavery and legal codes, for example in countries such as Italy, non-Italians such as Blacks and the English are vilified in other words they are being racialized. Recognised cases of racism include apartheid in 1994 in South Africa, whereby the white population became dominant in the country and had the power to do what privileged them, the Nazi under the ruling of Hitler and the colonisation of Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) by the British Colombia.

The existence of racial attitudes have been acknowledged widely and notwithstanding several pioneering historical studies of the subject, there has been an underestimation of the extent of which theories of racial differences form part of mainstream intellectual traditions (Dubow 1995). There are different types of racism; one being scientific racism. This contends that racial inequality is a by-product of genetic differences between races (Carolina and Thomas, 2000). Scientists developed their idea of race and science from the society and later presented it to the society using scientific facts to reinforce racist beliefs of that society. Cited in (Science lives.). Scientific racism has been discussed in little but in brief details by a number of Sociologists such as Darwin and other philosophers. Races for Darwin were sub-species developing with partial reproductive isolation from each other. The savage races for example had smaller brains, faced the prospect of declining fertility compared to civilised races adapted and survived (Law,2010).Scientific racism with its ambiguities and contradiction operated as a regime of truth in Germany, Britain and the USA in the beginning of the twentieth century (Law, 2010).Scientific racism has much been ignored in South Africa. There are particular reasons why this type of racism has been ignored. Dubow explains that in pursuing this argument there has been a tendency of avoiding a serious account of the content and internal logic of scientific racism (1995). Psychoanalytic racism has been explored by scholars in the past.The South African Journal of Psychology (2010) outlines that a psychoanalytic interpretation of racism revolves around the concept of racial scape goating by means of projection (Fanon, 1967). Psychoanalytic racism relates to the phobic reaction of the white racist to the black (Hook, 2004). Fanon (1967) takes a psychological but more importantly psychoanalytic approach to addressing the impact

racism has on blacks, but also outlines an immediate recognition of social and economic realities. Psychoanalytical theories of racism are severely limiting in the sense that they operate on an individual level and may view the individual as deviant and pathological. It is argued that a conceptualisation of racism as ideology is useful for the reason that it is better able to address racism on a larger scale through power relations (Duncan et al., 2001).

Xenophobia

Xenophobia is pervasive throughout many areas of the world, including Europe and North America, with the influx of immigrants from Northern Africa and Latin America (Noyes, 2010). The word xenophobia comes from the Greek words *xenos*, meaning the stranger and the guest and *phobos*, meaning fear. Xenophobia represents fear of the stranger but usually the term is used or taken to mean hatred of strangers (Smelser and Baltes, 2001). Xenophobia and racism tend to overlap, but are a distinct phenomena. Racism usually entails distinction based on physical characteristic differences, such as skin colour, hair type, facial features and so forth whereas xenophobia implies behaviour based on the idea that the other is foreign to our originates from outside the community or nation (NGO working Group on Migration and xenophobia for the world conference, 2001). Xenophobic and ethnic related disputes have played an unmistakable role in the countless conflicts primarily because of the strong feelings related to nationality and identity (Noyes, 2010). One would expect there should be a decrease in exclusion tendencies through globalization and attendant diversity as championed through the rhetoric of world leaders, media and the significant others (Banda and Mawadza, 2015). Xenophobia is a form of discrimination closely related to racism and is liable to affect anyone or a group of people which are considered non-indigenous or non-autochthonous (Handmaker and Parsley, 2001). According to Wallace, 1995: the difference between xenophobia and racism is that xenophobia is a reaction against foreigners whereas racism is reaction against a generic group. Xenophobia and racism can be seen as an attitude of mid-set (Harris, 2002). Xenophobic beliefs may be formed by stereotyping i.e. the drawing of inferences about individuals on the basis of the image of the social group or category of which the individual is a part (Rydgen, 2004). In the understanding xenophobia is characterised by a negative attitude towards foreigners, a dislike or fear (Kunda, 2009). By framing xenophobia as an attitude, however there is no comment on the effects of the mind-set (Kunda, 2009).

There are different types of xenophobias but literature tends to refer to them as hypotheses of xenophobia instead.

Scapegoating hypothesis

Scapegoating hypothesis argues that xenophobia occurs when a group of indigenous people turn their anger resulting from whatever hardship they are experiencing against foreigners, primarily because foreigners are the cause of their problems. This hypothesis does not explain why foreigners of colour in the context of contemporary South Africa invariably bear the brunt of the prejudicial and murderous hatred. (Duncan, 2012).

Isolation hypothesis

This hypothesis situated that xenophobia as a consequence of South Africa's history of isolation from the international community prior to 1994 elections (Harris, 2001). There is little doubt that the brutal environment created by apartheid with its enormous emphasis on boundary maintenance has also impacted on people's ability to be tolerant of difference (Morris, 1998).

Bio-cultural hypothesis

Explains that xenophobia operates through levels of physical and cultural appearance. International literature on nationalism suggests that xenophobia is a negative consequence of nation building (Harris, 2001). The bio-cultural hypothesis places xenophobia at the level of differences exhibited by African foreigners in the country. Foreigners such as Nigerians and Congolese are 'scapegoated' due to bio-cultural factors such as physical appearance and the 'inability' to speak one of the indigenous languages.

Kollappan (1999) suggests that xenophobia cannot be separated from violence and physical abuse. In this sense a rewriting of the definition of the term is necessary. Xenophobia is not just an attitude but an activity. Perpetrators of xenophobia treat their victims with physical and verbal abuse, these 'activities' can be compared to how black people were treated by the whites during the British Columbia, however what was happening was racial violence. With

xenophobia, xenophobia is not racism in the sense that it is against the people from the same nation with different traditions and traits.

Xenophobia in South Africa

South Africa is a highly Xenophobic society, which out of fear of foreigner, does not naturally value human rights of non-nationals (Dodson,2002) cited in Xenophobia in South Africa and problems related to it, 2005). Currently the media, social networks and the tabloids have reported violent attacks on immigrants in South Africa. South Africans are firing back that they want all immigrants to travel back to their country of origin. The backlash is targeted at black non-South African by South Africans. A statement as made by both the civil society and South African Human Rights Commission defines xenophobia in South Africa a deep dislike of non-nationals by nationals of the recipient nation (South African Human Rights Commission,1999). This definition however according to Harris (2001) is not enough in South African context the definition is limited and misleading because xenophobia in South Africa is not just an attitude: but a activity (...) it is violence that damages and harm the body (Harris, 2002) cited in (Valji,2003). Resentment is growing against foreigners blamed for taking governmental jobs. It can be argued whether xenophobia in the country was triggered by hatred of foreigners or it was the failure of the government in supporting its people escape poverty by providing resources and employment opportunities. According to Gumede (2015):

South Africa is more unequal today more than in 1994. About 60 to 70% of the population live in squalid conditions, hidden spaces. And a lot of the violence that is pouring now is happening to migrants in those spaces on a daily basis. Source: Alja Zeera

Xenophobia in South Africa is not only in one area but it is widespread although the government refuses to agree to its existence instead blame the media for exaggerating. Initially South Africa is already itself one of the most violent countries in world in particular with the popular city of Johannesburg. Since xenophobia is a violent act, its existence should not be a surprise especially the xenophobia that took place in 2008. In 2008 the country experienced mass xenophobia from South Africans to foreigners mainly those from countries like Zimbabwe, Nigeria and Mozambique. The country's experience of the 2008's xenophobia was not the first neither was it the last. For example in 1994, a group of South Africans in the township of Alexandra participated in a violent campaign forcing Zimbabweans and Malawian out of the township because they were responsible for the majority sexual attacks in the area , increase of crime and unemployment, in 1996, approximately one thousand South Africans inhabitants of an informal housing settlement attempted to drive all foreigners out of the settlement, in 1998, six South African police were filmed setting attack dogs to three Mozambicans migrants whilst hurling racist and xenophobic invectives to them (Duncan,2012). In public memory of the 2008 xenophobia it was the unpleasant and horrifying event of xenophobic violence that engulfed South African's landscape (Peberdy, 2009) cited in (Duncan, 2012). Sociologist Pillay (2008) suggests that socio-economics inequalities between the poor and the rich tend to be root of violence. Neocosmos (2008b) confirms that it is common occurrences the powerfull take their frustration on the less powerless, for example, women, the elderly and children. The suspected reason of xenophobia against foreigners was because South Africans accused foreigners for causing the rising levels of crime, they steal their jobs, houses and women (Human Right Watch, 2010). According to Matsopoulos et al (2008), not only adult men in particular black men are more likely than other groups to be victims of violence but also more likely to be perpetrators of violence (cf. Bulhan, 1985).

Past and present of xenophobia in South Africa

In South African attitude or mind-set xenophobia has resulted in tensions between indigenous people and foreigners and this has caused violent attacks against foreigner (Harris, 2002; Hassim et al., 2008; Krochmal, 2001; Tshitereke, 1994) cited in (Journal of Asian and African Studied, 2014). The South African society has had brutal experience of xenophobia before its win of democracy 1994, after its struggle with apartheid in the 1980s (Neocosmos, 2008). Current literature regarding xenophobia in South Africa focuses on the aftermath studies of areas affected by sudden eruptions of xenophobic violence (Noyes, 2010).Ahmed Dawlo, director of the Somali Association of South Africa, stated that xenophobia is a child of racism. It is a product of apartheid that has continued into the new

South Africa. It is black immigrants from the African continent who are targeted by other black South Africans. Cited in the International Journal of Social Science Studies, 2013). These people have been denied rights and entitlements via prejudice and stereotypes. Black non-South Africans living and working in the country report that compared to South Africans they have been stopped by the police more frequently (Nduru, 2005) cited in (International Journal of Social Science Studies, 2013). University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg did a survey and found out that 71% of refugees interviewed were stopped by the police compared to 47% of South Africans (Valji, 2004) cited in International Journal of Social Science, 2013). With the struggle of labour, conflict and economic hardship in South Africa's neighbouring countries, South Africa has been seen as a destination for migrants from all around. Foreigners who come from Nigeria and Mozambique are believed to be involved in illegal activities such as drugs and illegal immigration (Handmaker and Parsley, 2001). When people are hurt and not allowed to heal through emotional realisation, they are pulled to re-enact the hurt on someone else (Weissglass, 2001).

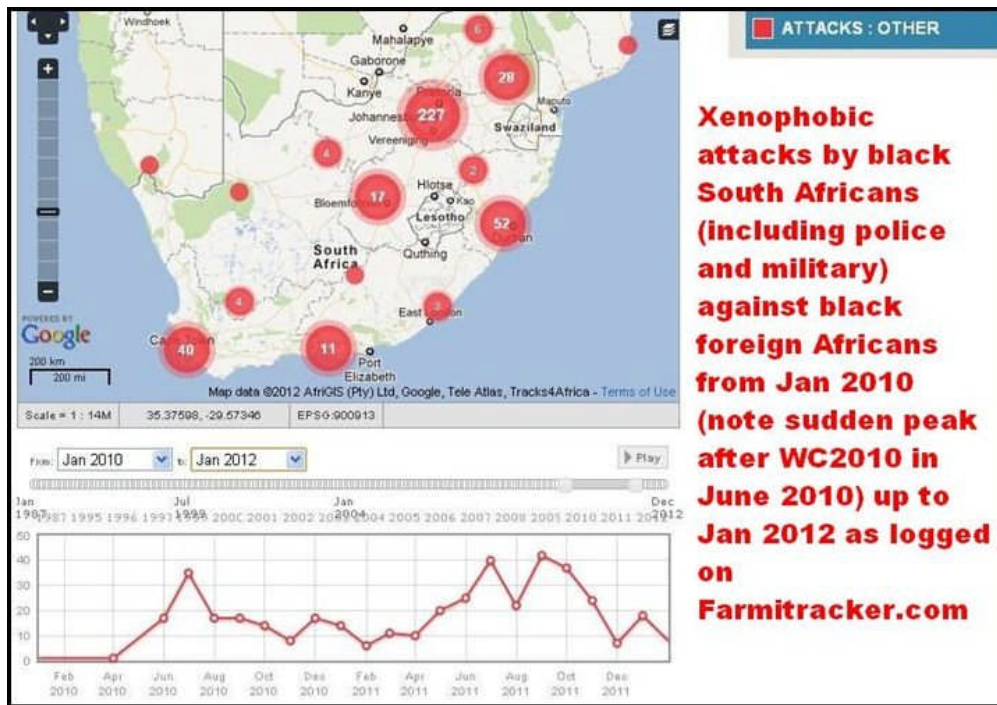
Crush and Pendleton 2004, commented on the xenophobic attitude of post-apartheid South Africa as; Negative attitudes (...) are pervasive and widespread that it is not possible to identify a xenophobe profile. Basically the poor, the rich, employed and unemployed, male or female or white or black all express similar attitudes (...) It also provides public education challenges not knowing where to begin but also deciding who to target. Xenophobia has become widespread in post-apartheid South Africa that it has created an impact on children and at school. Many children do not attend school because of xenophobic attitudes and misunderstanding of the law on the part of educators, who deny refugees and asylum seekers their right to education (Bronwyn, 2003). For foreigners patterns of residence in South Africa are connected with concerns of safety and security (Sinclair, 1998; Morris, 1999) cited in (Bronwyn, 2003). Foreigners are seen as a threat to the social and fiscal stability of South Africa (McDonald, 1998; McDonald, 2000) cited in (Journal of Asian and African Studies, 2014). Victims of xenophobia tend to be black Africans who are identified by crass physical features, such as colour of skin, inoculation marks and dress code (cf. Minaar and Hough, 1996; Morris, 1999) cited in Bronwyn, 2003).

In March 2001, The Star newspaper headline 'Too dark' teacher to sue for arrest (Monare and Feris, 2001). The article informs a woman who was arrested and assaulted by black policemen on the grounds that she was too dark to be a South African citizen. Cited in (Bronwyn, 2003). 30% of people arrested by the police are because too dark to be South African.

What started as attacks on 'illegal aliens' soon became attacks to immigrants legally here with their families and then attacks on South Africans who looked 'foreign' because they were 'too dark' to be South African. This is the evil story of the beginning of fascism (...) and ethnic cleansing which has been practised in other parts of the world.

Statement by the Congress of South African Trade Union (2013)

The claim by South Africans on the street that foreigners 'steal jobs' and are criminals are often accepted as the prima facie reasons for general attitudes of intolerance and hostility (Unpublished Masters Thesis, York University 2003). The graph below shows the statistics of xenophobic attacks of foreign nationals between the years of 2010 and 2012, in different cities around the country. The map shows Johannesburg with the most attacks comprising 227 compared to 3 attacks in East London near Port Elizabeth. Legget (2003) claims that if victims of xenophobia were looked at closely in particular Nigerian nationals who are already stereotyped as drug dealers and whose wealth is entrenched in mainstream consciousness the discrepancy is between those who were victims of robbery, assault or murder was between two or three times on nationals. Xenophobic violence can be traced as far as the first democratic year in 1994, in Alexandra a city in the outskirts of Johannesburg, armed youth gangs destroyed foreign owned properties, demanding them to leave Alexandra (Misago et al., 2009). Xenophobia in South Africa relates to other countries in the sense that all countries that have experienced xenophobia have one goal, to get rid of non-nationals. It can also be argued that South Africa's xenophobia is similar to Western racism but this does not mean that the West is the cause of xenophobia in South Africa.



The unsophisticated form of xenophobia highlights that racism has found a new victim in a post-apartheid South Africa (Harris, 2001). There are several reasons what triggers or what has triggered xenophobia in South Africa. According to University of Witwatersrand (2010) the key trigger against foreign nationals and ethnic minorities within the country has been local competition for political and economic power and based on in-depth field work xenophobia against foreign nationals in South Africa has been triggered by competition for formal and informal local leadership and competition for business opportunities. International migrants are often vilified and accused of taking over jobs from locals from the country. New data presented from Africa Check (2015) a different nuanced image of what it means to be a migrant and trying to better your life in South Africa. The Migration for Work Research Consortium found that 82% of 15 to 64 year old are migrant workers, 14% were domestic workers who had moved around the province for at least past five years and 4% of them could be identified as international migrants. The Migration for Work Research Consortium also found out a racial breakdown of 79% of international migrants were Africa, 17% were white and around 3% were Indian or Asian. Dodson and Oelofse (2000) did a study based on the reasons of xenophobia in Cape Town; their study revealed that in a context of extreme poverty and very high unemployment rates, job competitions in particular in the fishing industry, was the main factor driving separation among communities between foreigners and indigenous. In a country like South Africa where in some township poverty continues to grow, the competition of limited resources tends to cause anger towards the 'outsiders' the indigenous see the outsiders as competition and a threat to better resources and can lead to prejudice to outsiders. Murray (2003) argues that the unwanted newcomer is not only regarded as a tramontane intruder who disrupts the status quo but who figuratively, pollutes and contaminates the social order. Cited in (Banda and Mawadza, 2014).

South Africa remains to see itself as a welcoming country to others making it the 'rainbow nation' what was once Nelson Mandela's pride, but, the recent events of xenophobia have proved South Africa to be not what it says it is. It can be argued whether xenophobia has been hidden for so long until South Africans became frustrated. The recent events in the country has caused some African countries to plead its people to come back home, for example countries like Nigeria. The media within the country vilifies and stereotypes all Nigerians as drug dealers which fuel the perceptions of the public about Nigerians. A newspaper article by the Star newspaper quoted by Perpedy in (1998) is a tragic example of the mistreatment of Nigerian nationals. The headline was printed in the inner city of Johannesburg; headlining 'Nigerians arrested in drug deal in inner hotel'. It was later discovered that the arrest was not drug related. The Nigerians who were arrested were

illegal immigrants in the country. The headline is misleading and this is the sort of stereotype the South African media does not fail on. Migrants are not only likely to be victims of crime because of xenophobia but because they cannot seek or receive protection from the criminal justice, being in contact with the police as a migrant is a risk because the police can always arrest you as an illegal migrant even if you have the correct paperwork and this has caused an increase in the dark figure of crime and makes migrants vulnerable. Apartheid left South Africa as a country of wounds with the treatment they received before 1994; it affected a large scale of hurt and wounds in the country. As Weissglass (2001) states above that when people hurt and are prevented from healing through emotions, they are forced to re-enact the hurt on someone else and South Africans are using xenophobia as a way of healing from what happened to them during the period of apartheid, with the difference of victims and perpetrators.

Conclusion

South Africans will kick down a statue of a white man but will not slap a live one. Yet they can stone to death a black man simply because he is a foreigner.

Statement by President Robert Mugabe (2015). Source:

Lailasblog.com

There is much we can learn from the experiences of non-nationals in South Africa and xenophobia itself. Scholarly and research has defined xenophobia as a dislike or hatred of another person who is from same population. It is not merely an attitude but also an activity which harms a body physically and causes emotional distress to the victim. Xenophobia in particular in South Africa has been previously under studied until the xenophobia that occurred in the year 2008 and now in 2015. What we can learn from this is that xenophobia has been experienced around the world. It can be compared to racism of the West, but it should be noted that the West does not or did not cause xenophobia in the country. The local government has to abide by the Refugee Act which is there to protect all refugees, what this means is that resources provided to South African nationals they should be available for refugees at the same level. Basically the government needs to understand what the refugee act is about and refugees are to be treated like any other person who is not a refugee asylum seeker or foreigners a South African nationals would refer outsiders as. The recent events of xenophobia has attracted the media around the world especially with the denial of President Zuma (Republic of South Africa' president) that South Africa does not tolerate xenophobia even though it is argued how can the president claim his government does not tolerate xenophobia yet it is happening, nevertheless has acknowledged that xenophobia in South Africa is not new but persists denying that South Africans are xenophobic (News24, 2015). Prior to the April 2009 presidential elections in South Africa, news reports indicated evidence that political elections using xenophobic messages to drum up support for their campaigns (Berack,2008). The puzzle remains as to the true levels of xenophobia within all sectors of South African society. This question is especially poignant given the reports of political leaders exploiting these tensions. These actions allow individuals who may not participate in violent uprisings to empower leaders who will be more likely to push xenophobic policies (Noyes,2010). Recently the media had reported that Boko Haram has proposed to the South African government that it has to contain what South Africans are doing otherwise they will seek revenge by executing South Africans who live in Nigeria, Niger, Chad and other surrounding countries(Naija.com,2015). In a brief YouTube video Boko Haram threatened South African government that if the xenophobia continues they will attack the South African embassies in Nigeria (Nigerian watch, 2015) however no one is certain whether or not the video is genuine or not. The ANC message of reconciliation and pan Africanism in particular shallow when juxtaposed with the violence committed against foreigners and the accusations against ANC officials of making xenophobic remarks to further their own candidacies (Hudson, 2009).

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