



Xenophobia a product of jealousy and ignorance? Interrogating the noise surrounding migrants in South Africa using Ubuntu diplomacy

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Abstract

Xenophobia is a social evil that has seen the human rights of migrants violated all over the world. In South Africa, black foreign nationals are often humiliated, assaulted, and their businesses destroyed, in addition to being denied some basic services and seldom accused of dealing drugs and taking what belong to South African citizens in the form of jobs and social benefits. South Africans is considered a beneficiary of many acts of selfless solidarity during the apartheid era, however, some South Africa [to a certain extent] believes that what its people enjoy should be extended to the citizens from other country. Thus, its national interest can be daubed as people-centered while promoting the well-being, development and upliftment of its people and ensuring inclusive development of the country. Using a qualitative research method, this study interrogates the xenophobic noise surrounding migrants in South Africa while seeking to know whether xenophobia is a product of jealousy and ignorance? Thus, going by the influence of government policies, how can the principles of Ubuntu diplomacy be explored to checkmate the xenophobes in response to the circumstances surrounding it in South Africa? Theoretically, the study relies on scapegoatism theory, frustration aggression theory, and group threat theory and to explain the possible reasons behind the hostile nature of [black] South African towards black African migrants, concluding that the best, and only solution to the phenomenon is to remove the image of “they are our enemies” through Ubuntu diplomacy.

Key words: Apartheid, Ubuntu, Aggression, Foreigners, Diplomacy

Introduction

George Orwell (1984) in his book titled *Nineteen Eighty-Four* comments that . . . if the natives were allowed to make contact seemingly with [the perceived] foreigners, they would discover that they are creatures similar to themselves and that most of what they have been told about the foreign nationals are lies. The sealed world in which the natives’ lives would be broken, and the fear, hatred, and self-righteousness on which their morale depends on might evaporate. In a similar thought, Reni Eddo-Lodge (2019) concur that anyone feeling angry about their immigrant neighbours should take the time to talk with them and find out a bit about their lives, they would almost certainly find that these foreign nationals do not have everything handed to them on a platter of gold, rather they are very poor, living in cramped conditions, and possibly have left even worse conditions from wherever they've come from.

Black on black violence, in South Africa has become a household occurrence not because there are no policies to mitigate its occurrence but because of the restrictiveness of black South Africans’ views towards African migrants. An average black South African believes that migrants look different or smell different,

speak different language, or walk certain way, hence they are “not like us”. Thus, creating enemy images of black migrants whose origin is perceived to be in conflict with their (South African) origin.

Hussein and Hitomi (2019:6) contends that while xenophobia has been described as something of a global phenomenon, presumably associated with globalization it has been associated with countries [including South Africa] undergoing socio-economic and political transition. Neocosmos (2006) in support of Hussein and Hitomi argues that xenophobia is a problem that is common with post-coloniality in which the politics of the main group following political freedom is dominant. Amongst black South Africans, this has to do with their thought of superiority to black migrants. To a certain extent, this can be described as part of the scapegoating black migrants where unfulfilled promises of the democratic dispensation results in foreign nationals coming to take the available jobs resulting into poverty and deprivation on the part of the locals.

Historically, the arrival of refugees and asylum seekers in South Africa dates back to the 1980s, a period when the former apartheid enclave was home to refugees from Mozambique refugees. It should be noted that the position of refugees and asylum seekers was never recognized in South Africa until 1993. This was followed by its recognition by the United Nations Organization and African Union when it became a signatory to the organizations’ Conventions on Refugees in 1994.

To a certain extent, South Africa is considered to be the most industrialized country in Africa hence its attraction to tens of thousands of foreign nationals seeking running away from economic crises, war, and political persecution in their home countries, while seeking for another place to cushion their sufferings back at home. Countries such as Zimbabwe, Malawi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, and Ethiopia [in Africa] accounted for more than 90% of these refugees. There are a number of refugees that also come from Pakistan and Bangladesh.

The word xenophobia is derived from the Greek words, *xénos*, which means stranger or guest, and *phóbos*, which means fear or panic. Xenophobia, according to the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (2010), is a strong feeling of dislike or fear of people from other countries. Xenophobia is not limited to being an attitude, but it can also be manifested in the form of a practice, this practice can turn into violent behaviour against foreign nationals (Hagensen, 2014). Insofar xenophobia can also be couched as the manifestation of racism.

To a certain extent racism and xenophobia is characterized by prejudiced discourses. The two operate on the same basis of profiling people considered not to be part of the mainstream and making negative assertions. Comparatively, the profiling of “others” regarding racism is premised on race, while the noise about xenophobia is on the basis of who you are and which part of the continent you came from. Thus, xenophobia is a deep hatred of foreign nationals by the nationals of a recipient state. Without mincing words, the manifestation of xenophobia certainly undermines social cohesion, peaceful coexistence, good governance, apart from constituting violation of the principles of fundamental human rights of migrants in the former apartheid enclave (South African History Online, 2021). The manifestation of xenophobic attacks on foreign nationals physically and psychologically undermines the principles of social cohesion, peaceful coexistence between the locals and migrants.

Whenever xenophobic violence occurred in South Africa, the white South Africans [and none South African whites] are not attacked as they are not viewed as foreigners in the context of xenophobia. To a certain extent the reasons for xenophobic attacks are different, some locals blame xenophobia on the contestation for scarce socio-economic resources, some political pundits attribute it to the country’s past experience with the apartheid government, poor service delivery apart from the claim by the locals that foreign nationals take their jobs by accepting low wages. Hussein and Hitomi (2019) added that some South Africans claim that foreign nationals are criminals and drug addicts and should not be allowed to have access to services like free health services and police possibly protection. They comment further that foreign nationals are also blamed for their businesses loses by taking away customers from local residents as well as spread diseases such as HIV/AIDS.

The history of South Africa is one of pain and suffering, it is also one of brotherhood and solidarity, but behind the scenes, xenophobia was also taking place. Under the apartheid government, black South

Africans were arrested, beaten, tortured, humiliated, and dehumanized. Hence the transfer of aggression and frustration to the foreign nationals in form of harassment, and even killing of some. The extent of the damage that xenophobia has on South African society, not only does it affect the daily lives of migrants, but also affects the locals as well. The locals often lose the services provided to them by the black migrants. Xenophobia is not only detrimental to society, but it is also destructive to life, property, and South African economy as a result of damages to infrastructure that may cost millions of Rands to repair, while forcing the government to spend the money meant for development to manage the socio-economic crises created. This is in addition to its devastating effect on the locals whose livelihood depends on the services provided by the migrants. This is in addition undermining the nation's reputation abroad and scare away potential investors and tourists, hence a clog in the wheel of its economic development.

Research Objectives

This study is guided by the following research objectives:

1. To propose how Ubuntu diplomacy can be used as an alternative model for resolving xenophobia in South Africa
2. To establish whether xenophobia is a product of jealousy and ignorance?
3. To establish how government policies has contributed to xenophobia in South Africa.

Methodology

A qualitative method of research was used to gather information for this study. Qualitative method involves the collection and analysis of non-numerical data in order to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences (Bhandari, 2022). Data were collected from previous research and news articles pertaining to African migrants, and xenophobia in South Africa.

Literature/theoretical explanation

The manifestation and existentiality of xenophobia in any polity is a leeway to weakening the already over stretched social cohesion, peaceful co-existence, and good governance. This is in addition to the fact that xenophobia is tantamount to violation of human rights. As an independent state, South Africa is party to international human rights and humanitarian treaties, especially on refugees and asylum seekers, as well as responsibilities and commitment to combating xenophobia have both a legal and a moral force (Hussein and Hitomi, 2019).

Primarily, the most remarkable feature of xenophobia experienced in South Africa according to Neocosmos (2006) is its root in racism, directed at [black] migrants particularly from Africa as opposed to migrants from Europe, China, or America, who are practically welcomed with open hands. He further argued that this racially selective xenophobia is typified by the fact that many of those in the position of leadership are of foreign origin. It therefore suggests that exclusion is not simply directed against the foreign nationals but against those who seem to correspond to stereotypes of the stranger, particularly from Africa. Racism and xenophobia are like twin brothers capable of destabilizing South Africa's democratic values. The levels of xenophobia in South Africa can be equated to lack of knowledge and understanding of the uniqueness of the continent of Africa of which were not adequately reported by the media during the apartheid era. Moge kwu (2005) writes that rather than reporting the evils of apartheid to give a balanced side of African story focus was on Europe and international isolation. Hence the call for improved curriculum that talks to decolonization (culture, language, and current political and socio-economic activity) in Africa schools and institutions of higher learning.

Neocosmos, (2006), Hussein and Hitomi (2019) express the opinion that the system of apartheid has had a huge effect on the attitudes of South African citizens for a number of reasons. The end of apartheid meant the waiving of international borders and for South Africans to come into contact with people previously unknown. According to this argument, a vicious culture of hostility towards purported strangers

without any history of incorporating them meant that South Africans were, and still are, unable to tolerate difference that emanate from their contact with the supposed non-locals.

Neocosmos (2006) however, dismisses this argument on the premise that the system of apartheid did not distinguish between black South Africans and foreign Africans, the controversy over the subject of xenophobia has become the subject of an interpellation where the oppressed [both foreigners and the locals] are united in the struggle against the obnoxious apartheid system. More so, the system does not explain why racism is directed towards African foreigners rather than, for example, European foreigners. Neocosmos believes that to a certain extent, xenophobia can be unswervingly linked to the system of apartheid.

It can be argued that the system of apartheid created in [South] African a social unconscious consisting of social arrangements not perceived by South Africans if perceived, they are never acknowledged, and if at all it is acknowledged, it is not taken or seen as a social problem, if however, xenophobia is taken as problematic, it is not seen with an optimal degree of fairness and objectivity (Hopper, 2001).

Lacan (1993) expresses the opinion that social unconscious is not without definite aim, direction, or rule random, rather it is structured like language. Within the context of colonialism, the formation of the social conscious of the unconscious South Africa birth the collective opinion the [South] Africans have towards other [Africans] thus supporting the delusions that South Africans are better than other Africans. Matsinhe (2011:301) believes that there should be a sort of separation of the South African social unconscious, from the social habitus that goes along with it, which underlie the anti-African orientation. Thus, historically, South Africa seems to have set itself apart from [the rest of] Africa, seeing itself as ‘a European outpost’, much like other white settlers, bent on either eradicating or subjugating the natives.

Ali Mazrui (1986) acknowledges that one of the greatest ironies of modern African history is that it took European colonialism to inform Africans who they are and perhaps the greatest gift to Africans. The introduction of apartheid in South Africa indirectly socialized South Africans unconsciously thus making South African and whiteness synonyms, with blackness associated with evil. This indirectly enabled the colonized South Africans to see themselves in the image of the white colonizer. Matsinhe (2011) sees this as an imagination that finds expression in the ideology of South African exceptionalism, out of which is born the bizarre idea, among others, that South Africans are better than Africans from the countries in the continent, hence an appreciation of what it meant to be a South African in Africa.

In 2001, while celebrating the annual Africa Day, the former South Africa’s President (Thabo Mbeki) in his address admonished South Africans to be cautious of racism and xenophobia which is almost becoming a “culture” in South Africa. He went further that if xenophobia is not nip in the bud, it would destabilize and undermine South Africa’s nascent democracy apart from depriving the country of Foreign Investors. In his speech, Thabo Mbeki blamed the high levels of xenophobia on the lack of South Africans knowledge about the continent of Africa and its people, international isolation of the country during apartheid and focus on Europe as well as lack of report by the mass media on the continent in a balanced way. He therefore advocates for improved teaching about Africa in [South African] schools and higher institution of learning in subjects about African culture, language, and socio-economic and political activity in addition to the teaching of history and geography in schools (Mogekwu 2005).

Given its [relative] levels of industrialization coupled with relative success of its liberal democracy, South Africa’s perception or belief that they are exceptional and thus, superior to others is concomitant to a dominant arrogant public discourse likening South Africa to countries like Italy, Spain, Greece, Portugal [in Southern Europe] or Latin American countries such as Ecuador, Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Mexico etc. This is the attitude that precludes the South Africa’s post-apartheid era.

In his work titled *The South African ideology: the myth of exceptionalism*, the idea of renaissance Lazarus (2004) gives an argument that for most South African whites, South Africa was not really in Africa, rather the Rainbow Nation was considered a Western society that accidentally and inconsequentially find itself at the foot of the dark continent of Africa. Mogekwu (2005) therefore, argued that the notion that South Africa [and its political system] is different from, and better than what is obtainable in other part of Africa, was not just an ideology with which the social reality in South Africa was constructed vis-à-vis

other Africa countries; it was also futuristic on the basis that, at the time of the political struggle, its supporters had the idea that in future, an exceptionally liberated South Africa they had dreamt and hoped for will eventually emerged. Fundamentally, this notion shaped the exceptionality of the formation of South Africa's we-images towards other Africa countries.

Theoretically, scholars have come up with different constructs or propositions to explain and predict the reasons for the existentiality of the occurrence of xenophobic behaviour amongst black South Africans. For example, Morris (1998) made proposition for the idea of scapegoatism to which African foreign nationals were often blamed for crime, unemployment, and the spread of diseases such as HIV/AIDS can be seen as the manifestation of frustration by poor and unemployed black South Africans. Blaming [fellow] black Africans for South African's government inadequacies in the addressing inequalities orchestrated by long period of the brutal apartheid policies has led to frustration and dissatisfaction among South Africans, hence leading the deprived masses to turn against their fellow black Africans, a situation that has made xenophobia to flourish across the rainbow nation. For example, in his contribution on SAFM 107 on the 11th of April 2023, a caller xenophobically, claimed that foreign nationals cause most of the problems in South Africa including the problem with one of the electric pylons that fell down few days before. The presenter however counter this claim that it not possible to blame foreign nationals for all the ills of South Africans.

Thus, Dollard et al. 1939, cited in Breuer and Elson (2017:1) proposes the frustration aggression thesis, contending that the occurrence of aggressive behavior always presupposes the existence of frustration and, contrariwise, that the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression. Breuer and Elson explain further that frustration may not likely be understood as an emotional experience [on the part of the aggressor] but as an interference with the occurrence of an instigated goal-response. Debatably, Breuer and Elson are of the opinion that the benefit of characterizing frustration through events or environmental characteristics that can be observed allows description and testing of its causal effects, such as those on aggression, empirically instead of relying on individual contemplations; a person whose means of achieving his/her desired goals has been blocked may likely exhibit destructive behaviour.

Dougherty and Pfaltzgragg, 1996, cited in Efebeh (2018) believes that frustration combined with violence patterns are culturally specific, thus, the causes of human frustration as well as the targets of aggression or the directions in which they are turned depend heavily on the values of the particular cultural system. In this sense frustration aggression theory has been applied to the theory of scapegoatism which states that once the anger and desire for aggressive behaviour have occurred, it doesn't matter who is at the receiving end of the violence (Jost, 2017).

A popular group threat theory, also known as social threat, racial threat, or minority threat has been put forward by King (2007), placing the uneven loathing of African foreign nationals squarely on the visible intergroup hostility. The theory is premised on the assertion that intergroup hostility is mostly a response to perceived threats from inferior groups. King (2007) affirms that hostility can develop if the dominant group believes that their position relative to the minority group is in danger, which translates to losing their advantageous position in society.

Blumer (1958:4) contends that prejudice in these groups often originate from the collective process of identifying your own and other groups and the sense of social standing that results from it. He notes that the dominant group feels superior to the subordinate group, a feeling that the subordinate race is intrinsically different and alien, a feeling that they are entitled to the best resources, services, opportunities, and positions in society, and a feeling that dominant group also fear and suspect that the other group will threaten or attempt to undermine their position. Across the globe, these prejudices are very evident between the developed and underdeveloped states, between privileged and underprivileged groups in a society. Evidently, it can be seen in the way black [African] migrants are viewed and treated by a number of the South African population. These migrants are portrayed as outsiders' people that have come to invade and plunder the economy of South Africa for their own benefits because South Africa is considered to be more prosperous and developed than their own. Thus, in Blumer's terms, group threat could emanate/develop from competition over socio-economic opportunities as well as challenges to the dominant group's status,

privilege, and power. It is a common statement among South Africans that “since our land is flourishing and better than theirs, we are better than them, and because it is our land, we won’t give them this and they can’t be better than us, if we don’t have this, they can’t have it.

A product of jealousy and ignorance?

Relatively, South Africa has been able to make progress in addressing and reducing the level of poverty, however between 2011 and 2015, the path of poverty reduction was reversed to the point where all previous progress was nearly nullified. Close to 55.5 percent of the population live in poverty and about 25 percent are experiencing food poverty (Ricci, 2020). The official unemployment rate of the second quarter of 2022 stood at 33.9 percent, the total number of unemployed persons in South Africa is around 8.0 million with 4.8 million being youth between the ages of 15-34 (Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS), Statistics South Africa, 2022). However, there was a decrease in the fourth quarter of 2022. The new report for Q4: 2022 published by Statistics South Africa put it at 32.7% showing a small drop in the country’s unemployment rate. The official unemployment rate decreased by 0.2 of a percentage point from 32.9% in the third quarter of 2022 to 32.7% in the fourth quarter of 2022 (Business Tech, 2023).

South Africa is ranked as one of the countries with the lowest level of income inequality in the world. This is a devastating report that shows that although there has been a lot of development politically, economically, and socially, the fact still remains that very little progress has been made in closing the gap of inequality. Debatably, the South African economy is relatively prosperous and is favourable [only] to those who have the skill and the know-how to maximize it for their benefit, but to those who do not have either, it is ruthless, this is somewhat the result of the high inequality in the country. Currently, the South African government make provision for a monthly social grant [which has since been increased] to assist the poor and unemployed, however, this is not enough taking into consideration the increase in food prices orchestrated by inflation. Finding employment is not an easy task because of the requirements, work experience, level of education, etc., thus making it difficult to acquire a steady and secure source of income.

With this in mind, and the believe that South Africa has one of the largest economies in Africa, it attracts migrants from black African countries most of which are experiencing socio-political and economic crisis, and unemployment. It should be noted that it’s not only black African that come to South Africa but Europeans alike, however, the Europeans are not seen as threat to South Africans even though they also take jobs in the country. These black migrants come to South Africa with hopes of finding a better life cum employment or refuge. Debatably, majority of these [black] migrants are poor and thus contributed to the poor population of South Africa. What this translates to mean is that the battle for survival becomes more difficult and the competition for limited resources and opportunities gets more aggressive and competitive (Matunhu, 2011).

This competitiveness account for the threat to the lives of migrants from the locals and vice versal. In a radio programme on SA FM 107 aired on the 24 February 2023, a caller suggested that the locals should be separated from the foreign nationals in government hospitals across the country claiming that the foreign nationals often get to the hospitals before the locals, thus causing some sort of delay before [the] locals are attended to. The presenter however asked a question that what if the foreign nationals is a pregnant woman who is in urgent need of medical attention? The caller [though her argument was watered down by the presenter] insisted on her point that it is unfair and frustrating to see South Africans been treated as second class citizen in their own country. Adetiba (2022:99) remarks that this position advances a common psychological trait, shared by humans, that helps to explain why peoples’ feelings and choices are typically less than fully rational, Adetiba observed that one such is frustration-aggression theory, which contends that every individual and even societies that are frustrated sometimes become aggressive in their actions while reacting to the actions of others.

On the 21 June 2022 an anti-migrant group, Operation Dudula, led aggrieved black South Africans to Park Station in Johannesburg with the intention to displace and rid the place of foreign nationals who were believed to be illegal vendors. Their believe was that South Africans vendors who were struggling to make a living have been displaced by the foreign nationals. This action is a demonstration of how desperate the

situation is, coupled with the fact that people are willing to shut down a station just to get a “survivalist job” as a vendor. It further highlights the economic isolation and desperation experienced by many poor South Africans as well as the accompanying despair and psycho-social deterioration that occurs inside individuals and groups because it seems as though there is no immediate remedy (Vabaza, 2022). This highlights the collective thinking that a number of the South African population have, “if I am struggling to make end meet in my own country what gives a foreign national the right, to come and do better than me?”. Attitudes of this nature negatively affects the economy, in that South Africans who are employed by migrants often lose their jobs because of this, thus putting more strain on the government because there are more people that are dependent on the government for survival.

Government policies and its contribution to xenophobia in South Africa

The post-apartheid South African government joined the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in 1994 following its transition to inclusive democratic governance. The SADC is a regional organization that was established in 1992 and committed to the linear market integration model, the organisation also sought to gradually integrate the capital, labour, and products markets. The free movement of people to a greater extent was prioritised by some individuals who were in favour of Pan-African integration (Abebe, 2017, cited in Gordon, 2022). The new African Economic Community, established in 1991, identified opening national borders as one of its top priorities for promoting economic and social growth. During this time, some regional organizations in Africa, including the East African Community, made significant progress on removing visa requirements and liberalizing rights of residence and establishment.

However, the South African government initially resisted proposals for visa liberalization within SADC and opposed the establishment of visa-free zones in the 1990s that would have permitted unrestricted cross-border travel (Maunganidze & Formica, 2018, in Gordon, 2022). Severe restrictions were placed on the number of migrants that would be allowed into the country. There was a significant government effort to limit employment opportunities for unskilled and semi-skilled immigrants, employers were discouraged from employing foreign workers and state officials were encouraged to limit the number of work permits that could be issued (Gordon, 2022).

Together, the National Labour Migration Policy and the Proposed Employment Services Amendment Bill provide the legal structure and policy framework necessary to regulate the number of foreign nationals that businesses may hire in their establishments while upholding migrant worker’s rights (Draft national labour migration policy & employment services amendment bill: PMG 2022). The requirements for employing foreign nationals are very strict and therefore discourage employers from going through the process of employing them. Adetiba (2022:98) elaborates that the Department of Home Affairs in 2022 while trying to restrict the upward movement of foreign nationals in a government gazette (Immigration Act (13/2002): Critical Skills List 45860), signed on the 2nd of February 2022 by the minister of Home Affairs came up with a clamp on foreign nationals who had studied to PhD level in the country. Adetiba further argued that when a foreign national obtained a PhD degree in South Africa, usually, such person is allowed to apply for a critical skill work permit and subsequently apply for a Permanent Resident Permit (PRP), nevertheless, the new regulation says that for a foreign national to apply for a PRP in the Rainbow Nation, such must have been working for a period of 5 years using critical skill work permit and the applicant’s employer must provide a motivation letter in support of such application.

Furthermore, Adetiba (2022) offers that what is not visible to the public regarding this regulation is that the South African government through its employment policy made it difficult for migrants with a PhD to get a job and in some instances postdoctoral fellows are not given space (s). By interpretation migrants seems unwelcomed in South Africa notwithstanding the level of their academic qualification. However, the South African government is not aware of the enormous of resources that are been wasted because of these policies. Restrictions of this nature on migrants’ opportunity to access employment in the former apartheid enclave observably, deepen societal divisions as well as fuel xenophobia as [legal and illegal] migrants may fall victim of discrimination and violent attacks.

In order to push xenophobic tendencies out of South Africa, the [South African] government launched the National Action Plan Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in 2019. To nip the act of xenophobia in the bud the National Action Plan acknowledges that a variety of measures are required, such as acknowledging and denouncing acts of bias-motivated violence wherever they occur, adopting hate crime laws, strengthening the enforcement of law against xenophobia, and punishing offenders. It also acknowledges that the underlying causes of tensions between the locals and foreign nationals need to be dealt with. Ndlovu (2022) agrees that issues such as poverty, inequality and unemployment need to be dealt with in order to combat xenophobia. It should be noted that the inability of the South African government to provide employment, combat poverty, and bridge the gap of inequality has made [black] South Africans to see the black African foreign nationals as the scapegoat to which [African] were often blamed for crime, unemployment, and even the spread of diseases. This can be seen as an indication of frustration by poor and unemployed black South Africans. To a certain extent and notwithstanding how good and detailed the policies to combat xenophobia might be, the major challenge has always been how to implement it.

Dlamini, Adetiba, Enaifoghe, and Mlambo (2020) had argued that there is no doubt that the apartheid regime laid the foundation of xenophobia in South Africa by excluding and discriminating against black South Africans through racial segregation. Thus, xenophobia is deeply rooted in the country's history and are layered with underlying contemporary and historical factors which have permitted the escalation of xenophobic violence against foreign nationals. Ignorantly, high ranking political office holders whose words and actions have a great influence on their ill-informed followers about foreign nationals often make inflammatory statements that create a crisis-like environment in a society where xenophobia and violence towards foreign nationals are rampant.

It is common to hear politicians blaming migrants for insecurity, instability, and poor performance of the economy of South Africa. As of 2011, there were only about 2.2 million foreign migrants living in South Africa [about 4% of the population]. Heleta (2019) concur that politicians often argued that foreign nationals are the primary cause of South Africa's high crime rates, as well as the challenges faced by the country's impoverished and the overpopulation of its cities. Such remarks arguably add fuel to the hate that these people already have towards foreign nationals therefore, supporting the delusions that South Africans are better than other Africans. Herman Mashaba, the former mayor of Johannesburg, made a statement at a forum that alluded to this viewpoint when he tried to defend his countrymen against the string of attacks on foreign nationals, that 'we are not xenophobic but that we act in South Africans' best interests. It has to do with national identity and pride in one's country. There is no nationality called African, you are either Ethiopian, Angolan or South African. My ID states that I am a South African' (Adebanjo, 2017, cited in Efebeh 2018).

Ubuntu Diplomacy: An alternative model for resolving xenophobia in South Africa

The parties that negotiated the South African Interim Constitution of 1993 agreed that in addressing the divisions and strife of the past created by the obnoxious apartheid era in South Africa, in the epilogue after section 251, it stated that 'there is a need for understanding but not for vengeance, a need for reparation but not for retaliation, a need for Ubuntu but not for victimization (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 200 of 1993: Epilogue after Section 251).

Gade (2011:303) comments that historically, ubuntu has been defined and analysis several ways in the past indicating that many of the present ideas about the nature of Ubuntu [that Ubuntu means African humanism, a philosophy, an ethic, or a worldview], emerged for the first time in written sources during the second half of the 1900s. However, it became an object of particular interest and consideration during the political periods of transition from white minority rule to black majority rule in Zimbabwe and South Africa. Gade (2011) expresses the opinion that Ubuntu is a dynamic term that has taken on new meanings at different points in history, as a result of the influence of changing social and political circumstances. For example, to have been in the context of the South African transition process in the 1990s that the term Ubuntu became connected to the Nguni proverb *umuntu ngumuntu ngabatu* translated as a person is a

person through other persons. Lötter (1997) concur that in the context of the South African transition process from apartheid to inclusive governance, and the subsequent Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), where perpetrators of apartheid related crimes were tried for their offences. Ubuntu means that a person becomes a person through another person. Madise and Isike (2020) explains that the concept of Ubuntu [as an African philosophical worldview] gain prominence following the transition of South Africa to inclusive democratic governance in 1994, placing emphasis on the interdependency of humanity.

Gathogo (2008 cited in Madise and Isike, 2020:4) writes that late Arch Bishop Desmond Tutu interpreted Ubuntu thus: “A person with Ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished, when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed”. Form this interpretation, the idea may be used as an argument against the xenophobic stance of [black] South Africans against fellow [black] Africans. Thus, it is the responsibility of everyone to strive for interdependence, shared responsibilities, interests, and values. Madise and Isike (2020) expresses the opinion that among these interests and values is the need to go all-out for harmony in all human relations. Ramose (2003) confirms that the existing expression of African thought is the continual quest for consensus aimed at establishing peace, friendliness, and harmony.

From the National Planning Commission (2012), developing a national identity is considered very important and as a foundation for the formulation and the endorsing a successful foreign policy for the former apartheid enclave, which ordinarily, should flow from domestic policies such as the National Development Plan 2030. To this Alden and Schoeman (2016 cited in Madise and Isike, 2020:5) argued that Ubuntu plays a much more fundamental role in developing countries as a key tool for defining who we are, where we are in relation to others, and what we should do.

By interpretation and in relation to the subject of xenophobia vis-à-vis Ubuntu diplomacy, it imperative for [black] South Africans to define how to relate with others. The “others” in this term relates to migrants in South Africa. In order to prosper and progress, South Africans cannot escape the presence of its African brothers. Hence the need for South African government to seek and bring about mediation between different nationals in the country through consensus building. For South Africans to prosper, there is no need to destroy, fight or kill foreign nationals. Empirically, South Africans were deprived of socio-economic inclusion during apartheid thus becoming a major cause of hostility towards the foreign nationals living in the country.

In a survey conducted by the Southern African Migration Programme (SAMP) on xenophobia, it was revealed that an average [black] South Africans has always displayed a high level of hostility and intolerance towards foreign nationals. The survey further revealed that South Africans were the least open to outsiders and thus need severe restrictions on immigration in comparison with other countries surveyed (Muchiri, 2016). One aspect of South African Society that somewhat projected the foreign nationals negatively is the media. The media is expected to bring to the public the truth, to justify the trust the public has for the media.

Mgogo and Osunkunle (2021) believes that the problem of xenophobia begins when the media, especially the print media manipulate information for commercial success. The main reason for this is due to competitions, unfortunately this has sometimes made journalists to quickly jump into conclusion or been xenophobic in their reports. For example, the journalists are found of mentioning the name the country of a foreign national suspected for a crime, such as the suspect from Mozambique . . . but when such is a South African it will be reported as “the suspect”. South African media also use generalized stereotypes when covering reports about specific nationalities, for example, the stereotype that all Nigerians are drug traffickers’ headlines such “Breaking News: Many Nigerians in South Africa are drug traffickers often make people who only read news headlines to generalize this information about all Nigerians. Hence a big problem for the reason that more than half of South Africans have access to some form of media.

It should be pointed out that most African cultures are communalist which translate to mean that for one [African] to survive they are dependent on the community they are growing in. This is how Ubuntu as a value is born Mgogo and Osunkunle (2021). Fourie (2010) elaborates that a person is defined with

reference to the community. Put together, both the journalists, editors and reporters must highlight the need for unity of humanity as well as focus on the importance of constantly referring to the principles of empathy, cooperation, peace building and love while seeking to resolve common problems, such as xenophobic-related violence in this case (Blank-Libra and Overholser, 2016). From the above, Ubuntu journalism can be seen as an alternative model for reporting xenophobic related issues.

Conclusion

If South Africa as a state wants to maintain its regional leadership within SADC and by extension at continental level, this must or will come from the relationship between the [black] South Africans and “other” Africans in the Rainbow country. This requires South Africa to establish a consistent policy in its bid to eradicate xenophobia in the country, it must be addressed using a top-to-bottom socio-economic approach guided by the philosophy of Ubuntu. To a large extent, South African political leaders have largely been unsuccessful at addressing past outbreaks of xenophobic acts witnessed in the country since 2008, including failing to bring those suspected to be perpetrating the act to justice. Ending xenophobia in South Africa has been complicated by the public officials openly visiting their frustrations of their inability to deliver on foreign nationals, this is in addition to the media whose power of influence on public opinion has been misused while jettison the power of Ubuntu journalism as an alternative model for reporting xenophobic related issues.

To end xenophobia in all its public life, South Africa must create an enabling socio-economic environment that is conducive to a successful engagement between [black] Africans living in South Africa and the [black] South African while reducing the dire competitiveness among citizens and with “other” African nationals in the country over basic needs. To do this, South Africans should be taught more about the rest of Africa through cultural orientations, thus, fostering understanding and hospitality towards other African [foreign] nationals. Obviously, an average South African knows little or nothing about the rest of the continent, while other Africans have an assessable idea of South African socio-political, economy and the society. By interpretation, if [black] South Africans understand other African cultures, histories as well as their motives for migrating and the reason for which they have chosen to reside in South Africa over and above other country, this to a large extent would create openness and result to promoting the principle and the spirit of Ubuntu. This work believe that such actions can effectively change the image of South Africa as a hostile black African to other [black] African.

The high levels of xenophobia in the former apartheid enclave has been blamed on the lack of South Africa’s inability to provide jobs and the government’s inability to guarantee the protection of the rights of [black] South Africans against the foreign migrants who they believe has contributed to the high level of poverty, inequality, and unemployment in the country. Debatably, the presence of foreign migrants in the country does not constitute a threat to the level of unemployment and poverty in the country, rather they [foreign nationals] create jobs and employ the locals, but to sustain the argument for unemployment and poverty, South African government officials has resulted to playing the blame game where black African migrants have always been used as the scape goat to cover up for their shortcomings. Thus, out of frustration and jealousy, South Africans has continued to accuse black foreign national of taking the unavailable jobs.

There is no doubt that the manifestation of xenophobia undermines social cohesion in South Africa. The xenophobic stance of black South Africans and some its government official as well as the media [as mentioned above] has negatively impacts peaceful co-existence [of the indigenes and foreign nationals], and good governance. To a large extent, South Africa is a signatory to the international human rights and humanitarian treaties, especially on refugees and asylum seekers, thus, obligations to combat xenophobia have both a legal and a moral force. It is rather unfortunate that South African government seems to have neglected its moral obligations to respect these international laws but appears to have maintain its stance on xenophobia directed at migrants, and especially black migrants, from elsewhere on the continent, as opposed to, Europeans or Americans, who are, practically welcomed with open arms.

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