The Lack of Effective Communication Influences Xenophobic Attacks in South Africa

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Author BNR designed the study framework and literature review. Author EMM managed the analysis of the study and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Author EMM responded to reviewer's comments. Author BNR read the final draft and both authors sent it to the professional editor. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

This study has investigated the lack of effective communication, as the cause of Xenophobic attacks in South Africa. It is a descriptive and qualitative study, based on the literature and an empirical study.
South Africa experienced xenophobic attacks in 2008 and in 2015; and it may experience many more in the future; unless the government puts precautionary measures in place. This paper probes the impact of effective communication in reducing the incidence of xenophobic attacks across South Africa. The paper also probes how the lack of effective communication has contributed to the recent xenophobic attacks.
The results in this paper indicate that while there are a number of causes of xenophobia, including competition for limited resources; there has never been an effective communication deliberately

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focusing on the integration of foreign nationals and local community members. Local people need to understand the important roles played by the continent during the period of exile. The history of the country must be changed to one that would unite South Africa with other countries, in particular African ones. Also revealed, is that many years of colonialism; where citizens of Africa were divided along different borders and homelands, still linger in the minds of local citizens. The study also revealed that most citizens perceive foreigners as being only their fellow black men, with some coming from European countries. This paper proposes communication ways that would integrate South Africa with the rest of the continent.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa promotes equality before the law. Democratic South Africa was founded on a culture of inclusiveness, tolerance and human rights, embodied in her Constitution of 1996 [1]. The world was shocked when South Africans launched attacks on foreigners, which became known as xenophobia – and this also became a world-wide phenomenon. Xenophobia takes different forms in different countries, and it depends on the level of deprivation, and the perceived and /or real threats caused by non-nationals [2].

Xenophobia results from the political manipulation, immigration law, and the negative role played by the media [2]. In his study on xenophobia in the US, [3] revealed that the US has a long history of severe discrimination against immigrants; and this has been both noted and documented. [4] argues that xenophobia is perceived to have been caused by rising unemployment, housing shortages, and the general crisis of social phenomenon. This is supported by the study of [5] who also argues that foreigners are blamed for committing crimes, draining social resources, taking jobs, houses, and even women from South Africans.

Apartheid, and the colonial administration policies of artificial borders, are also to blame for xenophobic tendencies in Africa [4]. In support of these findings, [6] are of the view that artificial new borders have become a liability and created ethnic groupings, which see each other as enemies. However, service delivery has been blamed for xenophobic attacks, as well as Apartheid policies, which have cemented the hard attitudes of discrimination [7].

Of course, socio-economic inequality is also viewed as one of the causes of xenophobia [7]. In support of this study, [8] argue that the racialisation of African migrants and xenophobic sentiments are about the politics of access; a struggle for political and socio-economic resources. The same study by [9] could not corroborate the findings of the study by Patel. Xenophobia is said to be caused by the struggle for limited access to resources between competing groups. This competition for limited resources between competing groups culminates in prejudice against the out-group, who are perceived by the in-group to be a source of competition [10].

The study by [11] on the causes of xenophobia revealed that one of the reasons for xenophobic attacks was lack of service delivery by government due to its incompetent officials and this created anger and frustrations on the South Africans who ventilated it to immigrants.

However, [12] is of the view that xenophobia should be attributed to deprivation suffered by locals, which makes foreigners the scapegoats. In short, frustration and disillusionment caused by deprivation create a sense of frustration and the need for a scapegoat. [12] is of the view that the relaxation of borders for immigrants is also perceived as opening the flood-gates of hell – with foreigners coming into South Africa at will. In agreement with this line of thought, [5] argues that the reason why immigrants come to South Africa is the poor-living conditions in their own countries; and consequently, they are in search of a better life.

[12] has blamed the language used by senior government officials, such as a government minister of Home Affairs who was quoted as having said that "with unemployment running at above 34 per cent, and millions of immigrants making a living in South Africa, it can be postulated that if all the illegal aliens were removed, the unemployment problem would come to an end."

This line of reasoning is corroborated by [5], who argues that some members of media and government officials blame the immigrants for the nation's problems, thereby implying that foreigners are the cause of those perceived problems. The study by [5] further argues that what causes immigration is poor and failed leadership in the countries of origin of these foreigners; and that they should begin improving the living conditions and create job opportunities for their citizens.

When xenophobic attacks happen, children always bear the pain and suffering. Xenophobic attacks cause emotional distress and psychological harm to children. This is, according to [13]. This came after a number of incidents of Xenophobic attacks – mostly in the Provinces of KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng and Limpopo in South Africa in April 2015. These were not the first attacks in South Africa. In 2008, a total number of 62 people were killed; while 670 were injured [14]. In 2015, more than 50 people were killed, as a result of Xenophobia. Those killed include Marcus Natas from Ethiopia, who was petrol-bombed in Umlazi, Durban in the KwaZulu-Natal province, Muvo of Zimbabwe and Dava Sebaastio of Mozambique were attacked by the mob in Chatsworth; and Shaofic Shaof Ul Alam of Bangladesh was shot in Pietermaritzburg, Owen Mzobe and Ayanda Dlamini, whose countries were not disclosed, were killed in Ntuzuma; while Ishmael Sithole of Mozambique was stabbed to death in the township of Alexandria, Johannesburg in Gauteng Province [15]. Foreigners from different countries in Africa had to be relocated to the camps in different parts of the country, in an attempt to protect them from such attacks.

Some were no longer interested in being integrated into the communities – in fear of their lives. There are those who requested to be assisted to be repatriated back to their own countries, rather than being integrated with the locals.

The Government of South Africa assisted those interested in going to their homes. However, some felt they could not go back to their countries of origin, following socio-economic challenges experienced in their countries, and the deep levels of internecine conflict. Many parts of Africa have been affected by war with Nigeria and other areas, while battling to defeat religious groups, such as Boko Haram. What is shocking is the fact that xenophobic attacks in South Africa are only directed towards foreign blacks by blacks.

There are no xenophobic attacks on foreigners from outside the continent. Raising a concern, President Mugabe of Zimbabwe said only white people are living better in South Africa; while blacks are engaged in xenophobic attacks, poverty and are low in the economic levels [13]. The gruesome killings of Africans by other Africans in South Africa also indicates the level of hatred that the people of South Africa have towards their fellow Africans. It is in this regard that this paper also probes the impact of years of colonialism and apartheid rule on South Africans' perceptions to those immigrants from other African countries.

The paper will also focus on the communication situation of the government of South Africa, since the dawn of democracy in 1994. Other factors contributing to xenophobia in South Africa will also be addressed. The paper will conclude by outlining an effective communication framework, which is capable of having a positive impact on the reduction of xenophobia.

1.1 The Research Problem

The liberation of South Africa was an effort of the whole continent under the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). The Constitution of South Africa, 1996, was founded on a culture of inclusiveness, tolerance and human rights. However, many people have witnessed the shocking violent attacks South Africans have meted out to foreigners, given the fact that democratic South Africa made provision for such people in her Constitution of 1996 [16].

Among the causes of xenophobia, the level of deprivation and economic completion has been singled out [2]. The negative role of the media, together with some high-profile cultural and political leaders, has undermined the founding provisions of the Constitution [2]. In order to create harmonious relationships amongst all the people, there is a need for re-thinking on a new communication strategy, hence this study.

2. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This is a qualitative and literature study, which adopted the desktop research, where media coverage for the month of April 2015 was followed. The observation was on both the electronic and print media. Data were also

collected from the Dialogues on Xenophobia held at the Tshwane University of Pretoria (TUT) in Polokwane City on 15 May 2015, as well as the University of Venda in Thohoyandou town on the 29th June 2015, and at the Thulamela Municipal Chambers on the 15th July 2015.

The dialogues were attended, amongst others, by academics, economic experts, development agencies, government leaders, asylum seekers, Human Resource Council and the representatives of people who are in the country illegally, due to the lack of relevant residential permits. Presentations were invited; and each of these was followed by the questions and various inputs from the participants.

2.1 Objectives

The objectives for this study were to:

- Evaluate the effectiveness of the communication tool of South Africa;
- Investigate the causes of xenophobia in South Africa; and
- Propose an effective communication framework to eliminate the causes of xenophobia in South Africa.

2.2 Research Questions

- Is the communication tool of South Africa effective?
- What are the causes of xenophobia in South Africa?
- What effective communication framework could be proposed to eliminate xenophobia in South Africa?

2.3 Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

2.3.1 Communication

Although it is difficult to give a proper definition of communication, this study will give some of them, in order to assist the reader to understand the context of this study. Communication is said to involve getting the information from one person to the next. But what is exactly the meaning of communication? Communication is the art and process of creating and sharing ideas. Therefore, its effectiveness would depend on the richness of those ideas [17]. However, there are communication processes that are significant to communication, namely: the source; the message; decoding; the channel; the receiver; feed-back and the context [17].

Communication happens when a sender transmits a set of symbols, which include a message to the receiver, in order to change something, which the receiver is doing – even changing his opinion on something. It is a conversation between individuals [18]. Communication occurs when people who are talking to one another reach a common understanding which gives rise to mutually satisfactory action. But if there are no mutually satisfactory results, then there is no communication occurring [19]. It can be defined as information that enters a process, and eventually leaves its inverse process [20]. It is the process of transmitting information and common understanding from one individual to the next [21].

2.3.2 Xenophobia

There is a need to understand the concept of xenophobia; since it has risen to prominence recently in South Africa. Its meaning is still finding a common base; since at the moment, it does not include all the foreign nationals coming to South Africa. It is only used with reference to Africans – and not to those from other continents [4]. [4] sees it as violent anti-immigrant riots unleashed in South Africa. However, the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) defines it as violence unleashed against foreign nationals from other parts of Africa. [22] refers to xenophobia as unpardonable crimes against Africans. [7] refers to it as makwerekwere (cockroaches). Apartheid is blamed for creating discriminatory attitudes, which have remained cemented in the new democratic dispensation [7]. It is the hatred or fear of foreigners; and as such, it describes the attitudes and prejudices, meaning preconceived ideas and opinions that reject, exclude and often vilify specific persons, based on the perception that they are non-nationals, or outsiders [23].

Xenophobia is a concept descriptive of a socially observable phenomenon [3]. It is a form of attitudinal, effective, and behavioural prejudice towards immigrants and those perceived as foreign [3]. It focuses on individuals who come from other countries, and on those towards which native individuals have an intense dislike or fear [3].

2.4 Berlin Conference

The Berlin Conference of 1884 was a European gathering in Germany about how to divide Africa,

the Dark Continent, as it was referred to by them. Great Britain, Germany, Portugal and Belgium were largely the powers that got the lion's share of Africa. The Berlin Conference decided on new borders in Africa – ignoring those borders, which then existed. Same ethnic groups were split; while there were others which did not share any common culture, which were merged. According to [6], the Masai have been split between Kenya (62%) and Tanzania (38%), the Anyi between Ghana (58%) and the Ivory Coast (42%), and the Chewa between Mozambique (50%), Malawi (34%), and Zimbabwe (16%).

We can also calculate the likelihood that a randomly chosen pixel of the homeland of an ethnic group falls into different countries. The ethnic groups with the highest score in this index are the Malinke, which are split into six different countries; the Ndembu, which are split between Angola, Zaire, and Zambia; and the Nukwe, which are split between Angola, Namibia, Zambia, and Botswana. Therefore, the information given above would imply that partitioned ethnic groups found themselves enemies overnight; and this could result in hatred, such as xenophobia.

Fig. (1) below shows the map of Africa after its division by the European countries from 1884.

Because of the new borders and partitioned ethnic groups, we find Ethiopia and Somalia, which comprised one country before the Berlin Conference engaged in a bloody war. Uganda and Sudan supported each other's rebels. Eritrea clashed with Djibouti and Sudan (Mail and Guardian 2008, cited in [5]. Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti are a product of partitioning from the Afar; while Ethiopia and Somalia are split from Esa [6]. These new borders have acquired permanent status; and they could not be removed after the collapse of colonialism, thus rendering the geopolitical map a permanent liability [24]. Subsequently, the new borders served as a recipe for mistrust, hatred, fear, and conflicts which are prevalent in recent times in the whole of Africa.

3. PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

3.1 Contribution of Apartheid in Promoting Xenophobia in South Africa

Following many years of colonialism, the National Party (NP) came into power in 1948, after winning the whites-only elections. The NP was an overtly racist party committed to a policy of separate development, which would further entrench legislated segregation on the basis of race. This became evident when in the 1950s; the government became serious in passing a series of legislations that divided people, according to race.

The general suppression of the majority of blacks led to people embarking on resistance through the struggle for freedom. This took place in different forms; and blacks kept fighting, using different tactics; while the NP also attempted to contain or stop the resistance. These political transformations had a tremendous impact on South Africa's liberation movements, including the African National Congress (ANC), which is currently the national government in South Africa. Other parties were the South African Communist Party (SACP), the Indian Congress, and the Pan African Congress (PAC), which began to seek alternative ways of fighting apartheid. Unlike in previous years, where the liberation movements were embarking on non-violent, but constructive engagement with government, they ended up resorting to violence.

The ANC for example, formed the armed wing called the Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) in 1961.

The South African government then strengthened the border rules to make sure that those who had gone into exile could not return and have any influence back home. They also tried to prevent more people from crossing the borders and joining political organisations in exile.

3.2 Democratic Promises

During the struggle for liberation, the ANC and other struggle movements promised the people of South Africa a better life, once in power [25]. They would promote a better life for all, as written in the Freedom Charter of 1956. This charter became the foundation of the subsequent ANC election manifesto. The 27th April 1994 marked the end of colonialism, segregation and white-minority rule in South Africa, with the adoption of a new Constitution for the Republic of South Africa (Act 108) of 1996.

The new Constitution has a chapter on the Bill of Rights as a cornerstone of democracy in South Africa; and it enshrines the rights of all people in the country, and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom. The Constitution also emphasises that the State must
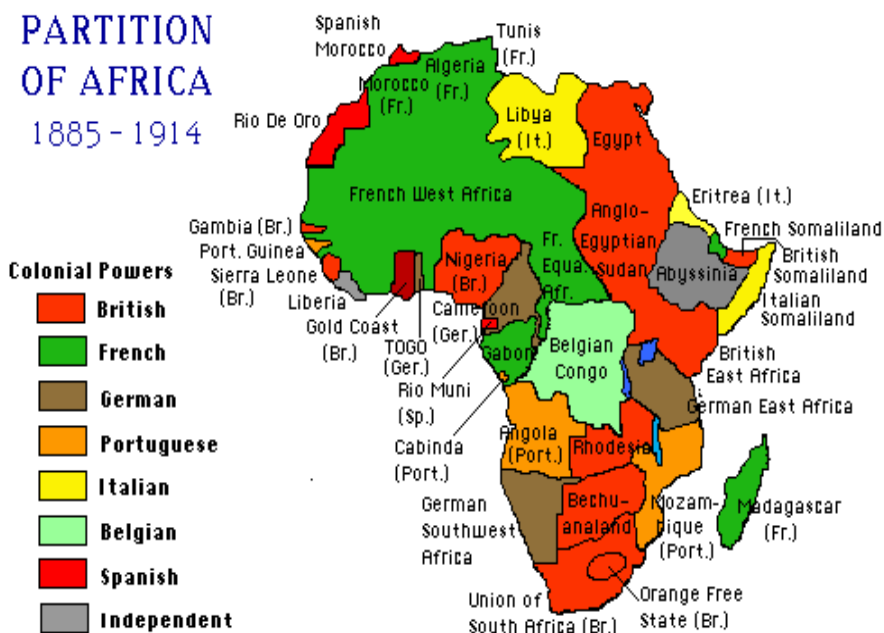
Fig. 1. Map of Colonial Africa
Source: http://original people.org/scramble for Africa-par 2012

respect, protect and promote the rights of all the country's citizens in the Bill of Rights.

The dawn of democracy also allowed for additional access to information; as more media platforms emerged. The media censorship laws were also relaxed. However, towards the end of the second decade in democracy, the government made calls for media accountability, professionalism, and the need to avoid "irresponsible" reporting [26]. This call came as government believed media reports were contributing to and influencing the protests in the country.

The people of South Africa are therefore still expecting this "better life for all", which many believe they did not get, or are still without. When people from outside the South African borders arrive and manage to make a living – without even qualifying for the government's social grants, the locals always suspect foul play, including acts of corruption and fraud.

3.3 Competition for Limited Resources

South Africa has inherited many challenges left behind by the apartheid regime. These include both social and economic challenges. The challenges came as a result of selective development, which focused more on areas occupied by whites at the expense of blacks. The democratic government now has to deal with the backlog caused by apartheid, and to provide for a growing population. According to [27], the population of South Africa has now grown to over 54 million people. This is despite the hundreds or thousands who enter through the country's borders. This process of informal immigration into South Africa by foreigners overstretches the limited resources available; and competition for such resources becomes inevitable, hence the source of suspicion and conflict.

The unemployment rate in South Africa is estimated by STATSSA 2015 to be at 24.3%. Unemployment is affecting mostly the young people. The people of South Africa also compete with immigrants for other resources, such as water, electricity, housing and general access to medical facilities. Community members easily develop a perception that the resources are limited because of the immigrants.

3.4 Criminal Activities

Some people perceive xenophobic acts in South Africa as acts of criminality. On many occasions, the foreigners who were attacked were those owning businesses, such as SPAZA shops. A

victim of these attacks, Mr Emmanuel Sithole, for example, used to sell cigarettes and sweets on the streets in Alexander. It is believed that thugs used the opportunity to steal from such people. Attacks in Lephalale and Thabazimbi in Limpopo, and many of those in Gauteng and in KwaZulu Natal Provinces were also aimed at the foreign-owned shops.

3.5 Communication by Government and Political Parties

The Government of South Africa is led by the ANC; and its communication activities are aligned to both the manifesto and its policies. Although the Western Cape, as a province, is led by the Democratic Alliance, this has little impact on national government communication strategies.

During the presidency of Mandela, government centred its communication on creating awareness of the rights that the people have. Mandela said, "Accordingly, the purpose that will drive this government shall be the expansion of the frontiers of human fulfilment, the continuous extension of the frontiers of this freedom. The acid test of the legitimacy of the programmes we elaborate, the government institutions we create, and the legislation we adopt, must be whether they serve these objectives.

"Our single most important challenge is therefore to help establish a social order in which the freedom of the individual will truly mean the freedom of the individual" [28].

It was imperative to preach this and make it a mantra; since the majority of blacks were confirmed by the Statistics South Africa as having a low level of education; and they have, consequently been denied these rights.

However, in one of his speeches, Mandela once said, "No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. If they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love; for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite [29]. If this was something South Africans interpreted well, it was going to have positive impact on their perceptions towards foreigners.

In 1999, Mbeki took over as President of South Africa; and all his speeches were centred on building a better life for all. In his State-of-the-

Nation address, President Mbeki said, "The continuing process of social and national emancipation, to which we are all subjected, constitutes an evolving act of self-definition.

"At the dawn of a new life, our practical actions must ensure that none can challenge us when we say - we are a nation at work to build a better life!" [30].

In 2009, President Zuma took over; and he is the incumbent president. His speeches are even now themed with the notion of government and communities working together to move South Africa forward.

Realising that white communities are reluctant to take an active role in building the country, Zuma addressed the nation in Afrikaans, one of the official languages of South Africa associated with apartheid, *"Laat ons mekaar se hande vat, en saam oplossings vind in die gees van 'n Suid Afrikaanse gemeenskap. Die tyd het gekom om harder te werk. Ons regering gaan vorentoe kyk, nie agtertoe nie"* President J. G. Zuma [31]. On the 17th June 2014, Zuma's State of the Nation Address focused on calling for the whole nation to join hands and take South Africa Forward; and that resulted in the coining of the general theme: "Together, we move South Africa forward", which is used in all government advertisements. The President's main messages and themes cascade to the provinces, districts and local municipalities.

The leaders of South Africa have never communicated to the communities the importance of uniting South Africans with the residents of other African countries. They have continued to keep talking more of the benefits that the people of South Africa deserve.

The understanding of the relationship that needs to be made with the people of other African communities has never been highlighted.

3.6 Hate Speeches by Traditional Leaders

Africans, particularly those from rural areas and the majority of them uneducated, are still loyal to traditional leadership – to the extent that they do not question anything that the traditional leaders say. Therefore, the majority of citizens take what traditional leaders say at face value. It was clear in KwaZulu-Natal Province and surrounding areas, that when their King Zwelithini mentioned that foreigners are taking jobs for locals, that these locals would vent their anger on foreigners.

The Zulus thought that was the right thing to do; because the King had said so. The son of the President was also implicated in such utterances; and he too, is associated with his father, the president; and some of the locals would feel that what he said would be correct; and so, they felt that they needed to attack the foreign nationals. The speech of the King suggested that unemployment and poverty were the creation of foreign nationals. Unemployment and poverty are the national problems, which the current government is trying to resolve – but with little apparent success.

3.7 Cultural Diversity

Some people who were interviewed indicated that at times there were issues of cultural shock. When the number of foreign nationals increased in South Africa, many of them came with their customary way of doing things. Their living styles were different from those of the citizens. As these people came from different countries, South African citizens were exposed to different lifestyles. Many people from foreign countries, for example, believed more in creating their own jobs by selling cigarettes, doing mechanical and building work, and even producing artworks for sale at prices reasonable to South Africans. South Africans, on the other hand, had many citizens receiving grants and other basic needs from government through the poverty-alleviation strategies [32].

3.8 Hatred Fuelled by Corruption in Government

During the Dialogue on Xenophobia held at the Tshwane University of Technology Polokwane campus on the 16th of July 2015, Ms Mpho Moyo from Zimbabwe, who was amongst the audience, argued that South Africans fight them in villages when they (the foreign nationals) enjoy those benefits that are enjoyed by all the other citizens. She gave an example of what happened in one of Seshego Township areas, Polokwane in South Africa, where the local citizens are chasing foreign nationals away "just because they are also getting free government subsidised houses; as they have permanent Identity documents", which they had made plans to get. These plans included colluding with officials from the Municipality, the Home Affairs department, and even local Civic Organisation leaders, in exchange for money. She asked, "If I buy the Identity document using my own money, what is wrong? What wrong have I done?"

The study revealed that there are many foreign nationals who resolved to exchange funds for permanent residence. The challenge is that they "buy" documents from the Government officials; but they still come and stay with villagers, who turn to resent them, when they compete for limited resources. This fuels the level of hatred towards foreign nationals in townships, villages and even in towns. However, the fear is not aimed at those foreign nationals from Western Countries; because people from Western countries do not directly compete for resources at the level of the village and townships. Some South African citizens do not even recognise that there are foreign nationals from such countries. To them, foreigners are those from African countries. This makes many people argue South Africans are suffering from Afrophobia (hatred for foreign nationals from Africa only).

4. DISCUSSION

In this section, recommendations will also be provided on how South Africa can win the battle against Xenophobia. However, the findings indicate that there are possibilities for South Africa to continue experiencing xenophobia and/or Afrophobia in the future.

The South African government has taken a position that in its communication approaches, there must never be the use of the word Xenophobia; but it must be replaced by the phrase: 'Attacks on foreign Nationals' (Key messages on Xenophobic Attacks in South Africa, 2015). The intention was to distance the citizens from being Xenophobic. In their argument, they also cite the period in which South Africans accommodated foreign nationals in mines in past years – long before the advent of democracy.

They, however, do not indicate the control mechanism which was in place at the specific time, as the movement of all people was under State control. This approach might have worked for the recent attacks; but it cannot last forever. This study recommends the following procedures to the South African government:

4.1 Media Content Sensitivity

When reporting issues of xenophobia or attacks on foreign nationals, the media need to refrain from creating a perception that criminal activities in South Africa are committed by foreign African Nationals only. A crime should be reported as a

crime without mentioning the nationality of the criminal. A Zimbabwean man was caught ……… Why not just A man of age……was arrested for………..

4.2 Deliberate Programme for Uniting Africa

Government and other institutions should have deliberate programmes to unite the continent of Africa – in a bid to deal with the colonial mentality. Many people of South Africa, when interviewed, still regard themselves as expatriates. For example, people of Ghana are referred to as people of Africa, while calling themselves people of South Africa. The boundary along the Limpopo River still exists in their minds.

Community members should be taught on the significance of migration. Currently, many community members think foreign nationals in South Africa have just decided to get into the country for economic gain; while there are those fearing death in their own countries.

4.3 Change Current South African Schools' History and bring it Back to Education

There is a general belief in the country that education should introduce a curriculum that would open economic doors for graduates, hence the elimination of History as a subject. However, this comes with its own limitations. The new generation does not understand their past, present, and future. The new generation needs to understand the life lived by their liberation heroes, such as Mandela, Malivha, Madzunya, Makhado, Sekhukhune, Tambo and others. In this way, they would be able to understand the general role played by the continent in their liberation.

4.4 Memorial Lectures for the Whole Nation

Political parties, such as the ANC conduct memorial lectures for the struggle-heroes; but these are confined to the members of the party in small functions. The memorial lectures on the heroes should be enlarged to include bigger events, and extended to the greater audience.

4.5 Influx Control

Government must ensure control over the influx of foreign nationals into the country. The control on influx would provide government with an opportunity to count people getting into the country, and to control their movement in the country, in order to avoid any competition for inadequate resources.

Government and the private sector need to work together to address the socio-economic challenges facing the people of South Africa, and those who come into the country. Addressing socio-economic challenges would limit the level of xenophobic activities. When foreign nationals are documented, this might also limit the desire to engage in corrupt activities with government official – in a bid to access better living conditions.

4.6 Avoid Hate Speeches

Political leaders, traditional leaders, academics and other influential community members should avoid using hate speeches from public platforms. Government needs to avoid programmes that suggest that they are focused on foreign nationals. When interviewed, some attributed the recent attacks on foreign nationals to the speech made by King Zwelithini of the Zulu Nation in April 2015. The king was quoted as saying that foreigners must leave to go back to their own countries. The King, however, disputed the allegations and distanced himself from the attacks. He argued that he had been quoted out of context.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This study has highlighted a number of factors that led to xenophobic attack in South Africa. The study has indicated that apartheid through its discriminatory policies of separate development laid the foundation for hatred amongst the people. When a democratic government replaced the apartheid government in 1994, it promised the good life for all; but it subsequently failed to live up to expectations, hence the frustration and despondency among the South African population and venting their resentment and hatred on foreign nationals. When foreign nationals came to South Africa, the locals perceive that the limited resources intended for them could instead be shared with other Africans. South Africa has a high rate of criminal activities; and foreign nationals have been used as the scapegoats. This study has also shown that hate speeches and poor communication by government officials and traditional leaders has led to these attacks – particularly in KwaZulu-

Natal because they are trusted by mostly illiterate rural people who take their word at face value. The study has recommended that media-content sensitivity should be revisited; so that it could assist with social-cohesion programmes. Government should also create programmes that assist in uniting the people beyond their borders. The history school curriculum should be aligned so that it teaches South Africans that they are part of the whole continent. There must be memorial lectures on the heroes of Africa, irrespective of where they come from, as long as they are Africans. The study has also recommended that hate speeches should be avoided – particularly by leaders, whom the majority would hold in high regard.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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