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**XENOPHOBIA: THE CONSEQUENCES OF BEING A ZIMBABWEAN IN
SOUTH AFRICA**

A Thesis Submitted to

Center for Migration and Refugee Studies

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

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B.A. in Speech Communications, Whitworth University, 2006

under the supervision of Dr. Ray Jureidini

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ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to explain and describe the xenophobia and xenophobic attacks of Zimbabwean refugees and migrants in South Africa. The political and social instability in Zimbabwe has led to mass exodus of Zimbabweans in search of stability and a means to survive. Many of these Zimbabweans have sought opportunity and refuge in South Africa only to be met with hurdles that metastasized into xenophobia. Research was done on the target population of Zimbabweans in Central Methodist Church in Johannesburg, along with interviews conducted through Medicines Sans Frontiers, and active players in the civil society in Cape Town.

INDEX WORDS: Discrimination, Migrants, Refugees, South Africa, Xenophobia, Zimbabwe

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Buyelekhaya: Zulu for 'Go back home.'

Mkwerekwere: A Zulu slang for 'foreigners.' Often used in a negative context.

MSF: Medecins Sans Frontieres/Doctors without Borders. An international medical and humanitarian aid organization.

Ndebele: A member of the Bantu people of Zimbabwe and Northeastern South Africa.

PASSOP: People Against Suffering Suppression Oppression and Poverty. A South African organization that fights for the rights of immigrants through activism and advocacy.

Red Ants: A Private Security Group that is subcontracted out often by the South African Government for evictions. The group is known for its brutal methods that often result in rape, sexual assaults and other violent means. They have harassed the Central Methodist Church in Johannesburg on a number of occasions and raided the church once.

SAMP: The Southern African Migration Project. An organization that conducts research that benefits policy-makers that wishes to positively affect the dynamics of migration in the southern African states.

Shona: A member of a group of people inhabiting southern Africa, primarily Zimbabwe.

Xenophobia: is often a phobic attitude toward strangers or of the unknown. The term is typically used to describe fear or dislike of foreigners or in general of people different from one's self. For example, racism is sometimes described as a form of xenophobia. For the purpose of this research I will be conceptualizing the term xenophobia as scapegoating.

Xhosa: A member of a South African people traditionally living in the Eastern Cape Province. They form the second largest ethnic group in South Africa after the Zulus.

Zulu: A member of a South African people living mainly in the KwaZulu-Natal Province.

1. INTRODUCTION

At first there were a few and there was no problem, but now there are just too many, and they are all in Johannesburg. It will never end; Mugabe could die tomorrow and they will still stay. They will never leave. It's too easy here. That's why I don't get upset when South Africans take it into their own hands to let them know they aren't welcome. If we didn't let them know, they would stay forever. What do you do when your dinner guests refuse to go home for the night? You tell them to go home, and if they don't go, you push them out of your door.

Boag 32, South African Restaurant Manager

Xenophobia is seen as an intense or irrational dislike of people from the outside, or other countries.¹ During the author's time in both South Africa and Zimbabwe, the term xenophobia was widely used in everyday conversation, describing the social climate that Zimbabweans and other foreign nationals live with in South Africa. In a 1998 Human Rights Watch report, written through the University of Pennsylvania's African Studies Center, it was stated that;

In general, South Africa's public culture has become increasingly xenophobic, and politicians often make unsubstantiated and inflammatory statements that the "deluge" of migrants is responsible for the current crime wave, rising unemployment,

¹ Cambridge University Press. "Definition: xenophobia" Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary. 2009.

or even the spread of diseases. As the unfounded perception that migrants are responsible for a variety of social ills grows, migrants have increasingly become the target of abuse at the hands of South African citizens, as well as members of the police, the army, and the Department of Home Affairs. Refugees and asylum-seekers with distinctive features from far-away countries are especially targeted for abuse.²

Since the fall of Apartheid in South Africa, the climate of xenophobia has been penetrating the South African landscape through a myriad of countless assaults on foreigners, and the build up to the xenophobic outbursts in early 2008. South African citizens aren't just scapegoating³ foreigners for the mistakes or faults of their country, but are instead compounding those fears of racism that have pervaded the country for so long, into a stew of irrational dislike, fear and hatred that drove a portion of the populous, limited to mostly townships, to murder 62 people across the country, strictly based on the nations in which they had come from.

1.1 THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RACISM AND XENOPHOBIA

To call the situation in South Africa a case of just scapegoating would be incorrect, although many foreigners are used as scapegoats and blamed for the poor economy, high unemployment or high crime rates. Openly expressed anger and resentment against many foreigners is prevalent and seen daily in the newspapers,

² Xenophobia in South Africa. Human Rights Watch Report. University of Pennsylvania – African Studies Center. 3 June 1998.

³ Scapegoat: noun, a person who is blamed for something that someone else has done.

Racism: noun, the belief that people's qualities are influenced by their race and that the members of other races are not as good as the members of your own, or the resulting unfair treatment of members of other races.

Xenophobia: noun, extreme dislike or fear of foreigners, their customs, their religions etc.

[All terms and definitions from the Cambridge University Press. Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary. 2009.]

heard on the radio and experienced in the streets. To call this something as simple as racism would also be too contrived. Many of those that are hated derive from the Ndebele tribe in Zimbabwe, a tribe that shares many of its ancestry and roots with the Zulu people of South Africa. One does hear of the Zimbabweans being 'very black' from some South Africans who have a lighter complexion, but to use the broad term of racism to describe the situation in South Africa would be mistaken. According to the author Richard Overy, it is possible to be xenophobic without being racist.⁴ Xenophobia is based on not knowing what one is dealing with; in essence, it is a state of caution. Once one who is xenophobic gets closer to what they do not know, they are then able to lose their fear. Racism is prejudice plus power and this does not necessarily stem from fear. It's when one wants to marginalize a group, disenfranchise a group based on bias alone regardless of what new information is learned about the other. The term 'racist' is rigid whereas 'xenophobic' isn't. The term xenophobic was coined in 1912 from the Greek word *xenos*, meaning "foreign" or "stranger."⁵ The term *phobos* is Greek for fear, and the combination of these two derivatives⁶ make the most appropriate word that can be used to describe the widespread attacks in 2008, the isolated incidents, and the everyday mood and feelings felt by many foreigners living in South Africa.

In recent years, due in large part to the economic collapse in Zimbabwe as well as the brutal repression from the country's president, Robert Mugabe, emigration has steadily increased. South Africa, one of the primary destinations of this migrant flow, has seen a rise in animosity toward migrants, regardless of their class or social status. Irrational fear of "the other" is prevalent on the part of xenophobic South Africans

⁴ Overy, Richard. 'The Dictators: Hitler's Germany, Stalin's Russia.' W.W.Norton & Company. 2004.

⁵ Harper, Douglas. 'An Etymological Dictionary of Modern English.' November 2001.

⁶ Klein. 'A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the English Language.' Second Edition. 2007.

who see migrants as intruders. Many South Africans believe that these interlopers are stealing their jobs. This belief, and the belief that they are taking business, and causing crime, fueled an intense animosity that reached its pinnacle in May 2008, when xenophobic attacks in the country made international headlines. The violence and hatred directed toward Zimbabweans and others are reminiscent of the viewpoint of the white-ruled Afrikaners prior to the end of apartheid in 1994. The animosity and xenophobia have not been confined just to the impoverished or the jobless; everyone from store managers to members of the police forces, medical facilitators and those in the upper reaches of the government are guilty of xenophobia.

This thesis will explore the causes and motivations behind the xenophobic attacks on Zimbabwean migrants and refugees who have fled in record numbers from their country. Research was conducted on the causes of the Alexandra Township attacks that sparked the initial violence. A survey of 250 Zimbabwean refugees in Johannesburg was conducted, discovering the refugees' arrival dates, ages, and genders, and documenting the xenophobic incidents that they have experienced since their arrival. The thesis will also focus on the Zimbabweans who have weathered the storm of xenophobia in South Africa and will give voice to some of their stories. Since not all Zimbabweans in South Africa have been subjected to xenophobia, the thesis will also concentrate on the opposite end of the spectrum as well.

In addition to giving a voice to the Zimbabwean refugees whom we now see as only numbers, this study also seeks to discover why South Africa is seen as a xenophobic nation and to determine where this attitude originated. Through this study, the author will present an informative report on the incidents of xenophobic violence and prejudice waged against the Zimbabwean community in South Africa. In

addition, by conducting in-depth interviews with victims of xenophobia, the author seeks to foster a deeper understanding of those who instigate and perpetuate xenophobia, and seeks to explain the violence that sometimes accompanies it. The point of view of the victim will be presented and explored. The author will attempt take a look inside South Africa, and see who institutes and perpetuates this violence, along with the perspective of their victims. Does the violent behavior derive from the government and its insistence in blaming South Africa's faltering economy on the Zimbabwean migrants? Does the xenophobic behavior come from the media and their insistence that the increase in crime can be blamed on the refugees? Or are the government and media merely scapegoating who are voiceless, hopeless, and powerless?

1.2 METHODOLOGY

The author's fieldwork took place in both Zimbabwe and South Africa for three months in the summer of 2009. Since xenophobia, much like racism cannot always be seen or heard, but instead felt, the author focused more on the dramatic effects of xenophobia, geared towards incidents of violence and public scrutiny or physical expulsion of residents. The data collection involved narrative interviews, focus groups, and a 250-person survey.

- Qualitative field research was the main objective in that the author spent time with a number of Zimbabwean migrants and refugees who had dealt first hand with xenophobia during their time in South Africa.
- In the survey conducted at the Central Methodist Church, two

church workers handed out the questionnaires. There were approximately 4,000 mostly Zimbabwean refugees residing on the premises. The surveys were handed out late at night when the majority of the populous was present. The church workers were instructed to evenly distribute the surveys based on the floors in which the people were present. The Central Methodist Church is comprised of four main floors, of which all four are completely occupied all night. The survey attendants handed 250 surveys out, and received approximately 230 back the next day. The conduction of the survey lasted two days and upon taking the questionnaire, the approximate time to fill out the form was between two to ten minutes per person. The questionnaire was simple in presentation and was comprised of one page. The subject was asked their age, nationality, country of origin, gender, date of arrival in South Africa, and asked whether or not they have been subjected to xenophobia whilst in South Africa since their arrival. The questionnaire stated that the survey was voluntary, and the church workers handing out the forms verbally stated that each questionnaire was voluntary.

1.2.1 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Six meetings were arranged at the United Methodist Church in Johannesburg, South Africa. The meetings were one-on-one discussions that lasted anywhere from thirty-minutes to two-hours. Those taking part in the interviews were the author, and Bishop Paul Verryn, Head Secretary Tina Dereijke, and members of the MSF staff

attached to the church. The meetings took place in the offices of the aforementioned parties, and a tape recorder was used with the consent and knowledge of the parties involved.

The church has been internationally recognized as the hub of protection for a great deal of the Zimbabwean migrants who have dealt with the xenophobic violence in the past few years. Meetings were also arranged at the University of Cape Town Law Clinic.

1.2.2 FOCUS GROUPS

In Cape Town, South Africa meetings and focus groups were arranged with the organization PASSOP who have been advocating for Zimbabwean migrants from their offices in the Cape. The author put together two focus groups where the participants explored the role of the police in the Western Cape during and after the initial xenophobic violence in May of 2008. The first focus group took part at the UCT Law Clinic where eight participants were involved. Those involved in this first focus group were members of the civil society in Cape Town. The second focus group included five participants, all Zimbabweans who were living in the nearby township of Kayalitcha in Cape Town. Braam Hanekom, the President of PASSOP, gathered the participants. In the focus group, three men and two women were present; all of whose ages fell in the late twenties.

1.2.3 NARRATIVES

A large portion of the research was focused on personal narratives of Zimbabwean irregular migrants in South Africa along with those who had returned home from South Africa to Zimbabwe. The author spent approximately two hours with all twenty-one participants, conducting expansive interviews and relied on the snowball effect to speak to more in the same area. The personal narratives were often persons who were referred by people the author met along the way. In the discussions, the author and the participant discussed daily rituals, how the person came to be in South Africa, what pulled/pushed them there. How life had been in South Africa. The topic of xenophobia was always left to be brought up by the participant, and the author never initiated the word on purpose. Interestingly, in each interview, the participant brought up the word xenophobia on his or her own accord. The author conducted this style of research in Cape Town and Johannesburg. In Zimbabwe the author focused on Chiredzi and Harare.

1.3 LIMITATIONS

This study was meant to be exploratory in nature. Thus, it was conducted on a small scale. In so doing, the author was not able to give an accurate representation of all Zimbabwean migrants and their experiences in South Africa. The author was able to gather detailed information from the study participants from two of the largest cities in South Africa: Johannesburg and Cape Town. To further reach out to the returned Diaspora in Zimbabwe the author continued to conduct one-on-one interviews with subjects who had returned to their home country from South Africa.

In Zimbabwe, the government looks down upon Western journalists and

researchers, as they feel the West portrays an inaccurate portrayal of Zimbabwe.⁷

1.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The participants that took part in the research were read an informed consent agreement that explained the voluntary nature of the research. The surveys that were handed out to the Zimbabwean refugees at Central Methodist Church in Johannesburg were authorized and approved by Bishop Verryn. The survey detailed the anonymity of the subject and as stated upon completion of the survey, the participant gave express written consent to have his/her anonymous information shared in the author's thesis. Names could be changed at the discretion of the participant.

1.5 WHAT TO EXPECT

In *Chapter 2, The Background*, the push factors that led to the influx of Zimbabwean citizens migrating into South Africa are explored. In *Chapter 3, The Literature Review*, the discussion focuses upon the xenophobic history of post-apartheid South Africa. The role of the mass media is brought to attention in their reporting the 'flood' of Zimbabweans and a summarial chronology of xenophobic attacks is listed from 1994 up until mid 2009.

In *Chapter 4, Zimbabwe's Refugees: Xenophobia in South Africa*, the experiences of interviewees are recounted with stories of xenophobia in Johannesburg, the difficulty of entering the country and, once inside, attaining the

⁷ 'Journalists Denied Visas to Cover Mugabe.' *The Zimbabwe Times*. 27 August 2009.
Wines, Michael. 'New Signs of Mugabe Crackdown in Zimbabwe.' *New York Times*. 4 April 2008.
Williams, Jon. 'Banned Reporters.' *BBC*. 7 May 2008.

proper papers necessary for refugee status.

In *Chapter 5, Central Methodist Church: A Refugee Camp with Pews*, the author describes the recent history of the Central Methodist Church's role in housing up to 4,000 Zimbabwean refugees at a time, in the church's downtown Johannesburg location. The chapter includes interviews with the staff, the head Bishop, Zimbabwean refugees and MSF workers who are associated with the church. The chapter also goes on to describe the incidents of xenophobic attacks that have occurred on the church in recent years and the most recent mass arrests by the Johannesburg municipality.

In *Chapter 6, Medicine: For South Africans Only*, the South African medical system is brought to light. It is argued that there is a contradiction (and thus, hypocrisy) between South Africa's constitution and the reality of health care for foreign nationals. Likewise, in *Chapter 7, The Police Force: To Serve and Protect...Their Own Interests*, the author describes the abuse perpetrated upon foreign nationals by the police forces in the western Cape, and the after-effects of the xenophobic violence that broke out in early 2008.

Finally, in *Chapter 8, The Cause: What Sets South Africa Apart with Xenophobia*, conclusions are drawn as to why South Africa, as a nation, has exhibited such a high propensity towards xenophobia against foreign nationals.

2. CHAPTER 2

2.1 BACKGROUND

During apartheid, we welcomed these people into our country and kept them safe. We gave them opportunities and jobs, and let them come and go as they pleased. The police never gave them problems. They needed no I.D. I remember my parents taking in two South Africans in the '80s. We felt bad for them because the whites hated them so much, and we remembered what it was like under Ian Smith. The memory of Rhodesia was still fresh in our minds, and we could sympathize with these people. What you find today is that these very same people that we were taking care of during apartheid are the people hurling insults at our children as they sleep in their streets⁸.

Constantine, 34, from Harare, Zimbabwe. Fled to South Africa in 2004.

Had worked in the president's office in Harare. He was later accused of attempting to sell state secrets. He then fled in fear of political persecution.

In this first chapter, a focus will put on the background of Zimbabwe's history, dating back to the early 1980's when President Robert Mugabe was elected to lead the new country, post-colonialism. This chapter will examine the push factors that led to a majority of the countries population to flee. This chapter will also focus on the xenophobia that confronts Zimbabwean refugees upon entry into South Africa, as well as South Africa's policies on immigration and refugee rights.

During times of economic crisis, food shortages, droughts, high unemployment,

⁸ Constantine. Personal INTERVIEW. 26 June 2009.

increased crime and other negative indicators, it is often the immigrant who is blamed for the turn of events. The immigrant becomes the scapegoat. Cabinet leaders and other politicians may not point the blame toward bad governing, but will instead hold migrants, the voiceless people, to blame. Migrants who arrive in search of work will take lower wages to survive and in so doing can undercut those in the lowest income brackets.

South African newspapers often include a high level of anti-immigrant bias that fuel xenophobia by further perpetuating the negative stereotypes against foreigners with headlines such as “Zimbabweans Flooding South Africa”⁹ emblazoned on front pages, and the South African government perpetually dehumanizing the Zimbabwean migrants by referring to them as “a flood,”¹⁰ rather than as individuals who are fleeing one horror only to encounter another.

The economic crisis and election violence in Zimbabwe have made it impossible for many Zimbabweans to stay in their country and survive. However, the media attempts to dehumanize these people as they migrate into South Africa have led the local population to see the foreigners not as people fleeing civil and economic

⁹ Bengali, Shashank. McClathy Newspapers. ‘Hungry and fearful, Zimbabweans flooding South Africa.’ 18 July 2008.

¹⁰ Daily Nation. “Zimbabweans Flood South Africa as Power Sharing Deal Troubled.” 26 October 2009. Meldrum, Andrew. “Refugees Flood from Zimbabwe.” The Observer. 1 July 2007.

Dixon, Robyn. “Running for their Lives-Zimbabweans Flood South Africa, where compassion has ebbed.” Los Angeles Times. 9 September 2007.

Africa News. “More Zimbabweans Flood Border post to SA.” 18 May 2009.

South African Migration Project [SAMP]. “Zimbabweans Flood Across Limpopo River.” 17 October 2006.

South African Press Association. “Desperate Zimbabweans Flood Across Border.” 19 September 2005.

South Africa Business Report. “Zimbabwean Cross-Border traders Flood Musina to stock up on Goods.” 14 December 2008.

NEWS 24 South Africa. “Zim Cholera Patients Flood SA.” 24 November 2008.

Mwakalyelye, Ndimiyake. “South Africa Mulls new Response to Massive Zimbabwean Immigration.” Voice of America. [excerpt: The swelling flood into South Africa of Zimbabweans seeking economic refuge poses a major policy dilemma for Pretoria...]. 29 August 2007.

unrest, but merely as annoying pests.

If one looks at Southern Africa as a region, Zimbabwe's history of migratory movement is one of which the country is a recipient and sender of migrants. South Africa has been a major destination for many Zimbabwean nationals for many years, even before Robert Mugabe's rule. According to research by The Southern African Migration Project (SAMP), nearly a quarter of adult Zimbabweans have parents or grandparents who have traveled to South Africa to seek work at some point in their lives. In turn, Zimbabwe has received labor migrants from such countries as Mozambique, Zambia and Malawi. During the 1951 census, there were 246,000 foreign Africans residing in the country of Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia). Of that large number, 40 percent were from nearby Mozambique¹¹.

Since its shift to independence in 1980, Zimbabwe has experienced a change in migration norms. Due to lack of stability and economic turmoil, the country has become a major exporter of migrant labor. Zimbabwe, notably, has no international bilateral treaty facilitating such movement, so there are limited opportunities for Zimbabweans to work legally in South Africa, their major country of destination. Since the late 1980s there has been a steady rise in undocumented migration into South Africa from Zimbabwe. In 1997, SAMP conducted a survey among Zimbabweans, asking the purpose of their last visit to South Africa¹². The survey showed that more than 70% of those polled had visited for economic purposes, with 29% of those going to work or to look for work and 42% migrating to trade or to

¹¹ Human Rights Watch. 'Unprotected Migrants: Zimbabweans in South Africa's Limpopo Province.' August 2006.

¹² Ibid.

shop.¹³

In 2001, Dr. Dan Tevara of SAMP, conducted another survey. Tevara asked a sample of urban Zimbabweans how much thought they had given to leaving the country. Of those asked, 76% considered leaving¹⁴. It was once common for single young men to leave the country and migrate for economic reasons. Today, the diaspora has broadened to encompass all types of people. Zimbabwean women, who would have traditionally stayed home, are now migrating to find a means to feed their children. People are literally reaching a point where there is no other option but to leave. Many would argue that the only thing keeping Zimbabwe afloat right now is the remittances the country is receiving from outside sources. Remittances such as US Dollars, South African Rand, dry foods, canned foods, clothing and medicine to name a few. Foreign currency remittances from Zimbabweans living outside of the country - excluding hand-to-hand transfers - were expected to double in 2009 from an estimated US\$361 million in 2008, according to projections by the International Fund for Agricultural Development, a UN agency dedicated to eradicating rural poverty. Other estimates have put all remittances from expatriates in Britain to Zimbabwe at about US\$1 billion annually.

According to the UNIFAD, about seven million of Zimbabwe's official population of 12 million, or more than half the people, are receiving food aid, although this does not factor in the millions thought to have left the country in recent years.

¹³ ChimaniKire, D.P. 'Zimbabwe Migration.' Trade and Development Studies Centre. March 2005.

¹⁴ Ibid.

Steve Hanke, professor of applied economics at the Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, US, and hyperinflation specialist, estimated inflation in Zimbabwe at 89.7 sextillion percent in November 2008.

Xenophobic attacks are not a new issue in South Africa. Since 1994, immigrants from other parts of Africa have faced incidences of violence and have been subjected to ethnocentric behavior. According to a *Human Rights Watch*(2006) report, immigrants from Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe who were living in Alexandra Township were “physically assaulted over a period of several weeks in January 1995, as armed gangs identified suspected undocumented migrants and marched them to the police station in an attempt to 'clean' the township of foreigners.” This campaign is known as “Buyelekhaya” (an admonition to “go back home”), and at its center it blames migrants for rape, crime and general unemployment¹⁵.

Xenophobic violence increases both in the number of incidents and in intensity as larger groups of people are targeted. The violence in South Africa reached a tipping point in March 2008, when a spate of attacks took place around Pretoria, leaving four people dead and hundreds homeless. The violence made international headlines when in May, riots broke out all over the country of South Africa, leaving 62 people dead and tens of thousands homeless. The vast majority of those targeted were Zimbabweans who were fleeing the political violence back home.

¹⁵ Human Rights Watch. August 2006.

The Zimbabwean migrant in South Africa is part of a purpose-specific circulatory process in which migrants are spending short periods of time in South Africa¹⁵. These migrants, Zimbabweans and Mozambicans alike, have become stereotyped as both social and economic threats. South Africans' views are not unique and many Southern African countries share similar views and attitudes. This, though, is not an excuse to allow violent and intolerant behavior to exist. There is a serious need for education and accountability amongst members of the media who would continue to perpetuate stereotypes against such migrants. To a lesser degree, the perpetuation of stereotypes by the media is reminiscent of the buildup to the Rwandan genocide in 1994. The media at that time repeatedly labeled Tutsis “cockroaches,” denigrating and dehumanizing the people before the eventual genocide began in April of that year.

Many problematic claims have led to the xenophobic behavior against Zimbabweans in South Africa. The most controversial of these have been the assumed numbers of “illegal immigrants” in the country. Over the past couple years, many experts, government officials, and media have estimated that there are anywhere between one million and three million Zimbabweans in South Africa at this time. On 12 July 2007, The Pretoria News coined one of the more dehumanizing terms related to the Zimbabwean refugees in its headline in “Zimbabwe’s Human Tsunami Floods into SA.”¹⁶ The mass media continues to hammer home the idea that overwhelming numbers of humans are “flooding” over the borders into South Africa.

South African newspapers make such assertions without clarifying the sources of the numbers of Zimbabwean migrants entering the country. The Independent estimated that around 30,000 Zimbabwean migrants are crossing into South Africa each month. Their source of data was “official estimates.” The Business Day estimated that 520,000 cross each year. Their source was “the police.” The Mail & Guardian printed numbers of 3,000 a day, 4,000 a day and 5,000 a day. The last two claims cited no sources, and the first claim, of 3,000 Zimbabwe migrants a day (or 1,068,000 per year), cited “the Musina Police.”¹⁷

What is important to note is that even before the current surge, the South African government could make no reliable estimate as to how many Zimbabweans, or other foreigners, were in the country.¹⁸ Therefore, even if estimates, by the Department of Home Affairs, depicting the numbers of new refugees entering the

¹⁶ Stuijt, Adriana. ‘Zimbabwe’s Human Tsunami Floods into SA.’ Pretoria News. July 2007.
Mumba, Hilton. ‘Concern as Zimbabweans ‘flood’ South Africa.’ National Zim Eye. 24 May 2009.

¹⁷ Chirwa, James. ‘Special Report: Fact or Fiction? Examining Zimbabwean Cross Border Migration into South Africa.’ Musina Legal Advice Office. March 2005.

¹⁸ Ibid.

country were accurate, this would make it impossible to know the current numbers. Unless South Africa implements a new system to monitor the migrants who have crossed into the country, it will continue to be impossible to pinpoint the correct number. Another problematic claim is that none of the Zimbabweans crossing the border are refugees. The term “border jumpers” is a blanket term for Zimbabweans coming into South Africa. Other terms such as “economic migrants” and “illegal immigrants” are used. These broad terms are confusing to those who seek to distinguish whether Zimbabweans are, in fact, refugees, or whether they could even be classified as refugees.¹⁹ In late 2007, the Democratic Alliance supported a call for refugees to be sent to camps, suggesting that all Zimbabwean migrants are “economic refugees.” At the other extreme in this issue, the Department of Home Affairs denies that there is any need for camps, claiming that almost none of the Zimbabwean migrants are legitimate asylum-seekers.²⁰

Many of the Zimbabweans who have crossed the border during the past couple years have subsequently been recognized as legitimate refugees under South Africa’s law. Up through May 2009, many of those crossing the border needed to go to one of the four refugee-reception offices located in country. From there they were given Section 23 Transit Permits that allowed them to travel further inland to submit their claims. As mentioned earlier, the Section 23 permit can take a very long time to be processed. Through this process, though, the legislation specifically contemplates the informal entry of asylum-seekers beyond the border posts, anticipating that they will instead go further inland.

¹⁹ UNHCR has made numerous statements regarding Zimbabweans in South Africa as Refugees. In May 2008, UNHCR condemned the actions of South Africa for deporting upward of 17,000 Zimbabweans [presumably Refugees] in a matter of forty days.

²⁰ Ibid Chirwa.

Finally, in South Africa, many claim that migrants are contributing to the increase in crime in their county. In a recent study conducted by the Forced Migration Studies Program & Musina Legal Advice Office, a few sources in Musina noted only thefts of farm property and smuggling of cigarettes by Zimbabweans, while most residents surveyed did not believe that Zimbabwean migration was the reason for crime in the area. According to the police commissioner, crime has decreased in the area over the past year.²¹ Many regard the Zimbabwean migrants as a good-natured people who are disinclined toward criminal activity.

Under the government of South Africa, it is unlawful to deport Zimbabweans who hold temporary residence permits; these include workers and visitors, the numbers of which range in the tens of thousands. Also, those who have claimed asylum are awaiting determination on their status, and those who have been granted status must remain in the country in which they were granted status. Between the years 2005 and 2007, 44,423 Zimbabweans claimed asylum in South Africa. Only about 5,000 new asylum applications are processed each year, and of those, the government recognized just 241 Zimbabweans as refugees between the years 2004 and 2006.²² More recent data has yet to become available.

In Zimbabwe in 2005, “Operation Murambatsvina” (“Operation Clear the Filth”), a form of ethnic cleansing, occurred; this was a forcible eviction of both dissidents and the impoverished by the Zimbabwean government that destroyed the homes and livelihoods of about 70,000 people, roughly 6% of Zimbabwe’s population.²³ Those targeted were located in the high-density suburbs of Zimbabwe’s

²¹ Ibid Chirwa.

²² Human Rights Watch. August 2006.

²³ Ibid.

larger cities. The evictions caused economic destitution and left a massive impact on the Zimbabwean economy. They created an escalation in the number of Zimbabweans fleeing to South Africa. Under the international refugee law, those who were targeted under “Operation Murambatsvina” have exceptionally strong claims for refugee status.

Regardless of the refugees’ demonstrated need and their obvious claim, South Africa still does not consider them to be protected under the 1951 Refugee Convention, or under the 1969 OAU act.

In 1998, South Africa adopted its own Refugees Act. Ten years later, the country's asylum system and deportation process are still dysfunctional. The procedures create as much red tape as possible at every stage of an asylum-seeker's application process.²⁴ Many migrants attempt to gain access to the system but later forgo the notion, as it is relatively impossible to advance in the system of attaining asylum status. There are also quite a few documented violations of non-refoulement among specifically Zimbabweans in the border areas. South Africa is bound as a country to both the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa.

Due to the relative dysfunction of South Africa’s deportation system, there are many Zimbabwean asylum-seekers who run the risk of being illegally deported. There are currently 76,400 backlogged cases of asylum-seekers in the South African Department of Home Affairs.²⁵ All of these cases were filed before Aug. 1, 2005.

²⁴ South African Department of Home Affairs sect 12(1) of the Refugees Act of 1998.

²⁵ South African Department of Home Affairs. 2007.

Since the release of this data in September 2007, 105,000 new cases have been filed.²⁶

It seems that more and more cases are being added to the backlog, and until there is a remedy to this pile-up, the numbers will continue to increase. Hence, more and more Zimbabweans will run the risk of refoulement.

2.2 CHRONOLOGY OF ATTACKS

Xenophobia is not a new problem to South Africa. The Center for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation compiled a chronological report on the issue of xenophobia since the democratic elections of 1994. What follows is a paraphrased synopsis of the cases and incidents logged, along with added incidents and quotes found through further research.

1994

- Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) threatens to take "physical action" if the government does not respond to the perceived crisis of undocumented migrants in South Africa.
- IFP leader and Minister of Home Affairs Mangosutho Buthelezi says in his first speech to parliament: "If we as South Africans are going to compete for scarce resources with millions of aliens who are pouring into South Africa, then we can bid goodbye to our reconstruction and development program."

²⁶ Ibid.

1995

- A report by the Southern African Bishops' Conference concludes this way: "There is no doubt that there is a very high level of xenophobia in our country ... One of the main problems is that a variety of people have been lumped together under the title of 'illegal immigrants,' and the situation of demonizing immigrants is feeding the xenophobia phenomenon."

1997

- Defense Minister Joe Modise links the issue of undocumented migration to increased crime in a newspaper interview. Shortly after in a speech to parliament, Home Affairs Minister Buthelezi makes the rash claim that "illegal aliens" are costing South African taxpayers "billions of rand" each year.
- A study co-authored by the Human Sciences Research Council and the Institute for Security Studies reports that 65 percent of South Africans support forced repatriation of undocumented migrants. White South Africans are found to be most hostile to migrants, with 93 percent expressing negative attitudes.

1998

- In September, two Senegalese and one Mozambican are killed when they are thrown from a train traveling between Pretoria and Johannesburg. The men who killed them

were returning from a rally that blamed foreigners for AIDS, crime and unemployment.

1999

- The SAHRC files a report which notes that xenophobia underpins police action against foreigners. People are arrested for being "too dark" or for "walking like a black foreigner."
- A Sudanese refugee named James Diop is seriously injured after being thrown from a train in Pretoria by a group of armed men. A Kenyan named Roy Ndeti and his flatmate are shot in their apartment. Both incidents are described as xenophobic attacks.
- In Operation Crackdown, a joint police and army sweep, more than 7,000 people are arrested on suspicion of being illegal immigrants. In contrast, only 14 people are arrested for serious crimes.

2000-05

- Between 2000 and 2005 a steady stream of xenophobic attacks were made upon Zimbabwean nationals and others from throughout the continent of Africa. With the escalation of the "Operation Murambatsvina" program, the number rose dramatically after 2005.

2006

- Cape Town's Somali community claims that up to 40 traders from their community have been the victims of targeted killings between August and September.
- Somali-owned businesses in the informal settlement of Diepsloot, outside Johannesburg, are torched, and Somalis in this settlement are harassed and abused.

2007

- In March, UNHCR notes its concern over the increase in the number of xenophobic attacks on Somalis. The Somali community claims that 400 people have been killed in the past decade.
- In May, more than 20 people are arrested after shops belonging to Somalis and other foreign nationals are torched during anti-government protests in Khutsong Township, a small mining town about 50km southwest of Johannesburg.
- According to the International Organization on Migration, 177,514 Zimbabweans deported from South Africa have passed through their reception center in Beitbridge since its opening in May 2006.

2008

- January: Police raid the Central Methodist Church in Johannesburg, detaining 350 people before a court interdicts and secures their release. The presiding judge refers to

the treatment of the detainees as being worse than during the days of apartheid.

- In March, human rights organizations condemn a spate of xenophobic attacks around Pretoria that leave at least four people dead and hundreds homeless.
- In May, xenophobic attacks erupt in Alexandra Township, in Johannesburg, then spread throughout the Gauteng, then to the Western Cape and Kwa-Zulu Natal. Sixty-two people reported killed, and more than 100,000 are displaced. OF those killed, many were Zimbabweans but no clear records of how many have become available at this time. Refugees fear that many more will be killed following these attacks.

2009

- June 6, Sowetans arrive and enter the Central Methodist Church community in downtown Johannesburg late at night, beating people they find there. “You couldn’t fall asleep until around 5 a.m.; you were just spending the whole night avoiding people,” says Owen, a Zimbabwean refugee staying at the church.
- June 12, a group of “Red Ants” arrive in a large truck, spraying filthy water on the Zimbabwean refugees sleeping on the street in front of Central Methodist Church.
- On June 16 in Guguletu, local traders send warning letters to Somali shopkeepers warning them to leave Guguletu. The shopkeepers are later made to apologize for their threats.
- July 3, police raid Central Methodist Church and arrest more than 380 Zimbabwean refugees in front of the church. The Zimbabweans arrested include both children and

an obviously pregnant woman. When asked under what charges the people are being arrested, the police loudly exclaim, “loitering!”

- July 14 in Cape Town, five foreigners are beaten by their landlord. The five appear at the local police station to press charges, but the police refuse to open a file for them because they are foreigners.²⁷
-

It has been clear that there has been systematic abuse and xenophobia wrought against Zimbabwean refugees and other mainly black African immigrants and migrants. Steps have been taken legally by the South African government to accommodate refugees in their country, but a lack of follow up and enforcement is needed.

²⁷ Sources used for the collection of this data include: SAMP, SAHRC, Human Rights Watch, Center for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, and personal documented research in country.

3. CHAPTER 3

3.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, the author will examine three hypotheses for xenophobia in South Africa. The first being the ‘Scapegoating hypothesis’ that is a sociological model that looks at the social changes in society as well as the evolution of a society. The second hypothesis for xenophobia is the ‘Isolation hypothesis’, which argues that due to the strict border controls during apartheid, a post-apartheid era that allows most all foreigners in country has resulted in tensions. The final hypothesis is the ‘Bio-cultural hypothesis.’ This theory examines the bio-cultural differences in the Africans whom are being targeted for attacks.

According to a 2008 survey, conducted by Freshly Ground Insights, 550 people across South Africa were surveyed in an attempt to measure the degree of xenophobia present.²⁸ The overwhelming message returned from the study was that South African ‘main market’ consumers did not welcome immigrants from other African countries. The causes presented by the research concluded that the reasons why South Africans felt this way were because they attributed crime and unemployment to foreign immigrants from other African countries.²⁹

According to Tseliso Thipanyane, CEO of Human Rights Commission, [HRC] the causes of xenophobia are many and complex, including competition for limited resources in terms of housing and jobs, a perceived criminality by immigrants, South

²⁸ McKenzie, Roy. “We Need to Address Xenophobia” 16 May 2008.

²⁹ Ibid.

Africa's inability to develop quicker, and a violent past.³⁰ Roy McKenzie says that the fact that South Africans are still resorting to intimidation and violence as a means of resolving their issues is a reflection of how problems were solved in the past during the repressive apartheid rule, and that "there is much work that needs to be done to educate South Africans in other, more constructive and peaceful conflict resolution strategies."³¹

Xenophobia is an economic cost factor in South Africa. South Africa is a nation that needs to attract qualified labor, as it is suffering from a shortage of highly skilled labor. Studies like the one done at Ruhr-University Bochum,³² show that foreign African entrepreneurs provide a series of new jobs by establishing businesses or increasing the aggregate demand as a result of cross-border trading. The high levels of xenophobia in South Africa that have permeated the air waves across Africa, and much of the world, do not portray a positive welcome mat impression to foreigners seeking to apply their skills abroad, nor does this enhance the reputation of South Africa in terms of the forth-coming World Cup even in 2010.

Despite the shift from authoritarian rule that institutionalized racism, to democracy, violence and prejudice still act as defining markers for today's South Africa. As described in the first chapter, xenophobia is characterized by a negative attitude towards foreigners, a dislike, a fear, or hatred.³³ However, in South Africa, xenophobia is not restricted to a fear or dislike of foreigners, but rather, it results in 'intense tension and violence by South Africans towards immigrants.'³⁴ Kollapan, a

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Blank, Buchholz. 'Detriments of Xenophobia among South African Students in the Self-Declared Rainbow Nation.' Ruhr-University Bochum. 2008.

³³ Harris, Bronwyn. 'Xenophobia: A new Pathology for a New South Africa?' pg 170.

³⁴ Tshitereke, C. 'Xenophobia and Relative Deprivation.' Crossings, 3. Pg 4-5. 1999.

well known South African researcher, explains that xenophobia cannot be separated from physical abuse and violence. He notes that it would be necessary to rewrite the definition in the dictionary, as it must incorporate practice. It is not just an attitude, but also an activity. It is not just a dislike or fear of foreigners, but it is a violent practice that results in bodily harm.³⁵

In the paper, 'Xenophobia: A New Pathology for a New South Africa?' Harris highlights three hypothesis explanations for xenophobia: 'the scapegoating hypothesis', 'the isolation hypothesis', and 'the biocultural hypothesis'. These are not mutually exclusive, but instead present a variation of explanation for xenophobia in contemporary South Africa.

3.2 THE SCAPEGOATING HYPOTHESIS OF XENOPHOBIA

Drawn from Tshitereke's ideas on xenophobia, the scapegoating hypothesis is largely a sociological model. It presents xenophobia as a result of social change and evolution in society. Tshitereke would argue that such underlying factors as a lack of employment opportunities, poor access to health care, and limited housing, lead to a hostility towards foreigners as an explanation for these realities.³⁶ Tshitereke explains that in the post-apartheid epoch, while people's expectations have been heightened, a realization that delivery is not immediate has meant that discontent and indignation are at their peak. People are more conscious of their deprivation than ever before... This is the ideal situation for a phenomenon like xenophobia to take root and

³⁵ Kollapan, J. 'Xenophobia in South Africa: The challenge to forced migration.' Unpublished seminar, 7 October 1999. Graduate School of the University of Witwatersrand.

³⁶ Morris, A. 'Our fellow Africans make our lives hell': The lives of Congolese and Nigerians living in Johannesburg. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 21 (6), pg 1116-36.

flourish. South Africa's political transition to democracy has exposed the unequal distribution of resources and wealth in the country.³⁷

Drawing from this context, Tshitereke argues that 'people often create a "frustration-scapegoat",³⁸ for instance they create a target to blame their ongoing problems on. This theory would suggest that the most common scapegoat in these instances would be foreigners. Foreigners in these cases and in the case of South Africa are seen as a threat to jobs, education, health care and housing. Morris notes that 'research and historical events have indicated that if a majority group is in a perilous economic position they are more likely to feel threatened by minorities, especially if they are foreign'.³⁹

Tshitereke conceptualizes xenophobia in terms of frustration and deprivation.⁴⁰ However, Tshitereke states that violence is not always the inevitable outcome of this relative deprivation. Harris describes Tshitereke's explanation of this in her paper stating:⁴¹

The anger caused by deprivation and perceived or real threats from immigrants as it relates to resources does not directly cause the nationals to commit violence, but it frustrates them. Political scientist Annette Seegers says, 'frustration breeds anger, yet angry people do not always commit violence.'⁴² They could turn

³⁷ Tshitereke, C. (1999: 4).

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Morris, A. (1998: 1125)

⁴⁰ Harris, B. (2002: 171)

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

their anger inwards and commit suicide. Alternatively, people release their anger on that 'frustration-scapegoat', usually non-national minorities.⁴³

In this example, Tshitereke uses psychological theories of frustration and aggression to create a causal link between collective violence and a relative means of deprivation. Scapegoating the foreigner then forges Tshitereke's link.

3.3 THE ISOLATION HYPOTHESIS OF XENOPHOBIA

The isolation hypothesis suggests that due to the years of isolation, South Africans are unable not only accommodate but tolerate difference. According to this theory, South Africans are threatened by difference and may even find it to be dangerous.⁴⁴

The isolation hypothesis⁴⁵ of xenophobia presents foreigners as the focal point of hostility. This hypothesis focuses on the unknown factor of foreigners, and also is centered on the fact that xenophobia in South Africa is a consequence of apartheid. Once apartheid ended and the borders opened up, a new level of integration arose, and the country then became integrated into the international community. In essence, this brought contemporary South Africa into contact with the unknown, foreigners.⁴⁶ According to this hypothesis, the mixture of the previously isolated South African citizens and the unknown foreigners creates an environment of hostility. 'When a

⁴³ Tshitereke, C. (1999: 4)

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Harris, B. (2002: 173)

⁴⁶ Harris, B. (2002: 174)

group has no history of incorporating strangers, it may find it difficult to be welcoming.’⁴⁷

3.4 THE BIOCULTURAL HYPOTHESIS OF XENOPHOBIA

What has become evident in South Africa is that not all foreigners are on equal ground in regards to scapegoats and xenophobia. Some foreigners, especially ones from other African nations, are at greater risk of xenophobia.⁴⁸ Biocultural xenophobia is an asymmetrical targeting of specifically African foreigners, by South Africans. This targeting places an emphasis on biological factors that separate South Africans from other continental Africans. Morris gives an example of the Congolese and Nigerians, as being ‘easily identifiable as the Other.’⁴⁹ The physical differences are clear, as are the cultural difference. The way one presents their clothing style, the way people pronounce certain words. For example, Zimbabweans are often distinguishable physically by having darker skin than many South Africans. The level of English proficiency is also higher in Zimbabwe as compared to South Africa with many natives, and the inability to speak Zulu or Xhosa, two of the main 11 official languages used in South Africa, offers another clear distinction leading to a biocultural hypothesis of xenophobia.

Overall, many conclusions can be made to draw a reason as to why many South African nationals are so hostile to foreigners. It can be as simple as frustration

⁴⁷ Morris, A. (1998: 1125)

⁴⁸ Human Rights Commission. ‘Media Statement Issued by the SA Human Rights Commission.’ 19 October 1999.

⁴⁹ Morris, A. (1998: 1125)

due to unemployment manifested violently against the 'other,' or more complex and engrained as one of the previous hypotheses suggest.

4. CHAPTER 4: ZIMBABWE'S REFUGEES: XENOPHOBIA IN SOUTH AFRICA

"I'm 36, but you know they say life begins at 40. Unfortunately, we Zimbabweans are dying in our 30s⁵⁰."

-Owen, a 36-year-old economic refugee from Livingstone, Zimbabwe

In April 2009, the governments of the Republic of South Africa and Zimbabwe signed an agreement that dropped the visa requirements for Zimbabwean passport holders looking to travel into South Africa. The new measure gives Zimbabweans passage into South Africa for up to 90 days, and it permits those who enter to seek employment⁵¹. Co-Home Affairs Minister Giles Mutsekwa and his South African counterpart, Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, announced this move. With this new development in border control, the traffic more than doubled, from 3,000 Zimbabweans crossing each day to 7,000. The average traveler spent 10 hours waiting at the border to pass through⁵². The visa waiver is seen by many as a major step toward free movement in the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Despite the waiver, many, if not most, Zimbabweans cannot travel to South Africa: they are unable to afford the cost of a passport. An adult Zimbabwean passport now costs approximately US\$670, while a new passport for children is now costing US\$420⁵³. These are impossibly expensive costs for many who live in a country

⁵⁰ Owen. Personal INTERVIEW. 17 June 2009.

⁵¹ Kwenda, Stanley "South Africa: Visa Waiver 'Encumbering' Zimbabwean Trade." IPS. 2009. Inter Press Service <<http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=47086>>

⁵² Ibid

⁵³ IRIN, "Zimbabwe: Passport fees leave a population going nowhere." 2009. International News and Analysis; UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. 30 Jan. 2009 <<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=82515>>

where civil servants barely survive on their US\$100-per-month salaries⁵⁴. The US\$670 fee, however, comprises regulatory costs only; the cost of networking through channels and red tape to obtain a visa in Zimbabwe can actually cost up to R6,800 (US\$820)⁵⁵. Once again, only a tiny minority can afford such costs. This leaves the most vulnerable unable to afford passports, which means that they must find ways across the border through non-official channels.

Many Zimbabweans are grateful for the lifted restrictions, as some had been subjected to systematic rape, robbery, and trafficking when they attempted to cross the border before April 2009. In the past three years, an estimated three million Zimbabweans have illegally crossed the Limpopo River into South Africa⁵⁶.

Nearly 25% of the Zimbabwean population has fled Zimbabwe to neighboring countries such as Botswana, Zambia, and Mozambique. Most have gone to South Africa. The immediate cause for flight has been an unprecedented cholera epidemic that had affected more than 100,000 Zimbabweans and killed more than 4,300; an escalating HIV crisis with no means of ARVs, and a total collapse of the healthcare system⁵⁷. Food shortages left grocery stores bare, with citizens eating roots and tree leaves in rural areas; political violence and rampant unemployment have soared above 94%⁵⁸. Of the country's 12 million people, only 480,000 have formal jobs, according

⁵⁴ Kwenda, Stanley 2009.

⁵⁵ IRIN 2009.

⁵⁶ International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. "Zimbabwe: 100,000th case looms as cholera remains a threat." 2009. IFRC 26 May 2009. <<http://www.ifrc.org/docs/news/pr09/2709.asp>>

⁵⁷ Ibid

⁵⁸ Agence France-Presse. "Zimbabwe Unemployment Soars to 94%." 2009. Harare (AFP). 29 Jan. 2009. <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5imTkGEP84_3QTVcSGu_8W3YrP8wA>

to a January 2009 report by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)⁵⁹.

Prior to the relaxation of border restrictions, many Zimbabweans risked their lives fleeing to South Africa. The South African government has traditionally characterized the entering Zimbabweans as “voluntary economic migrants,” and South Africa instigated harsh measures to deport them. Before April 2009, approximately 17,000 Zimbabweans were deported each month by South African authorities, according to the South African Department of Home Affairs. Many of the deportees had filed for refugee status. In Musina alone, more than 30,000 Zimbabweans applied for asylum between July and December 2008. Of those, just 53 (0.1%) were granted refugee status⁶⁰.

South Africa’s government, supported by UNHCR, has taken the position that the vast majority of the Zimbabweans in South Africa are in fact not refugees under either convention. The economic, political, and health crises that continue to stifle the lives of Zimbabweans are not enough to garner the attention of either party, and they do not at this point warrant a group application of the OAU Convention-based refugee definition. But, as Michael Dummett of Oxford University correctly points out, “It needs only a moment’s thought to realize that flight for economic reasons may be as justified and as worthy of sympathy and help as flight from political persecution.”⁶¹ The distinction with Zimbabwe is not only its insurmountable economic woes, but the fact that even during the joint government rule that welcomed Zimbabwean Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai the opposition party, Zanu PF, continued systematically

⁵⁹ Ibid

⁶⁰ MSF. “Beyond Cholera: Zimbabwe’s Worsening Crisis. 2009. MSF. Feb 2009.

⁶¹ Dummett, Michael. ‘On Immigration and Refugees.’ 2001. Routledge, page 45.

to brutalize, murder and detain citizens who showed any opposition to the party's ideals and its ruler, President Robert Mugabe.

Within the new system, legislated by South Africa's Department of Home Affairs, which puts in place a method of regularizing the legal status of Zimbabweans in South Africa, a problem may arise. Although the new system of 90-day visas is a welcome departure from the government's former brutal harassment, arrests and deportations, this new system also may allow the UNHCR to abdicate its international responsibility for protecting the Zimbabweans. Should it do so, this would leave UNHCR with little or no responsibility in providing food and shelter to refugees. At this point, no organization is accountable to the refugees, and South Africa has clearly acknowledged that "migrants" do not fall under their mandate; therefore, there will be no new housing to which Zimbabweans will be entitled. It should also be noted that UNHCR very rarely approves Zimbabweans for refugee status.

With the announcement of the new moratorium on deportations, the South African Police Services (SAPS) continued the wholesale deportation of Zimbabweans and refused to acknowledge the new DHA directive. The DHA showed no reaction to this ongoing violation, while during the Easter holiday alone there were 736 deportations of Zimbabweans from Musina⁶².

The numbers of those crossing into South Africa are somewhat deceiving, as the initial push was strong, causing long traffic delays that stretched for kilometers. After a few weeks, the flow of migrants steadied, but the border crossing remained the busiest one in the SADC region⁶³. Many of the people crossing into South Africa are

⁶² MSF. 'No Refuge: Access Denied.' 2009. Page 9. June 2009.

⁶³ Ibid

returning from previous visits during which they have sought short-term employment. They have returned to Zimbabwe to bring back food and supplies, and then once again crossed into South Africa to seek jobs and other opportunities. Research shows that the incidence of multiple entry and exit by Zimbabweans is extremely common. While the border crossings once comprised mainly men looking for employment and trade, the migration has now turned into a movement of Zimbabwean men, women and children into South Africa.

Women in large numbers are finding their ways into South Africa, where some set up food stands in Musina and offering trade goods in the streets of Johannesburg. Often the women bring children, and this creates a host of medical and educational problems that are often difficult to address. Many medical facilities refuse to treat Zimbabweans based on their country of origin, going against the very words of South Africa's constitution, which grants medical care to any foreign national regardless of legal status. This issue will be addressed in greater detail in Chapter 6, "Medicine: For South Africans Only."

Many Zimbabwean children who are fortunate enough to attend public or private schools in South Africa deal with xenophobia on the playgrounds and in the classrooms. Angela, a twelve-year-old from southern Zimbabwe, arrived in South Africa in 2005, when she was eight. Angela and her mother fled Zimbabwe for economic reasons and made a new home in Kempton Park, just outside Johannesburg. At school, Angela was confronted with xenophobia daily. "The children would beat me because I could not speak Zulu," she says. "Every day at school I was scared and was beaten just because I couldn't speak Zulu. I too know what it's like to be a part of

xenophobia.... I don't understand what makes people act like this⁶⁴.”

Angela would later say that this sort of behavior was normal for foreign children in her class and her school in South Africa.

In downtown Johannesburg, next to the Central Methodist Church where hundreds of Zimbabwean refugees sleep on the streets, people walk by and throw garbage, yell derogatory epithets and sometimes spit at the people sitting beside the church. This is a daily occurrence that is compounded by police harassment, which leaves men with no money and women with a diminished sense of dignity and decency. Research in the downtown Johannesburg area showed that a large portion of Zimbabweans who move alone through the streets are easily identified by police officers and are questioned and threatened with deportation if the police are not given “appreciations” (bribes) from the men, or sexual favors from the women. A number of South Africans who were interviewed claimed that Zimbabweans are easy to spot as they have darker complexions, generally speak English very well, and in many cases have worn-down shoes and clothes.

Boag, a 32-year-old South African Spurs Restaurant manager in downtown Johannesburg, spoke extensively on the subject of Zimbabweans in South Africa. Boag attributed the hatred of Zimbabweans in South Africa to African tribalism.

With us blacks, we truly hate and are willing to blame our problems on anyone based on race or tribe. You look up in Rwanda, a million killed over tribalism. Tribalism is racism, and it's no different all over Africa. We black Africans are the most racist people around. With these Zimbabweans, they are just people,

⁶⁴ Angela. Personal INTERVIEW. 19 June 2009

like anyone, and to hate them for being from another country is just foolish... You see, Zimbabweans are extremely hard workers. When you are alone in a country, you have no one to depend on. You can't go borrow money or stay at a sister's house. You just have yourself, so you make sure you work hard and right. You don't have room to make mistakes⁶⁵.

As Boag continued, the topic of rampant crime in South Africa came up.

You see, the cause of all of this crime derives from the foreigners. They bring us their crime. All these Zimbabweans come to Johannesburg. They come and with them comes crime. Our people are the masterminds of this crime, but the main perpetrators are the Zimbabweans. They are thieves who murder, steal and rape our people. There are so many of them that there is nothing we can do about it.

How can you come into my home and complain about the condition of my bathroom? You have no right. This is what they are doing, they are coming into your house, complaining about it to you, and, while they are there, they are robbing you blind. Look, just look at them down the street (referring to CMC): you see them sleeping on the street. I guarantee that back home they had three meals a day and a bed to sleep on; now they are here asking for handouts and sleeping on the streets. Why don't they just go home where they can find comfort? ...At first there were a few and there was no problem, but now there are just too many, and they are all in Johannesburg. It will never end. Mugabe could die tomorrow, and they will still stay. They will never leave. It's too easy here. That's why I don't get upset when South Africans take it into their own hands to let them [the Zimbabweans] know they aren't welcome. If we didn't let

⁶⁵ Boag. Personal INTERVIEW. 26 June 2009.

them know, they would stay forever. What do you do when your dinner guest refuses to go home for the night? You tell them to go home, and if they don't go, you push them out of your door⁶⁶.

This practice of everyday citizens pushing foreigners out of the country grew to a fever pitch in early 2008. The actions of the police and civilians led to violence and civil unrest in South Africa. In January 2008, police raided the Central Methodist Church, in Johannesburg, detaining more than 350 refugees before a court intervened and released the people. The judge who was presiding over the case referred to the treatment of the mostly Zimbabwean refugees as being worse than in the days of apartheid⁶⁷. Isolated acts of xenophobic violence continued up until May 2008, when the well-known attacks erupted in Alexandra Township, in Johannesburg. Braam Hanekom, the founder and chairperson of People against Suffering Suppression, Oppression and Poverty (PASSOP) discovered, after spending time in Alexandra Township following the May attacks, that community leaders in the township had convened to discuss a situation involving Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP) homes being built in the township⁶⁸. The RDP was initiated under Nelson Mandela's presidency, early in 1994. The aim of the program was to address the seemingly insurmountable socioeconomic problems left over from apartheid. A primary goal of the RDP initiative was clean water and housing for the 12.5 million people who had neither. Between 1994 and 2001, more than 1.1 million cheap houses had been built, accommodating more than five million of the estimated 12.5 million

⁶⁶ Ibid

⁶⁷ MSF. 'No Refuge.' 2009.

⁶⁸ Hanekom. Personal INTERVIEW. 7 July 2009.

who had been without homes⁶⁹.

The RDP housing initiative continued well into 2008, and with it has come a focus on the Alexandra Township. Hanekom found that a large population of Zimbabwean refugees had begun to move in to the township. Due to the refugees' arrival and to their low social standing, most were forced to live in an area near a shallow creek that flooded in the wake of harsh rains. When the RDP's people evaluated the area, they found it to be the one most in need of new housing. When the local leaders discovered that RDP housing was going to be implemented in Alexandra Township, and that the first people to benefit would be foreigners, they convened a meeting to voice their distaste and anger. From his contact with local leaders and police in this area, Hanekom came to believe that that meeting was the epicenter of planning for the violence that followed.

The violence that ensued spread through the Gauteng, then across the Western Cape and Kwa-Zulu Natal. In these areas, 62 people were killed, 670 were reportedly injured and more than 100,000 were displaced⁷⁰. The ripple effects of the violence spread throughout the country; a year later, foreigners still live and move in fear. During the attacks of May 2008, 23-year-old Tyrone, from Harare, Zimbabwe, described his experience in Dobsonville, near Soweto.

I was living in Dobsonville and had just returned home from work. They just knocked. I opened the door and saw a lot of people. "Go back! Go back! Go back!" they said. "Why?" I asked. "I work here" Then they took me out of the

⁶⁹ Terreblanche, Sampie. 'An Evaluation of Macroeconomic Policy in the Democratic Era.' 2005. Cosatu, South Africa. 6 March 2005.

⁷⁰ The Lancet. 'South Africa Failing People Displaced by Xenophobia Riots.' 2009. The Lancet, Volume 371, Issue 9629, Pages 1,986-1,987.

house and started beating me. They started hitting me, hitting me still. Hitting me with bricks, and steel bars. They took all of my clothes and left me naked in the street. We were three; they dragged a couple over with me. They started hitting us, and they pulled out firewood. They started a fire and wanted to burn us. If it weren't for the police, they would have burned us. When the police came, the fire was already on. They hated us. If you tried to stand, they would hit you and tell you to sit down. They would push you into the fire. They took everything from my house; they stole everything...I was working at a shop making curtains. My friend is all right; he's burned, though, and now he is back home. What they did to him was terrible. They want to do it again; the last few months have been getting worse.

This happened to me last year. It happened in June or July maybe. After that is when I came here (CMC).

I don't know why, when Zimbabwe was all right, foreigners would come and nobody treated them bad. Police didn't even ask for papers. Some Malawians, Mozambicans – everyone came; some even got houses and I.D. But this is South Africa⁷¹.

A year after the outbreak of xenophobic violence, Zimbabweans are still fearful.

⁷¹ Tyrone. Personal INTERVIEW. 15 June 2009.

Owen, a 36-year-old Zimbabwean who arrived in South Africa in February 2009, described his perception of xenophobia.

It's not just xenophobic violence; it goes deeper. The words of the people are words of hate. "Go back! Go back!" they say. "Go back and fix your own problems; get rid of Mugabe. These are your problems to deal with." I was here in 2003; there were no problems then. You see that job opportunities are scarce and the employers are taking advantage of us. They are using us for cheap labor, because they know we will work and not complain.

The South Africans are upset because of the jobs. They are angry because we will work hard for less, as we are desperate. The xenophobia still exists, but it's not as violent. I have been all right. But you see the people are upset, the jobs are scarce, and they [the South Africans] are saying that we as foreigners are burdening them.

You see, here at the church (CMC), the business owners are not happy; they are saying we are driving away business. They call us squatters. They say we are dirty, that there are street kids⁷².

The area in which Central Methodist Church is located is a large downtown mall, filled with many outdoor businesses. Many of the businesses have been taking

⁷² Owen. Personal INTERVIEW. 17 June 2009.

their complaints to the Johannesburg municipality, complaining about the number of Zimbabweans living at the church. Due to the high volume of complaints, the police force has added officers in the downtown area near the church. This increase in police power has been both good and bad for the refugees. The police saved a 31-year-old male Zimbabwean staying at the church when, according to the man, “a mob came to attack foreign nationals residing on the premises. Fortunately enough, the police were nearby and managed to disperse the mob before it got to the refugees. I will never forget the cruelty of the Zulus of South Africa...God forgive them, please⁷³.”

In February 2009, more 100 Johannesburg police officers and “red ants” attempted a raid on the people sleeping in front of the high court next to the Central Methodist Church. The incident occurred late at night and resulted in random arrests and harassment of 300-plus Zimbabweans caught sleeping on the street. The ‘Red Ants’ are a subcontracted security group that is often hired out by the Government municipalities to evict people from their homes. The private security group is known for their harsh tactics that sometimes result in rape, sexual assault and violent beatings.

The day after the arrests, Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) was given access to the detainees, who were taken to the Johannesburg Central Police Station so that MSF volunteers could determine the condition of their health.

“The South African constitution guarantees access to healthcare services to all who live in the country, says Sharon Ekambaran, MSF’s general director. “However, devastating operations like the recent raid at the Methodist church undermine

⁷³ Anonymous. Personal INTERVIEW. 22 June 2009.

Zimbabwean migrants' access to health services⁷⁴.” The MSF team reported fractured ribs and possible lung contusions among the victims of police violence during the arrests. Some of the people under attack were in undergoing HIV and TB treatment and were unable to get the amount of food they required in order to take their medications. The MSF team said that they left behind medications for some of the patients, but the police officers often failed to give the refugees their drugs despite their promises to do so. “The cells were overcrowded, the detainees were scared and hungry” says Ekambaran. “They were being shouted at and verbally abused. They felt humiliated and were crying, and some were in a state of panic⁷⁵.”

Near the end of March, South African authorities forcibly expelled thousands of Zimbabweans from the Musina showgrounds. Thousands fled to Johannesburg, and many went to CMC. At the height of the exodus, more than 4,000 Zimbabweans found refuge in and near the church. Local businesses have erected a large metal gate in front of the church that prevents Zimbabweans from sleeping near the building at night. In the downtown Johannesburg area, CMC is seen as the only safe place for many poor Zimbabweans. The metal gate is seen as a barrier that cuts off some of the most vulnerable from safety and subjects them to potential abuse and violence.

As for those negatively affected by the added police force, a number of female refugees have complained about police destroying the goods that they had been selling in the streets to carve out a living. Some men have complained about the perpetual harassment in the streets by the police, who demand bribes on the threat of deportation. A 45-year-old male complained, “There were too much police raiding at Methodist Church, and nobody was permitted to go out of the building and also walk

⁷⁴ MSF Press Release. 5 Feb 2008.

⁷⁵ Ibid

into town anymore. It was not really well⁷⁶.”

The xenophobic climate in the Gauteng region and the Kwazulu-Natal have taken on a much more violent face than in the southern Cape region of South Africa. During the major attacks of mid-2008, the 62 people who were murdered were all in the Gauteng and Kwazulu-Natal regions. In the western Cape there were no reported murders, but many refugees refute the reports. The climate of xenophobia in Cape Town was also fueled by the intent of some locals to loot and steal from foreign owned shops. After the initial eruptions in Alexandra, media all over the country covered the cases, often asking, “Where will the next attacks be?” After a few days, reports of attacks and robberies of foreign businesses began springing up all over Cape Town. A Zimbabwean in a township outside of Cape Town noted, “If you shout out for help, but you don’t shout out in Xhosa, no one will help you.”

Most of the violence against Zimbabweans occurs within these townships. The newer arrivals from Zimbabwe often find themselves in the larger cities, held captive by the poverty of the townships. The longer a Zimbabwean is in South Africa, the further away from the city centers he or she is likely to go. The newest arrivals are the most vulnerable and the least able to defend themselves against rampant xenophobia and violence.

On July 3, 2009, the author saw the Johannesburg police raid Central Methodist Church and systematically arrest more than 380 Zimbabwean refugees standing in front of the church. It was a Friday night at around 10 p.m. when the police arrived in large prisoner trucks. The officers jumped out and began yelling ethnic slurs as they herded the people together; many used their batons to beat those who weren’t moving

⁷⁶ Anonymous Survey. 19 June 2009.

fast enough. Those arrested included both children and a visibly pregnant woman. When asked the nature of the charges against the detainees, the police loudly exclaimed, “Loitering!” Evans, a 32-year-old Medecins Sans Frontieres employee and Zimbabwean citizen from Harare, stood his ground against the police, questioning their motives for arresting and, in some cases, violently beating the people. Conspicuous in his MSF shirt, he made this statement to a police officer arresting the Zimbabweans: “We have rights, you know,” whereupon the police officer indignantly replied, “I’ve got more rights than you do!” The officer inquired as to Evans’ nationality, and, upon learning that Evans was also a Zimbabwean, he quickly arrested him with the others. The 380 people spent the weekend in jail under an R300 bail for each person.

Evans, who was discharged two days earlier than the other detainees because his MSF colleagues advocated for his release, described the Zimbabweans’ stint in lockup.

I was there (in jail) from Friday to Saturday. They didn't give us food; they didn't give us blankets. The police were making comments, saying, “You have no rights here in South Africa. You aren't South African, so you don't deserve the food we have.” They made us stand in line for eight hours through processing. They weren't ready for us, and the people were cold and hungry and scared, but they didn't care. (Live interview, July 6, 2009)

Under the heavy pressure from members of local human-rights groups, who made it clear that those detained were being held without charge, the municipality was

then forced to release the rest of the Zimbabweans late Monday night. The police, in emphasizing that the people were held despite the fact that no charges had been filed against them, seemed to be warning the people staying near Central Methodist Church that the Johannesburg municipality has no reservations about arresting and beating the Zimbabweans without cause.

When the Zimbabweans were released and sent back to the church, they were visibly weak and hungry. The police withheld food the first night of the Zimbabweans relatively brief stay in jail; from Saturday until Monday night, the detainees were given only two slices of bread a day. There were reports of beatings in the jail and stories of xenophobic tirades against the Zimbabweans, as well as claims that police officers stole some refugees' cell phones and pocket money.

In the year since the major attacks that infected the entire country, it would seem that the outwardly violent levels of xenophobia by the everyday South African have receded. There aren't cases of large mobs roaming the townships, searching out makwerekwere's to beat and murder. What is being seen is an undercurrent of xenophobia perpetrated by local government officials, police officers and medical professionals. These perpetual attacks and isolated incidents of harassment by police personnel, who are supposed to be seen by others as a means of protection and service, are instead an added stress for these refugees. Mike Nyamarebvu, a consultant for 'Solidarity Peace Trust,' and organization that seeks to feed and rehabilitate broken Zimbabwean refugees said that these people live in a constant state of fear. The violent outbreaks of last May 2008 were so sudden and deadly, that the Zimbabweans living in South Africa have no real means of letting their guard down. *"The effects have scarred us, even up to now, the people are still scared and live in*

fear,' Nyamarebvu said. Nyamarebvu said that the root of the xenophobia in South Africa is what he believes to be unemployment. What gave rise to the xenophobia was the media's role in their coverage of the ordeal.

It started out as a game, and then other parts of South Africa mimicked this behavior. They [South Africans] saw their neighbors with jobs, who were also foreigners. It spread from area to area. Many areas then joined in on the behavior. Then you have the aspect of people brewing hate in themselves everyday, and now came an excuse to act on this hatred.

Upon the author's discussions with many South Africans regarding Zimbabwean migrants and refugees, the perpetual theme that arose was that of worry. A lot of these South Africans seemed to be worried that their country will never be able to handle the influx of immigrants. They worry that the constant flow of Zimbabweans will hinder the production and preparedness for the World Cup of which South Africa is hosting in 2010, that there wont be enough jobs for South Africans, and that the influx of foreigners in their neighborhoods will drive up food costs. In the book 'White Nation' the author implicitly argues that worrying is a narcissistic affect. You worry about your nation when you as a citizen of said nation, feels threatened—essentially, you are only worrying about yourself. In the following book, by the same author, 'Against Paranoid Nationalism,' the idea of caring for ones owns nation is a much different idea than worrying. In South Africa's case, those who are worried, often express a worry for employment, money, cars, availability of single women, single men, affordability of small goods, and hopes that the following years football matches will go on without delay. These are in fact all narcissistic worries that translate into both material and physical necessities. The idea of caring for South

Africa is much more of an inter-subjective affect.

Caring implies accountability towards ones brethren, and keeping others within one's perspective of care. Caring does not include the defensive, paranoid connotations that worrying has. In the case of South Africa, a nation whose people displaced over 100,000 foreigners and killed over 62 in a matter of days, and has not yet, a year after these atrocities took place, taken measures to prosecute or charge anyone with these grave offenses, can be seen as a nation with a worrying problem.

The defensive society, such as the one we have in South Africa today, is a country that not only lacks care, but also suffers from a scarcity of hope, and breeds a citizenry that sees threats everywhere. In effect, South Africa creates a sense of worry and also molds a citizen that suffers from a paranoid nationalism. The ANC [African National Committee] of old was one that was created to create national unity, and to buck the authoritarian, brutal white ruled, Afrikaner apartheid regime. With figure heads like Nelson Mandela and others in the private sector like Bishop Desmond Tutu, the fuel that burned the ANC's will was stoked by a call for revolutionary type movements. This affective attachment of both worrying and caring that the majority of society created amongst its citizens, is thus intimately connected to the hope that the ANC and it's party followers created; a sense of caring. This ideology and revolutionary movement succeeded, and in the late 1980's and early 1990's the white ruled apartheid government crumbled leading way to a black run ANC government, under the helm of President Nelson Mandela.

In the early 21st Century what is evident is that as South Africa's star shines brighter and brighter, the citizens of the surrounding countries in the SADC can't help but notice the light permeating from their governments bordering demarcations. So

people come. Some come out of hope for opportunity, others are driven out of their countries or are unable to survive, as is the case with many Zimbabweans. Now, South Africa's attachment of both caring and worrying has dissipated into a fear driven worry. The revolutionary government, like most revolutionary governments in Africa and elsewhere, hasn't made good on its promise to generate more jobs and opportunity. Violent crime has become an everyday norm that people have learned to live with, and now the institutionalization of a culture of worrying at the expense of a culture of caring has given rise under the rule of the ANC. When the government can't make good on its promises, then it must be the fault of the voiceless foreigner.

5. CHAPTER 5: CENTRAL METHODIST CHURCH: A REFUGEE CAMP WITH PEWS

“I told myself that I would never come to this country. A country of racism, torture, and humiliation. Being a lady does not mean that I’m useless, a vagabond. There were seven men that tore my panties and penetrated me. I was reserving myself from sex. I would even tell my boyfriend that we should abstain and he understood. Can you imagine up to now even though I’m married now, I failed to disclose this to him. Just imagine to my husband. After all they left me failing to walk and my voice had gone. Women of this so-called proud nation did nothing. I received help from school children. I went to the hospital hoping to get assistance, but instead they tortured me for a month. They gave me no medication, and called me ‘mkwerekwere.’ The pain, my pain, my sorrow, who can help me, only tears of memories.”

-28-year-old Zimbabwean woman living in Central Methodist Church.⁷⁷

Central Methodist Church is located in downtown Johannesburg, South Africa. Today the church is home to anywhere from 1,500-4,000 mainly Zimbabwean refugees. The church was an active voice in the anti-apartheid movement up through 1994, and in the past few years has been a place of refuge and advocacy for Zimbabwean refugees fleeing the economic and political turmoil of Zimbabwe. For the past twenty years, Central Methodist’s mission has quite specifically been

⁷⁷ Statement gathered from author’s survey.

engaged in a ministry to the homeless on the streets. This has taken on the added role of caring for refugees. The church has included for the refugees; a feeding program, primary health attention, support groups, counseling, advocacy, and job opportunity searches through local organizations.

During the Second World War, about 450,000 people stayed for a night or up to five years at Central Hall in downtown London. Bishop Paul Verryn uses this one example to illustrate the abundant precedent in the two millennia of the Christian Church's existence showing how the Church has been used as shelter for the vulnerable and destitute in society. These are some of the foundations that have been laid for Central Methodist Church in Johannesburg, and some of the reasons Bishop Paul Verryn feels are necessary to show the importance of sheltering the large numbers of Zimbabweans who seek refuge at the Church.

The Church holds a set of rules that are strictly enforced and honored by a majority of the population that chooses to reside in the Church: No drinking of alcohol, no smoking of anything, no fighting, no stealing and no illegitimate sex are allowed in the Church. Married persons are accommodated in a separate area of the church. Those that choose to not follow these rules are evicted. More than 25 people act as monitors that patrol the church at all hours of the day. It is an absurdity to assume that there is no conflict. With the vast numbers coming and going, rules are broken and civil disobedience does occur, but considering the strain of the circumstances, the results are remarkable.

Tina Dereijke, the churches Head Secretary has been working with the church for over twenty years. On June 26, 2009 Dereijke explained CMC's recent history with Zimbabwean refugees;

We first began our mission with Zimbabweans four years ago at Central Methodist Church. I'm not sure how word got out. Now word has spread and people in Zimbabwe have heard of CMC, and come directly here. Even the police bring people here, especially the young ones, unaccompanied minors.

Some folk are going back, the peak of attendance was when they closed some of the refugee shelters down. We ended up with a lot of people. People were still coming across the border and flocking to CMC. The camps in Musina closed down and they began shipping busloads of people down to the Church. Just outside of Musina, there is a big army base that would be ideal to house people⁷⁸.

Tina went on to explain that she thinks the xenophobia is attributed to a lack of employment for South Africans in their own country. She said Zimbabweans are willing to come down from their own country to find work, and work hard for little compensation. Tina said that the xenophobia also comes from the fact that many South Africans have nothing, and their government has not been looking after them. When the church first began its mission to help the Zimbabwean refugees four years ago, many in the congregation held a lot of resentment. People would often visit the Bishop to voice their distaste with the way he was helping the Zimbabweans. A lot of money came in as donations specifically for the Zimbabwean refugees, and many of the South Africans believed that some of that money should go to them. After the initial eruption of violence in Alexandra Township last year, many of the churches in the area opened their doors to the more than 100,000 foreigners who were fleeing the

⁷⁸ Dereijke, Tina. Personal INTERVIEW. 26 June, 2009.

violence. The churches were seen as a place of safety and refuge.

The government didn't see it as a problem. Now I think they've realized that they've got to do something. With all of the millions that have come down into South Africa, they had to finally do something. The church (CMC) had tried to negotiate with people. Paul had tried for three years to talk with the mayor of Johannesburg about the problem, about the thousands we are holding in the church, but the city just ignored the problem. I think they just wanted to ignore it and pretend it wasn't happening, as if nothing was happening. But we've had people on the streets for ages. The problem has been very visible.

The relationship between the church and the government has improved a little. Right now they are trying to find us buildings downtown. There was a building, but they said they couldn't do anything, they didn't have any money. After some time, Paul talked to them and they now said they can refurbish it and it can take about 700 people. This means the building can only take the people off the street but not also from the church.

It's sad because there are so many buildings in Johannesburg city that could be of use, but they aren't making the effort⁷⁹.

For a long time, the city of Johannesburg refused to cooperate with the Bishop, and refused to meet or acknowledge the refugee problem. But as more and more international acclaim has been lauded upon Central Methodist Church, with visits from President Bill Clinton and Former Secretary General Kofi Annan this year

⁷⁹ Dereijke. Ibid.

[2009] the local municipality is finding it harder and harder to ignore the churches ever increasing voice and influence. After years of holding out a clenched hand, the Johannesburg municipality has recently met with the Bishop and shopped around the city center in search of locations for the refugees to be moved. Yet despite some who wish to address the issue positively, others have chosen to continue a negative discourse with the church and its leaders.

Bishop Paul Verryn has attracted both acclaim and criticism for using the church to provide shelter for thousands of Zimbabwean refugees. In March of 2009, Local Government MEC Zedani Dorothy Mahlangu noted that refugees should no longer be allowed to stay inside the church.

“I think Methodist Bishop Paul Verryn is exposing them to more danger,” said Mahlangu. “We’re not condoning what he’s doing. We condemn it...Any church, any community hall is not meant to be inhabited by people.”⁸⁰

“I don’t think that in the midst of this gigantic crisis, where in fact people have got to work together, that we can point fingers and try to abdicate responsibility. I think it’s an absurdity,” Verryn responded⁸¹.

These comments were made as thousands of Zimbabweans had been flocking to the church and its surroundings following Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai’s wife’s death, and the closure of the refugee camp in Musina in March. Verryn noted that after the closing of the camp in Musina, an estimated 2,000 refugees were sleeping in the streets outside the church, as the inside of the building had already

⁸⁰ Bega, Sheree. ‘Gauteng MEC Mahlangu attacks Zim Refugees and Bishop Verryn.’ The Star. 14 March 2009.

⁸¹ Ibid.

reached capacity. Verryn had said that for some time, the church had been trying to find living accommodations for the refugees in downtown Johannesburg. The local government had been consistently non-responsive until as of late, where both the local government and the church had been in agreement about finding temporary accommodation for the refugees.

In the meantime, the church has arranged a Primary School on Albert Street for the hundreds of children in need of education. Chess groups, Pilates, and computer classes have also been arranged to occupy the time of those staying in the church. The Bishop noted that just because the people are stationary, doesn't mean that they shouldn't be active both mentally and physically. During the day time, a vast majority of those sleeping in and around the church are out in the city either working or in search of work⁸². Every Wednesday a church service is held specifically for the refugees at 7PM, and around 1,500 people fill the pews each week. The youth sometimes perform plays about their transitions into South Africa, and life back home. During these masses in the winter, it's often difficult to hear the words of the youth or the Bishop during his sermons, as a cacophony of coughing is perpetually drowning out the voices of any one man or woman on stage. Without the proper nutrients and rest that many of these refugees lack, the spread of common flu's and colds run rampant throughout the church leaving the populous in a consistent state of weakness.

At night people are lined up down the street sleeping on the sidewalk next to the church, as the church itself often reaches capacity. The numbers vary, but it's not uncommon for there to be upwards of 3,000 to 4,000 people on the grounds each

⁸² Verryn, Paul. Personal INTERVIEW. 6 July 2009.

night. Indoors the temperature rises in excess of 20 degrees Fahrenheit in some areas due to the mere congestion of the huddled masses.

The first raid on the church by the South African police occurred in January of 2008. More than 1,500 Zimbabwean refugees were arrested. The police claimed they were looking for drugs, guns and illegal immigrants. Verryn alleges that he was “bullied” by the police who grabbed him by his belt. Upon speaking with the BBC’s World Today program, Verryn said, “Until now, I have not had any reports that guns were found.⁸³” The Bishop would later say that he would have cooperated with the police had they come to him asking for his help in searching the building and to check the papers of those inside. Every person that stays in the building is registered in a database, which captures his or her next of kin, educational qualifications and skills. The police would have been given access to the database, however their abrupt raid of the church that resulted in many injured, broken doors and windows, not to mention emotional scars proved to be ‘despicable’ and a ‘violation of rights’ said Verryn⁸⁴. Despite the public outcry, further intimidation and harassment of the Zimbabwean refugees staying in the church would occur two more times in 2008.

In Late on the evening of June 12, 2009, as refugees were lined up alongside Central Methodist Church, a large truck full of ‘Red Ants’ pulled up, and sprayed waste water on the Zimbabweans cooking and preparing for bed. Some were already asleep, huddled together under blankets protecting themselves from the cold South African winter night. Others were still awake, socializing when they were drenched with the polluted water. Bishop Verryn was witness to the event and subsequently Verryn and the church pressed charges against the ‘Red Ants.’

⁸³ BBC. ‘SA police arrest 1,500 in church.’ 31 January 2008.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

Early that June on the 6th, a group of South African ‘thugs’ from Soweto arrived and infiltrated the church community. It was late at night when the men arrived, and upon entrance they began beating people and attempting robberies. ‘You couldn’t fall asleep until around 5AM. You were just spending the whole night avoiding people,’ Owen, a resident of the church exclaimed⁸⁵.

Four weeks later on July 3, police raided the church and arrested over 380 Zimbabwean refugees standing in front of the church. After a few days of detainment with no charges, the people were released, many with visible injuries. Some fifteen of those detained gave statements to local human rights lawyers citing the beatings they were given by the Johannesburg police department while in custody.

The refugees themselves have not been the only people subjected to abuse and threats. Earlier this year [2009] two men were arrested for death threats against the Bishop. According to Captain John Maluleke, “Two suspects were arrested for intimidation and blackmailing at the Central Methodist Church.” The men aged 26 and 31 were hired by local business owners around the church, to kill the Bishop. The men were regarded as professional killers and were active in the taxi violence that is widespread in South Africa⁸⁶.

“The men said they were being hired by the shop owners in the mall and they’ve been given a car and a gun,” Verryn said. The men also claimed to have received R30,000 for the murder. Verryn received a phone call from one of the men attempting to extort money from the Bishop. “I think it is a blackmail attempt because

⁸⁵ Owen. Personal INTERVIEW. 8 June 2009.

⁸⁶ The Star. ‘Two arrested after Bishop Verryn death threats.’ 9 April 2009.

they had said, ‘what are you prepared to do to save your own life,’ said Verryn⁸⁷. The men said they would not carry out the contract murder if the Bishop paid them off. The Bishop said that he could not discuss such matters on the telephone and asked them to come into his office to work out the details. It was then that Bishop Verryn notified the police and Captain Maluleke of the situation. When the two men arrived the police were ready for them, posing as church security, the officers led them men upstairs to Verryn’s office where the men told the Bishop that they were hired killers. At this meeting the men told the Bishop that they were in fact hired by local shop owners who were said to be angry because of the Bishops helping hand towards the thousands of Zimbabwean refugees that were being housed and fed in the church. After the death threats, blackmail and added information given, the police rushed in and arrested the two men⁸⁸.

After the attempt on his life, Bishop Verryn has continued to address the issue of the churches role in this matter and refuses to be discouraged or intimidated by those who oppose his work. Tina Dereijke went on to say:

The Bishop has spoken to folk and the attitude has gotten better. What is the church? The church is meant to do mission, and that is what we are doing. The Bishop has spoken of this in sermons, some people have come in and disagreed with him, but Paul has not budged, he said this is what the church is meant for. We helped during the apartheid years, doing missions for organizations that opposed apartheid even though it was illegal. You find Jesus in the streets, you don't find him in the high risers, and that is what we've been doing, we've been going to the streets and helping the people, and we wont stop no matter what

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Verryn, Paul. Personal INTERVIEW. 15 June 2009.

people say.

You don't know, one day we may be refugees, and what could happen.

You don't know what day when it could be you.

There are buses going back to Zimbabwe. They aren't filled with people, but instead filled with commodities, to a country that has nothing⁸⁹.

Johannesburg Refugee Community Survey

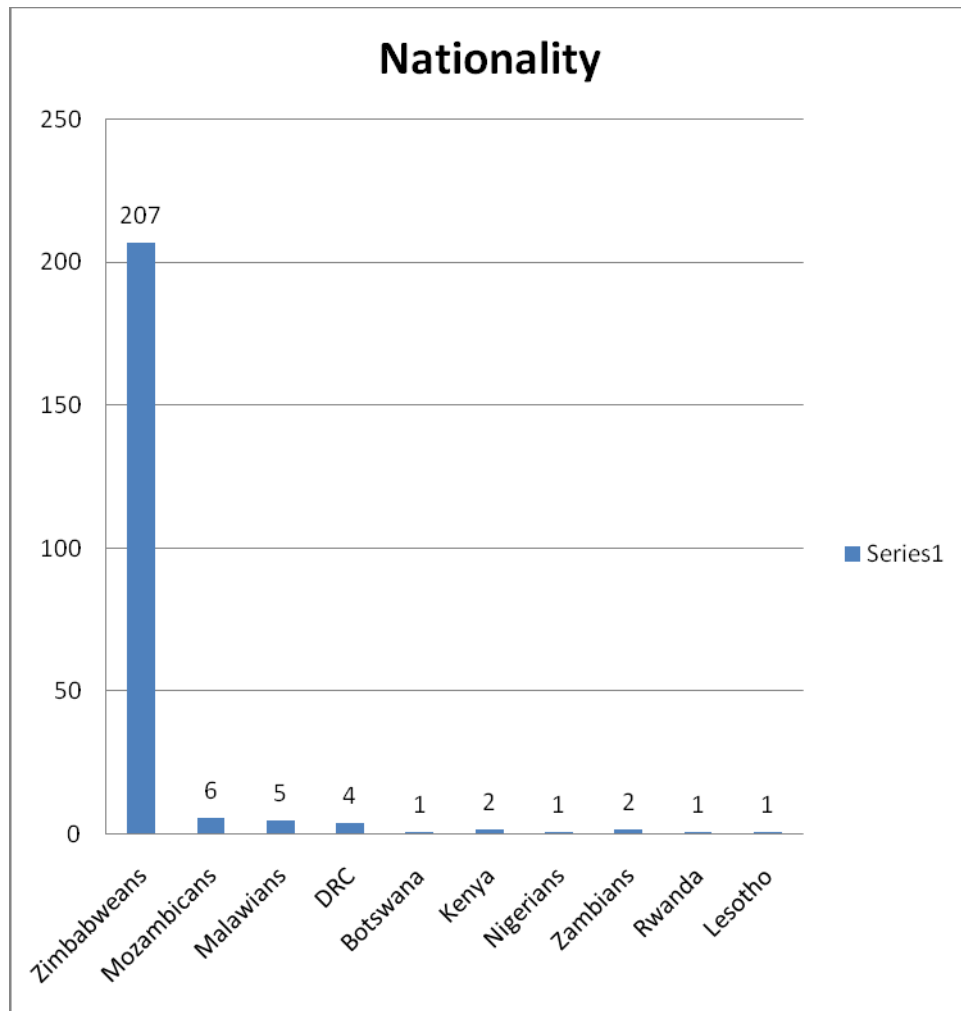
[Central Methodist Church]

In July of 2009, the author conducted a survey of 230 asylum seekers residing in Central Methodist Church in downtown Johannesburg, South Africa. The surveys were handed out by employees of CMC, and were presented in an anonymous fashion. The surveys requested age, gender, nationality, date of arrival to South Africa, incidence of xenophobia, if there was an incidence of xenophobia, what it was, and what they felt the cause of xenophobia is. The vast majority of respondents

⁸⁹ Dereijke.

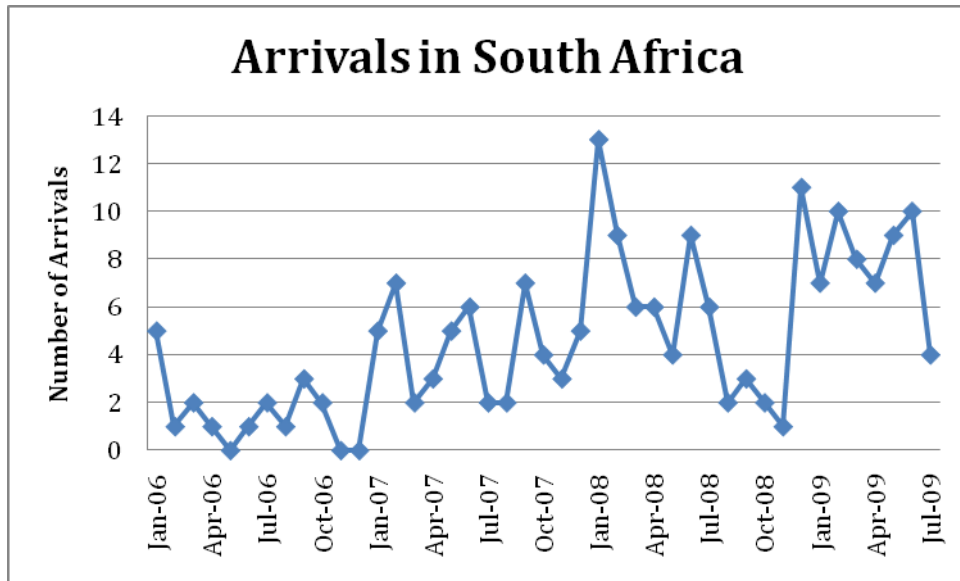
were from Zimbabwe. Some came from surrounding border countries, erstwhile there were 10 countries represented in all. [Figure 1]

Figure 1 - Nationalities of Survey Sample % (N= 230)



What the data uncovered was that there has been a high rate of xenophobic incidents among foreign asylum seekers in South Africa. Among the respondents, 61 percent in all experienced a xenophobic incident [See Figure 3. Appendix]. Among those polled, 58 percent were male while 42 percent were female. The data shows that females are more likely to experience xenophobia than males, and the longer they are in country, the more likely an incident will occur.

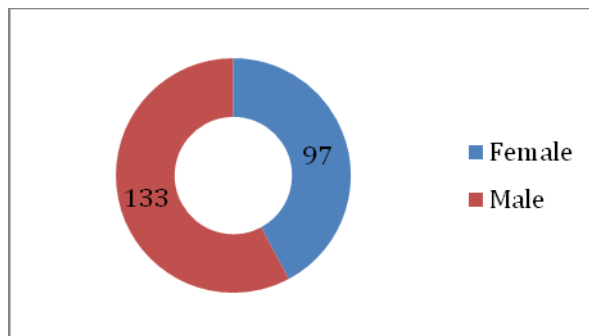
Figure 2 - Arrivals of Survey Sample % (N=230)



The number of arrivals and incidents of xenophobia shown in Figures 6-10 in the appendix are relatively the same. The highest level of arrivals occurring around January 2008 coincides with the violent elections that occurred in Zimbabwe.

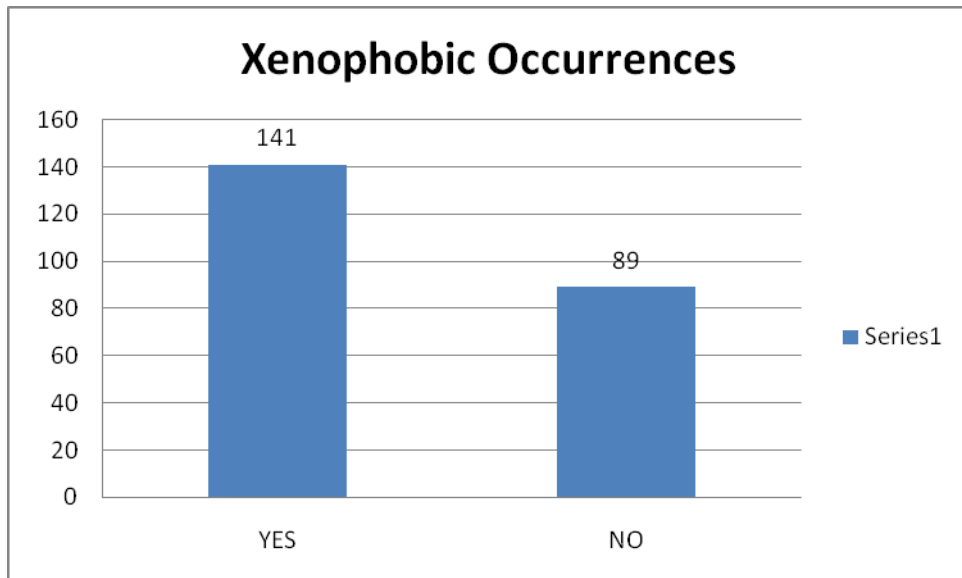
Data collected from those seeking refuge in Central Methodist Church in downtown Johannesburg. Data collected from a pool of 230 respondents, 207 of whom originate from Zimbabwe. Data was collected in July of 2009 by the author, from a pool of proximately 4,000 mainly Zimbabwean refugees.

Figure 3 - Gender



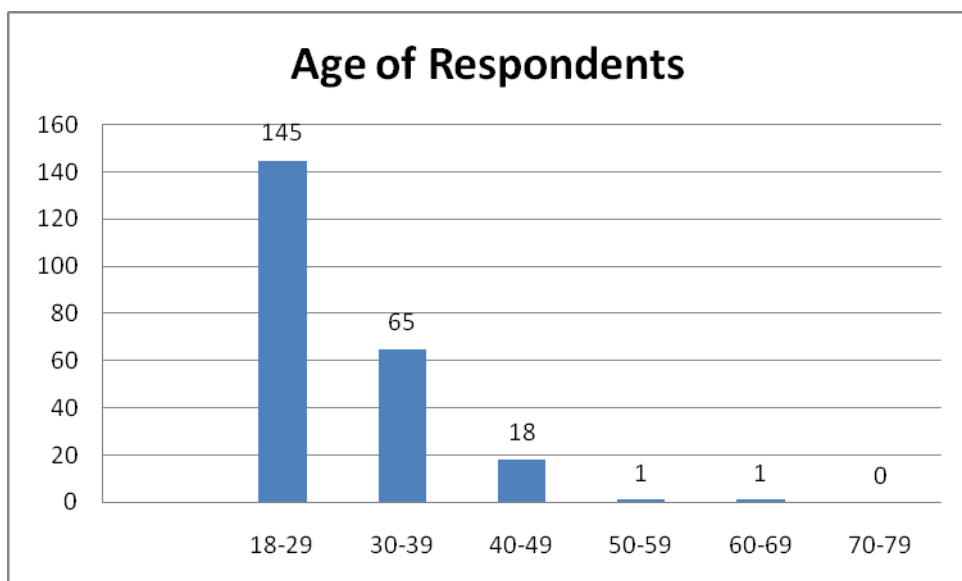
Traditionally, Zimbabwean males have migrated in times of economic hardship. In recent years, the percentage of females leaving Zimbabwe has grown. [See page 24 for further explanation]

Figure 4 - Xenophobic Occurrences



Xenophobic occurrences inflicted upon foreign asylum seekers currently in South Africa. Data collected from a pool of 230 respondents.

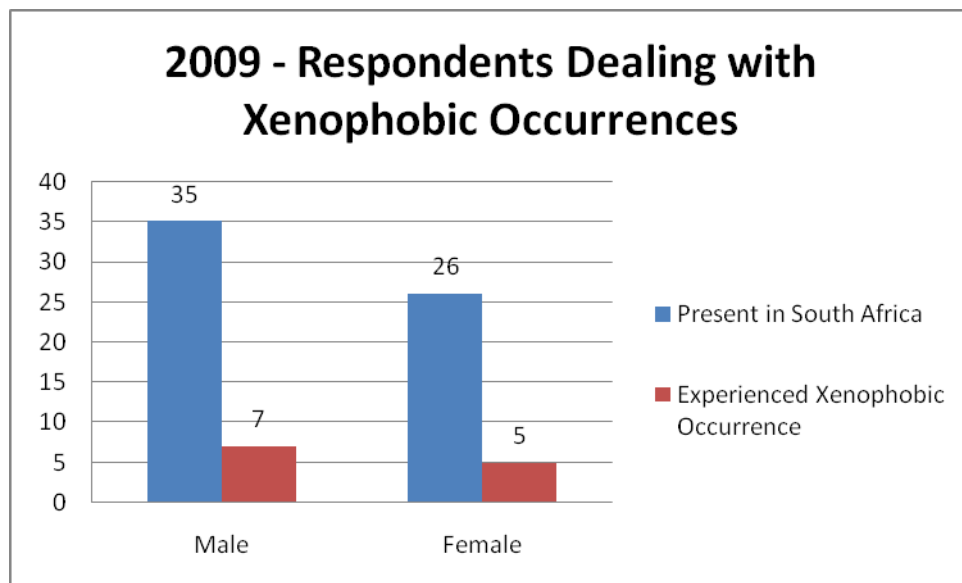
Figure 5 - Age of Respondents



According to the World Health Organization [2008 Statistics], the life expectancy of Zimbabwean males is 43, and the life expectancy of Zimbabwean females is 33, one of the lowest in the world.

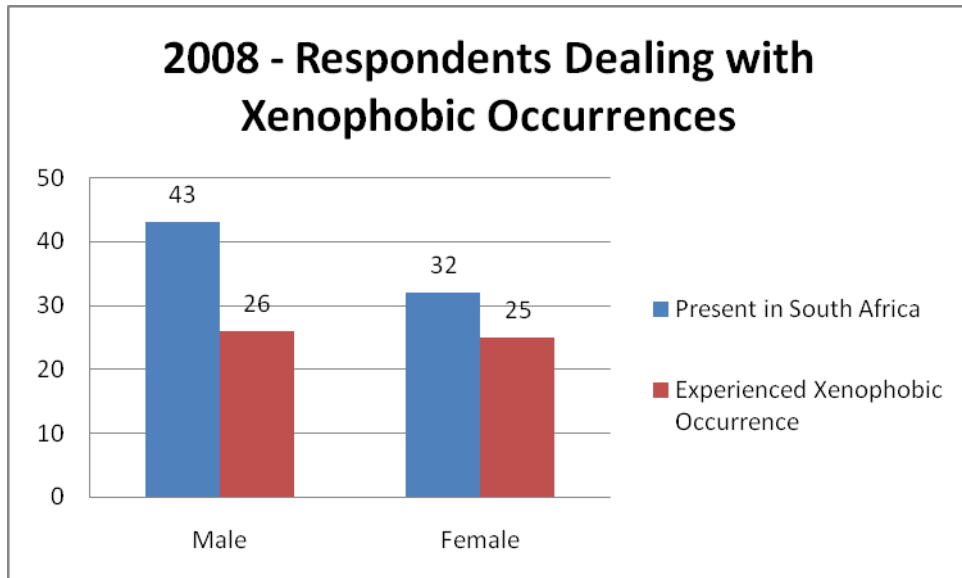
The data showed a steady rise in xenophobic attacks through the past ten years, culminating in a spike during the 2008 xenophobic violence outbreaks. In 2009, the incidents of xenophobia have decreased dramatically. Figures 6 -10 show the steady increase, spike, and then decrease in 2009. It would appear that the longer a foreign national seeking asylum spends in South Africa, the higher likelihood of a xenophobic attack occurring.

Figure 6 - Respondents Dealing with Xenophobia, 2009



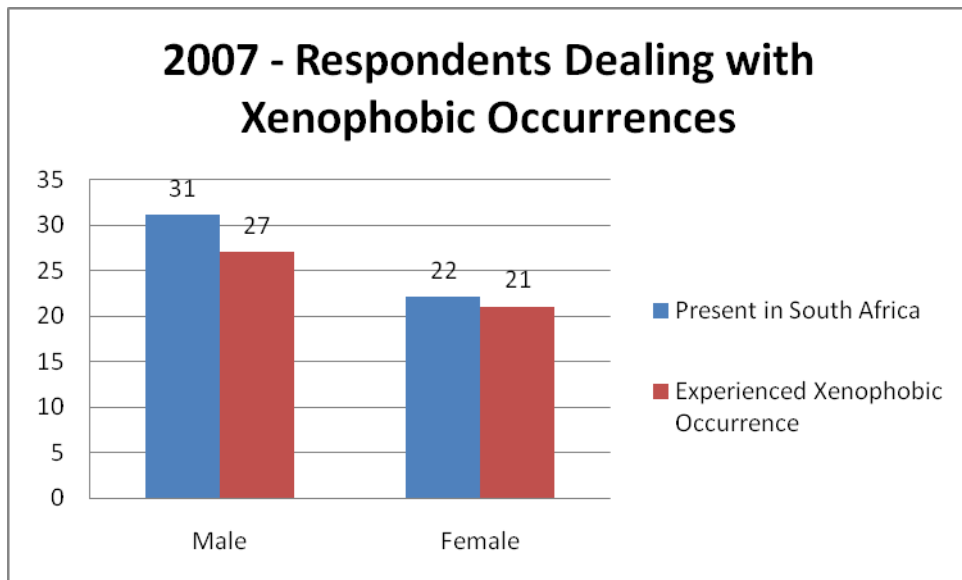
Together, the total incidence of xenophobic attacks on the respondents who arrived in 2009 is 11 percent.

Figure 7 - Respondents Dealing with Xenophobia, 2008



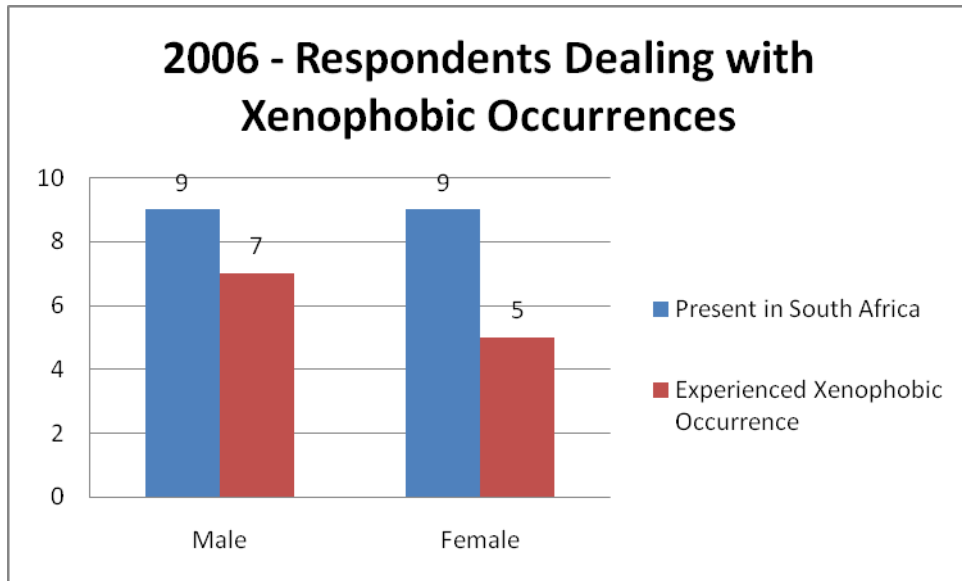
Together, the likelihood of a xenophobic attack or incident on the respondents that have arrived in 2008 is 65 percent.

Figure 8 - Respondents Dealing with Xenophobia, 2007



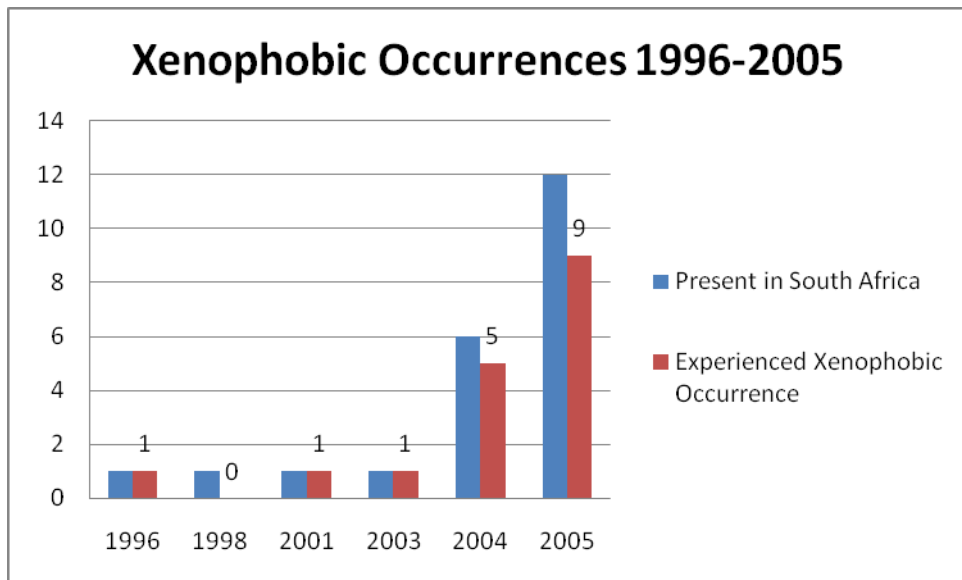
Together, the likelihood of a xenophobic attack or incident on the respondents that have arrived in 2007 is 90 percent.

Figure 9 - Respondents Dealing with Xenophobia, 2006



Together, the likelihood of a xenophobic attack or incident on the respondents that have arrived in 2006 is 67 percent.

Figure 10 - Respondents Dealing with Xenophobia, 1996-2005



Together, the likelihood of a xenophobic attack or incident on the respondents that have arrived between the years 1996 and 2005 is 79 percent.

6. CHAPTER 6: MEDICINE: FOR SOUTH AFRICANS ONLY

“Recently, I took my one-year-old baby to Coronation Hospital for his usual check up. While I was in the queue, the nurse asked me to remove his nappy before I could put him on the scale. I could not understand what she had said because she had spoken in Afrikaans. When she saw that I didn't understand, she cursed and asked me where I was from. I told her I was from Zimbabwe. She then exchanged looks with her colleagues and served other patients while I had to wait to be last helped.”

-22-year-old Zimbabwean female⁹⁰

The institutionalization of xenophobia in South Africa is never more apparent than in the medical field. The problems that Zimbabwean refugees and asylum-seekers face in accessing health care are insurmountable and often result in refused treatment or inadequate care. In March 2008, Amnesty International received reports while undertaking research that a number of barriers arise for those seeking access to HIV services in rural areas; some face absolute denial of access to anti-retroviral treatment on the basis of their citizenship. The author's research encountered numerous cases of denied medical treatment on the basis of nationality, and the MSF clinic attached to Central Methodist Church confirmed a wide range of xenophobic reports against Johannesburg clinics and hospitals.

⁹⁰ Statement gathered from author's survey.

In terms of South Africa's constitution, each person, regardless of nationality, is entitled to human dignity, equality and freedom. This should also be the case when a patient receives medical treatment in both the private and public sector. The government has an obligation to protect the life of every person in South Africa, and every patient has the right to receive medical treatment. According to section 27(3) of the constitution, urgent medical treatment may not be refused in either the private or the public sector.⁹¹ This implies that any patient who is in need of urgent care should and must receive medical treatment from the nearest hospital until the patient is stabilized.

The documented problems that face Zimbabweans are inconsistent with South Africa's constitution, not to mention with the republic's obligation under human rights law – an obligation shared by many nations: to provide health care to migrants. The international human rights law establishes that there are basic principles against non-discrimination and equality, including the right to access basic health care. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights includes rights to medical care and freedom from discrimination. South Africa ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in 1999. The act of signing this bill legally bound the South African government, further guaranteeing equality of all persons before the law. In 1994, South Africa signed the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, establishing the rights of all people to the highest attainable standard of health. In this same bill, duties are set forth for the state parties to take steps individually and through international cooperation to realize this signed right progressively and

⁹¹ The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, was approved by the Constitutional Court (CC) on 4 December 1996 and went into effect on 4 February 1997. The constitution is the supreme law of the land. No other law or government action can supersede the provisions of the constitution. South Africa's constitution is one of the most progressive in the world and enjoys high acclaim internationally.

liberally. The steps taken are meant to realize these rights by way of prevention, treatment, and control of diseases, as well as through the creation of conditions to assure medical service and attention to all. The Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Committee, the covenant's corresponding monitoring body, has noted that the right to health includes ensuring non-discriminatory access to health facilities, particularly for vulnerable or marginalized groups.⁹²

South Africa should also be reminded that they are party to the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The country should take heed of the state's obligation toward non-citizens, and should permit no distinctions on the grounds of citizenship to "detract in any way from the rights and freedoms recognized and enunciated in particular in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights."⁹³

Other issues may arise when South Africa denies health care to non-citizens. Those who are in the country with maladies such as tuberculosis and sexually transmitted diseases may spread these communicable diseases to the general population if they are not treated. The health system is meant to identify, treat and counsel patients with these diseases in order to prevent further infection.

⁹² Minyuku, Rikky. 'Refugee Amendment Bill.' Human Rights Watch. 21 August 2009.

⁹³ Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. 23 February – 12 March 2004.

The author spoke with nurses and doctors working with Medecins Sans Frontieres in the Johannesburg Clinic that is attached to Central Methodist Church. The information gathered from the medical professionals painted a clear picture of xenophobic profiling in the local clinics and hospitals. Bianca Tolboom, an MSF nurse and project coordinator, spoke extensively on the neglect and trauma the Zimbabwean refugees experienced with South Africa's medical system.⁹⁴

Yesterday we referred a Zimbabwean woman to the hospital with cervical cancer. Upon her arrival, once they learned she was a foreigner, they treated her as a casual and just gave her antibiotics and saw her on her way. We see this as an institutionalized xenophobic attack. Another was sent in with what we thought to be meningitis; she had all the symptoms, but we had to be sure, so we sent her in to the hospital for observation. Upon her arrival they asked for papers, then denied her service. They said that she needed to pay 1,500R for a test. This sort of thing has been happening every day. When somebody needs to be admitted into the hospital or needs treatment or has TB, the person is denied service because s/he is from Zimbabwe. This sort of thing happens all of the time now. People are flooding into our clinic (MSF). We are seeing over 3,200 patients a month, and we are just two doctors and three nurses. We are overloaded, but we never turn anyone away. We don't ask for papers, and our services are free. South Africans – now they prefer to come to us.

The MSF clinic attached to CMC has long lines of Zimbabweans stretching around the corner all day every day. Most illnesses are not serious, but with the close

⁹⁴ Tolboom, Bianca. Personal INTERVIEW. 15 June, 2009.

living conditions of the church and continued neglect by local clinics, the populace often looks to MSF for help. The clinic can do just so much, and when diagnoses are serious, patients are referred to nearby hospitals for further evaluation and treatment. Problems arise in these continued steps, as many Zimbabweans complain that they face neglect, abuse, and either delayed treatment or outright refusal of treatment at many of these South African institutions.

Yesterday a pregnant woman went to Hillsboro clinic; her water had broken and she was in labor. Once they learned she was a foreigner, they denied her service, and she came back here [to the church] and gave birth. This is the third baby born in this church this year. [July 7]

Women arrive at the hospitals at around four months into their pregnancy, and they are told to leave and come back when they are around eight months along. When they arrive at eight months, they are told that they have waited too long and that the hospital will not give them treatment. Most of these clinics treat foreigners as second-class citizens; they hate these people.⁹⁵

Tolboom went on to say that the government has turned a blind eye to the foreign population. For foreigners, there is no space in South Africa, which is missing out on an opportunity. *“Most of them are skilled, and valuable here. They are doctors, engineers and teachers, and they have a lot to offer, but the government chooses*

⁹⁵ Tolboom.

either to pretend they aren't here or to make a point of abusing them or deporting them back to where they are unable to survive.”⁹⁶

After the xenophobic attacks last year, Ms. Tolboom went to all the camps in the area to see and treat people. Many had not received treatment, even though many were suffering from broken bones, lacerations, concussions, internal hemorrhaging, and other serious issues. The most common reasons given were that the victims of the violence feared going to South African hospitals or that they had gone and were turned away, based on their nationality.

Tolboom said that many of the Somalis didn't want to go back to their communities because they saw so much violence there, and they feared it would continue if they returned. Some of them had been in South Africa for as much as 11 years; despite their long occupancy, they saw their shops burned down and their relatives killed – everything destroyed in a day.

Much as in other testimonies, Tolboom says that the violence began in the Alexandra Township, and that it all began with a community meeting.

As far as I know, it started at a community meeting in Alexandra. They said, “The foreigners are taking our RDP houses [re-development program houses].” In the meeting they blamed the foreigners for all their problems; all the jobs they are unable to get, they lose because the foreigners are taking them. The prominent people in these communities – the leaders of these communities – decided to take their social problems into their own hands. So when they came out of this meeting, they wanted to get rid of all the foreigners and they did it in

⁹⁶ Ibid.

the most violent way possible, and then it spread all over the nation.

Leaders in this country don't know how to address this issue of foreigners; they don't want to take responsibility for what happened.⁹⁷

During the author's short time at CMC, four births took place on the grounds of the church because the mothers were either turned away from the hospital while they were in labor, or they were told not to come back after a routine checkup weeks prior to the birth.

Early in 2009, Winnie Sarona, a Zimbabwean, came to South Africa to look for a job to support her six children. But those dreams were never realized. The violation of her human rights and those of her fellow citizens changed her perception of South Africa. She described her struggle to get treatment at Johannesburg hospital, exclaiming that her only sin was being unable to speak local languages.⁹⁸

Each time we go to a hospital, the way we foreigners are treated is quite an awesome thing. I was in a hospital, and I tried to explain my condition to the nurses there. But they would tell you, "I don't understand English."

Right now we've got more than 10 babies who were born in the toilet here. The mothers, we take them to the hospital, but once [the staff there] realize they are a foreigners, they are treated so badly. "Go! Come back when the water has broken." But what if there are complications when one is giving

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ IPS. Johannesburg Press. "South Africa Election Campaign Ignores Nation's Xenophobic Troubles." 17 April, 2009.

birth in a toilet... simply because we are foreigners.⁹⁹

An MSF report released in early 2009 and titled “No Refuge” chronicled the systematic abuse of Zimbabwean refugees in South Africa’s medical community. The report showed Zimbabweans attempting to access a health care system that is non-responsive and unwilling to provide care. Despite the fact that since 1996 South Africa has had a policy of free primary health care services for everyone in the public health system, care continues to be withheld through many facets of the system. In September 2007, the Department of Health [DOH] released a Revenue Directive¹⁰⁰ reaffirming that asylum-seekers and refugees, whether or not they have a permit, are entitled to access health care services and are to be treated for free at any primary health care facility; a patient is to be given absolute exemption from any and all hospital fees if he or she is without resources. But the actions of South Africa’s health care institutions speak louder than the DOH’s words. Dr. Eric Goemaere, the medical coordinator for MSF in South Africa, described a number of instances where health care was not provided based on nationality.

Our team referred an unconscious Zimbabwean patient to a hospital in Johannesburg. His condition was a result of assault, and the patient presented with a severe head injury. At the hospital, the matron in charge refused to attend to the patient, who was in need of critical emergency care, claiming that the patient was not able to say his name so she was not willing to attend to him. This is shocking. Every medical professional has an obligation to provide care

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ DOH Revenue Directive-Refugees/Asylum-Seekers With or Without Permit [BI 4/29 REFUG/ASYL 8 2007]

to a patient who is presenting with a life-threatening condition.¹⁰¹

In the same report, Bianca Tolboom went on to describe a similar situation.

A Zimbabwean mother brought her six-year-old child to our clinic. The child had been raped. She was examined by our medical doctor, and prophylactic treatment was given. Our counselor did an initial counseling session with the mother and referred her to Child Welfare. From there they were referred to the hospital for further medical follow-up. The child was turned away from the hospital because she and the mother did not have legal documentation. It is unacceptable and inhumane to refuse treatment to a six-year-old child who needs essential medical care after she has been raped. Not having legal documents cannot be a reason to deny access to health care.¹⁰²

In Musina, the border-crossing town between Zimbabwe and South Africa, an MSF health worker gave a series of testimonies similar to those of Ms. Tolboom and Dr. Goemaere.

One woman was very ill. She had malaria and was HIV-positive. She was in bad condition; her temperature was very high. And we referred her to hospital, but then she came back the following day. We saw that she still wasn't well, so we wanted to return her to the hospital, but she said she did not want to go there.

We asked her why and she said the nurses told her, "You are dirty, you are

¹⁰¹ No Refuge. MSF. pg 10, March 2009.

¹⁰² Ibid. pg 11.

smelly. You go back to Zimbabwe with your dirtiness.”¹⁰³

Many Zimbabweans who attempt to access the health care system on their own are either harassed or faced with a series of obstacles that prevent them from receiving the care they need, especially in hospitals.

South Africans should acknowledge that health care for all citizens is not only a law in their country; it is also a moral imperative that must be upheld. Citizens must act from a particular conception of their relationship to each other as human beings – a relationship rooted in the dignity of the other in relation to the self. Dignity cannot be granted, but it can be recognized. South Africans cannot bestow dignity on the foreigners in their country, but they can recognize the dignity inherent in their fellow humans, and they should act accordingly.

¹⁰³ Ibid. pg 11.

7. CHAPTER 7: THE POLICE FORCE: TO SERVE AND PROTECT...ITS OWN INTERESTS

Police are very xenophobic, because when they see foreigners they think of making a quick buck. The police don't treat us with respect; they harass us verbally, emotionally and sexually. If you don't have money or an expensive phone or a sexual favor, you may go to jail or be deported. There are many things police don't do to help us if we have problems, if we don't have bribe money. If you are black they call you "makwerekwere." If you are white they call you a tourist. Why are we doing this to one another? Being in another country is bad because there is no one to protect you, family is very far, trusting friends is also not easy. -31 F, Zimbabwe¹⁰⁴

During the beginning of the xenophobic violence in the Gauteng region that initiated the xenophobic outbreaks nationwide, a meeting was held by all of the local police chiefs in the Western Cape. At this meeting, some local advocates were invited to bring forth a voice outside of the law enforcement sphere. The meeting was meant to address the forthcoming violence that was soon to spread down the Cape. Fatima Khan, an attorney and coordinator of the Refugee Rights Project at UCT Law Clinic, was at this meeting. Before the meeting, Kahn learned through community contacts where future attacks in the Western Cape would take place. She knew enough about the probable locations and times of upcoming attacks, as well as the sequence in which they would take place, that she felt both compelled to attend the meeting to give the police warning. At the meeting, she was "treated poorly" and "basically told

¹⁰⁴ Statement gathered from author's survey.

to keep quiet.”¹⁰⁵ They did not want to hear what she had to say, and they disregarded her warnings. From Kahn’s perspective, the very least the police could have done was to listen to her and investigate her claims before rejecting the information. Three days after the meeting and the subsequent warnings, the attacks Kahn had warned of took place at almost the exact times and in almost the exact locations and order she had mentioned. These were the first public signs of xenophobic unrest in the Western Cape.

The incidence of xenophobia was much less violent in the Western Cape than in the Gauteng region. In the Gauteng, there were 62 reported xenophobic murders; however, there were no reported murders in the Western Cape, although some community workers would argue that a small number of Somalis were killed during the attacks in the Cape Town area.¹⁰⁶

The author attended and spoke at a forum on “The Police Response to Xenophobia.” The University of Cape Town’s Law School hosted this event, at which prominent members of the human rights community spoke. The initial topic of discussion centered on the reaction of the police in the Western Cape to the violence visited upon the foreigners. According to Kahn, the police acted differently – and in a discriminatory way – when foreigners were under siege. “How would police have acted if it were South Africans being attacked?,”¹⁰⁷ asked Braam Hanekom, the leader of PASSOP. Hanekom noted the media’s involvement in the instigation of violence. “Every time they [media] put a person on TV describing the xenophobic attacks, 500

¹⁰⁵ Khan, Fatima. Personal INTERVIEW. 15 July, 2009.

¹⁰⁶ Hanekom, Braam. Personal INTERVIEW. 15 July, 2009.

¹⁰⁷ Khan, Fatima.

more people were displaced,”¹⁰⁸ he said. This may be an overstatement, but what was made clear and agreed upon at the forum, was that the media caused more harm than good in the Western Cape.

During the attacks in the township of Guguletu, 15km outside of Cape Town, there were reports of police standing by as opportunistic South Africans robbed the businesses and homes of foreigners. According to Fatima Khan,

They actively watched and stood by as people committed crimes. There are pictures of people walking out of foreigners’ homes with refrigerators and televisions, as the police stand by in the background. They should not have just defended the person, but instead they should have defended both the person and their property. Instead, they stood by and watched as houses were looted and burned.¹⁰⁹

From these descriptions, the police responded reactively and not proactively. In Diepsloot, a township outside of Johannesburg, police fired 30,000 rubber bullets during the uprisings to deter the xenophobic crowds; still, foreigners were killed.¹¹⁰ In the Gauteng region, an area comprised mostly of Zulus, the crowds were much more resistant to law enforcement’s efforts to quell the violence. In the Cape, there was a much more opportunistic crowd, that didn’t create the large riots seen in the north, but was instead more focused on isolated incidents of property theft. It would

¹⁰⁸ Hanekom, Braam.

¹⁰⁹ Khan, Fatima.

¹¹⁰ Van Der Spuy, Elrena. Personal INTERVIEW. 15, July 2009. Associate Professor at the Center of Criminology and Department of Public Law at the University of Cape Town.

seem that in the Gauteng, the xenophobia was fueled more by labor-related frustrations, while in the Cape the xenophobia was often more trade-related.

On and after 22 May 2008, more than 20,000 foreigners were displaced in the Western Cape.¹¹¹ People left their homes not because they were driven out, but because they were fearful that what they had seen up north might happen to them, as well. Some stayed away from their homes long enough that looting took place. This created confrontations among some returnees, and, as a result, people were attacked, and some were reportedly killed. Several weeks after the initial displacement, officials said that approximately 10,000 people remained in temporary shelters that included five enormous refugee/internment camps. In addition to those large camps, there were also about 80 other shelters, some of which were run by the state.¹¹²

In the camps for displaced people throughout the country, police and private security guarded the entrances. In Youngsfield, nine kilometers from Cape Town, South African mobs arrived demanding to see the food aid being given to the foreign occupants. Private security hired for protection at this camp kept the crowds at bay. Inside the camps, private security groups patrolled, acting as police.

According to Tracey Saunders, a local women's rights activist and community developer, the police arrests of refugees in the camps seemed irrational. The police would ask people in the camps who their community leaders were. When the people led the police to the leaders, police arrested the leaders, levying false charges or no charges at all. In the meantime, if people walked outside the camps' grounds, they

¹¹¹ Hassan, Fatima. "Report on Xenophobic Attacks in the Western Cape." AIDS Law Project.

¹¹² The Camps were located far from the main city of Cape Town. Tents were set up at beach camps in the midst of winter with little or no protection against the harsh winter air. The people in these camps were left with little or no opportunity to travel to work or send their children to school. The health risks in the camps were considerable, as many were living in cramped and crowded conditions with

might be stoned, robbed, and/or beaten by angry South African mobs.¹¹³ “From a lawyer’s perspective, the police did not do their jobs. They did not act appropriately. They often did nothing. They stood by and watched people commit criminal acts,” Fatima Khan declared.¹¹⁴

In some camps, wristbands were handed out twice to foreigners, essentially labeling them. The civil society¹¹⁵ implores them to take the wristbands off, as they called even more attention to an already at-risk populace.

In the year following the attacks and the proliferation of internment camps, law enforcement officials still systematically subjected foreigners in the Western Cape to abuse. Fatima Khan still sees abuses on a daily basis. According to Khan, on 14 July 2009, five foreigners were beaten by their landlord. The five reported the incident and the police refused to open a docket for them. Khan argued in forum, that this sort of behavior can be common among law enforcement officials in Cape Town. “The police are not opening dockets for non-South Africans,” says Kahn. “They are handing out blank sheets of paper with no case numbers on them, telling people to basically create a shopping list. The forms are then later discarded.”¹¹⁶

However, the abuses perpetrated by the police are not entirely directed against foreigners alone. Tracey Saunders says she sees abuses by men in uniform on a daily basis, against all facets of society. “It’s not just foreigners who don’t trust the police. It’s everyone in South Africa,”¹¹⁷ she says. Saunders says that if you are a foreigner in

¹¹³ Saunders, Tracey. Personal INTERVIEW. 15 July 2009.

¹¹⁴ Khan, Fatima.

¹¹⁵ The Civil Society is composed of the totality of voluntary civic and social organizations and institutions that form the basis of a functioning society as opposed to the force-backed structures of a state (regardless of that state's political system) and commercial institutions of the market.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Saunders, Tracey.

South Africa, your chances at justice have recently gone “from minimal to highly unlikely.”

To this day, not even one person has prosecuted for the hate crimes committed in South Africa. The police have provided nothing more than crowd control. When a police task force collectively goes on the defensive, it creates a vulnerable society by telling people, “Run for your lives! And if you’re lucky, we *may* be there to help.” Foreign nationals distrust the police, and the government and the police need to act together to create not only a system to handle xenophobic violence, but also a climate that keeps attacks from happening in the first place. Communication is needed between law enforcement officials and foreign nationals. The police must be aware of the abuses foreigners are suffering, and they can never address such claims if police dockets are neglected to be filled out, and the police are looking the other way while foreign businesses and homes are looted. As Ms. Khan concluded at the UCT Law Clinic this past July, “we live in a country where there is no integration across communities. How do we expect to accept black foreigners into our country?”¹¹⁸

¹¹⁸ Khan, Fatima.

8. CHAPTER 8: THE CAUSE: WHAT SETS SOUTH AFRICA APART WITH XENOPHOBIA

“We live in a country where there is no integration across communities. How do we expect to accept black foreigners into our country?”

-Fatima Khan¹¹⁹

“We must learn to live together as brothers, or perish together as fools.”

-Martin Luther King. Jr.

It is important to note that the many victims of xenophobia in South Africa have included Pakistanis as well as black South Africans from minority ethnic groups. With this being said, it is not difficult to assume that some people have gone through a process by which they have begun identifying themselves in opposition to others – in terms of what they are not, rather than what they are. This process of identification is not intended as hatred against, Zimbabweans or Somalis, for example, based on their nationalities; rather, it appears to be quite simply a hatred of anyone or anything unfamiliar.

As soon as it became apparent in the early '90s that apartheid was nearing its end, migrants from all over the continent began heading to South Africa in search of a better future. South Africans knew that other African nationals were likely to be better trained and educated than they; thus, many felt threatened by competition from

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

outsiders. The system of “Bantu education” to which most black South Africans were subject left many at an extreme disadvantage in comparison with those who had to meet the higher education standards of other post-liberation countries in Africa.

Many migrants were willing to work for less than South Africans and to do jobs that some South Africans felt were beneath them or were exploitive. This combination of factors led to accusations that South African nationals were losing jobs as a result of the influx of foreigners. High unemployment led to a buildup of widespread xenophobic violence in 2008, but the violence can be attributed to more than just the lack of jobs.

At the conclusion of the author’s research, he sat down with some of the key players in South Africa’s civil society and formulated a list of the factors that have contributed to xenophobia in South Africa. Bishop Paul Verryn, Fatima Khan, Braam Hanekom, and Tracey Saunders were present.

The conclusions regarding additional factors for violence were as follows:

- General lack of education and understanding of refugees and migrants
- Globalization and the competition for resources
- The effects of apartheid, and the institutionalization of racism
- The dehumanization of others with whom one is unfamiliar, and racial exclusion. These were both key parts of apartheid’s socialization process.
- A culture of violence and crime
- Media’s role in the perpetuation of stereotypes

- Lack of understanding of the humanitarian disasters in the countries of refugees' origins.

The influence of apartheid has played a major role in the subsequent actions of many South African nationals who took part in xenophobic violence.

The end of apartheid, in 1994, resulted in a major transformation for a country that had been one of the most divided nations on the planet. The drastic turn of events gave the newly dubbed "Rainbow Nation" the opportunity to right its wrongs and work toward a cohesive harmony that rested upon the shoulders of the newly elected government. These ideals can be seen in probably the most progressive constitution in the world today, and in the country's aggressive nation-building endeavors. However, South Africa was unable to shake the cobwebs of racism and xenophobia, which, as ideals that were once institutionalized, were not easily forgotten nor unlearned overnight. From 1996 on, violent attacks on foreigners became more and more frequent, and ever more violent. Study after study was conducted, and the results were given to the South African government indicating one main problem – the fact that South Africans express the harshest feelings about foreigners and immigrants, branding them as criminals and deterrents to the country's economy.

However, the difference between xenophobia in South Africa and, for example, a country like Japan, is that in South Africa, xenophobia is addressed constantly in the media, and in government and civil circles. A colloquium on xenophobia and violence last May at the University of Witwatersrand saw Bishop Paul Verryn, along with other panel speakers, addressing the root causes of xenophobia.

Verryn explained that the situation is not a matter of skilled laborers stealing away South African jobs. South Africans can acquire the skills of people who have the experience of building a nation free of colonialism and oppression.¹²⁰ The skills that have been driven out of Zimbabwe and into South Africa fortuitously match the skills needed in South Africa's present economy.¹²¹ South Africa is starving for doctors and nurses, teachers and professors, and the very people who have these qualifications are being stepped over and spat upon in the streets, while the next block down, South Africans are receiving inadequate medical care and Zimbabweans are being turned away.¹²²

The xenophobic attacks targeted not the rich Zimbabweans, but the poor ones sleeping in the streets and living in shacks. The poor of South Africa are becoming impatient with a government that has made a plethora of promises that have not been kept. According to Verryn, one of the problems regarding the poor is a matter of national resources. The xenophobic attacks were a warning to the community about what it has done with its resources.¹²³

“Resources in this country belong to the entire nation and need to be shared in a way that ensures that every human being knows that they are of value and they have human dignity that cannot be alienated from them,” said Verryn.¹²⁴ He went on to say that some of the first xenophobic attacks he had experienced were in Braamfontein

¹²⁰ Verryn, Paul. University of Witwatersrand, May 2008.

¹²¹ Bloch, Alice. “Emigration from Zimbabwe: Migrant Perspectives.” *Social Policy & Administration*. Vol. 40, No 1, February 2006 pg. 77.

The Block survey showed that nearly 30% of Zimbabwean arrivals in South Africa [2006] had either a undergraduate degree or post-graduate degree, and were looking for work. Of a random sampling of 245 Zimbabweans crossing into South Africa in 2006, 73 were professionals in the jobs that South Africa is lacking, e.g. Nurses, Doctors, Teachers, Engineers, Pharmacists, and Technicians.

¹²² Ibid Verryn.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

three years earlier, and that the government had known of the problem for some years now.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

What must be recognized is that South Africa is a country that is vulnerable to prejudice. Prejudice was institutionalized in this country until 1994. Insufficient work has been done to reverse that trend. In both white and black communities, there is reactive judgment against “the other.” This results in sexism, ageism, and racism.

Some in authority have put forth an ambivalent message because, on the one hand, they have signed conventions advocating refugee rights and condemning xenophobia, but on the other hand they have done nothing to signify that they are upholding those conventions. They have neither strategized nor financed the provisions of the conventions they have signed. Even in the face of the deluge of people coming from the north, in particular from Zimbabwe, the people – especially the leaders – have sent a message of denial. This message states quite simply that the problems in Zimbabwe aren’t that serious and that the people streaming into South Africa shouldn’t be there. This creates the illusion in the minds of the general public that Zimbabweans and others are in South Africa to steal jobs, to steal money, to steal homes and to steal business. At the height of the repression in Zimbabwe, particularly over the past 10 years, this has been the primary attitude of South Africans. People who were leaders in South Africa never called the actions of Zanu PF or President Mugabe into question. President Mbeki was absolutely silent about the atrocities taking place up north. Not one South African leader said to the people, “We signed these conventions; we’ve made these promises; it is now our great privilege to belong to the world community and to become a place of hospitality to people who are vulnerable and whose lives are in danger. Therefore, we beg of you not to treat those people badly, but to raise the dignity of our country by showing them respect, by

opening up space for them to live, and by giving them an opportunity to participate in what this country really is. And we want to warn you that if any of you are found mistreating any foreign national in this country, we will prosecute you to the fullest extent of the law.”

Instead of benefitting from such an idealistic statement from the government, foreign nationals suffer criminal violence. The police and the courts have been tardy and inefficient in their dealings with these matters. Eighteen months after the xenophobic violence that left 62 foreigners murdered and more than 100,000 displaced from their homes, no one has been convicted of murder or of any other felony relating to that scar on the face of South Africa. It’s as though the country’s government is pretending it never happened.

South Africa lived under the Pass Laws during the apartheid years. These laws were designed to segregate the population and severely limit the movements of non-white South Africans. The legislation was introduced in 1923 and repealed in 1986. The ultimate intention of this legislation was that there would be no black South Africans. They would belong to Vendor, Transkei or Siskei, and 14% of land was allocated to 80% of the population. In downtown Johannesburg, at the bottom of Markey Street, an entire court was given over to dealing with Pass Law irregularities. The court was just opposite (geographically) of John Foster Square, which is home to today’s Johannesburg Police Station. Today, that same attitude and behavior exist, drummed up from the years of the Pass Laws, projected upon foreign nationals by the police at that station.

An abused child can serve as a metaphor for South Africa: The child, beaten by his parents, grows up to start his own family; finding himself caught in the same

cycle of violence, he abuses his own children. Apartheid brought about suffering for everyone involved. However fresh its scars may be, the wounds can continue to heal if and only if such healing is nurtured, with understanding and open-mindedness, by every South African – from community leaders in the townships to the president in office.

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APPENDIX A

An assortment of self-described xenophobic occurrences compiled through the collection of the author's survey at Central Methodist Church in Johannesburg, South Africa during the months of June and July of 2008.

I was working as a domestic worker renting at a back yard when all hell broke loose. Five men attacked me they raped me. The fifth man said my vagina was big and hollow; he took a glass bottle trying to push it inside me. They yelled 'you are a dog you deserve to die.' I collapsed when I woke up there was blood everywhere. I did not know what to do. My South African neighbor helped when I was treated at the hospital and I received stitches down there. I vowed never to fall in love again. There was no counseling to help me afterwards. **26 F, Zimbabwe**

I have lost everything that I have worked for in my life I use to support and take care of my family and my kids. But I lost my job because people were feeling insecure because I am a Zimbabwean. Now I cannot even take care of my family and myself. **35 M, Zimbabwe**

I was selling on the street and the police destroyed my things. So now my life is very difficult because I also have children and I don't know what to do now. **35 F, Zimbabwe**

I was seen by a dancing crowd carrying my groceries and they took them from me asking me where I got the money to buy all that food while they don't have jobs. **29 F, Zimbabwe**

I lost my job because South Africans didn't want to work with Zimbabweans. So my boss had to let me go. It's difficult for me to find another job. My parents are suffering at home because I'm no longer working. **20 F, Zimbabwe**

Yes I was going to work and I met a group of about five people who knew I was a Zimbabwean since I pass them everyday, they chased me shouting Mkwerekwere! **35 M, Zimbabwe**

I was on my way to shops. I didn't know anything then I met a group of young boys then ask me where do I come from. I answered then in English then they started beating me. I ran away then they disappeared.

39 M, Zimbabwe

I came here to make and look for better opportunities for my family only to end up with trauma and frustration. I can not find a job know because where I was working I

was chased because I am a Zimbabwean and my boss was scared for his business as they were threatening him by telling him that they were going to burn down his factory because he is employing Zimbabweans. **30 M, Zimbabwe**

When I got knocked by a car in Pritchard Street the hospital staff at Johannesburg Hospital denied me access to medicine. They even shouted at me to go back to Zimbabwe. When xenophobic attacks erupted in Alexandra it spread to China City where I was working as a security. All foreigners were attacked and our goods burnt and some looted. We were given shelter at the Methodist Church. **39 M, Zimbabwe**

I was robbed of my money by people whom I knew and had pretended to be my friends even though they knew of my origin. When their countrymen asked why you robbed this guy they responded, 'it is a foreigner, foreigners are here to be used and the money they make belongs to South Africa.'

39 M, Zimbabwe

I was coming from work in Germiston where I was working as a sales rep. I just got off from a train and I met a group of boys armed with machetes, knives and sticks. They greeted me in Zulu and I replied in English. They started to beat me up saying 'Mkwerekwere' go back to your country you're taking our jobs. **28 M, Zimbabwe**

I was watching TV with my wife and family when I suddenly heard somebody knocking at my door in the middle of the night. I stood up to open and saw a gang carrying weapons, they told me to go and lock myself in the toilet. I did as they said, I took my 12 year old son with me, they took all my property and my wife whom I haven't seen since, and the police of South Africa did nothing about it. **33 M, Zimbabwe**

When you are looking for employment if you meet South Africans at work places they shout at you saying that they cannot find employment because foreigners take all the jobs they even threaten to kill you if you get the job. 2. In public baths the cleaners don't usually like foreigners; they shout all sorts of abusive words to show that they don't like foreigners in public baths. **47 F, Zimbabwe**

In June 2008 I heard so many stories of foreigners being beaten. They came to Methodist

Church and chanted insulting words declaring us to leave. From that day I am scared of the next person I meet for I don't know their opinion. **30 F, Zimbabwe**

People were following me one day asking me where I come from. A large group of people kept bothering me wanting to know where I was from, but I refused to say my origin country. **18 F, Zimbabwe**

On Monday morning I was going to work, they caught me on the way and they started talking Zulu to me, I didn't know how to speak Zulu and they then started beating me. I was injured on my body.

32 M, Zimbabwe

I went to look for jobs. Only to be asked where I come from, why was I looking for a job? Because of the language, which was being used, I could not understand, I tried to speak English and this comes as it was an insult of not being able to speak one of South Africa language. I was told to wait while he was phoning someone, I didn't know that he was calling a gang of people. I was assaulted and left almost dead. I only remember waking up in the hospital. **39 M, Zimbabwe**

I was seriously sick and was admitted in Johannesburg Hospital. I had less than a month in RSA but the nurses used to tell me they could not understand English, they wanted me to speak in Zulu. What a hard time and an embarrassment in my condition. I wasn't comfortable though I knew they understood English, I could not say it. **43 F, Zimbabwe**

One day I went to Soweto for a look at a job without knowing what lay ahead of me.

Immediately, they discovered I was a foreigner because I couldn't speak the local

language. They spat on me, and with anything that was available they beat me. I could have died but I ran only to find I had just bruises on my legs and head. Immediately I boarded a taxi and vacated the place. **24 M, Zimbabwe**

I was on my way home from work going down the street, so I was passing by Hillbrow so I saw a group of six guys coming my way and they shouted, 'Mkwerekwere.' my legs couldn't get far as I was already on the floor. I was beaten with sjamboks, sticks, and they kicked me saying go back to Zimbabwe you are getting our jobs and our money. You're busy sending stuff home, so this is your other package you should send home.' They released me while I was bloody and beaten and I regretted why I came to this un-African country. **26 M, Zimbabwe**

I had a xenophobic attack. I was staying in town in a flat with my husband. I was on the first floor when a group of people came inside the flats; they started to beat people who were going outside of the flats. They then came to my door banging on it, then broke in, they started beating my husband with a big metal. They dragged my husband out of the flat. They then slept with me. All I could remember was there were eight men. **24 F, Zimbabwe**

'Mkwerekwere' they shouted and then I knew that I'm finished. They dragged me out of a restaurant where I was working. All they did was slap me and said 'Now Leave.' I did not disagree instead I thanked them but deep inside I was hurt. I went and told my

friends and to police, but that was a waste of time. **25 M, Zimbabwe**

I heard people yelling by my flat, I thought something was going on but I realized something wrong was happening. I looked outside and saw a large number of people, some running away, and some throwing stones. Me and my two friends stayed. One of the people throwing stones realized we were in the flat. They began to come in so I ran downstairs to a car park. I thank God for keeping me safe. My two friends died, they killed them. By the time I ran to the police station I was free and comfortable and I stayed hidden. **29 M, Zimbabwe**

I chose to be a prostitute but that did not give anyone the right to exploit or humiliate me. Taxi drivers, who caught me made me feel as if I didn't belong here. They took me to a township where I was made their sex servant. It was a two week feast for the guys who did all sorts of things to me. Rape and beatings and humiliation. At the end I was left with a beautiful baby girl who is four months old and HIV positive. I am not complaining but I'm not in my country. **25 F, Zimbabwe**

I used to work at a clothing shop on Bree Street in town. A mob came, they were not attacking us they took clothes, food, shoes everything in foreign nationals shops. The message was go away, never come back because you don't belong here. **22 M, Mozambique**

My friend says in the township Alexandra, he had a tuckshop, which was doing well, it was organized and did youth cultural groups that helped children to stay away from sex and drugs. The day we were attacked they told us to go home. The shack with furniture was looted and the shop. The scary part was even people we saw as our friends who tried to help us were beaten as it was said they got bribes. South Africans were told to choose between us and their notorious friends. **24 M, Zimbabwe**

It was a Sunday morning and I decided to go to church. About 50 meters from away from church a group of women came towards me and said if they ever see me going to church and work again they would cut my throat. I just kept on going, and the beating I got was unbearable. No one wanted to help me. At Hillbrow clinic nurses told me to go somewhere else, otherwise medication is only for South Africans. I can't believe that we can be so mean towards one another. After three months I was attacked by a group of street kids who did not understand what they were doing. **30**

F, Kenya

I was stoned by some South Africans at a construction site because I was looking for a job. They said that jobs in South Africa are for South Africans not for Zimbabweans.

30 F, Zimbabwe

On the 3rd of July, 2009 whilst sleeping outside the metro police arrived. They started shouting at us with vulgar words telling us to go back home because we were

loitering. They said the town is dirty and smelly because of us, they then arrested us.

28 M, Zimbabwe

I was not served in a shop because I was not able to speak Zulu. The person who was on the till said he could not serve me because I was not able to speak Zulu. He said that people from Zimbabwe are taking goods that should be for South Africans to Zimbabwe. I tried to speak in English but he said he was not a white man. **19 M, Zimbabwe**

I was working without papers; my boss used to breath on top of me and tell me how sweet I smelled. When the attacks started he kept me as a prostitute and threatened to call the police and say I stole something if I told anyone. The external and internal injuries will always be on me everywhere I go. **30 F, Zimbabwe**

I work at PJ Panel Beaters along Berea Street in the Johannesburg Industries. I mainly work with South Africans of different tribes and on one xenophobic incident during lunchtime, after I contributed some money for most of our lunch, the other guys excluded me from the lunch (we eat together), then I went on to overhear them discussing that they wanted to show all the 'Mkwerekwere' what life is supposed to be like for us in South Africa. I did nothing about it for fear of being attacked. **20 F, Zimbabwe**

I am a chronic patient every-time I went to the hospital, I'd be told to wait sometimes I'd come back without getting treatment because nurses would tell me to go home, the pharmacy was closed. I can't miss my TB tablets because it will cause more damage.

25 F, Zimbabwe

I was raped and beaten up with some men. They said that we should go back to our countries and if we stay in South Africa we will provide free sex. **25 F, DRC**

They actually don't like us. They call us all sorts of names and they say we smell and we don't bathe and we should go back to our country of Zimbabwe. **22 M, Zimbabwe**

One time I went to Hillbrow clinic since I am diabetic and asthmatic. I was on attack and I was told all sorts of words saying Zimbabweans go back to your country; we don't want you wasting our medical resources. **33 M, Zimbabwe**

I am a nurse by profession, but I work as a teller at a Nigerian shop, but I aint complaining because I was able to send food home although it was not enough. I was working without papers until the day I was in a taxi; I was left alone with the driver. He told me not to worry, because he was also a foreigner. He said he had to take money to his boss and that he would be just five minutes. He drove me to a bush, and he said that I would never think of another man again. He did not rape me, he burnt

my private parts and bums, saying it is because of the 'Mkwerekwere' that his sister lost her job and it drove her to suicide. The taxi driver complained that he has to look after his sister's children and he does not have enough money to feed them and dress them and take them to school. Why should we suffer? **34 F, Zimbabwe**

Police are very xenophobic because when they see foreigners they think of making a quick buck which aint fair to no South Africans. The police don't treat us with respect; they harass us verbally, emotionally and sexually. If you don't have money or an expensive phone or a sexual favor, you may go to jail or be deported. There are many things police don't do to help us if we have problems, if we don't have bribe money. If you are black they call you 'Mkwerekwere.' If you are white they call you a tourist. Why are we doing this to one another? Being in another country is bad because there is no one to protect you, family is very far, trusting friends is also not easy. **31 F, Zimbabwe**

By profession I am an accountant when I came to South Africa on the 1st of May, 2008, I came as an illegal immigrant which made it difficult for me to get the job for me because I had no documents. I opted in the general one, which is domestic work. On my third week to work, four teenagers followed me; they dragged me to an abandoned building where they raped me. When they were done they took my clothes and ran away with them. I covered myself with boxes. A police van passed by when I tried to stop they passed thinking I was a witch. The humiliation I went through I'd never have a way to explain it. Another police van passed by which took me to a

police station and I was told to consult with my embassy/UNHCR for help because they don't have clothes to give. **38 F, Zimbabwe**

I was working as a domestic worker in Benoni. At the end of every month I would travel to Joburg to visit friends and relatives by train and also to send food back home to Zimbabwe by bus. On this particular occasion, on my arrival at park-station, a mob of men carrying axes, knobkerries and weapons were singing and chanting slogans. They accused the people boarding buses and sending groceries of depriving them of their rights as South Africans. They started beating up people. I managed to escape but could not recover the goods when I fled. **20 F, Zimbabwe**

I was staying in Protia Glen (Soweto) when the xenophobia came. I ran away and I left my sister in the room. They came in and raped her and beat her, now my sister is sick and HIV positive. **23 F, Zimbabwe**

When the xenophobia came, I was staying in the Central Methodist Church. I was working out of Joburg then, and on my way I was attacked in a taxi. It was so painful but there was nothing I was supposed to do because I am a foreigner in South Africa. **22 F, Zimbabwe**

I boarded a taxi from Kempton Park to town then I asked how much was the fare. All

I got was a harsh response from other passengers whom they claimed to be of the Zulu tribe, instead of a polite answer from the taxi driver. They asked me of my country of origin through their language. All I did was keep quiet. **24 M, Zimbabwe**

I was recently burned with electric wire because I was called a 'Mkwerekwere.' **31 M, Zimbabwe**

I was called by names, where I used to work. The majority were South Africans, hence I was forced to resign because I was forced to do tough duties and work overtime without pay. I witnessed my sister being gang raped, it traumatized her and me as well, seeing her depressed and sick in hospital for three months. I was the only one to take care of her and at the same timework to earn a living. **26 F, Zimbabwe**

I was in a taxi going to work when some boys stopped the taxi looking for foreigners and I was one of them. They tore up my asylum papers and beat me and a couple others up. I ended up losing my job as an affect. **26 F, Zimbabwe**

It was on July 4 2009. I was attacked by Metro Police on my way to the church at 10:30PM. I was coming from work, they arrested me and they said I was loitering; they took me to the police station. They took my wages and tore my asylum papers. At the station they kicked me right in the stomach and they socked me with a baton.

25 M, Zimbabwe

Since 2007 I've been unable to get a job because everywhere I go I am told I don't belong here. **40 M, Zimbabwe**

I was walking in town, coming from Park Station with my newborn baby. I met the Policeman and they asked for my passport. I told them that I had an asylum paper, which was valid, and they said it was no longer in use. I explained to them that Home Affairs is still issuing asylum papers so they are in use. They said, 'You Zimbabweans, you think you are too clever and educated, so you will not be passing. You need to make a plan.' I refused because I knew what I was talking about. They moved around with me for almost two hours. After seeing my residence they left me. These policemen do not have people at heart. I moved around with them for so long with a newborn baby, and they did not care. **25 F, Zimbabwe**

It was on the 26th of May 2009. I was going to the supermarket to buy my groceries. I bought them, then a group of men saw me and told me the groceries are only for South Africans. They beat me with steal on my leg and hand. My hand does not work well now; they also took my money, 550R. **20 F, Zimbabwe**

I was on my way to my market job; I was speaking Shona and English. So I was

attacked by some taxi drivers because I was speaking an outside language and English. **19 M, Zimbabwe**

During the xenophobic times they took all my stuff, my TV, radio, double bed, cell phone. They burned my clothes, blankets along with six bags of mealie-mealie which I had wanted to send home to my parents to survive. They beat us and now some of them treat us like animals and they called us Mkwerekwere. If you hear the word Mkwerekwere again, you feel like they want to start the violence again. **22 M, Zimbabwe**

I used to work as a car guard; I stayed in Diepsloot with my wife and two kids. We heard people shouting 'hombani Mkwerekwere.' I opened the door to see what was happening. My fellow brothers I've stayed with were angry and full of hatred. We had to quickly run for our lives. My wife was caught and beaten, she was sexually harassed. As a man I could do nothing. Again, I moved to the camps with my family and there was no support or counseling. The government officials did not make our lives easy, because food and clothes distribution was very unfair and there was a lot of corruption. **42 M, Mozambique**

A person will come to my workplace and trying to control me when they see my life is moving on because I am working hard. In one incident, I was directing someone to the Carlton Center, they said, 'how do you know that, you're just an alien.' I was

speaking with my language and people will simply move away from me. I was speaking English and people will say, 'Speak in your language, you're not white. They look at me and simply say I will send you back to your country. When women here see me talking to my South African boyfriend, they try to date him and take him from me. Cleaners of toilets don't want foreigners to use them. If they see you making it in life, they hate you. They want to see foreigners suffering, but me, I will make it. **30**

F, Zimbabwe

I was living in Carletonville in a high-density suburb called Kutsong. The houses that my fellow mates and I were living in were burned down. People were running up and down the streets beating any foreigner they could find. There was this guy who was beaten so badly at a rail station that he died. I had to witness this. **24 F, Zimbabwe**

I was arrested on the 3rd of July 2009 for loitering while I was asleep on the pavement together with some of my fellow friends, about 400 of us by the Metro Police. This move by the police, I see it as xenophobia because of the way the Johannesburg Metro Police Department were shouting at us verbally and beating us for no apparent reason and not notifying us of any charges. They didn't let us bring any of our belongings; the words they were using towards us were words of xenophobia. The way they treated us in the cells, the beatings and verbal harassment was pure xenophobia. I've never seen in my life a group of people arrested for loitering, especially in the evening while we are asleep. Many people that night lost expensive things like money and cell phones that the police never returned and will

never be replaced. It hurts so much because it was the police doing this. **29 M,**
Zimbabwe