

## **Nationalism and Othering in the Contemporary Era: The Non-South African Black and Xenophobia in South Africa**

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### **ABSTRACT**

A wave of populism is certainly sweeping the world yet again. In Africa, the ugliest face of violent nationalism can be observed in South Africa, where regular spikes of xenophobia are an affront to the pan Africanist project that leaders on the continent have been trying to actualize for decades. This paper explores socio-economic, political, psychological, and cultural dimensions of the othering of the non-South African black, which are ultimately rooted in the fear of experiencing increased scarcity in an already economically infertile field for the low class, unemployed citizen. The paper attempts to propose a way forward that includes strengthening individual states on the continent and specifically addressing fear based behaviors.

Keywords: xenophobia, populism, pan Africanism, entrepreneurship, migration

### **Introduction**

The nation state is a relatively recent, yet incredibly powerful, concept. The notion that identity, belonging, and obligation begin and end at certain physical boundaries is peculiar when we take into consideration the perpetual movement of peoples over time. The places in which groups and individuals found themselves when certain borders were erected did not necessarily have any significant connection to their identity in the future, whether social, political, or economical. As much as nation states can serve as useful units of both organization and measurement for both human and economic development, they can also be tools for constructing divisive differences where they do not need to exist (Morse and Fraser 2005, 629). This is especially true in the context of Africa, where national borders drawn up at the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885 were not a function of the historical and practical groupings of people, but of the colonial agenda. Divvying up the continent also meant isolating chunks of the continent from each other in what is commonly termed a divide-and-conquer tactic. The pan Africanist movement at its core works to undo this sense of division. Instead, the goal of the movement is to harness the intellectual, social, political, and, eventually, economic strength that arises from unity (Hill 2015, 136).

It is alarming that several nations continue to embrace divisive nationalism, populism, and a disdain for foreign nationals. The newly inaugurated Trump administration of the United States, that of Theresa May in the United Kingdom, and the possibility of a Marie Le Pen presidency in France are prominent examples. South Africa has also been guilty of holding nationalist and xenophobic sentiment for similar reasons, including a disenchantment with governments' over-promised allure of prosperity, complemented by the convenient scapegoating of foreign nationals for putting a so-called extra strain on national social and economic infrastructure. On multiple

levels, Africans are already victims of systematic discrimination worldwide. Prime examples come out of the neoliberal economic system, built on exploitative colonial foundations, which perpetuates African dependency and poverty; the restriction of the movement of African peoples; and the inescapable racism used to justify the launch of the transatlantic slave trade as the basis of capitalism. It is imperative, then, that Africans refrain from participating in their own disadvantaging.

In this paper, I look at how South African newspapers covered xenophobic violence during major outbursts between 2008 and 2016. Noteworthy spikes in violence can be observed in 2008, 2011, and 2015. An especially relevant primary source is volume 16 of the *Chimurenga Chronic*. The *Chronic* is an annual publication that, in 2011, published a “time travel” edition set in the week of May 18th to 24th, during the height of the 2008 attacks, in order to serve as “a time-machine – which travels backwards and forwards, to place these events within a broader context” (*Chimurenga Chronic* 2011, 1). In this important edition, journalists conducted interviews with eyewitnesses neglected by police, in order to reconstruct and report the reality that the police force was complicit in whitewashing. South African hostility toward other black Africans suggests inauspicious implications for the future of the pan Africanist project. This is because xenophobia stems from an unwillingness to engage with the rest of the continent culturally, socially, and politically. This is counterproductive as such engagement is at the core of pan Africanism. The othering of the non-South African black is seen even at the highest levels of government, with President Jacob Zuma offhandedly remarking during a news conference on road toll fees, for example: “We can’t think like Africans in Africa generally. This is Johannesburg. It is not some national road in Malawi” (Aljazeera 2013). His disparaging comments explicitly reflect a prevalent South African sense of superiority and disdain that elevates South Africa above the rest of the continent. Social consciousness is also embedded with exclusive language that reflects the sentiment that Africa is a foreign space. South African slang contains derogatory terms for migrants that are country specific for most nationalities – “Koolie” for Indian, “Paki” for Pakistani, and “M’china” for Chinese, for example – but one term is used for all black, non-South African Africans: kwerekwere. Used to mock this group, this word was originally derived from the languages spoken by this group that, according to South Africans, were “unintelligible” (Warner and Finchilescu 2003, 38). The use of one singular word for other Africans represents the perception that the rest of the continent is a monolith devoid of idiosyncrasy and inherent value, and therefore not worthy of being learned about and engaged with. Overall, lack of interest in and constructive engagement with the rest of the continent, including the conditions that migrants are coming from, facilitates fallacious reasoning surrounding what cohabitation can mean for all. Unfortunately, this gives rise to hostility at best, and hate-fuelled violence at worst.

### **The History of South Africa as an African Melting Pot**

Labor migrations have led to a diverse urban population in South Africa. The gold and diamond rushes of the nineteenth century, for example, necessitated a large influx of laborers from all over Africa to capitalize on the mineral finds that would become the cornerstone of the South African economy. As well as from other parts of the country, people flocked from Mozambique, Malawi, Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Namibia as unskilled laborers. When mining moved from being primarily open cast to underground, a more specialized and skilled labor force was required; thus, mine owners moved men more permanently to mine sites by building them semi-permanent, dorm-style dwellings called hostels (Wentzel and Tlabela 2006, 74). This separated

families and more concretely changed the makeup of the South African working class. During the period of 1890 to 1899, when Johannesburg's gold industry was rapidly expanding, the migrant population at these mines grew from approximately 14,000 to 97,000 (Skinner 2015, 73).

Particularly within the Southern African Development Community, South Africa had liberal agreements when it came to the free movement of people for work. Still, "one of the main characteristics of the migrant labour system was that foreign workers had traditionally been denied permanent rights to work or take up residence in South Africa, regardless of the overall length of their employment under succeeding contracts, or their established familial connections or social ties" (Crush, Chikanda, and Skinner 2015, 76). Black South African citizens themselves suffered from being cast as the 'other' in the country of their birth through the white settler regime's influx controls and pass laws that were put in place to keep them and their families out of urban areas, while still exploiting their cheap labor (which they were then taxed on without representation). Also, the social and economic costs a state usually has to bear to sustain a productive workforce were outsourced, in that migrants could not stay and utilize public goods in their areas of work (Crush, Chikanda, and Skinner 2015, 77).

Another major source of pre-1994 migration was African refugees fleeing war, repressive regimes, and/or postcolonial power struggles. People from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola, and Mozambique are some examples. The Mozambican civil war coincided with drought and famine in the country, causing many to flee to South Africa amongst other places (Crush, Chikanda, and Skinner 2015, 81). Even then, a lack of solidarity with the black non-African was apparent at the state level as Mozambican refugees were refused recognition, in some cases, by denying them assistance. This was until 1996, when the government signed and ratified the United Nations Convention on Refugees and the Organization of African Unity Convention regarding the protection and treatment of asylum seekers and refugees. This was a step in the right direction, as it required the state to adhere to international guidelines on accepting and providing for those eligible for asylum-seeker and refugee status (Handmaker, de la Hunt, and Klaaren 2008, 1).

### **The Catch-22 of the Move to South Africa**

Northcote and Dodson state that, in the contemporary era, while some Africans from outside of South Africa find employment in the formal sector, most earn their livelihoods from insecure, informal work as casual laborers (2015, 146). When other Africans move to South Africa to work, the informal sector is easier to break into than the formal one. Starting or working in a small, unregistered business allows one to bypass legal regulations and run on low launch and operational costs. Moreover, success is a function of how much initiative and street smarts migrants display, rather than of the cooperation of the Departments of Labour or Home Affairs, which are responsible for work permits, asylum-seeker status, and refugee visas. Non-skilled migrants, or those who cannot enter the formal sector, can find work on construction sites, as domestic workers, or as traders or artisans who sell goods and services, either as itinerate hawkers or through small businesses called *spaza* shops. Spaza shops are small convenience stores located in low income communities that sell necessary household items in affordable quantities. For example, if a family cannot afford to buy eggs, milk, and bread in the full-sized quantities available at the supermarket, they can buy a single egg, one liter of milk, and a half loaf of bread to fulfill their daily needs while they continue to attempt to make ends meet. Perceived disparities in the success of migrant owner versus South African-owned spaza shops

manifest in xenophobic behaviors within the already prevalent crime culture of South Africa, in the sense that attacks on migrant shop owners can be more violent and frequent. In 2013, Northcote and Dodson interviewed a series of spaza shop owners. One Somali interviewee commented: “As for safety, it is very bad in South Africa for refugees, especially for Somalians. If they see [a] Somalian, they think they’ve got money. But money is very difficult – if you sell sweets and what-what, and small groceries, if you sell that stuff, maybe, plus minus, you can get more than R2,000 or R3,000 per month... The people, they see this money and they think that you’ve got a lot of money” (Northcote and Dodson 2015, 159). Refugees and registered asylum seekers are legally permitted to work in the formal sector, but anti-migrant sentiment, exacerbated by the prevalence of fake documents, can act as an invisible barrier to entry (Landau and Segatti 2009, 54). Migrants also often perform casual labor, which is defined as “informal work that is performed for an employer without the rights associated with formal employment, such as sick leave, paid leave, or a formal contract” (Devey et al. 2006, as quoted in Northcote and Dodson 2015, 147). Census data reflects that unemployment rates are lower in African migrant communities in South Africa than they are amongst South Africans. Compared to 31 percent of South Africans, 18 percent of Zimbabweans, 24 percent of Mozambicans, and 30 percent of Basotho who live in the country are unemployed (Crush, Chikanda, and Skinner 2015, 4). Even in this informal sector, the communities in which migrants operate, as well as the South African government itself in some regards, propagate the stereotypes of non-South Africans as unworthy of the space, market share, and commercial success the country affords them. These stereotypical beliefs fall into three broad categories: (1) since many migrant businesses operate parallel to legal and regulatory frameworks, they act as parasites on the economy without formally contributing to it in the form of taxes; (2) migrants are taking jobs away from South Africans, a widespread populist belief observed also in the United States against Mexicans and South Americans, as well as in the United Kingdom, where “Put Britain First” is seen on Brexiteer merchandise and publications; and (3) migrant business practices and owners are more often than not nefarious. Stereotypes include the Nigerian drug dealer and brothel owner, the stingy and entitled Pakistani shop owner, and the stealing Zimbabwean domestic worker (Crush, Chikanda, and Skinner 2015, 3). Public consciousness surrounding South Africans is summarized as follows by Crush, Chikanda, and Skinner:

A central premise of the hostility towards “foreigners” in South Africa is that they “steal” jobs from South Africans. A survey in 2010 found that 60 per cent of South Africans believe that migrants take jobs and only 27 per cent that they create them. Furthermore, nearly 60 per cent felt that reasons for the xenophobic violence of 2008 included that migrants take jobs from South Africans and that they do not belong in the country. At the same time, only 16 per cent of South Africans claimed that they had personally been denied a job because it was given to a foreign national. (2015, 6)

On the other hand, studies on the casual labor market in Cape Town in 2012 found that, when picking up day laborers who were advertising their trades (such as painters or carpenters) on the roadside, people tended to favor foreign nationals based on their higher English proficiency and the mentality that they tend to work harder (Northcote and Dodson 2015, 147).

Fatoki conducted a case study attempting to measure if a difference existed between the entrepreneurial tendencies of migrant informal business owners and those of South Africans. The study found that migrant entrepreneurial practices are characterized as exhibiting “competitive intelligence,” a quality that includes, for example: scoping out the prices at which goods and

services are being traded by local competitors; being willing to offer a greater range of products (stocked from South Africa and their home countries); keeping their stores open for longer hours; and reducing operational costs by working with other migrant business owners to buy collectively and harvest the benefits of bulk prices or the divided cost of transportation (Fatoki 2013, 90–92). All of this enables migrant-owned businesses to undercut prices advertised by South African informal traders and secure a greater proportion of customers; this is negatively interpreted by local traders and their families and communities as “stealing” market share.

The hostile attitudes these biases foster come not only from ordinary citizens who, ironically, buy and use goods and services offered to them by the migrant community because of the on-average lower prices, the cause of which will be addressed shortly, but also from South African police officials who exhibit and license xenophobia on the very streets where they are paid to maintain order. An article in the *Chimurenga Chronic* titled “The Warm Up” that explored the beginnings of the 2008 spike, quotes a policeman inciting mob action by saying, “Sort these people out, we also don’t want them here” to an already riled up mob in Atteridgeville (Sosibo 2011, 2). An example of members of the police tainting the integrity of the force is 2014’s “Operation Hardstick,” during which over six hundred small, informal businesses owned by foreign Africans, some of whom were refugees, were fined, expelled from their operating sites, and had their owners detained and/or verbally abused by Limpopo province police. The Supreme Court ultimately ruled the operation was highly discriminatory and unconstitutional, seeing as what was supposed to be a blanket informal sector regulating operation was selectively enforced to only target foreign Africans. An affidavit presented in the case of the *Somali Association of South Africa and Others versus the Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism* stated that the South African police force’s behavior, “tell[s] a story of the most naked form of xenophobic discrimination and of the utter desperation experienced by the victims of that discrimination” (SAFLII 2014). The notion of desperation being exploited in this instance is particularly significant, as one could deduce that high levels of desperation caused by unemployment and coupled with a lack of service delivery within the South African population itself is a major cause of xenophobia. The irony of the solidarity that should come from experiencing the same struggle instead manifesting as fierce, violent competitiveness is tragic and favors those with the home ground advantage. A repeat incident was Johannesburg Metro Police’s Operation Clean Sweep in 2013, which affected between five thousand and six thousand traders (Nxumalo and Tolsi 2013). In an interview with Ungulani Ba Ka Khosa, a celebrated Mozambican novelist, a fellow Mozambican reflected on how disappointed he was to learn during the 2008 attacks that he was mistaken about how well he had assimilated into South Africa, a place he had called home for ten years. The interviewed Mozambican remarked:

I assumed myself to be Matsolo [a Sotho sounding South Africanization of his Mozambican last name, Matola]... But they, in truth, never did accept me. When caught by the whirlwind of hate, all they saw [were] foreigners. To all of those, they directed the hatred they felt for their own miserable lives. It was tough. And even tougher was when we saw the images of Ernesto Nhamuave burning alive. They wrote “Burning Man”, “Burning Nation”. But what was burning away wasn’t only South Africa, but also the world; the world that burns with misery and hate. (Ba Ka Khosa 2013)

“Burning Man” refers to the unequivocal low point of the 2008 violence, when Ernesto Alfabeto Nhamuave, a Mozambican national, was burned alive in front of a giant mob in Ramaphosa, an informal settlement east of Johannesburg.

It is not difficult to understand why non-South African blacks live in a state of fear that ebbs and flows according to the changing, yet somewhat regular, currents of violent xenophobic flare-ups that go unaddressed. Rather than tackling roots as well as symptoms, periods of high violence and tension are simply waited out until they subside, leaving all demographics uncomfortable and nursing subdued resentment until the next violent eruption. Fear amongst the migrant community manifests across the domestic, social, and professional spheres. Somali shop owners have reported being afraid to invest in immovable property out of fear that they will have to flee and abandon it in the foreseeable future. They also sell their goods from behind thick, clear plastic windows with burglar bars and small windows through which only hands holding groceries and money can fit, in order to make it as difficult as possible for outsiders to enter the small, contained stall to vandalize and loot or hurt the owner. South African police officials are also guilty of looting and extortion (Battersby and Peyton 2014, 161). Bribes are elicited by police and given by shop owners to secure some level of protection or to ensure simply being left alone. The transnational movements of migrant informal entrepreneurs mean that this group is particularly vulnerable to this level of corruption since there are more formal, systematized checkpoints that facilitate police demanding payments. Interviews with those who frequently move across borders have revealed that, as of January 2016, such payments are an average of ZAR 2,000 and ZAR 5,000 (\$147.20 and \$368.01 USD, respectively). That is a sizeable chunk of capital that could go toward stock or operational costs being lost, for example, at the Beitbridge border post with Zimbabwe, where “84 per cent of traders had goods valued between ZAR1,000 and ZAR5,000” (Crush, Chikanda, and Skinner, 2015, 12). Another example of police corruption involves Moses Mhlangu, a Mozambican artisan who had lived in South Africa for twenty-seven years and been a citizen for five years by 2008. Mhlangu reported to the *Chimurenga* newspaper, while on the run from his home in Atteridgeville, that a policeman had warned him of imminent violence, saying that, for a fee, Mhlangu could buy private police protection for himself and his business. Although Mhlangu did not pay this bribe, he reported that even those who did pay had their spaza shop vandalized (Sosibo 2011, 3).

Crush, Chikanda, and Skinner (2015) also laud this transnational trade as a form of low-level globalization, facilitated through small amounts of capital and informal transactions carried out in businesses that survive by bootstrapping, since many of them are rendered ineligible for business or personal loans from formal South African financial institutions.

### **Tiers of Exclusion**

As mentioned, there are levels to xenophobic exclusion. Crush and Ramachandaran (2015, 28) outline four particular avenues of exclusion as: (1) the protectionist position of the South African state when it comes to regulating small to medium enterprises, including informal businesses, that disadvantages and restricts migrant business activity; (2) the bribe seeking of police officials, who solicit payment from migrant entrepreneurs or workers in exchange for protection from xenophobically motivated raids or document checks or violence from South Africans in their community; (3) migrant business owners being intimidated or physically scared out of certain areas to make space for natives; and (4) grassroots discrimination on individual and community levels. Migrants and their businesses are attacked violently, with many individuals being scared into moving once again or even killed. Table 1, below, shows recorded xenophobic incidents of collective violence. There is a trend of overall increase in violent incidences, with an anomalous spike in 2010 when the FIFA World Cup was hosted in South Africa. The most violent attacks of 2008 will be addressed separately due to their severity and significance.

Table 1

*Number of Recorded Xenophobic Incidents in South Africa Per Year*

Year	No. of incidents	Percentage
Pre-2005	9	4
2005	4	2
2006	9	4
2007	9	4
2008*	19	8
2009	17	7
2010	46	20
2011	22	10
2012	25	11
2013	36	16
2014 (to end-August)	32	14
Total	228	100

\* *Excluding May 2008 attacks*

Source: Crush and Ramachandaran 2015, 35.

Despite these figures, the South African government has at times chosen to adopt a denialist stance, as is the case with many nationalist and populist movements. In response to online press coverage of anti-migrant fueled violence in Port Elizabeth (Patel and Essa 2013, in Crush and Ramachandaran 2015, 48), one governmental spokesperson made the assertion that the media “painted an incorrect picture of...South Africa [that] was far from reality [, saying that] South Africa allows and welcomes foreign nationals” and has “strived to build a society based on the values of unity and togetherness” (Williams 2013, as quoted in Crush and Ramachandaran 2015, 48). A widely employed scapegoat statement was that of opportunistic criminals simply doing what they have always done rather than of South Africans being Afro-phobic. The spokesperson concluded: “The looting, displacement and killing of foreign nationals in South Africa *should not be viewed as xenophobic attacks, but opportunistic criminal acts* [emphasis ours] that have the potential to undermine the unity and cohesiveness of our communities” (Hirsi 2013, as quoted in Crush and Ramachandaran 2015, 48). In 2013, after a large number of attacks on migrant owned shops in Port Elizabeth, the provincial police remarked that the “motive” for the violence should not be viewed as “*xenophobic in nature, but a criminal element that has seized an opportunity* [emphasis ours]” (Sapa 2013, as quoted in Crush and Ramachandaran 2015, 49). Disdain for the importance of correctly characterizing the source of violence is detrimental for finding lasting solutions. Another case in point would be the former deputy trade and industry minister Elizabeth Thabethe’s remark about how, “You still find many spazas with African names, but when you go in to buy you find your Mohammeds and most of them are not even registered”

(Sowetan 2013, as quoted in Crush and Ramachandaran 2015, 49). As well, ANC Secretary-General Gwede Mantashe proclaimed at a 2014 election rally that, “if you go to Soweto, corner shops have been taken over by foreigners. We must do something about it” (Ginindza 2014, as quoted in Crush and Ramachandaran 2015, 50). This latter sentiment from a high ranking member of the political party that possesses the greatest cultural capital is frightening. It has the power not only to validate xenophobia, but also to impede efforts to undo discriminatory mentalities.

### **The Role of Gender in Exclusion**

The informal sector that many migrants participate in – either as a stepping stone to the formal sector or as a perpetual means of survival – offers differing opportunities to men and women. These differences occur due to prevailing, highly segregated, and traditionally held views on what work is appropriate for what gender; safety concerns that women have that men do not that discourage them from doing work that involves working and/or commuting alone at night; and, the fact that existing gender disparities propagate themselves. The major disparity in the effect gender has on migrants’ ability to support and advance themselves is the connectedness to the greater working community afforded to males over females (Blaauw, Pretorius, Schoeman, and Schenck 2012, 1339). Northcote and Dodson (2015) have also observed that gender can also have an effect on the extent to which communities made up of migrants and South Africans alike lend a helping hand to those in need. They cite a series of interviews in which a single father from Ghana, who was struggling to find work and thus afford to support himself and his daughter, was allowed to live rent free in the home of a Congolese woman in Cape Town, so that he could take care of his daughter’s needs. By contrast, a young, single mother from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) reported garnering less sympathy and support, as her youth and single-motherhood led people to assume negative stereotypes about her, including that she was promiscuous. Such perceptions occur as a result of a lack of contextualization of the landscape of rape as a weapon of war in the DRC, which has produced scores of children with single mothers who have needed to migrate to places such as South Africa.

In terms of the type of work available, for women, work is isolating and often lacks opportunities to connect with others. The work available to men, on the other hand, is often along the lines of construction work on teams, where they can network with other workers, form social connections, practice speaking the local language, and learn where to find more similar work. Generally, in their research, Northcote and Dodson noted a “clear gender bias in how success is attained. In contrast to the casual jobs that the men were able to secure, work as a domestic laborer was comparatively socially isolating for the women involved. Male participants commonly worked as part of a team, such as on a construction site, thereby allowing them to build their language skills and open up a web of possible social and business connections. Domestic labor, such as washing dishes, doing laundry and cleaning homes, does not offer these same possibilities” to women (Northcote and Dodson 2015, 150).

### **Legal Exclusion**

Christian Rogerson (2015) explains that the South African government has made concerted efforts to support small to medium enterprises in the informal sector through various initiatives of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the creation of a specialized Ministry for small business announced in 2014. The importance of an entire dedicated ministry became

apparent when it was found that, in South Africa, up to 56 percent of the GDP is generated by small to medium enterprises. One of the DTI's chief initiatives was to develop the Informal Business and Chamber Support, the mandate of which is to harvest the "vital importance of the informal business sector in broadening economic participation and creating decent employment" (Rogerson 2015, 232). In particular, the National Informal Business Development Strategy (NIBDS) was created to combat the perpetual survivalist culture that many informal sector workers and entrepreneurs were failing to graduate from to make it into secure income generating businesses. NIBDS's goal is to craft "an enabling policy, regulatory, and programming environment promoting and supporting a developmental continuum for the graduation of Informal Businesses into the mainstream of the formal economy," and especially, to place "particular focus on uplifting and empowering disadvantaged informal businesses of vulnerable groups like women, youth and disabled persons" (Rogerson 2015, 233). The Ministry will focus initiatives to foster and up-skill entrepreneurs, whereas the Department will provide financial and legal support to qualifying enterprises. The notion of "qualifying" enterprises here is an important one because it implicitly excludes migrant entrepreneurs, who, as discussed earlier, are at the foundation of the South African economy and continue to be a major source of growth at all levels. Although people with refugee and asylum-seeker status living and working in the country are legally permitted to work, the NIBDS and other governmental provisions are awarded on the basis of South African citizenship, and carry the explicit objective to increase South African labourers' overall competitiveness in the domestic context (Rogerson 2015, 239). Seeing as how the NIBDS is a national government initiative, it goes without saying that it was designed to benefit the South African people. Thus, the specific goal to make South African informal sector workers more competitive than their non-South African counterparts is especially exclusionary, and indeed demonstrates an othering of the non-South African across spheres of identity: national, social, and ethnic. Official NIBDS documentation has consistently portrayed non-South Africans in a negative light, and as a threat. The strategy document reads: "there are no regulatory restrictions in controlling the influx of foreigners" and there is "no synergy between the DTI and Home Affairs in devising strategies and policies to control foreign business activities" (Rogerson 2015, 239). With regard to the Refugee Status Act of 1998, the document notes that the Act, "is still perceived by [the] majority [of] citizens to be too lenient to foreigners[,] giving them an unfair advantage over nationals" (Rogerson 2015, 239–40). Rogerson also observes that sections of the document selectively cite instances in Ghanaian, Indian, and Malaysian policy, in which foreign nationals are prevented from participating in segments of their informal economies and are banned from trading in certain areas (2015, 240). Rogerson argues that when the Department of Trade and Industry writes about the importance of cracking down on the trade of counterfeit goods, it is an indirect attack on migrant traders as they are often associated with those sales.

A major component of the push for greater regulation of the informal sector, ostensibly to strengthen it, is the registering of businesses (Holmes 2013). Registered businesses can avail themselves of assistance from the government in the form of small business loans and business development support structures (e.g., skills training and access to technology) (Rogerson 2015, 233–34). However, during attempts to pass the licensing rule that would operationalize registering informal businesses, the Department of Home Affairs requested that "foreigners whose status is not confirmed...should not be granted licences" (DTI 2014). In addition, the municipal government branches responsible for implementing licensing regulations made a call for community-based organizations to assist with implementation. Jonathan Crush has noted that

this, “sounds suspiciously like an attempt to get South Africans on board to assist the police in identifying and rooting out foreign traders,” and argued that the licensing debacle is attempting to “make it so difficult for non-citizens to operate small businesses in the country that they will go home” (Crush 2013, as quoted in Rogerson 2015, 240–1).

While some South Africans have exhibited highly xenophobic behavior, particularly in the significantly violent eruptions of 2008 and 2015, others have banded together, citing very logical, pragmatic reasons as to why they are open to living, working, and trading with other Africans. During the same series of xenophobic attacks, a female-led anti-xenophobic coalition gave interviews to the BBC. The women’s comments included: “They are the only shops from where we can buy things cheaply. The local businessmen are greedy and jealous”; “Even when [I am] short of R1, they give me the bread and tell me I can pay next time”; and, “When it is the middle of the month, they give me groceries and tell me I can pay them when I get my pension. They don’t even take my number or address, that is how much they trust us” (BBC News 2011). The contrast can be seen between this and another interview from 2011, when leaders from the community group that called itself the Greater Gauteng Business Forum remarked: “We want them [Somali spaza shop owners] to leave. Before, we said let them remain here because they are also human beings and they’re supposed to stay somewhere. Now we’re saying: Just close your shops and leave the area. We don’t like them, we don’t want them to be around townships any more. The government is supposed to take them to a camp somewhere, not allow them to come inside our townships” (Misago and Wilhelm-Solomon 2011). Here, South Africans demonstrate empathy towards the cause of the refugee, but not the migrant. The perceived threat arises when people feel that their space is being permanently infringed upon.

### **Africa Hosts Itself**

Another way to look at the notion of one group or nationality claiming particular spaces is that it is a hypocritical practice, particularly in the case of Africans. Contrary to popular belief, it has been found that most Africans migrate for family, work, or study, rather than as a result of having to flee from poverty or socio-political strife, although these are also significant contributors (Flahaux and De Haas 2016, 3). Only 14 percent of Africans leaving the continent are doing so as refugees or under refugee-like circumstances, which means that 86 percent are driven by ordinary social processes, such as moving to a new place for work, to live with a partner/spouse, or for education (Bakewell and Bonfiglio 2013, 4). Thus, I would argue that hope for the future of pan Africanism is twofold: first, Africa deserves credit for, in large part, hosting itself. While most western media outlets routinely broadcast that Europe is struggling with its refugee crisis, out of the top ten refugee-hosting countries, none are European, but five are African. In order of the number of refugees hosted, they are Ethiopia (736,000), Kenya (554,000), Uganda (477,000), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (383,000), and Chad (370,000) (UNHRC 2016). Schoumaker et al. have noted that most African migrations are not directed toward Europe, but toward other African countries, and also to the Gulf countries and the Americas (2015, as quoted in Flahaux and De Haas 2016, 3). While around 1.3 million refugees sought asylum in the European Union over the past year, 4.4 million did so in sub-Saharan Africa. Additionally, the continent holds 19.5 million “people of concern” to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (Hasan 2016). That point brings us to the second point of this paper surrounding the future of the pan Africanist project: the continent needs to get its own house in order. Countries on the continent need to work smarter as well as harder on creating conditions in which their citizens have no urgent incentive to emigrate, but rather, can participate

in a productive and growing society that attracts other investment. According to Zelinsky's Hypothesis of the Mobility Transition, "processes of modernisation and economic development have historically coincided with increasing rural-to-urban migration followed by a subsequent increase in emigration. When societies become wealthy emigration decreases and immigration increases, leading to a mobility or migration transition, in which countries gradually transform from countries of net emigration into countries of net immigration" (Flahaux and De Haas 2016, 17). South Africa is a useful case study in this regard. While the inflow of other Africans signals its attractiveness as a relatively prosperous economy, the tension lies in that not being the experience of low income South Africans themselves, who find themselves not wanting to "share" what to them is an already sparse landscape of opportunity.

## **Conclusion**

Central to dismantling xenophobia in the South African consciousness and in practice, from communities to all levels of government, is deconstructing the language surrounding "us" and "them." Small Business Development Minister Lindiwe Zulu gave an address in 2014 that consistently referred to "foreigners" and South Africans as two distinct groups in direct competition for customers, transactions, and physical space. In reference to the perceived greater rates of success of migrant spaza shop owners, she said: "They must ask themselves how can they [foreigners] be successful in the same communities [where] others [locals] claim they can't succeed...How are they able to make it when our people can't. It is because they know business. It is in their blood" (Rogerson 2015, 244). This evokes colonial era divide-and-conquer ideologies, in which a group would be made out to be inherently more adept at something, with little to no sense of contextualizing the accurate source of disparities in terms of successfulness. One example is the appointment of the Tutsi in Rwanda as the collaborating class, who were privileged over the Hutu and Twa on the basis of physical features that more closely resembled European ones, such as longer, thinner noses and high cheekbones.

With the rest of the world exhibiting varied forms of Afrophobia by imposing obstacles to traveling, working, and settling abroad, it is highly unnecessary for Africans to impose the same exclusion amongst themselves. Such exclusion is particularly troubling as it signals bad news for the future of pan Africanism. Secession is a phenomenon not new to the African continent: Eritrea, attempts at founding the Republic of Biafra, Somaliland, Western Sahara, and, most recently, South Sudan are prominent examples. The erection of new borders on the continent that already possesses the most is surely a move away from integration and toward a continental culture of nationalism, populism, and othering. Populism is not unique to Africa, however, as evidenced by the election of the 45th United States president, Donald Trump, the vote to exit the European Union and Theresa May's unelected prime ministership, and the possibility of a Le Pen presidency in France. Migration is as human as procreation – we have been doing both since the origin of our species. Poet Teju Cole captures this sentiment in his poem writing:

Moving for economic benefit is itself a matter of life and death. Because money is the universal language, and to be deprived of it is to be deprived of a voice while everyone else is shouting. Sometimes the gun aimed at your head is grinding poverty, or endless shabby struggle, or soul crushing tedium.

Did all sixteen of your great great grandparents live, work, and die in the same town where you now live? If no, then you're a child of migrants.

“OK, but where do we draw the line?” is a question you create in your head to distract you from your human duty to the other. If the line had been drawn in front of you instead of behind, you wouldn’t even be here now, wherever here might be. (Cole 2015)

Fearful reactions to the free movement of people in search of a better life go against the grain of the natural progression of human development. This is not to say that unregulated movement is the solution, as there are very real threats involved in that as well. Terrorism, economic strain, and disease are issues all citizens of the world are concerned about, yet these too can be powerful notions that can incentivize cooperation rather than isolation and exclusion. In the context of Africa, the continent is too pertinent an example of how divide-and-conquer tactics weaken the social, political, and economic strength of states and societies. The South African government and people need to take responsibility for the country’s privileged position as the continent’s second largest economy. South Africa needs to devise comprehensive strategies to enable itself to play a practical and sustainable role in the uplifting of Africa’s people. As the world moves toward nationalism and populism, we must continually and critically reflect on the roots of this movement and dissect the fear and discrimination that drives it, in order to move away from a place in which nationality dictates the extent of one’s entitlement to dignity and humanity.

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