Crucifying the Alien: An interdisciplinary Critique of Xenophobic [Afrophobia] Violence against African Immigrants in South Africa.

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Abstract

The paper explores the ancient roots and contemporary dynamics of persistent xenophobic violence against immigrants in South Africa. The violence specifically targets African nationals, a phenomenon which has come to be theorised as Afrophobia. We argue that the foundation of this violence stems from the apartheid era, which institutionalised a culture where force and aggression served as the primary means to silence perceived political antagonists. Despite the persistence of these targeted attacks, scholars within philosophy and religion remain reluctant to engage with localised, non-state violence. In order to address this gap, we combine a philosophical and religious framework to analyse the socio-political, moral, and ideological dimensions of violence against fellow Africans. From a philosophical standpoint, we interrogate historical validations of violence, engaging liberal thinkers and Enlightenment perspectives on the French Revolution. In the same light, we apply *Ubuntu* ethics to evaluate human dignity, community, and ethical relationality. And, from a religious standpoint scrutinise the interplay between faith and hostility, questioning whether violence is innate to religion, at the same time drawing on biblical perspectives that frame scripture as a narrative of migrants. By fusing Christian theology with *Ubuntu*, the paper proposes a rounded inquiry of xenophobic violence and offers home-grown ethical solutions aimed at curbing Afrophobic attacks, and thereby promoting peaceful coexistence in South Africa.

Keywords: Xenophobia, Afrophobia, Ubuntu, Christianity, Violence

Introduction

In this paper, we argue that the major cause of the recurrent violent attacks on immigrants in South Africa can be traced back to the apartheid era. It is our conviction that a 'culture' of violence was created during the apartheid era whereby the use of force and violence silenced perceived political dissidents. Interestingly, the violence has deliberately targeted Africans and no other races, which in some circles has been labelled as Afrophobia. We then argue that, in light of the recurring violent attacks in South Africa, philosophy and religion as social science disciplines should offer their expertise and guidance in the quest to understand the phenomenon of violence. The two disciplines must proffer solutions that lead to the minimisation or curbing of violent attacks on immigrants in South Africa. On religion, we limit ourselves to Christianity and in philosophy, we will interrogate this violence using the African home-grown theory of *Ubuntu* to avoid generalisations.

Religion and philosophy have always been part of humanity. The questions we attempt to answer are: How are the relevant social, religious, political and moral questions raised by violence impacting society? Can violence be justified? How do we engage liberal philosophers such as John Locke and John Stuart Mill who support forms of war and colonialism, an inherently violent project? How do perceptions of the Enlightenment philosophers of the French Revolution [a violent eruption] a major event in the realisation of reason in the world? On the other hand, we also note with concern that there have been, and still are, misunderstandings and difficulties when it comes to understanding the relationship that exists between religion and violence. It has long been argued that most acts of violence seem to be exacerbated by religion. Is there sufficient basis to suppose that violence is inherent to religion? The Bible has been regarded in some circles as a "book of migrants" [Ex. 22:21; Dt. 14:21; 15:3; 32:8; Eph. 2:19; Phil. 3:20]. The other issue that we grapple with is the reluctant nature of philosophy and religion to deal with problems of violence. We note with concern that the only time that philosophers and specialists of religion attempted to look at the problem is when the discipline focuses on specific types of violence such as terrorism, torture and war. Nonetheless, today we continue to experience new forms of violent attacks on immigrants, as in the case of South Africa. The paper calls for a comprehensive and holistic analysis of the causes of violence against immigrants from a philosophical and religious perspective.

1. Conceptual Analysis

In this section, we try to understand the concept of violence and xenophobia vis-à-vis Afrophobia. Violence has been broadly defined by the World Health Organisation [WHO] as "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation [as cited in Krug et al, 2002:6]. In their analysis of this definition, Krug et al. al [2002:6] note that WHO associates intentionality with the committing of the act itself, irrespective of the outcome it produces. Thus, the definition excludes unintentional incidents. The inclusion of the word 'power' and the phrase 'use of physical force' broadens the nature of a violent act and expands the conventional understanding of violence to include those acts that result from a power relationship, including threats and intimidation [2002:6]. The 'use of power' also serves to include neglect or acts of omission in addition to the more obvious violent acts of commission.

World Health Organisation developed a typology of violence that characterised the different types of violence and the links formed between them. In this characterisation, violence is divided into three broad categories, that is, self-directed, interpersonal, and collective violence [Krug et al. al, 2002:6]. Self-directed violence is subdivided into suicidal behaviour and self-abuse. Interpersonal violence can be in the form of family and intimate partner violence or community violence [Krug et al. al, 2002:6]. The former is violence that takes place between family members and intimate partners, though it is not exclusively confined to homes. The latter, however, is violence between individuals who are unrelated and who may or may not know each other, generally taking place outside the home [Krug et al. al, 2002:6]. The final category is that of collective violence, which is committed by larger groups of individuals or states. These crimes are motivated by a need for social, religious, technological, political or economic transformation [Krug et al. al, 2002:6]. Such violence as crimes of hate committed by organised groups, terrorist acts and mob violence are types of violent crimes aimed at advancing particular social agendas. Religious and political violence includes war and related violent conflicts, state violence and similar acts carried out by larger groups. Economic violence includes attacks by larger groups motivated by economic gain [2002:6]. Violence therefore manifests itself in different forms.

This paper is more concerned about collective violence as it is reflective of xenophobic attacks, which are crimes of hate committed by the community or mob to drive a social change. Post-apartheid South Africa has witnessed these acts of violence by local communities, groups or mobs targeted at foreign nationals or outsiders, especially Africans. The attack can be verbal, physical and economic. What exactly is xenophobia? For Wimmer [2007:66], 'xeno' means 'stranger' or 'foreign', and 'phobia' means fear. Mlilo and Masago [2019:2] define xenophobia as any acts of violence targeted at foreign nationals or "outsiders" because

of their being foreign strangers. They further indicate that it is an explicit targeting of outsiders for violent attacks despite other material, political, cultural, religious, and social forces that might be at play [2019:2]. Shindondola [2003:6] understood xenophobia as "a bitter outcome of the exertion of collective identity. This identity is characterised by the dominant ethnic, religious, economic and political demands". Yakushko [2009:44] considers xenophobia "as a form of attitudinal, affective, and behavioural prejudice toward immigrants and those perceived as foreigners".

The main characteristics of these violent attacks in South Africa include murder, assaults, looting, robbery, arson attacks, verbal attacks, displacement and threat of violence [2019:2]. Xenophobia leads to various forms of discrimination against foreigners and strangers, even though these foreigners are of the same skin colour as the local inhabitants. This is how we possibly have to understand violence in South Africa [especially xenophobia], where indigenous South Africans were exposed to inhuman brutality from the apartheid regime in their fight for freedom. Colonialism and apartheid created a condescending image of Africans, which some Africans have gladly worn. South Africans were locked away from their African neighbouring folks who made sacrifices for the liberation of South Africans. The lock-away resulted in traumatic cultural genocide as witnessed in many nations that experienced slavery, colonisation and the recent neo-imperialistic machinations. Had South Africans been liberated first ahead of other Africans, would they have used their haven and liberated African zone to liberate other Africans against colonialism? Violence has therefore become innate and criminal even against their African brothers and sisters; surprisingly, the xenophobic violence has spared non-African races. This, however, has prompted some scholars to argue that these attacks should not be termed 'xenophobia' but instead 'Afrophobia' [Black-on-Black conflict and violence directed at African nationals], a new form of racism [Hickell 2014 and Tafira 2011].

We, however, agree with the views of these scholars that the befitting name of these attacks is Afrophobia and not xenophobia. The Xenowatch reported that by the 31st of December 2018 they had recorded 529 xenophobic violence incidents that resulted in 309 deaths; 901 physical assaults, 2193 shops looted and over 100,000 people displaced [Mlilo and Misago 2019:2]. However, this is not to mean that these xenophobic and Afrophobic attacks are peculiar to South Africa since even Eastern and Western Europe also recorded and documented racist, xenophobic and Afrophobic crimes in countries such as Russia, China, Israel, Malaysia, Denmark, Germany, Greece, France, Ireland, Finland and the United Kingdom. The same xenophobic attacks have been reported in the United States of America.

2. Causes of Violent Behaviour vis-à-vis Xenophobic Attacks

We acknowledge that there is a plethora of literature on the causes of xenophobic attacks. These theories have tried to explain the causes of violence from different perspectives such as psychological, religious, anthropological, political economy, etc. However, we argue that most of these theories are developed in societies that are individualistic in nature. In South Africa, the major cited causes of xenophobia range from jealousy of foreigners' business success [Khosa and Kalatanyi 2014] to the allegations that foreigners were stealing South African women [Mnyaka 2003]; or that they accept below minimum wages [Nyamnojoh 2006]; or that they were stealing their jobs [Steinberg 2010; Tebeli & Mutelo 2023]. We believe that some of the solutions to xenophobia in Western societies, which are buttressed on individualism, may not be applicable in Africa in general and South Africa in particular, whose people are guided by principles of communalism inherent in the ethics of *Ubuntu*. We, however, hasten to say that this is not to romanticise the theory of *Ubuntu*. We do acknowledge that the theory has its own weaknesses, but we believe most of the weaknesses of the theory are as a result of colonialism bastardising and diluting the African culture which had its foundations in communalism. This can also be related to Christianity, which has a following amongst South Africans and their use of the Bible that calls for peaceful co-existence with others, especially immigrants. According to Edwards [2007], the Bible speaks much more about the treatment of immigrants, that is, the treatment of the stranger, the sojourner, or foreign resident in our midst, than it does about immigration policies that govern the influx of immigrants. We have biblical texts that focus on how strangers and aliens must be treated. We have the following selected texts:

Leviticus 19:33-34, which says,

> *When an alien lives with you in your land, do not mistreat him. The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native-born.*

Exodus 22:21, which says,

> *Do not mistreat an alien or oppress him, for you were aliens in Egypt.*

It is such texts that South Africans [most of whom are Christians] use to find them wanting when it comes to how they treat immigrants. The Bible and the moral law are against mistreatment or oppression of foreigners. Both the Old and New Testaments overwhelmingly affirm the ethic of hospitality to all people, including those in power, to immigrants. Foreign residents or Gentiles of ancient Israel enjoyed the same obligations to the community as Jews by being exhorted to share part of their agricultural produce with foreigners and the downtrodden every third year. This included aliens, Levites, orphans and widows [Dt. 14:28-29; 16: 9-15]. Christians find inspiration in texts that remind them as 'strangers and aliens" in this world [Eph. 2:19; Phil. 3:20] and citizens of heaven. Everything is viewed as passing, and our contact is depicted as contributing to our eligibility in heaven. Furthermore, when looking at crimes committed in the name of religion, we try to ascertain whether it is possible to distinguish the 'Church' that cannot sin from the 'sons and daughters' of the Church who committed atrocities in misguided zeal? Is violence inherent to religion? In Christian circles, the Bible seems ambivalent to issues of violence. Therefore, the Bible provides a rich source of anti-violent themes, humanist ideals and descriptions of idyllic peace and justice [Hassner and Aran, 2013:3]. The same Bible promotes crossings into other people's borderlands [Dt 10: 18-19; Heb 13:2; Ex 12:49; Mt 25: 35-40; Lev 19:33-34; Dt 27:19; Rom 12:13].

On the other hand, the Bible is a remarkably militant text that includes an extraordinary rage of aggressive themes and models, often confusing and contradictory. In the case of foreigners or immigrants or aliens who find themselves being segregated against or being placed under different obligations when it comes to what is regarded as "clean" food for the chosen ones and "unclean food" [Dt. 14:21] or non-exemptions from debts as foreigners [Dt. 15:3]. For example, Jewish law allowed Jews to sell or give unclean food or dead animals to foreigners, which possibly could have put foreigners or aliens in danger of disease. So in this case, violence is evidently evoked in the image of God, his treatment of humanity, the manner in which he demands to be worshipped, and the rules he sets forth for social control [Hassner and Aran, 2013:3]. Violence is also apparent in the chronicles of the Israelites, which are replete with war, genocide, and internecine conflict, as well as in prophecies that envision a turbulent end times [Hassner and Aran, 2013:3]. The Hebrew God is a "Lord of Hosts", vengeful and militant, who ruthlessly kills individuals, annihilates groups, and punishes humanity with plagues, brutal wars, and natural disasters [Hassner and Aran, 2013:3]. Just as in the case of xenophobic attacks, God commands killing on a 'chauvinist' basis: His chosen people are instructed to implement his fury, violent and segregative against inferior peoples that are accursed from conception, like the Ishmaelites, Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites. It is not surprising that Boers used biblical violent texts to justify their superiority and access to resources over and against indigenous people. The element of superiority seems to define indigenous South Africans against fellow African nationals. The economic hierarchy defines their social and political contact.

In 2008, xenophobic attacks in South Africa left more foreign nationals dead. Fearing for their lives, many African immigrants settled in refugee camps ready to return to their countries of origin. The South African nation has experienced violence with xenophobic undertones for decades, but current waves in 2008 and 2018 have seen increased levels of intensity that targeted Africans. The South African government did not do much to protect African immigrants from vigilante groups who moved around or ran around half naked, moving from shop to shop claiming to deal with illegal immigrants. Vigilante groups usurped the powers of government and police, trying to determine who is documented or not documented. As a result, even documented immigrants were told to pack and go. In the end, South Africa will lose out as many people who went for studies in South Africa will withdraw, and this will promote white monopoly and capital. King [2012:554] describes violence, on one hand, as a condition of nature and on the other hand as a consequence of a damaged psyche. The violent attacks are a result of a psyche that was damaged during apartheid cha-

racterized by racial domination and exploitation of black people, at the same time safeguarding the interests of the colonisers. Pityana [1999:143] notes that apartheid was aimed at making sure that, "Africans should have a doubtful sense of identity and self-respect; their cultural systems and values were subordinated and marginalised in the land of their birth". Gobodo-Madikizela [2003:6] in his description of South Africa notes that, "every black South African has lived a life shaped by violence and the memories of Apartheid". Following these narratives and the violent xenophobic attacks, we are left wondering if indeed South Africans have gone past apartheid. Colonialism perpetuated attitudes of anti-blackness that are being witnessed in post- apartheid South Africa.

Margargee [as cited in King 2012:557] in his algebra of aggression explains how formerly 'over controlled' assaultive people, who are characterised by massive inhibitions against expressing or enacting aggressive feelings, overcome those inhibitions against expressing or enacting aggressive feelings, overcome those inhibitions and commit astonishing acts of violence. Applying this to South Africa, Kynoch [2016:65] argues that white minority rule in the country was maintained through different forms of violence. For him, controlling and exploiting the black population required an extensive and interlinked bureaucratic, judicial and coercive apparatus that directly subjected black South Africans to state violence and marginalisation [2016:65]. Kynoch [2016:65] further notes that the maintenance of white security and privilege fostered violence within many black communities, including crime, vigilantism, and communal conflict. It is only normal to expect that with the demise of apartheid these violent tendencies would also end, but alas that is not the case with democratic South Africa.

South African nationals' experiences during apartheid play a pivotal role in these recurrent xenophobic attacks. Landau [2005:9] argues that South Africa's long history of racial politics and stratification has had an important effect on how citizens perceive non-nationals. As Morris [1998:21] notes, in the pre-1994 era, the apartheid government imposed strict pass laws on the black population, causing movement restrictions effectively limiting South Africans' ability to mix, accommodate one another or tolerate differences amongst themselves and foreigners. Harris [2001:70] argues that the experience of oppression during apartheid, especially by black nationals, seems to have resulted in the mistrust and suspicion of outsiders. Force was used to maintain apartheid, thereby creating a 'culture of violence'. Harris [2001:14] describes it as a situation in which social relations and interactions are governed through violence, rather than non-violent means; a culture where violence is proffered as a normal, legitimate solution to problems. Following this line of thought, Misago et al [2009:10] attribute the present-day culture of communal violence and xenophobia to the apartheid era's brutal governance system. According to them;

> *During the Apartheid era, the threat of violence, whether 'vertical' [State against citizens] or 'horizontal' [citizens or rival political and social factions against each other], saturated the lives of South Africans residing in the volatile, tightly policed townships…. The effects of this historic fabric can be seen in the recent xenophobic attacks, when violence was justified by reference to the politics of housing and employment allocation as well as defending access to 'our women', and where criminal opportunism in some cases masqueraded under the evidently more acceptable guise of anti-foreign initiatives [2009:10].*

Julius Malema, in his apology to fellow Africans on xenophobia, indicates that fellow Africans should forgive the South Africans who were made to believe that they were better than Africa by their colonisers [YouTube]. The challenges go back to the African problem of slavery, colonialism, hunger, scarcity, war and theft, which are usually associated with Africans. Indigenous South Africans use the same colonial and imperialist template to regard and take immigrants as exclusively Africans and not other races. Black African South Africans suffer from Stockholm syndrome, where they love their former tormentors, who are whites who control 70% of the South African land, and they do not want Africans, hence Afrophobia. The Afrophobia led to violence, murder and repatriation of fellow Africans. The psychology of the oppressed is that they fear the oppressor so much that they resort to taking each other out as blacks or Africans, resulting in psychological alienation and sickness. Africans are the vandalised lot in terms of soul and spirit, which got removed from the African space. The African cultural software has been uploaded with pro-Western data where the colonial knee continuously sits on the neck of Africans and is celebrated. The loss of land gave birth to perennial violence that targets Africans as victims. So xenophobia, as the fear of the foreigner who is white, does not exist in South Africa, but the big problem is that of Afrophobia where Africans murder each other at the base

[Mngxitama]. The issue of Africans as migrants in Africa is a white construct meant to alienate Africans from their soil and spaces of life. The issue of borders is a foreign narrative that is used to exploit Africans as cheap labour in South Africa from neighbouring nations looking for jobs that are lowly paid ahead of locals whose services are perceived as expensive. On the other side, Africans from neighbouring nations see themselves as hardworking fellows, hence the reason why they get employed ahead of indigenous South Africans. The issue of borders is a white capital narrative where White settlers or Westerners do not fit in the Western template of immigrants. In fact, the Western imperialist template views white foreign nationals as employers and creators of employment and job opportunities. African immigrants are portrayed as criminals, dogs and thieves of opportunities. Apartheid cultivated the 'culture of violence' and violence against "blackness" and "Africanness" in the minds of the South Africans.

Malema invokes the ethics of *Ubuntu* and argues that Africans are not inherently violent, but are hospitable people and welcoming to strangers and foreigners [Youtube]. These xenophobic attacks are remnants of the violence that transpired during apartheid and are alien to the African people who are guided by their principles of *Ubuntu*. The theory of *Ubuntu* emphasises togetherness expressed by Mbiti [1969:108-9] as follows:

> *Only in terms of other people does the individual become conscious of his being, his own duties, his privileges and responsibilities towards himself and towards other people. When he suffers, he does not suffer alone, but with the corporate group; when he rejoices, he rejoices not alone but with his kinsmen, his neighbours and his relatives whether dead or living. When he gets married, he is not alone, neither does the wife "belong" to him alone, so also the children belong to the corporate body of kinsmen, even if they bear only their father's name. What happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual. The individual can only say "I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am". This is the cardinal point in the understanding of the African view of man.*

If 'I am because we are' is the golden rule of African personhood, yet Afrophobia negates African identity. What is happening in South Africa is self-negating and self-defeating when Africans fight or mistreat fellow Africans, which is a danger to African unity. It is a psychological catastrophe where the self tries to survive by destroying the roots of the 'we' that allows it to exist in the first place. For Desmond Tutu [2000:31], *Ubuntu* is, "…the essence of being human. It speaks of the fact that my humanity is caught up and is inextricably bound up in yours. I am human because I belong. It speaks about wholeness; it speaks about compassion". Also, Samkange and Samkange [1980:30] define hunhu/ubuntu as, "the attention one human being gives to another: kindness, courtesy, and friendliness in the relationship between people, a code of behaviour, an attitude to other people….". Speaking of relationships, Tempels [1959:29] argues that, created beings for the Bantu preserve a bond with one another, an intimate ontological relationship. For him, the world of forces was held together like a spider's web of which no single thread could be caused to vibrate without shaking the whole network. Hence, to be is to be connected. A person is not a self-contained island [Gwara & Mutelo 2025]. Gyekye [1992:104] buttresses this by arguing that, "a person is not a palm tree that he should be self-complete or self-sufficient". His or her identity, power, and survival depend entirely on maintaining harmonious relationships in the community. Isolation in this kind of framework is non-existence. An individual or group of individuals exhibiting hatred and violence towards another African is the pathway to isolating themselves from the web of forces. This separation does not preserve their power, but it diminishes their vital force. Thus, Afrophobia ought to be understood as a form of self-weakening or 'spiritual suicide'; the act of attacking the "other", the people of South Africa, inherently drains their own life force. They fail to realise that in the cosmic web, to crush your brother is to chop off the very wire supplying power to yourself.

To further buttress that xenophobic attacks are un-African, we note that the causes of these attacks cited above, that is, jealousy, stealing of jobs and women, accepting of below minimum wages, are not sustainable to a people who are guided by a theory which encourages its individuals to be able to be welcoming, hospitable, warm and generous and willing to share. Yet most of the African immigrants created employment for the South Africans. As Koenane [2018:2] notes;

> *Such people are open and available to others, are willing to be vulnerable, are affirming of others and do not feel threatened that others are able and good, for they have a proper assurance that comes from knowing that they belong in a greater whole. They know that they are diminished when others are humiliated, diminished when others are*

oppressed and diminished when others are treated as if they were less than who they are.

The theory of *Ubuntu* guides the African people and emphasises respect for human dignity, hospitality, empathy, compassion and forgiveness among others. Explaining the African understanding of human dignity, Metz [2010:93] believes that it is a superlative non-instrumental value devoid of social construction. For Molefe [2020:814], dignity is the capacity to show moral sympathy towards the lives of others. All these African values emphasise the intrinsic value of all members of the community; immigrants included. The principles of *Ubuntu* are in sync with the teachings of Christianity. The principles, however, cannot be reconciled with Afrophobic violence that South Africa has witnessed, where people are tortured, and some are burnt alive. In support of the value of respect for human dignity, Teffo [1997:55] argues that;

The essence of man in Ubuntu or African humanism lies in the recognition of man as man, before financial, political, and social factors are taken into consideration. Man is an end in himself and not a means. He is a touchstone of value.

Hospitality is anchored upon the belief that a visitor does not exhaust food reserves. The proverb *mweni haapedzi dura* [a visitor does not exhaust the granary] best explains the rationale behind the African form of hospitality [Mandova and Chingombe 2013:103]. *Ubuntu* also emphasises togetherness, which is realised through empathy. This means taking up the burden for other people. This is expressed in the Shona proverb: *varume kutsva kwendebvu vanodzimurana* [men are all the same when their beards burn, they help each other to extinguish the fire] [Mandova and Chingombe 2013:102]. This proverb brings to the fore the idea that a person through *Hunhu/Ubuntu* should be in a position to be empathetic towards others. It is the feeling that should be exhibited among the people. People feel for others. Being able to feel for the other is the grounding good in *Hunhu/Ubuntu* ethics. Commenting on compassion, Mangayi [1983:49] says;

This quality of compassion has a lot to do with African humanism as people in various parts of the continent have lived it. Compassion, reaching out to others, is what this humanism is about: you are enlarged and increased when you go out of yourself. I am attracted to an existence in which people treat each other as human beings and not simply as instruments or tools, where people become committed to one another without necessarily having to declare such commitments. When the chips are down, it is compassion which makes it possible for others to rise to the occasion. Compassion integrates and binds people together.

Also, African communal relationships are based on reciprocity. The rationale in African worldviews is that *kandiro kanopfumba kunobva kamwe* [people are willing to give to those who give]; *kupa kuturika* [to give is to bank] and *kupa chipavhurire uchakodzwa* [giving opens good relations] [Mandova and Chingombe 2013:103]. *Hunhu/Ubuntu* enables people to take care of others. The Ndebele say *unyawo akalmpululo* [the foot has no rest], meaning people are constantly mobile [2013:103]. From this background, Africans believe that a person may find themselves in situations where they are also strangers or visitors. No one should look down upon others or despise others regardless of their social status. Finally, *Ubuntu* puts emphasis on forgiveness, and the people demonstrate a great capacity for forgiveness. As Kaunda [1980:179] argues, "If there is one thing the African people are supremely good at, it is forgiving their enemies." Forgiveness is believed to be necessary for the restoration of the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator.

3. Can Violence be ever Justified?

In philosophical circles, violence can only be understood in line with the philosophers' views on war. It is against this understanding that we will consider different views by different philosophers who justified wars, revolutions, and events that are characterized with violent acts. For John Locke, reason teaches the maturing individual to respect others' rights to their freedom and the extent to which an aggressor ought to be punished- "so far as reason and conscience dictate" [www.iep.utm.edu/locke]. In his writings, Locke's moral absolutism and even Old Testament ethic resurface-murderers and thieves deserve death, for a man has a right to destroy that which threatens his life. According to Locke, individuals possess the right of retaliation and defence against aggressors, who, by initiating force, thereby introduce a state of war, an unjustifiable

condition of violence and inequality that leads to enslavement [www.iep.utm.edu/locke]. The Old Testament also confirms the same attitude of retaliation in the case of being provoked. It confirms and celebrates violence [Gen.19:24-25; Ex. 12:29-32, 32:25-29; Josh 6:25, 7; Numb 21:1-3; Judg. 1:4-7, 1:25-2:3; 1 Sam 15; 1 Kings 18:39-40; 2 Kings 2:23-25; Dt 9:5, 12:31, 20:16-18]. It is only Jesus' ethics where we find retaliation and defence against aggressors being condemned or not encouraged [Mt 5:21-27]. Jesus encourages the victim of violence to work towards peace to the extent of accepting being harassed and tortured but not fighting back. For Verhey [1984], the Jesus ethic included the love command (part of righteousness) as a golden rule which is valid in its entirety. The love ethic defines righteousness as one for personal relations and the other for social relations, which applies to the whole life for all would-be Christians. Boring and Craddock [2004] add that Jesus ethics are not only touching on the physical deed but the intention of the heart. Any deed that endangers other human beings is unacceptable when read in the frame of Jesus' ethics, especially all forms of 'phobias'. But can a man be said to lose his rights if he aggresses against another? Hobbes thought that a man possessed an inalienable right to self-preservation, such that if he were to be executed [justly for murder, say] he would still possess the right to flee [www.iep.utm.edu/locke]. Furthermore, philosophers such as Hegel and Kant supported the French Revolution catalysed by violent periods of political turmoil. In his *Phenomenology of the French Revolution,* Hegel perceives the revolution as a necessity of the 'historical justice' [Mijuskovic 2012:2]. In *History of Philosophy,* Hegel argues that the revolution is the call for freedom of young years. For him, this is an important moment of freedom against the ruling old institutions [2012:2]. On the other hand, Beck [as cited in Axinn 1971:424], Kant's strong support of the French Revolution was not a matter of a moment's discretion but his constant position for a long time. Over and above all, Kant took the French Revolution to be a step in mankind's approach to the kingdom of ends, to a situation in which there would be perfect dignity and self-determination for every human being.

It is clear from the discussion above that philosophers who justified violence did so on the basis that they viewed it as a legitimate and inevitable right of the oppressed. This is something against the xenophobic or Afrophobic violence in South Africa where the black majority poor attack and kill African poor immigrants. If the xenophobic violence targeted the rich Western owners of capital or rich African business people, it would have been regarded as a revolution by the poor about fair distribution of resources and access to wealth. The xenophobic or Afrophobic violent acts are far from the above. Some critics have argued that the violence is possibly manufactured and managed/controlled by white capitalists in collaboration with African political and religious elites to divert South African indigenous plight of poverty. Thus, Proudhon's radical anarcho-syndicalism conceived the workers' uprising as the total annihilation of the enemy, a goal toward which every form of violence would in principle be justified [Avelar 2004:5]. Marx adds that, for the justification of violence on the basis of the violence upon which the present capitalist order of things was founded [the horrors of past, primitive expropriation and accumulation, duly reproduced in the present]. For him, this offered the definitive rationale for violence in the future. This marks Marxism's ethical basis of the vindication of violence. We can relate this to the liberation struggle violence towards independence in South Africa and Zimbabwe. The case of Mandela and violence meted out on Africans; we can look at forms of apartheid and possible influence on xenophobia in South Africa. Samkange and Samkange [1980:49] note that the former Ndebele king Lobengula, when the whites came into his state and were causing havoc, said: "I will not begin war, I wish to remain at peace, but if I am attacked I shall defend myself". This explained the nature of hospitality that the Ndebele exhibited. However, the whites saw this as a weakness that could be exploited. However, over and above all, the principles of *Ubuntu* will not justify xenophobic attacks, for these tend to dehumanise both the perpetrator and the victim. At best, *Ubuntu* preaches restoration as an attempt to bring peace and mend relations between individuals.

Conclusion

As witnessed above, violence can be justified in some cases and not in others. For the most part, philosophers believe that every individual has a right to self-preservation. Following this line of thought, violence can only be justified in cases when [1] one is responding to aggression [2] one is fighting for freedom from oppression. It is clear from the above two scenarios that neither justifies Xenophobia and Afrophobia as we

have it in contemporary society. The South African nationals are in no way defending themselves against any aggressor; in fact, they are the aggressors against their fellow African immigrants who intend to create inequalities in society, which makes the use of violence unjustifiable. The persecution targeted even those with papers or legally approved to stay in Botswana. Also, in the second case, the South African nationals are in no way oppressed and are not using violence to obtain freedom, so in this case xenophobia and Afrophobia cannot be justified.

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