



**THE IMPACT OF THE XENOPHOBIA PHENOMENON OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AT A SELECTED INSTITUTION OF HIGHER LEARNING IN THE WESTERN CAPE**

by

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## **DECLARATION**

I, MAPOLO MONKHE, declare that the contents of this thesis represent my own unaided work, and that the thesis has not previously been submitted for academic examinations towards any qualification. Furthermore, it represents my own conclusions and not necessarily those of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

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Signed

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Date

## **ABSTRACT**

This study is based upon the understanding that xenophobia has become a contentious issue in South Africa. International migrants have increasingly become victims of xenophobia at the hands of South African citizens. The commitment to shed some light on the nature of xenophobia in South Africa by examining the experiences of international students in a selected institution of higher learning in Cape Town is what has anchored this study. There is, indeed, evidence of some tension between a fraction of the South African population and international migrants from other African countries. Examining the experiences of international students and their views about xenophobia, the study concluded that the country's segregated history was a contributing factor to the negative behavior of citizens towards non-citizens.

International students have the potential to strengthen both the development of South African institutions of higher learning and the economy at large, they are, however, regarded as being here to disrupt the social order. Even though all international students share the same sense of need to meet and get along with others in the new country, African students endure special difficulties. For, whatever unfortunate reasons, most institutions of higher learning seem not to be doing much to enlighten their local students about other African countries, cultures and histories. Students from elsewhere in Africa often find their South African classmates to be rather uninformed when it comes to appreciating their heritage. This lack of knowledge often sets the stage for xenophobic sentiments between the locals, international migrants in general and international students in particular.

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my mother, Motshidisi Sarah Monkhe, for always believing in me and her unconditional love and support.

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## **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Although the contemporary levels of xenophobia may be alarming, the phenomenon is certainly far from new, being a central theme in twentieth-century world history. According to Babbie & Mouton (2008:33) the immigration is likely to be a major concern in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries for decades to come and that the increase of nativism signals the need for greater understanding of how immigrants can be integrated into host societies. The circumstance in which xenophobia arises represents a combination of socio-economic and political conditions, necessitating the comprehension of the specifics of individual contexts of contemporary prejudice. Such knowledge is crucial for the formulation of effective policies for the reduction of xenophobia. Creswell (2007:185) states that public education is an essential component of policies aimed at facilitating social justice for immigrant minorities. As much as it is widely recognised to be essential, there is little discussion as to what exactly public education should set out to achieve and how this might be approached.

According to Harris (2010:10) racism, xenophobia and related intolerance continue to thrive in Southern Africa just like the rest of world. The effects of globalisation, economic hardship, migration, ethnic conflict and the plight of indigenous people affect many, if not all, countries in the region. Issues relating to education, access to services, disparate economic status, autonomy and problems arising from migration are among the manifestations of racism and xenophobia in South Africa. Bosch & Peucker (2008:90) state that the notion of xenophobia is not a strange or new phenomenon, it is largely based on unfounded or unverified fears, and the inclination to stereotype foreigners as the cause of social and economic problems in a host country. Along with this, comes a fear or distrust of anything associated with foreigners such as their culture, language and religion. Delport & Strydom, (2009:265) attest that xenophobia has been experienced in many countries across the globe. Poverty and lack of

employment opportunities provide drive factors that motivate migration. Civil War has resulted in many people leaving their country of origin and fleeing across the borders with the hope of securing safety and a better life.

The issue with xenophobia in South Africa is that, it exists and is on the increase. It is not only people who are illegal in the country who get to experience this phenomenon, but also those who are in the country lawfully, like students. Currently, there is not much research focusing on the experiences and emotions of immigrant students in South Africa. This study will contribute by exploring the nature and scale of xenophobia directed towards international students and also provides further insight into the

## **1.2 Clarification of basic terms and concepts**

### **1.2.1 Xenophobia**

According to Wimmer (2007:66) 'Xeno' means "stranger" or "foreigner", and "phobia" means "fear". The word "xenophobia", therefore, means "irrational fear and dislike of foreigners or strangers. Creswell (2006:185) supports that xenophobia is defined as "an intense dislike or fear of strangers or people from other countries". Thus, xenophobia is seen as a deep dislike of foreigners or foreign things. Xenophobia is further defined by Azindow (2007:98) as discrimination towards foreigners or strangers. This is manifested in individuals who could be, for instance, the same colour as the local inhabitants. In South Africa, local black inhabitants blame foreign black individuals who are in the country (either legally or illegally) for taking their jobs, resulting in discriminatory practices that lead to violence and aggression towards foreigners.

The phenomenon of xenophobia would, therefore, point to a dislike of foreigners by nationals. According to Shindondola (2008:56) this fear has turned itself into a severe tension and violence by South Africans towards foreigners. For the purpose of this study, the term 'xenophobia' will be used to signify attitudes of dislike and fear as well as violent actions towards foreigners.

### **1.2.2 Impact**

Bekker & Carlton (2008:45) declare that impact is not what happens to a man but rather "it is what a man does with what happens to him". Impact involves something personally significant or meaningful that involves the whole person not just the person's intellect but also his or her senses, feelings and personality. Impact refers to the nature of the events that someone or something has undergone. Azindow (2007:45) further states that impact is what is happening to us all the time, as long as we exist. Impact, used in the present tense, refers to the subjective nature of one's current existence. Humans have a myriad of expressions, behaviours, language, and emotions that characterise and convey our moment to moment experiences. Impact, used in the past tense, refers to the accumulated product (or residue) of past experiences.

For the purpose of this research, the term 'impact' will refer to firsthand knowledge of states, situations, emotions, or sensations the accumulation of knowledge or a skill that result from the direct participation in events or activities. Someone able to recount an event he/she witnessed or took part in has "first hand experience". Participation may be through observing something or some event gained through involvement in or exposure to that thing or event.

### **1.2.3 International students**

According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2008:165) international students are those students who travel from their countries of origin to a country different from their own for the purpose of tertiary study. Despite that, the definition of international or foreign students varies from country to country in accordance with their own national education system. According to Hoffman & Karlotto (2009:14) a person who qualifies as an international or foreign student in South Africa is anyone who is not a South African citizen, not a permanent resident or does not have a diplomatic exemption.

### **1.3 Statement of the problem**

The Human Sciences Research Council in its studies conducted in 2008, has confirmed that South Africa is an extremely xenophobic society and this is confirmed by a number of research studies utilising methodologies allowing for international comparison. In a study conducted by the University of the Witwatersrand (2010:178) 64.8% of the respondents thought it would be a positive thing if most African refugees and migrants left the country. Xenophobia related sentiments have increasingly been more disturbing and alarming with subtle forms, public servants are victimising refugees, asylum seekers and even those South Africans whom they mistake for foreigners when they go to places such as hospitals and police stations to go get services.

According to Harris (2010:120) these three main reasons account for foreigners leaving their countries to settle in South Africa: lack of job opportunities in their home countries, the desire to pursue studies in South Africa and fear of political persecution. Cilliers (2008:65) further states that the majority of South Africans currently believe that immigration and migration impact unfavorably on the country with nearly 70% believing that foreigners weaken the society and the economy, and over 60% are of the opinion that they put a strain on South African resources.

Fear of crime, diseases, stealing of jobs and shortage of resources are the leading reasons given for opposing immigration. Xenophobia seems to be triggered by a fight for scarce resources and resentment towards immigrants who are supposedly taking jobs, houses, women, spreading diseases and committing crimes. An article in the Star newspaper (26 June 2008) indicated that people living in informal settlements are dissatisfied with their lot in life and it is in these areas that the outbreak of xenophobic violence begins. Babbie & Mouton (2008:113) state that it is the marginalised communities that suffer real deprivation from rising food and transportation costs, while the price of their labour is undercut by the services of illegal immigrants and refugees.

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#### **1.4 Ethical Consideration**

The participants that will take part in the research will receive an informed consent agreement that explains the voluntary nature of the research, assuring them that the questionnaire will detail the anonymity of the subject and as it will be stated upon completion of the questionnaire. The participant can express written consent to have his/her anonymous information that will be shared in the author's thesis. Sensitive information such as the names of the participants or which faculty do they belong to will not be included in the thesis.

#### **1.5 Background to the research study**

Civil wars and violence have resulted in many people leaving their countries of origin and fleeing across borders with the hope of securing safety and a better life. Post-apartheid South Africa symbolises freedom and prosperity, a safe haven from war, a sanctuary away from poverty. South Africa is seen as a country with economic opportunities and promise hence it has attracted millions of immigrants from Africa, which some are here to attain better education, skills and knowledge at various universities and universities of technology around the country.

Xenophobia generally is accepted as the fear or dislike of foreigners. The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines xenophobia as a "morbid of foreigners". For the purpose of this research, the concept of xenophobia will relate to any hostility or negative behaviour or attitude towards international students of the selected institution.

According to Wimmer (2007:211) since the advent of democracy in South Africa in 1994, this hostility or intolerance towards non-nationals has increased since all it takes to identify immigrants or international students is through their physical features, distinct dress and inability to speak an indigenous language.

### **1.6 Type of study**

Thomas (2009:73) states that the two accepted approaches to research are qualitative and quantitative models. The research study will be conducted using the qualitative approach. Qualitative exploratory research by means of an anonymous questionnaire will be conducted to collect data.

As defined by Creswell (2007:264) a phenomenological study is a study that “seeks to understand people’s perceptions, perspectives and understanding of a particular situation”. The phenomenological study as the research design is appropriate within the realm of qualitative research because this approach describes the meaning of experiences of the phenomenon (xenophobia) for immigrant students. The phenomenological research approach is considered to be the most appropriate to the aim of the study, which is to explore and understand the experiences of international students at a selected institution of higher learning. The study will, therefore, be a general description of the phenomenon of xenophobia as seen through the eyes of people who have experienced it first-hand.

### **1.7 Literature review**

Although xenophobia existed during the apartheid years, it was only after 1994 that it became a visible and serious issue. In the past studies on xenophobia were diverse and wide. Xenophobia in South Africa has been investigated by a number of scholars (Neocosmos 2008; Valji 2003; Handmaker & Parsley 2002). The concept of xenophobia and its implications in South Africa is widely dealt with in the literature for example; Harris (2010:151) identifies three hypotheses to explain this phenomenon in the country. Firstly, the isolation hypothesis explains xenophobia as a result of the larger or



siege mentality developed during apartheid. Secondly, the scapegoat hypothesis blames foreigners for all the ills of the country. Finally, the biocultural hypothesis locates xenophobia at the level of visible difference or otherness, for example, physical, biological features and cultural differences exhibited by African foreigners in the country.

There are also numerous accounts around South Africa of the manifestation of xenophobia. Xenophobic attacks range from name-calling, attacks against homes and businesses of foreigners and even violent attacks which result in death. Bosch & Peucker (2008:132) and Tshitereke (2009:298) have documented that xenophobic attitudes have been portrayed through the media and also by the government officials having investigated at work, while according to Eyber (2008:28) and De Jongh (2009:90) there are acts of violence and abuse against foreigners and other experiences of xenophobia in South Africa.

Shindondola (2008:89) has documented experiences of the African international students in relation to xenophobia. The author records the experiences of international students at the Rand Afrikaans University with regard to xenophobia in the country, while Azindow (2007:56) evaluated the ethical perspective on racism and xenophobia within the global ethos of human rights. Kadima & Karlotto (2005:131) investigate xenophobia in South Africa. The investigation discusses the reasons for and causes of xenophobia in South Africa. Two studies were conducted on xenophobia and foreigners in post-apartheid South Africa by Delport and Strydom (2009:34) and Shindondola (2008:121).

Foreigners are often called names such as *makwerekwere*, which is a derogatory term for foreign individuals who do not understand any of the languages of the country. Stereotypes also play a role in xenophobic behaviors as these labels entail predetermined opinions of a certain group. These labels are held as true and result in prejudicial thinking towards the stereotyped group. For instance, blacks were likened to

children who could not think for themselves. This patriarchal view can be considered to underpin much stereotypical thinking on the African continent. Xenophobia implies behaviour based on the idea that an individual is foreign to, or originates from outside the home community or nation. It is often difficult however, to differentiate between racism and xenophobia as motivations for negative behaviour(s). According to De Jongh (2009:90), xenophobia may be the starting point upon which racism can be constructed. This further confirms that there is a close correlation between the two phenomena. Expressions of xenophobia occur when people of identical physical characteristics, but who have a different culture and/or language, arrive in a community and are discriminated against. It can be concluded that xenophobia falls under the category of modern racism as it concentrates more on cultural than biological difference.

### **1.8 Research question**

In view of the foregoing, the following research question is posed:

What is the impact of xenophobia on international students of a selected institution of higher learning in the Western Cape?

### **1.9 Research purpose**

This study aims to explore the phenomenon of xenophobia as experienced by international students at a selected institution of higher learning in the Western Cape. The research postulates that South Africa's political transition (post 1994) has resulted in new targets (foreigners) and forms (xenophobia) of violence today. It is within this context that international students have been identified as the primary research constituency for this aspect of the research process. In undertaking this research, the intention is to explore the nature and scale of xenophobia directed at international students.

#### **1.9.1 Primary objective**

The primary objective is to determine and explore the experiences of international students in a selected higher institution of learning with regard to the phenomenon of xenophobia.

### **1.9.2 Secondary objectives**

In view of the primary aim, the secondary objectives of this research study are as follows:

- To provide a theoretical analysis on the experience of xenophobia.
- To provide a legislative analysis of the study.
- To conduct a literature research.
- To conduct an empirical research.
- To identify participating students.
- To record and analyse results.

### **1.10 Research design and design**

Research design refers to the design that the researcher will use to perform the research project and indicates the way in which the data will be collected. The purpose of the research design is to ensure that the researcher has the research question in mind and does not deviate from it.

The quantitative research design is usually a gradually developing, extremely flexible design, in which research decisions are made when more information becomes available (Eyber 2008:40). The phenomenological research approach is considered to be the most appropriate to the aim of the study, which is to explore and understand the experiences of international students in the selected institution of higher learning. The study will therefore, be a general description of the phenomenon of xenophobia experienced by international students. Data for this study will be derived from anonymous questionnaires with students who are registered for studies at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. The study will use in-depth, open-ended questionnaire that will advance as the research project proceeds. The questions will be relatively unstructured so as to allow respondents to draw the discussion towards the

tensions and terror experienced and also provide relevant details to allow the researcher to explore and capture what really happened. This is a conscious strategy to avoid imposing any assumptions, such as those expressed by different opinions in previous studies conducted. This research will not focus on the gender or age of the participants. Two sets of questionnaires will be designed, one for the international students and the other for the institution's International Office. According to Creswell (2006:95), qualitative researchers typically become absorbed in the phenomena studied and bear the attitude of appreciation rather than of an expert.

#### **1.10.1 Target population**

The target population is all registered international students studying at the selected institution of higher learning. A sample of students will be drawn and targeted from a pool of international students. The anonymous questionnaire will be sent via e-mail requesting respondents to fill it out.

#### **1.10.2 Sampling method**

Information on the international students will be provided by the university's international office, e-mails will be sent out using student numbers as their addresses. This method will be used until the desired sample size is reached, enough for data to be collected.

The Non-probability sampling will be used for it is suitable for this type of research. In the case of such sampling, researchers seek typical and divergent data. According to Bosch & Peucker (2008:329), qualitative researchers seek out the individuals and settings where the phenomenon being studied most likely exists. The researcher's concern is to find informants who will improve the study by making a unique contribution that will yield information rich with data to the research study.

### **1.10.3 Data collection**

Questionnaires will be answered by willing foreign students as per the sampling frame. The e-mail sent out will request individuals to answer the questionnaire(s) and complete them, upon completion then they should send them back. The e-mail will also explain to the students that they need to participate in the study only if they are comfortable and want to. If they do not want to participate they will be requested to ignore the e-mail. The respondents, in the covering letter to the questionnaire, will be asked not to reveal their identity on the questionnaire. This process is to ensure confidentiality.

### **1.10.4 The questionnaire**

Data will be collected by means of questionnaires. A technique of setting the questionnaires will be established as it is important that a measurement technique is very closely related to known theory and related concepts. If this can be demonstrated, the instrument can be shown to have high construct validity.

The questions in the questionnaire require respondents to indicate their attitude(s) and/or opinions toward South Africans and the respondent's expectations. The questions will be deliberate in that they will be intended to make sense of the stereotypes that individuals in this country have displayed and how these underlying stereotypes influence xenophobic behaviours towards foreigners. The structure of the questionnaire might be as follows: possibly a section for demographic detail, followed by one that looks at the encounter respondents have had of xenophobic treatment, and then possibly followed by the impact of that experience. In another section of the questionnaire respondents will have to indicate the xenophobic attitudes that exist in South Africa.

## **1.11 Research constraints**

### **1.11.1 Limitation**

The limitation of this study is that the results are narrowed down to the experiences of international students from only one institution of higher learning in South Africa.

### **1.11.2 Delimitation**

The research focus will be on the selected institution of higher learning.

## **1.12 Significance of the research**

The study will provide a thorough and well-documented resource available to all those interested in education policy as well as researchers interested in the phenomenon of xenophobia. It will also provide first-hand information, sufficiently inspiring to encourage further research on this topic. The research will contribute to the limited body of literature available on the phenomenon of xenophobia as experienced by international students studying at institutions of higher learning in South Africa.

## **1.13 Pilot test or pilot study**

The primary purpose of the pilot test is to establish whether the subjects understand the questions, ascertain how much time it takes to test each subject and obtain the necessary experience and practice in conducting the interview to the main study sample. Muller (2010:27) maintains that pilot work helps to sort out the more useful and reliable methods and definitions thereby facilitating the final selection by the researcher of those particular methods and definitions which will be used in the main study itself". The purpose of a pilot study is to improve the success and effectiveness of the investigation. Bekker & Carlton (2008:210) asserts that no matter how carefully a data collection instrument is designed, the possibility of errors exists and the "surest protection against such error is pre-testing the instrument". A pilot study is valuable in "refining the wording, ordering, layout, filtering" and in helping to edit the questionnaire or interview schedule to a manageable length Bekker & Carlton (2008:210) to ensure

effectiveness of the interview schedules, they will be administered at the selected institution.

### **1.14 Plan of the study**

The study has been structured as follows:

#### **Chapter One**

Chapter One serves as a short introduction and background study, as well as emphasising the significance of this study thereof. The purpose statement and research approach of the study are also briefly explained.

#### **Chapter Two**

Chapter Two aims at tracing xenophobia from the apartheid era in our country and also looking at other countries that are faced with this phenomenon.

#### **Chapter Three**

Chapter Three looks at the Immigration Act and other Acts of government as to what do they say about immigrants in South Africa. It aims at placing the research in relation to existing studies on immigration and giving an explanation of different immigrants. It also places the subject of the study (international students) in to the research.

#### **Chapter Four**

The chapter deals with the research paradigms and methods used in reaching the objectives of the study. Further it explains the aims of the study, how respondents were chosen, and how data was collected and analysed.

#### **Chapter Five**

This chapter deals with the interpretation of the data and discussing the findings. It also deals with the respondent's reasons for coming to South Africa and the strengths and weaknesses of the study are included at the conclusion of this chapter.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE STUDY**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

South Africa is known to be one of the most culturally diverse nations in the modern world according to Harcourt (2009) Neocosmos (2008) Valji (2003) Handmaker & Parsley (2002). The purpose of this chapter is to first provide the historical background of xenophobia in a general sense in South Africa and then describe xenophobia in other countries. The explanations will provide the contextual background against which the research will be conducted in as well as provide for the substantive development of the research instruments.

#### **2.2 Historical background**

South Africa has always shown traces of xenophobia from as early as 1910; and as time progressed, it had segregation laws such as the Urban Areas Act of 1923 which introduced residential segregation, discriminating against people based on national origin, class, gender and race. Kruger (1969:231) explains that during the Union of South Africa, the white South Africans did everything possible to limit the immigration of non-white immigrants. According to Peberdy (2008:56) the first group of people to fall victim to these restraining immigration policies of the South African government was the Indians. Due to a number of Indians rising in the country during the 1910s, the government prohibited immigrants from entering the country. A lot of the Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe and Germany started coming into the country during the 1920s and 1930s, causing the government to panic and be fearful. During this era of apartheid, the South Africa government started to pass more restrictive policies attempting to restrict the people whom they believed to be threatening their ideology, religion and life style. Hunt, (2008:67) further states that the South African government justified its restrictive policies by saying peaceful co-existence was only possible when different racial/ cultural/ population groups lived apart.

De Haas (2008:76) asserts that racial segregation, apartheid and colonialism are closely linked to South African history. Apartheid ultimately resulted in black-on-black



discrimination (not only white on black discrimination), namely tribalism and xenophobia which has been fuelled by the prevailing paradigm of patriarchy. The findings of Crush (2006:103) stated that there are signs of racial stereotypes in all ethnic groups. South Africans are known to be positively biased towards their own group and negatively biased towards other cultural groups. Crush (2006:104) further states that foreigners mostly came to South Africa to seek employment. They lived with locals in townships, squatter areas or domestic quarters in suburbia ending up being part of the local communities. Due to living with locals, the foreigners ended up having local partners and speaking at least one indigenous language. They dressed and conducted their lifestyle as ordinary township locals, making it almost impossible to be distinguished as foreigners. During the apartheid years, hostility towards the Southern African foreigners was limited.

De Haas (2008:78) notes that although these foreigners were illegal immigrants, the locals welcomed them and did not see them as a threat in taking their jobs or women. However communities and locals saw the apartheid regime as a threat because they believed that it robbed them of a decent quality life, employment and upward mobility, stirring up the emotions of the people to an extent that all their focus went into eliminate apartheid.

Croucher (2009:23) notes that in 1994 South Africa became a democratic state, and like the United States and Western Europe, it is an immigrant receiving country. However, it still faces problems related to politics and policies of immigration. De Haas (2008:154) states that the problems South Africa is still facing regarding immigration, are problems of increased burden on the state welfare system, the tension between locals and foreigners over jobs, the demand of resettling refugees, the scarce economic resources and xenophobia which is both a cause and a consequence of the challenges faced during the apartheid regime.

According to Croucher (2009:119) the Southern African Migration Project, (SAMP) conducted a research in South Africa in 2006 and discovered that the attitude towards xenophobia continued to harden. The research showed that between the years 2002 and 2008, 37% of the participants wanted a total ban on foreigners entering the

country, while three quarters supported electrification of borders. A 72% of the participants wanted non-citizens to carry personal identification with them at all times and 60% supported a policy for foreigners' with HIV/ AIDS deported back home. Croucher (2009:123) further states that only a small number of about 15% supported that migrants can have and enjoy the privilege of basic rights such as legal protection, freedom of movement, police protection and access to social services. A 30% of the population group indicated that they would take matters in their own hands by taking action to prevent migrants from neighboring countries moving into or operating a business in their community. 60% of those interviewed replied by saying they were prepared to combine with others to force foreign nationals to leave their area. Indeed, in the years and months leading up to May 2008, violent attacks on foreign nationals increased and became more common.

### **2.3 Xenophobia in other countries**

Observing other countries that have experienced episodes of xenophobic violence as well as acute discrimination against foreigners. This at all does not suggest that xenophobic violence does not occur in other parts of the world or that it's everywhere this intense. However, these countries from different parts of the world are selected to illustrate that xenophobia is a global problem. The phenomenon experienced in other selected countries is explained hereunder, namely: Malaysia, India, Libya and France.

### **2.4 Malaysia**

According to Brees (2008:299) the Department of Home affairs in Malaysia reported that in the year 1990 the country had documented about 2.1 million migrant workers, although the exact numbers are not known. Malaysia is a country that depends heavily on migration workers and it is known to have a strong economy in the South-East Asia. McLaren (2009:311) states that Malaysia employs migrant workers and use them to do difficult, hard, dangerous and dirty jobs that the citizens reject. Despite migrants doing crucial labor for the economy, Malaysia has no sound immigration policies or immigrant quotas as a result migrants get unfairly treated by unprincipled employers, recruitment

agencies and enforcement authorities. McLaren (2009:367) further notes that the Malaysian country had not formally accepted the International Human Rights instruments for the protection of refugees. Even though refugees were registered by the Union Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) the treatment they received from the immigration authorities was still that of irregular migrants, the People's Volunteer Corps known as RELA and the Itakan Relawan Rakyat abused and controlled irregular migration in Malaysia.

Pererby (2008:26) cited the then Deputy Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Najib in 2005 who attacked the irregular migrants, by stating: "We will take action against anyone who is here illegally, there is no exemption on this including those carrying letters, genuine or otherwise from the UNHCR. If the UNHCR wishes to appeal after these people are arrested, it is up to them but it is up to us whether we accept the appeal or not". According to Brees (2008:213) in 2003 the Malaysian government was found to be at fault by the Human Rights Watch for failing to recognise Indonesians as refugees who had ran away from the operations and martial law in the war-torn Ache province. Johnson & Christensen (2009:233) state that Malaysia, like many other destination countries has not endorsed the International Convention on the Protection of the rights of all migrant workers and their families. By failing to do so, the country was breaking the human rights of both documented and irregular migrants. The Malaysian government went as far as proposing that migrants' workers must be restricted to their kongsi (work place) when they are not working and that they be carefully monitored by authorities when they travel in the country.

The level of intolerance directed towards the irregular migrants who were totally unwelcomed was very harsh. Pererby (2008:44) explains further by saying irregular immigrants who were seized were subjected to bodily punishment like whipping and caning. Irregular migrants would be detained for long periods of time in camps that do not meet the standards recommended by the United Nations.

Malaysian Ambassador Mohammad Taufik, in August 2002 was summoned by the Philippines government to hand over a complaint formally protesting the mistreatment of the irregular Filipina migrants. Johnson & Christensen (2009:234) noted that at a news conference the Philippines Foreign Secretary Blas Ople stressed this point by saying that although their country did not expect 1<sup>st</sup> class or Hilton standard treatment for its citizens in Malaysia, a number of reports had pointed out that the conditions in the Malaysian detention centers were excessively cruel. The Philippines foreign secretary Blas Ople continued to say that their citizens were used as scapegoats for problems such as crime in the Malaysian country and that justified the poor treatment given to them. On an interview Director General of the People's Volunteer Corps (RELA) Zaidon Asmuni made a declaration in newspaper and said: "We have no more Communists at the moment, but we are now facing illegal immigrants. As you know, illegal immigrants are enemy No. 2 in Malaysia following drugs as Enemy no. 1". McLaren (2009:36) states that this belief was likely carried out by all citizens in Malaysia as a RELA volunteer mentioned a similar statement to that of the Director General saying: "These illegal immigrants especially from Indonesia, they always give us a lot of trouble by breaking into our houses, robbing and stealing things". Malaysians were affected and worried about crimes committed by these illegal migrants hence crackdown operations were carried out against illegal immigrants regularly.

Pererby (2008:46) pointed out that the government of Malaysia launched a campaign in 2005 called operation Tegas which means (tough or firm operation) to manage the number of illegal migrants. The Malaysian newspaper called the Daily Express wrote a statement made by Sabah MP Willfed Madius Tangau urging citizens to report the whereabouts of irregular migrants and further saying: "as we celebrate the coming Malaysia Day on September 16, we must stand united in support of the government's efforts in ridding the state of illegal immigrants". During operation Tegas, thousands of Acehnese asylum seekers were caught and detained and many of them were sentenced to a whipping or sent to jail. McLaren (2009:89) added that Minister Fahmi Idris of labour and transmigration in Indonesia on the 28 February 2005 said that there are

100,000 Indonesian irregular migrants who were refusing to go back to their country despite being constantly threatened of aggressive detention and expulsion because these irregular migrants have not received payments from their employers.

Johnson & Christensen (2009:238) stated that at the Annual General Meeting of the Malaysian Bar Council on the 17 March 2007, the government was urged by the Bar Council to use trained law enforcement personnel to deal with irregular migrants, to maintain safety and security in the country and to look after the well being of citizens. For many years the Malaysian government had deployed RELA to maintain safety and security in the country. The Bar Council told the government that according to the Essential Regulations Act of 2001, amended in 2005, the government had given too much authority to RELA workers and volunteers by allowing them to perform searches on public and private property and do so without a warrant. RELA workers and volunteers had permission to make arrests without a warrant of arrest, carry and use firearms, and also check the citizenship documents of anyone living in Malaysia. The RELA volunteers alone were about half a million in number meaning that the RELA's strength in terms of number superseded that of the Malaysian police and military personnel. The Bar Council ruled against RELA and encouraged the Malaysian government to disperse it (McLaren 2009:37).

Pererby (2008:55) supports that RELA volunteers were extensive in number and they were not trained to perform the duties entrusted to them by the government. Heavy criticism was voiced out by the migrants' advocacy and groups about RELA workers and volunteers accusing them of regularly abusing the extraordinary authority given to them. Johnson & Christensen (2009:239) state that the RELA volunteers forcefully seizing personal belongings such as jewellery, clothing and household goods from migrants and they deliberately destroyed migrants' valid identification documents and demanded brides from detainees. The Human Rights Watch in 2007 in its report stated that the Malaysian government excised its xenophobia through the use of RELA and that RELA is more than just a watchful force to target foreigners. Pererby (2008:78)

concurred that the rights of refugees and asylum seekers were not respect by RELA workers and volunteers, in January 2007, 52 asylum seekers from Myanmar's Chin state were seized and sent to Lenggeng detention camp.

Johnson & Christensen (2009:238) noted that an immigration raid conducted by RELA workers and volunteers on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of February 2006 in the Selayang area, the capital city Kuala Lumpur, was followed by 5 dead bodies of migrants being found in a lake. Allegedly these migrants were victims of an extreme brutality shown by RELA workers. The Malaysian government failed to offer any explanation to the concerns expressed by the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants and the Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial Summary or Arbitrary Executions over the incident. In August 2006 Jorge Bustamante, the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants proposed to visit Malaysia to assess the living conditions of migrants and refugees, but the government ignored his request. McLaren (2009:939) notes that in December 2008, the government accepted allegations of maltreatment by some volunteers, yet explicitly rejected any plans to disperse or do away with RELA emphasizing that RELA has served the country well and has a useful purpose.

## **2.5 India**

According to Bhaukim (2009:43) the Parliamentary Standing report on Home Affairs in April 2008 declared that India had a large number of illegal Bangladeshi immigrants. These illegal immigrants were viewed as a threat to the well being and security of the nation. In 2006, xenophobic rivalry rose and India openly expressed hostility towards the Bangladeshi migrants. The Bangladeshi rebellious groups got involved in terrorist acts in India and the government decided to form a 25 member Parliamentary Standing Committee headed by Sushma Swaraj from the right wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to strictly monitor the movement of the Bangladeshi migrants into the country. According to Bhaumik (2009:231) the Parliamentary Standing Committee reflected the general mood in India, a mood that was extremely aggressive and not tolerant to the presence of the migrants. A study conducted by the Human Rights in April 2004,

reported that in the year 2001, the Indian Census data on place of birth estimated that there were 3.1 to 3.7 million Bangladeshis in India. However estimates by the government agencies, journalists and the Hindu right have given growing and shocking statistics of Bangladeshis in India.

The then Minister of Home Affairs Shriprakash Jaiswal in 2004, informed Rajya Sabha (Upper House of the Indian Parliament) that there were more than 12million Bangladeshis who were illegally residing in the country. The Indian Border Security Force (BFS) estimated a number of 14million Bangladeshis who entered Indian between 1972 and 2005 as tourist with visas then failed to leave the country. Wagner & Schnitzer (2009:144) note that according to a recent World Bank study, in terms of flows of migrants the Indo Bangladesh corridor is extremely active globally, coming close to flows across the United States Mexican border. The Hindu nationalist group and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) presented the highest estimated number of migrants that there are about 20million illegal Bangladeshis living in India. Bhaukim (2009:312) stated that due to the informal and rough character of these refugees, there is virtually no accurate data on these migrations.

According to Ramachandran (2008:125) the north-eastern provinces received the largest flows of immigrants due to being in close proximity to Bangladesh. In 1947, a large number of immigrants moved during the separation of the Indian sub-continent into India and the East and West Pakistan. In 1971, Bangladesh was subsequently formed as an independent state nation and the immigrants moved from the erstwhile East Bengal now known as Bangladesh. Although the Bangladeshis continue to migrate into India in these modern times, this has become a highly controversial matter which causes xenophobic incidents. As stated by Ramachandran (2008:129) there is a pattern of hostility towards Bengali speakers and it has resonance in the current opposition towards irregular Bangladeshi migrants. There were ways developed to conflate the early groups of Bengali refugees with the new irregular migrants from Bangladesh. Bhaumik (2009) notes that a movement called the Bengal Kheda movement which

means (drive away Bengalis) was started due to demographic and cultural changes. This movement linked the entry of Bengali speaking population from the east, starting from the late 1940s onwards in the Assam and many Bengali Hindus moved to the West Bengal and Tripura provinces after fleeing from Assam.

During the 1980s and 1990s, the anti-Bengali violence was witnessed in Meghalaya (India's Neighboring state) when the Assam Students Union (AASU) spearheaded an anti foreigners movement in Assam opposing the entry of the irregular Bangladeshis. Wagner & Schnitzer (2009:144) note that the AASU demanded an expulsion of all Bengalis' who had entered their territories after the year 1951. Allegedly the violence first broke out over an abduction and rape of the Assamese tribal tiwa women by the Bengali Muslim migrants. Close to 2,000 Bengali speaking Muslim immigrants got brutally murdered at the peak of the movement in Nellie.

Ramachandran (2008:125) noted that these incidences further unleashed and simmered hatred and resentment against the settlement of Bengali tribal lands into the Miyas from Mymensingh district of East Benga. Till date, the North Eastern provinces still express the strongest xenophobia against the Bangladeshis. Scholars like Hazarika (2010) and Huguet (2009) have raised arguments that in these socially and politically active areas, the continuous entry of the Bangladeshi migrants' in significant numbers further aggravates these disruptive and aggressive behaviors. Sarbananda Sanowal of the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) in an interview stated that "These illegal migrants from Bangladesh are a major threat to our identity and we will become foreigners in our own land unless we keep these people out of Assam". It is clear that anxieties about linguistic identities and a threatened culture gave a powerful motivation force to Indians to not want the migrants in their country. Wasbir (2010) also emphasised this issue by stating that leaving out politics of the Hindu right only rejuvenated the expression of fear and loathing around these migrants, and this has been the case for over the past two decades. Wasbir (2010:211) continues to add that these migrations to India have been described as a demographic aggression and silent invasion of million Muslims who are unlearned, starving and fanatic and they have flooded into India and settled, spread



themselves like a swam of locust in the blossoming green fields and forests of Assam . These migrants were victims of the most immoral and evil xenophobia system in India (Wasbir 2010:212).

## **2.6 Libya**

According to Lewis (2008:90) in September 2000, Zawiya in Libya West of Tripoli, a fiery attack against immigrants erupted and a lot of immigrants died. The number of immigrants who died was more that the Libyan government officials were willing to mention. The Libyan government reported only 7causalties and yet the international media coverage revealed a number bigger than seven. The World Refugee Survey (2001) reported that a hundred migrants were killed and 20,000 African migrants fled Libya. The series of events that triggered the violent attacks is still unknown.

Several authors Rydgren (2009) Lifton (2009) & Harris (2010) concurred that though the Libyan government claims to have lodged an investigation into these attacks, till due date, the government has not disclosed any details of the awful incident. An independent newspaper in Sudan called Akhbar al-Yom cited a clash broke out between Libyans and migrants from Sudan and Chad killing 50 people, likewise the BBC news reported that apparently a trivial dispute among spectators at a football match broke out and triggered the clashes between Libyans and migrants from Chad and Sudan later spreading to Tripoli.

According to Harris (2006:47), the Human Rights Watch in 2000 was informed by the senior Libyan official that the first clash that happened between Libyans and Nigerian migrants was triggered by the Nigerians mocking the Libyan girls. The senior Libyan official made emphases on the fact that the police were called to intervene and necessary measures were taken to arrest and bring to justice those individuals who were involved in the attack. Regardless of the cause of the clash being insignificant, the attack became widespread and specifically directed at immigrants even as far as sub Saharan Africa. Lifton (2009:122), notes that the Libyans went to immigrants

neighborhoods chanting "blacks must go" also killing about 50 Sudanese and Chad migrants. Lewis (2008:57), states that on the 25<sup>th</sup> September 2000, the Libyan mob went to the Ghanaian migrants' area and set it on fire. A repatriate Nigerian migrant was asked to share his experiences of staying in Libya, he said the only words to describe the Libyan country was that it was "hellfire" because much violence was directed at Nigerian immigrants because they were believed to be the very people who got involved in criminal activities and provoked clashes.

According to Hunt (2008:121) the then Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi said his vision of uniting Africa was undermined and he blamed the attacks on foreign hidden hostile hands. The immigrants who witnessed these attacks reported that a gang of Libyan youth that carried out violence against immigrants did so with the involvement of the state authorities and these attacks on migrants continued even three months after the first period of violence. Migrants from countries like Chad, Sudan, Gambia, Ghana, Congo and Nigeria complained that they were viciously attacked and their host and home governments had failed to protect them. Hunt (2008:123) notes further that migrants from countries like Nigeria and Ghana who were sent back to their homes declared that Libyans do not like black people, these migrants said they were insulted and called names such as "monkeys" in the streets. Libyan children covered their noses in the presence of these immigrants and they couldn't live nor move freely in Libya simply because of the colour of their skin.

Harris (2010:78) stated that the then special Rapporteur Maurice Glele Ahanhanzo wrote a report to the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) in 2001 on current forms of racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerances. He condemned this xenophobic aggression and said it's like a witch hunts targeting black people. He cited an article that appeared on the Ivorian daily newspaper called *Fraternite Matin* on 22 November 2000 stating:

Immigrants said that they were victims of racist attacks resulting in deaths, expulsions, and repatriations for the luckiest...immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa and especially nationals of Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ghana, Niger, Nigeria, Sudan, Chad and even Côte d'Ivoire , were treated by locals and especially by young rebels in a way reminiscent of apartheid emphasis in original. The authorities, who attribute this violence to clashes between gangs from black Africa, expelled several thousand back to their countries of origin.

A newspaper called *Jeune Afrique* while reporting; this is how it described incidences in Libya:

It was difficult for the Libyan authorities to maintain for very long their rather anodyne version of the dramatic events that had taken place at Ezzaouia at the end of September. Six people died (one of whom was a Libyan). This official figure was very quickly refuted by survivors of the pogrom who managed to leave Jamahiriya [Libya]. In point of fact, several hundred African immigrant workers were killed...the tidal wave of immigrants seeking refuge in embassy compounds and the complaints of NGOs eventually revealed the seriousness of the situation. Abuja then chartered a plane which, in the course of seven trips, evacuated 450 Nigerian nationals. Almost 5000 are waiting to leave the former Libyan El Dorado. John Jerry Rawlings, the President for Ghana, went to Tripoli to recover his nationals. Sudanese and Chadians are also leaving the Jamahiriya in droves. The two million Africans residing legally in Libya are completely terrified.

Lewis (2008:390) documented in her study that during the time when Nigerian migrants were sent back to their home country, the Libyan embassy Charge D'Affaires in Abuja was quoted saying in the Nigerian Post Express newspaper to the repatriations "good riddance to bad rubbish". The Libyan embassy Charge further made it clear that those who reside in Libya illegally, they will be sort out and chased away because most of these illegal migrants when they fail to get jobs they resort to crimes such as drug

peddling, prostitution and armed robbery, which the society does not approve of. Hunt (2008:121) notes that the Libyan state quickly expelled many African migrants whom authorities blamed for sparking attacks and the breaking out of clashes simply because they wanted to lessen popular sentiments.

The General People's Congress (Parliament) made an announcement that caused more clashes to erupt by saying the government plans to tighten immigration in the country by catching and deporting migrants who do not have papers. Lewis (2008:390) states that a lot of immigrants were residing in Libya without proper documentation for an extensive period of time and the authorities have tolerated their presence for a long time. The total exact number of immigrants is not known in Libya because census was conducted through informal and irregular channels making accurate figures for migrants hard to calculate.

Rydgren (2009:131) concurred that the number of migrants who are legal in Libya is around 600,000 and of irregular migrants is between 750,000 and 1.2 million. Other assessments provide much higher figures of 2 to 2.5 million migrants, including half a million migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa since the last few years. African migrants used Libya as a stop point when heading to Western Europe, while estimates made by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in 2006 are that Libya has two million migrants slightly consisting of more than 30% of the country's population of 6 million.

Lewis (2008:390) pointed out that for several decades, Libya has pursued an open-door policy towards migrants. During the 1970s and 1980s, due to the economic boom that was followed by the discovery of oil, many migrants from neighboring countries such as Sudan got attracted to residing in Libya. In the 1990s, Gaddafi opened up Libya to the rest of Africa when the United Security Council imposed on Libya the air and arms embargo isolating the country from the West. Due to frustration of the uncooperativeness of the Arab states and the radical shift in foreign policy Gaddafi presented himself differently

as an African leader, inviting Sub-Saharan Africans to seek employment in the country in the spirit of Pan African solidarity. De Haas (2006:132) states that most North African migrants their destination point that was a surge, it took place in trans-Saharan migration to Libya, becoming a major destination country to have about one million migrants entering its borders during decade. Employment positions that were informal and labour intensive construction sectors were filled by migrants doing menial jobs that citizens did not want to perform. De Haas (2008:133) noted that in 1990s, due to sanctions and inflation levels being excessively high the Libyan economy has deteriorated, resulting in African migrants no longer being treated properly. The number of unemployed migrants continued to climb high and the unemployment rates reaching 30%, the Libyan government announced plans of cutting down foreign labour and tackle irregular migration.

According to Rydgren (2009:131) in 1995 Libya embarked on a raid called Kasha, apprehending and deporting a number 200,00 migrants while other migrants left voluntarily after being granted one week of grace period to leave the country. By the end of 1995 an entire number of 335,000 migrant had departed Libya. De Haas (2006:324) stated that in 2003 public attitudes towards migrations have not been recorded through large scale surveys and also the press coverage on immigration has not yet been critically examined in Libya. However the few studies conducted show that xenophobic attitudes and practiced are out of control and immigrants from African countries are treated with contempt and disrespect. A report by the Human Rights Watch (2006) has highlighted the widespread antagonism and hostility, including physical and verbal attacks, harassment, and extortion encountered by migrants in Libya. Issues of culture, religious and racial differences have contributed to some extent to the growth of this animosity.

## **2.7 France**

Rydgren (2009:123) notes that France is no exception when it comes to xenophobia. It exists among a large portion of the population, and manifests itself in the attitudes towards foreigners. Immigrants are blamed by the majority of French citizens for the increasing unemployment, crime and decreasing education standards. Three quarters of the French population believe that immigrants are more likely to commit crimes than the average French person is, and nearly 40% of the population supports that unemployed immigrants must aggressively be sent back to their countries of birth. While a 22% of the population supports that all immigrants must aggressively be sent back to their countries of birth. According to Wasbir (2010:122) subtle forms of racism are shown in the educational system because the most prestigious universities and graduate schools recruit almost all their students from a limited sociological pool of the white, the wealthy and the well connected. Brees (2008:107) notes that in 2004, xenophobic acts increased up to 25% in schools. About 12% of the offences committed in schools constituted violent, racist threats or acts. Xenophobic crimes in the country increased by 20% in 2004 leaving room to the fact that they may not be a true reflection of the level of xenophobia that is taking place in France due to some incidences not being reported. Bullying of foreigners was reported 210 times more than any other form of racism. Wasbir (2010:173) pointed out that the emphasis is on inclusiveness of culture and that 36% of the French populations have foreign parents or grandparents which may attribute to the reduction in intolerance in France. Attitudes of intolerance are more widespread among men and the older generation.

## **2.8 Conclusion**

Evidence has shown that xenophobia is a global problem and irrespective of in which country it takes place, it most certainly has a huge effect on the victim. Victims of xenophobia may experience a number of emotions including anger, sadness, fear, powerlessness, vulnerability and suspicion of others. Statistics do not reflect true sense of harm inflicted on the individuals who have been targeted, because many victims do not report their experiences to the police.

The literature study explains the phenomenon of xenophobia from a theoretical framework, thereby giving the reader a better understanding of the concept. Xenophobia is a universal phenomenon found in all countries of the world, what is not universal though is xenophobic attacks. Xenophobia in the post apartheid era in South Africa is viewed as a product of historical factors, and dreams of nation building are marred by xenophobic attacks. This chapter clearly demonstrates that xenophobia, as a phenomenon in education, does not exist in South Africa only but in other countries as well.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **CATEGORISATION OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

#### **3.1 Introduction and Background**

International students are the main object of the study within the border phenomenon of “foreigners” in South Africa. Categories of migrants were also examined as well as their significance within the xenophobia phenomenon. Various categories of non-citizens in South Africa are briefly discussed and a Table showing the number of international students in South Africa by country of their permanent residence and race, lastly the position of international students within the context of non citizens.

#### **3.2 Categories of foreigners**

The following categories of foreigners are presented and explained hereunder:

Refugees and Asylum seekers

Migrants

Illegal or undocumented migrants

Permanent residents

Temporary residents

International students

### **3.2.1 Refugees and Asylum seekers**

According to section 2 of the South African Refugee Act, 1998 (Act 130 of 1998) a refugee (a) is a person who as a result of a well founded fear of being persecuted by reason of his or her race, tribe, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social groups outside the country of his or her nationality and is unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country, or, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his or her formal habitual residence is unable or owing to such fear, unwilling to return to it (b) is a person who owing to external aggression, occupation or foreign domination or events seriously disturbing or disrupting public order either in part or the whole of his or her country of originality, is compelled to leave his or her place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge elsewhere.

Section 3 of the South African Refugees Act, 1998 (Act 130 of 1998) defines an asylum seeker as "a person seeking recognition as a refugee". The Department of Home Affairs uses two categories to define asylum seekers for refugee status, there is an individual category and a collective category. Brisil (2009:134) states that at an individual category assessment involves whether an applicant has a well-founded fear of persecution in his or her country, for example, that would be someone facing religious persecution in the country, even if the whole country is not at war. On the collective category, determination is based on whether the country of origin is engaged in civil war or general mass violence resulting in arbitrary decisions taken.

### **3.2.2 Migrants**

Migrants are people moving across borders, in and out of a country for work and business. Brees (2008:55) notes that most migrants do not desire permanent residency in other countries, they are just in the country for a specific time period and purpose, then they return to their country of origin. The most common form of migration to South Africa is labour migration, they are known as migrant or contract workers because they come to S.A to work for a defined time period. Brisil (2009:146), further



stated that incentive for workers to migrate to South Africa is purely economic and on the basis of assured employment migrant workers can get valid work permits, making them legal migrants in the country. Migration is mainly concentrated on South African silver, gold and diamond mines and farms. As stated by Kelly (2009:142) that the two important links between mine migrancy and more general migration patterns in the region are:

Firstly, mine migrancy is important because of the remittance it generates for the economies of neighboring countries, for example, it is estimated, that one mine worker supports up to 16 relatives at home.

Secondly, the link that exists between these economic activities and concealed migration to South Africa. If the mine industry continues to employ less mine workers, as it appears to be the trend, it will automatically affect the number of foreign workers employed in the country. The pressure to immigrate to South Africa by any means will then become stronger as this trend increases. Throughout the apartheid years the South African government exploited this form of migration, while the overall numbers of miners are expected to decrease, the percentage of foreign miners have remained relatively stable over the years (Kelly 2009:142).

### **3.2.3 Illegal or undocumented migrants**

Illegal migration is by definition a product of the laws created by the state to control immigration. In other words, an illegal or undocumented immigrant is defined by each state's own laws. In terms Section 5 of the South African immigrations Act, 2002 (Act 13 of 2002) an illegal immigrant is any person that:

Enters the Republic of South Africa at a place other than a port of entry

Remains in the RSA without a valid residence permit

Acts in contravention of his/her residence permit

Remains in the RSA after the expiry date of his/her residence permit

Is prohibited from entering the RSA or  
Becomes a prohibited person whilst in the RSA

Brees (2008:124) argues that some immigrants enter South Africa unlawfully, without going through the proper required immigration procedures, while others enter legally but violate the terms of their entry by overstaying their permit or working without permission. There is a change worldwide in the way illegal immigrants are treated for example in South Africa, many illegal immigrants are given the right to vote in national elections but after that they became the targets of police raids and attacked by communities for being foreigners. Brees (2008:126) further states that an explanation for this change is the increasing linkage of illegal immigrants to national socio-economic problems in South Africa and the rest of the world.

### **3.3 Citizenship**

According to section 5 of the South African Citizenship Amendment Act 2010 (17 of 2010) to be a citizen or a resident of a country means that you belong to that country and have the right to live there. There are three ways in which a person can be a citizen:

By birth

By descent and

By naturalization

Citizenship by birth and descent are legal rights for anyone who can prove the facts of birth and parentage while citizenship by naturalization is not a legal right, it can be granted or denied by the minister of Home Affairs.

#### **3.3.1 Permanent Residents**

Section 3 of the Immigration Act 2002 (Act 13 of 2002) defines a permanent resident permit as a permit to immigrate to the Republic with the intention to take up permanent residence. Hunt (2009:88) supports that generally, refugees differ from other spontaneous or sponsored immigrants in the conditions of their movement from

one area to another and the effects these have on them in the settlement and adjustment phases of their relocation. Harris (2006:243) argues that though immigration, emigrants can choose their destinations in advance, while refugees have very little to say about their final destinations and despite the initial objective of permanent settlement, emigrants may choose to return home where as the prospects for refugees return are for the most part dependent on the stabilization of the circumstance which prompted their flight in the first instants.

### **3.3.2 Temporary Residents**

Sections 11 to 23 of the Immigration Act, 2002 (Act 13 of 2002) recognizes ten different temporary residing permits, namely: Work seeker's permit, work permit, study permit visitor's permit, business permit, medical treatment permit, crew permit, treaty permit, diplomatic permit and a relatives permit.

### **3.4 International Students**

Kelly (2009:144) notes that although the term "foreign students" is a legitimate one, in South Africa it carries negative connotations and many countries now refer to non-local students as international students.

Who then qualifies as an international or foreign student according to the laws of South Africa? The South African Department of Home Affairs states that, it is anyone who is not a South African citizen, not a permanent resident or does not have a diplomatic exemption. Kelly (2009:145) reports that most universities and Universities of Technology in South Africa subscribe to this definition to decide who should and who shouldn't get subsidies from the government. In 2007 over 14,000 international students were studying in South African Universities and Universities of Technology. Students from Southern Africa Development Communities (SADC) made up 50% of all international students and they are required to have a temporary residence permit, and for tertiary institutions to check study permits before registration, therefore they are here on a legal basis.

### 3.4.1 Requirements for a study permit

The study permit for South Africa is issued by the Department Of Home Affairs for foreigners who are looking to study for more than a period of 3months at a South African accredited learning institute and reside in South Africa during the duration of the study. The permit is issued to "stand alone immigrants" that wish to continue their studies in South Africa and therefore require a study permit for South Africa to be able to enroll with universities or other suitable further learning institutions. Applications for this type of study permit need to be submitted with various supporting documentation such as:

Medical aid insurance

Acceptance by the school of proof of the ability of the student, or students sponsor

Adequate finances to support themselves throughout the study period.

Study permits are issued if the applicant submits, besides other documentations, an official letter from the relevant institution confirming provisional acceptance and the duration of the course. As an added bonus a Study Permit for South Africa allows the student to work for up to 20 hours per week. Study permit holders do not qualify for a permanent resident application.

**Table 1: Number of International Students at South African Universities by Country of Permanent Residence and Race, 2008**

Country	African	Coloured	Indian	White	Unknown	Total
Angola	23	0	0	6	0	29
Botswana	319	9	7	22	0	357
Lesotho	530	12	3	3	0	548
Malawi	98	6	9	5	0	118
Zimbabwe	2,764	21	7	9	0	39,764
Namibia	534	198	6	743	0	1,481
Swaziland	343	10	2	13	0	368

Other Africa Countries	1,711	86	312	43	0	2,152
Countries in Europe	66	22	29	45	0	162
Countries in Asia	97	7	31	198	0	333
Countries in North America	14	6	6	12	16	54
Countries in South America	4	1	2	10	0	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,503</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>414</b>	<b>1,109</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>45,383</b>

Source: Department of Higher Education and Training, 2008

### **3.5 Foreign Students Abroad: the pull-push factors**

Many reasons exist involving the movement of students to study in other countries. Students from industrialised countries studying overseas give totally different reasons for their movement from students who come from developing countries also studying overseas. Below are some of the factors that pull and push students to study in other countries.

#### **3.5.1 The pull-push factors**

According to Crush (2006:201) students from industrialised nations take up their studies in overseas countries for linguistic training, cultural enrichment, and in some cases for the experience of living in another unfamiliar place. North America and Western Europe academic institutions award academic credit for foreign study in such fields as foreign languages, this studying abroad is an important part of the curriculum. Lifton (2009:45)

asserts the importance of industrialised countries treating foreign academic degrees with less respect, for instance if the value of foreign degrees were taken to be less than domestic qualification, it is obvious that students were not motivated to obtain such degrees. Japan is given as one of those countries which did not recognise foreign degrees in some fields and from some universities, exception was made by Japan during the earliest period of its civilisation, emphasis was laid on sending Japanese technicians and students overseas to gain up to date skills in a different number of disciplines needed by the Japanese to cope with the modern technology. As stated further by Crush (2006) the Japanese still sends thousands of students overseas, especially in fields related to science and technology while the European Union made it easier and less expensive for students from its member states to study in institutions overseas by having a common currency the Euro-dollar in the late 1970's.

### **3.5.2 Lack of tertiary institutions**

Countries such as (Lesotho, Botswana, Swaziland, Zimbabwe and Namibia) don't have adequate tertiary institutions and academic programmes are very limited but highly selective. According to Lulat (2010:121) the increase in the prospective student population at some countries also had an impact on the movement of students. Therefore, a great number of students who did not obtain admission to academic institutions at their home countries often chose to move else where for their education in this regard they chose South Africa. Due to problems of accessibility some developing countries offer opportunities for studying overseas.

### **3.5.3 Globalisation**

Thelejane (2006:112) states that the emphasis on economics, cultural and social independence amongst countries, was the ongoing debates on "globalisation" which encouraged competition. Intellectual and skills development are factors that motivated movement of students to other countries, globalisation is therefore one of the factors that made students seek access to degrees from countries rather than their own. Lifton, (2009:174) also state that it was advantageous for prospective students to go abroad

and seek programmes that could offer them training which would enable them to be made competitive, since competition and development would be amongst intellectuals from different countries. To the advantage of foreign students, such foreign qualifications were helpful on the national or international labour market and usually rewarded the possessors with higher salaries and good possibilities for higher positions.

Fry (1984:208) observed that it is important for students from developing countries to acquire technical skill, and personal career upliftment while abroad, because it also turns to be an intense cultural experience that has deep and fundamental meaning for many students. Given the extensive research on attitude changes associated with foreign study, changes may have many positive intangible benefits related to the building of a peaceful cooperative global community.

Lifton (2009:287) pointed out that despite the positive aspect of globalisation there were also negative aspects of globalisation that students from developing countries had to go back face such as a problem of "culture collisions" and some were able to integrate the newly acquired values with the old, while others felt and looked completely lost in their home countries having the process of re adjusting being difficult for many returning students.

#### **3.5.4 Political Factors**

Harris (2008:72) notes that political factors also had an impact on the movement of students, after World War Two. Foreign policy agreements on offering assistance to students from former African colonies which had financial crises, prompted many industrialised nations to take a great number of international students. Political and economic changes in the world, as well as political realignment between countries all had an effect on the choice made by foreign students to study abroad, for instance when the United States government became active in alliance with a country, the number of students moving from that country to the United States went up. As stated further by Lifton (2009) if the United States government became less active in its

alliance with another country, the number of students moving from that country to the United States would drop, the American government's lack of sympathy towards allowing visas to students from Iran since the revolution in that country, reduced the flow of Iranian students to America.

Brislis (2009:174) also maintained that foreign students' movement could also be affected by changes in foreign policy leading to the completion of two countries' agreements, for instance, bilateral agreements between China and the United States or Ethiopia and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic slowed down the flow of students between these countries. The movement of students might also be affected by economic policy changes that stressed requirements for specialised pre-higher learning education which might not be afforded by some students from other countries because it was expensive and China is amongst the republics that can be cited as an example of a country that sends students abroad to acquire pre-higher learning education.

### **3.5.5 The expansion of secondary education**

According Weiler (2004:172) the expansion of secondary education provision in some developing countries like Tanzania and Kenya increased numbers of middle-class young people who sought access to higher education. However, local academic programmes were not able to accommodate their growing numbers so in response to this, some governments increased the provision of scholarships. Weiler (2004:173) notes further that the provision of scholarship was done through asking for more donor assistance and increased participation from the NGO's and the private sector to fund more students to study in institutions outside the country. However, it needed to be noted that some developing countries perceive foreign study as a reduction of pressure on limited available home academic resources.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

International students who come to study legally and even immigrant who are in the country rightfully so become victims of xenophobia, it is sad that before they are



disgraced and humiliated for being non-South Africans, the perpetrators never take time to ask whether are they here as per the laws an Act of the country.

The next chapter will describe how the research on xenophobia and international students is to be conducted and to distinguish the manner and extent to which international students experience xenophobia in South Africa. International students as a target market have been selected to make a contribution to the understanding of xenophobia as a phenomenon.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

Xenophobia as an area of study still is receiving attention for research and in the media in South Africa. It is not only foreigners who are illegal in this country who seem to be experiencing xenophobia, but also foreigners who are legal, for example the international students. Extensive coverage involving foreigners and locals in general has been done but very limited studies have investigated the experiences of foreigners who are legal like international students with regard to xenophobia in South Africa.

Previous chapters highlighted the phenomenon of xenophobia in general terms and how it is experienced across the globe. In this chapter, the focus shifts to the research methodology and design that was utilised in conducting the research. The discussion will be structured around the research design, population sampling, data collection and data analysis. By giving a clear description of the research design, clarity will be obtained on how the research was conducted and what methods were used to obtain the data. The chapter will also include the purpose of the research, research method, sampling design and data collection. Altbach (2010:252) recommends that the research design, sampling method, data collection procedures and the measuring instruments

utilised, should be discussed in the chapter where the research methodology is explained.

## **4.2 Purpose of the Research**

The purpose of the study is to firstly, document xenophobic experiences that international students has had in a selected university of higher learning, so that appropriate actions may be taken to improve their situation. Secondly, in undertaking this research, the intention is also to explore the nature and scale of xenophobia directed towards the students. Thirdly, the study aims at gaining some understanding of the perceived causes of xenophobia in South Africa and finally, to identify challenges facing international students in South Africa.

## **4.3 Research Methodology**

According to Johnson & Christensen (2009:163) a method refers to ways of obtaining, organising and analysing data that will reflect the overall research design and strategy. The choice of method is determined by the research question. In this study, method refers to how the research is conducted and its logical sequence. Solomon (2009:109) notes that research is a logical and systematic process which insists on the application of a certain method of gathering and analysing data. Qualitative methodology was utilized to establish the extent of xenophobia in the selected institution of higher learning and the international students' experiences of the xenophobia phenomenon. The method was selected because it will be ducted to provide the best possible understanding of the phenomenon of xenophobia within the context of the institution of higher learning rather than in a generalised or universal context.

### **4.3.1 Qualitative Research**

Vockell & William (2008:101) state that qualitative research refers to the holistic, subjective and process-oriented methods used to understand, interpret, describe and develop a theory on a phenomenon or setting. Qualitative research gives an in depth analysis of the problem in order to understand the "what and why" of human

behaviour. According to Creswell (2008:145) qualitative research is a systematic, subjective approach that is used to describe life experiences and how people make sense of their experiences. Qualitative research is mainly concerned with an understanding of the social phenomenon from the research subject's perspective. Vockell & William (2008:104) further state that this type of research aims to describe and analyse the participant's individual and collective social actions, beliefs, thoughts and perceptions. Qualitative research generates non-numerical data. In this study qualitative research design was used to understand the participants' experiences and their life-world experiences related to xenophobia.

#### **4.4 Sampling Design**

The following paragraphs will explain the research population that will be investigated, the sampling method adapted, research methods, data collection and data analysis.

##### **4.4.1 Research Population**

The Research population includes all international registered students studying at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. All students who have been studying at the selected university as far back as 2004 and who are still registered will receive the anonymous questionnaire.

##### **4.4.2 Sampling Method**

Sampling refers to the method of selecting a group to represent the total target population. Neuman (2010:82) notes that a researcher's concern is to find cases that will enhance the processes of social life in a specific context that the researcher is learning about. Respondents and events are selected for their unique ability to explain, understand, and yield information about the meaning of a particular behaviour or the way the social system works.

Delport & Strydom (2009:129) state that in purposeful sampling, a particular case is chosen because it illustrates a feature or process that is of interest for a particular

study. The purposeful selection of participants represents a key decision point in a qualitative study and the search for data must be guided by processes that will provide rich detail. In the case of purposive sampling, researchers seek typical and different data. According to Neuman (2010:83) qualitative researchers seek out the individuals and settings where the phenomenon being studied most likely exists, the researcher's concern is to find the target population that will improve the study by making a unique contribution that will give back fruitful information to the research study.

In this study, the potential respondents will be contacted via e-mail, using their student numbers that will be obtained from the international office as their addresses. To qualify as a participant, the international student must be able to communicate his/her experiences in English as it is the medium language of communication in the institution. An attempt will be made to obtain representatives of different nationalities as a sample though some nationalities dominate more than others. The respondents will answer the questionnaire sent to them electronically then send it back via e-mail or place it in a box provided at the international office.

#### **4.5 Data Collection**

Altbach (2010:39) notes that qualitative research is carried out in the participants' natural settings, this often means that researchers' are entering the private worlds of individuals. This type of research is not only intimate, but it also involves gathering sensitive or controversial information. Therefore it is important that information observed or heard is treated with the greatest confidentiality as moral and ethical issues are involved.

To enhance the results of the study, qualitative data was collected by means of anonymous questionnaire from the international students and the international office. The questionnaire was used to obtain experiences and responses from the international students and the international office in order to develop the data collected. Although the questionnaire was anonymous and based on specific questions, answers were

sought in as much detail as possible. Data collected was focused on specific questions presented hereunder that remained constant throughout the data collection process:

## **QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT**

### **When did you come to South Africa?**

This question aimed at providing a time frame or a periodic dimension with regards to when most international students came to South Africa, also to determine if the respondent in question had experienced the May 2008 xenophobic attacks. The year of arrival is important because it also explains what could be have been going in the respondents country of origin.

### **Why did you come to South Africa?**

The question was asked to determine if were there other reasons for living home and coming to South Africa apart from studying.

### **Did you face any problems when you were applying to study in South Africa and this University in particular? If yes, please specify.**

This question was asked to find out the length and the duration of the permit application processes and whether respondents think the length of time is reasonable, also how immediate was the response of the university to their application.

### **Do you perceive South Africans to be xenophobic? If yes, please specify.**

The main aim of asking this question was to get the perception of international students towards South Africans, in particular the views and opinions of participants now that they are in the country.

### **What do you think are the origins of xenophobia in South Africa?**

The intention of posing this question was to capture the thoughts of the respondents as to what do they think are the reasons for South Africans xenophobic behaviours'. The literature study has shown that the causes of negative attitudes towards non South African citizens could be traced in the apartheid history of the country

### **What types or form of xenophobia have you experienced on campus?**

The primary aim of asking this question was to find out to what extent were the local students hostile towards the international students, to also determine if there were any staff members on campus who have the same kind of hostility towards the international students and how do they express it.

### **What negative impact has it had on you?**

This question was to observe if the xenophobic attitudes and behaviors faced by the respondents had caused them to be disturbed in their studies either by not being able to concentrate, perform or fail in their studies or have depression and want to drop out on their studies and go back home.

### **Are you staying in the universities residence?**

To determine if respondents were comfortable staying with other local students at the universities residences or they preferred to reside in hired flats where they don't have to share their personal space with local students because of their xenophobic attitudes and treatment.

### **Do you find it easy to socialise with South African students on campus and in res?**

The objective of this question was to find out if the respondents made friendships with local students and if they valued those friendships, also to assess the views that if an out-group experiences antagonism from the in-group, this lead to withdrawal and respondents keeping to themselves because of being treated as an outcast.

### **How often do you interact with South African students?**

The reason for asking this question was to observe if the interactions between international and local students only happen in lecture rooms when required to do work as a group or the relationship extend even outside. To also determined if the international students felt comfortable enough to make any efforts in trying to make friendships and enjoy life with local students at the university.

### **As an international student do you often feel threatened or uncomfortable on campus?**

This question was to determine if international students have been victimised in anyway on campus, or have they experienced any emotional incidences that made them feel uncomfortable or threatened around campus.

### **What do you fear most about being on campus?**

The question sought to find out if due to the xenophobic experiences that international students have had, do they still feel safe being on campus.

### **What Problems do you face as a foreign student on campus?**

This questing is asked to help international students to share problems faced such as being treated differently, always feeling like they did not belong or being made to feel like they are less of humans because of being a foreigner and invading the space of locals coming and studying in South Africa. To also find out what other problems were international students having in general regarding life on campus.

### **What other challenges are you facing as an international student?**

The question was asked to determine the challenges encountered by international students outside campus, simply because of being an international student and a foreigner in South Africa.

### **Is there anything that the Institution can do to further protect you from xenophobic experiences?**

The purpose of this question was not to imply in anyway that the university is not doing enough to protect or help its international students, however to find out from the respondents what more can the institution do on top of what is already being done to protect them from more xenophobic attacks.

## **4.6 Data Analysis**

The aim of conducting a research study is to produce findings. Data obtained during the research process is analysed to produce the findings. McMillan & Schumacher, (2008:45) state that data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the data accumulated. Qualitative data analysis is primarily an efficient process of organising the data into categories and identifying patterns among the categories. Analysis will be utilised in interpreting the data as it allows the patterns to

appear rather than imposing the patterns on data before the data collection process. The results of the analysis in this study will be discussed in chapter five.

According to Creswell, (2008:167) data analysis should be conducted in accordance with the research objectives, using the questions asked in a manner that aspires to create meaning and relating to the subject and in sequence. The aim of the researcher is to search for underlying statements and relationships in the data gathered. It is important to identify and describe patterns and themes from the perspective of the participants and then attempt to understand and explain these patterns and themes. The phenomenological researcher's interest will be in describing the fundamental structure of the experiences of international students.

Rosnow & Rosenthal, (2010:192) state that the emphasis of qualitative content analysis is on finding meaning within the data rather than focusing on the theme frequency. In doing a content analysis, it is important to take note of the following:

ensure intercoder reliability

develop specific, relevant content categories for the judges to code and

choose a good sampling procedure

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

In this chapter, research design was explained including the methodology to be used in the data collection process. Methods of data analysis, sampling and research methods were also discussed. The next chapter records the interpretation of the data collected.



## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The results of this study are presented in this chapter. A number of themes were covered from the answered questionnaires by the international students, and are discussed below. It starts with reasons why participants came to South Africa, followed by the perception of participants towards South Africans in general and other challenges facing them as international students. In conclusion of this chapter the strength and weaknesses of the study will be discussed. The extent to which the data is able to answer the research question is discussed in this chapter.

#### **5.2 Interpretation of Data**

The profile of the sample will be discussed according to the various questions asked in the international students' questionnaire.

##### **5.2.1 The year that respondents came to South Africa**

In determining to what level our respondents have been exposed to xenophobia, and have an understanding of it, asking the year in which they arrived became very important because the year 1994 is very significant in the history of immigration in South Africa, because that is when the first democratic elections were held. Also having students who were already in South Africa in 2008 is crucial. Participant who experienced the May 2008 xenophobia in this country will have a much more deeper understanding and a firsthand experience than the participant who arrived in South Africa in the year 2012. Respondents of this study go as far back as the year 2004. Out of the 50 respondents four came to South Africa in 2004, while 5 was arrived in 2005 and 7 in 2006, 8 in 2007, 4 in 2008, 7 in 2009, 5 in 2010, 6 in 2011 and the last 4 arrived in South Africa in the year 2012.

### **5.2.2 Reasons for coming to South Africa.**

It is important to present the reasons why respondents came to South Africa so that reasons leading to their arrival maybe understood. None of the respondents indicated that they left their countries and came to South Africa to seek jobs, asylum, or medical attention. However all the 50 respondents who participated in this study came to South Africa driven by their desire to pursue their studies.

### **5.2.3 Problems faced when applying**

Thirty-three of the 50 respondents responded by saying yes they faced problems when they were applying to South Africa, some said in this institution in particular. The common problems that respondents faced was the amount of time they had to wait to get their study permits from the Department of Home Affairs and the cost of the permit itself, while others stated that the problem they faced was not getting any response from the institution regarding their applications. The other 17 of the respondents said everything went smooth for them; they didn't encounter any problems when they applied to come study in South Africa and at this institution in particular.

### **5.2.4 Whether respondents perceive South Africans to be xenophobic or not**

South Africans are regarded as having a tendency of looking down towards other countries, especially African countries. Forty-four out of 50 respondents strongly agreed that South Africans are xenophobic, intolerant and full of hatred towards other Africans. The respondents' inability to speak an indigenous language is a obstacle in terms of integration and it sets the stage for xenophobic tendencies. Only a minimal of 3 participants responded by saying No to the question, they personally had not experienced South Africans as xenophobic people, and another 3 stated that they don't know whether or not South Africans are xenophobic.

### **5.2.5 The respondents views about the origins of xenophobia in the country**

One participant wrote "The wounds of apartheid are still fresh, it will take them longer to heal. Maybe the next generation will be welcoming and more tolerant of foreigners". The isolation of South Africa during the apartheid years from the rest of Africa has made South Africans not to be used to other African countries beyond Southern Africa and find welcoming them difficult. The respondents believe apartheid to be the root cause of xenophobia in South Africa; they believe apartheid did not expose South Africa to the rest of the World. Twenty-four out of the 50 respondents say politics and apartheid are the root cause while the other 10 seem to believe that lack of jobs in this country gave birth to a xenophobic country and remaining 13 out of the 50 respondents' identified crime, jealousy and greed, the rudeness and unkindness of the people of this country as strong contributory factors to the origin of apartheid. 3 respondents' out of the 50 stated they do not know what the origins of xenophobia in South Africa are.

### **5.2.6 The type of xenophobia respondents have experienced on campus.**

In order to establish whether students have suffered any type of xenophobia in the one place they should feel safe and protected in (campus), respondents were asked this question to determine if there is any level of xenophobic treatments directed towards them as international students when they are on campus. 10 respondents responded by saying that they are looked down upon by South African students, they are made to feel inferior and poor because South Africans students tend to think that respondents left their countries because of civil wars, hunger or unemployment which is not the case for some, they stated that they just want education and they are not here to compete with South African students for their jobs and houses. 5 respondents indicated that they have been suffered verbal abuse on campus by their fellow classmates; they said they have been told on numerous occasions that they stink, they smell horrible and S.A students don't want to seat close to them. However 17 respondents clearly stated that although they have experienced all types of xenophobia in South Africa, they haven't experience anything on campus. Four out of 50 respondents said that South African

students especially girls they gossip and call them offensive names like “kwerekwere” simply because they pass well in class. Only one respondent said he/she has experienced racism rather than xenophobia on campus and another respondent stated that he/she is treated unfairly by a lecturer who sometimes speaks isiXhosa when lecturing. Seven respondents gave a response that was brief; they said they have experienced xenophobic attitudes on campus, while the other 5 said it has experienced bad attitudes from fellow South African students.

### **5.2.7 The negative impact of xenophobia on the respondents.**

It is only common that when you are at a place where you are looked down upon and not liked that atmosphere and behavior will impact negatively on you. In order to determine how international students deal with the resentment they get from South Africans, they were asked to mention the negative impact that xenophobia has had on them. Four respondents indicated that the negative impact that xenophobia had had on them caused them to perform poorly in their studies, they even had to seek counseling to deal with what it. Another 7 respondents indicated how much they loathe South Africans for what they do to them and they themselves are starting to believe what South Africans think of them, they are not confident in themselves anymore; they are suffering from low self-esteem. 10 participants stated that they do not care about South Africans and they will not allow xenophobia to impact them and their studies in any negative way, hence they are not negatively impacted by the xenophobic attitudes they receive in this country. 5 respondents said they were filled with anger towards South Africans while 9 said they live in constant fear of their lives. Six respondents clearly indicate how the impact of xenophobia has caused them to withdraw from socialising with South Africans in any way, while 3 responded by saying they feel that they have lost their sense of freedom. A further number of 5 respondents said they also have developed the same negative attitude for South Africans that South Africans have towards them, and the last respondent said police authorities steal from foreigners rather than protecting them.

### **5.2.8 Are respondents staying in the institutions residents or not**

A large number of 36 responded yes to this question of staying at the university's residence and only 14 respondents found themselves alternative places to stay.

### **5.2.9 Is it easy for respondents to socialise with South African students on campus**

Thirty-six respondents answered with a no to this question, they stated that they don't find it easy to Socialise with South African students on campus or at their residences, and 14 of the respondents find it easy to socialise with their fellow South African students.

### **5.2.10 How often do respondents interact with South African students**

When responding to this question, 31 out of the 50 respondents said they don't often interact with South African students while 19 said they interact with South Africans during lectures.

### **5.2.11 How respondents feel when they are on campus, threatened or uncomfortable.**

A total number of 12 respondent responded by saying they don't feel threatened nor uncomfortable when they are on campus, yet another 29 of the 50 respondents clearly indicated that it feels uncomfortable when on campus. Only 9 respondents indicated that they feel threatened when they are around campus.

### **5.2.12 The respondents fear about being on campus**

Respondents feared being attacked while attending their classes, eight respondents have that fear, the feared of being attacked, while another 5 fear being beaten and killed while on campus. A large number of 16 did not fear anything while on campus, they declared campus to be a safe haven for them, but sadly not all of the respondents share that sentiment. Six out 50 respondents feared unfair treatment and 3feared

anything that is negative and painful that might be done to them, another 3 feared crime and another 3 feared being discriminated against and 6 feared being mocked.

### **5.2.13 The problems respondents face on campus.**

As much as respondents came to South Africa to study, many of them are finding difficulty in learning English, since it's not their 1<sup>st</sup> language or mother tongue. Nine of our respondents stated language barrier a major problem to them because they have difficulty in speaking and understanding English. While 6 respondents proceeded to answer this question by saying their problem is feeling lonely, since they are in a country that is not welcoming. Four respondents said they have a problem with being identified and seen as foreigners rather than being seen as human being by South Africans, and feeling rejected was the biggest problem that other 4 respondents had. Although sixteen participants stated that they do not face any problems that are linked with xenophobia on campus. Only one respondent mentioned the issue of not having accommodation during the institutions recess as all the students are expected to vacate residences. Two respondents said it's not an issue of xenophobia but that of racism in some faculties which South African students also suffer. The other 8 respondents face a problem when it comes to the unwelcoming atmosphere that is on campus and the ugly attitudes that go with it.

### **5.2.14 The challenges that respondents face as international students**

Challenges faced by the respondents vary while some happen to link together. However there will always be those respondents who are fortunate not to face any challenges like the rest. About 14 respondents mentioned that they do not have any challenges as international students studying in a foreign country. However 5 respondents find a challenge in the renewing of study permits, they just wish that this process can be reviewed and students should be given a once off study permit that lasts 3years, another 5 said their challenge is the treatment they receive at the embassies in their countries. Seven international respondents indicated that the being in a country where you are unwelcomed and rejected when you are far away from home is a challenge for

them as international students. Ten respondents were unhappy and challenged by the unfair treatment of the very people who studied and took an oath to uphold the law, to serve and protect people who are in this country, the police together with some of the staff from the public hospitals, respondents said that some nurses would let a person die simply because he/she is not a south African while the police themselves in this country are criminals who steal from foreigners. Another 9 of the respondents indicated their problem to be about not having a place to go during the university's recess in June and December, as they can't afford to go home since their homes are far away and require a lot of money that they don't have. They further said that since they are not allowed to work full time in South Africa because they are students and not citizens of this country, they struggle to come up with the money required to book a room here at the institution during the institution's break.

#### **5.2.15 What respondents believe the institution can do to further protect them**

Nineteen respondents believe that South Africans need to be taught and trained to be loving and welcoming also to be made to understand why foreigners' especially international students come to South Africa and the value they bring to this country. The respondents seem to believe that education is the key to ending xenophobia in South Africa because South Africans are ignorant due to not having knowledge. Eleven participants said the institution should find a way of being involved in the processes of study permits and also the embassies at their country, because they wait a long time to get their study permits and it sometimes delays them for registrations in January. A total number of 13 don't think there is anything that the institution can do outside of the rules and regulations in place. The last seven of the 50 respondents said the institution should review its policies regarding the June and December recess that students shouldn't be thrown out as they can't afford to pay the upfront fee required to stay at a residence during the vacation.

### **5.3 Strengths and limitation of the study**

It is of importance that before closing this chapter, to note the strengths and weaknesses of this study. Although the area of xenophobia seems to be covered extensively, most of these studies have focused on other population groups, for example, migrants from certain countries only, as well as refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in general. However this study is a unique one in the sense that it looked at the experiences of the international students in an institution of higher learning.

The research examined a group of students, who have experienced verbal, physical and emotional abuse in the name of xenophobia at the hands of South Africans. Secondly, the use of the interview guide, all open-ended questions gave the respondents much freedom to say as much as they liked without being limited or confined to a selection of answers, furthermore the e-mail technique made it much more easier for participants to go through the emotions all over again and write about their experiences without the fear of being identified or known by anyone not even by the researcher as a participant in a study about xenophobia.

However the biggest limitation with a mini-dissertation study is the selective nature of the sample. Perhaps the research would have been richer with information if it, for example, compared students from CPUT with those of UCT, UWC or Stellenbosch University which are also in the Western Cape. It would have also been of importance to interview refugee students, just to see how they are affected by xenophobia as well.



## **5.4 Conclusion**

Being an international student is no protection from prejudice and abuse, especially if you are an international student from African countries and have a darker pigmentation. Black foreign students experience the same level of abuse, discrimination and hatred like any other foreigner in South Africa. They are faced with difficulties regarding processes of getting a study permit and getting help from police and the health care sector employees when they are in need of it. The following chapter which is the final chapter of this study will give a summary of this study and recommend solutions to minimize the problems of xenophobia with regard to international students in particular and migrants in general.

# **CHAPTER SIX CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

## **6.1 Introduction**

One of the greatest tests of a country's democracy is how its government and people treat foreigners. The Southern African region has become host to one of the largest refugee populations in the world because of political unrest and destabilisation (Klaaren & Handmaker 2008:278). South Africa committed itself to human rights by embedding human rights in its Constitution. The 1998 Refugees Act and the Immigration Act of 2002 are examples of the constitutional protection mechanisms that the South African government has effected in its commitment to protect foreigners.

In South Africa, xenophobia's roots stems from the apartheid past, inequality in South Africa was institutionalised and the resources of the country were only benefiting the white minority. Due to this, the minds of the black people were affected. This becomes evident as we have entered the new South Africa, black people have developed high expectations, both economically and socially. After 2004, South Africa experienced an increase in the population size of migrants from African countries. This increase came with a substantial growth of xenophobia and attacks on foreigners. The many unfulfilled

promises from the government lead to people taking out their disappointments, anger and frustrations at foreigners, as they deeply believe that foreigners came here to take what belongs to them. Xenophobia is a result of people believing that they deserve what they consider theirs.

## **6.2 Aims of the study**

This study aimed at:

Documenting international students experiences in South Africa so that appropriate action maybe taken to improve their situation.

Investigate the nature and the scale of xenophobia directed at these students.

Gaining understanding of the causes of xenophobia in South Africa.

Learning about other challenges that are facing international students in South Africa

## **6.3 Methodology**

Information for this study was derived from qualitative interviews with 50 international students who were registered full time at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. Two sets of interviews were designed, one for the students and another one for the CPUT international office.

## **6.4 Summary of Findings**

The main aim was to establish the extent of xenophobia directed towards international students. The investigation uncovered the following:

South Africans do not welcome diversity, as a result xenophobia is alive and well in South Africa. Coming here as a student doesn't protect one from prejudice and abuse especially if you happen to be African. Black students endure the same level of abuse, stereotyping and discrimination endured by any black foreigner in the country. They have suffered verbally, physically and more emotionally at the hands of fellow students and South Africans at large. They have been called demeaning names such as "amakwerekwere" and "khabrikwa".

A number of students have even suffered in the hands of the police and immigration officers, police have been viewed as corrupt and brutal. Some of the students have experienced people from their own countries being robbed and beaten to death by the locals, sometimes because they can't speak indigenous languages. Students sometimes get bad service from taxi drivers when they travel outside of campus. This sort of transport has made other students resort to expensive means of transport as an alternative to get around, instead of using local taxis.

The other thing participants felt strongly about was the study permits that the applications form for study permits are difficult to fill out, they are not user friendly they are discouraging more than anything else and they wish that study permits would be renewable after 4years instead of a year. Students find it difficult leaving their homes to come this far to study but arriving in a country where they don't know anyone yet still have to vacate university residences during the university breaks is a more traumatic experience for them. Most of the students have voiced out their difficulty in speaking and understanding English during their 1<sup>st</sup> year and most failed their 1<sup>st</sup> semester because of this problem.

The sample population in this study consisted of people who were in the country legally, well informed members of the society however they are also victims of xenophobia in South Africa. Their negative experiences in South Africa, Cape Town to be exact, make adjusting to life in South Africa very difficult. These challenges need to be addressed so that a welcoming atmosphere for these students is established.

South Africans need to work hard in becoming the very rainbow nation it claims to be. According to Morris (2009:163) the current South African government is not anchored on racist principles, unlike the previous one and therefore, the post apartheid regime needs to take steps to counter xenophobia if it is to ensure that a new form of political racism does not emerge.

## **6.5 Recommendations**

This sections deals with recommendations aiming at fighting xenophobia and easing the difficulty of international students and migrants in general. These recommendations are aimed at, respectively, the institutions of higher learning, government of South Africa and the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

### **6.5.1 South African Institutions of Higher Learning**

To be able to serve international students better, the institutions of higher learning should consider the following:

Establish policies that are clear regarding visas for international students and curriculum to be offered to these students.

International student's needs should be assessed more regularly by:

Conducting surveys

Having informal engagements with the international students

Consulting with other institutions of higher learning regarding policy arrangements

Organising and attending professional conferences that focuses on international students and their dire needs.

A self study model for universities that consist of questions that will help staff members to determine the role international students play on campus.

Come up with programmes that get international students to get involved in communities though volunteer work. This will provide more understanding from both parties about the other as well as help them become familiar with South African customs and cultures.

Additional training for staff members to further educate them on cultural differences and any special needs of a particular national group.

Design programs that encourage local students to interact with international students so that each group can learn about the culture of the other.

Universities should also assist the Home Affairs in developing and instilling a comprehensive database containing relevant economic and social data on international students for public information.

### **6.5.2 Recommendations for the Government of South Africa**

There is a strong need for the government of South Africa to:

To carry educational campaigns nation wide to raise awareness about the predicament of black foreigners in South Africa.

Train police and immigration officers on human rights

Do away with yearly renewals of study permits, instead, students should get permits for the duration of their studies and only get a new permit when they wish to continue with their studies.

Be efficient in finalising study permits on time in order to avoid delays, which result in international students missing or being late for registration.

Train staff members at South African High Commissions in different countries in human relations, in order to enable them to deal with applicants in a professional way.

Make South Africans aware of the positive contribution foreigners make to the country.

### **6.5.3 Recommendations to the Cape Peninsula University of Learning**

The university needs to accommodate international students at residences free of charge during the university vacation. The university and maybe together with the Student Representative Council need to introduce international sports day and cultural day to enhance integration. There should be more exchange programmes with non-South African universities to promote tolerance and diversity. English classes or lessons should be offered by the university for those students who come to South Africa not being able to speak the language at all.

## **6.6 Recommendations for future study**

Most of the research done on xenophobia appears to be concentrating on migrants in general. It is clear that not much focused research has been done solely on xenophobia in general here in South Africa. These research done most of them appear to be quantitative, therefore there is a need of more qualitative into the lives of international migrants. There is a need for further research on the following themes:

Research on xenophobia towards international students on a national level, both for tertiary and non-tertiary students.

On regional initiatives aimed at enhancing tolerance and cooperation among universities.

A fuller investigation into:

What makes South Africans xenophobic

A relationship between foreigners and nationals in South Africa

Victims of xenophobia other than international students

The impact of xenophobia on the South African economy

The relationship between the "culture of violence" and xenophobia in South Africa

Whether refugee students get a study permit as well as refugee permits, and their fees are the same as that of domestic students.

## **6.7 Conclusion**

This study was undertaken with the intention to investigate the experience of international students who attend an institution of higher learning that's based in one of the biggest cities in South Africa, Cape Town. The research attempted to discern the manner and the extent to which xenophobia affects their lives.

Xenophobia in South Africa is an anti-black sentiment, not only does it affect illegal foreigners but those who are legal too get affected by it. Foreigners are blamed for coming here to steal jobs, and houses. Some foreigners are not regarded as "job

competitors” but rather as “job snatchers”, this is a fight for access of resources and benefits such as housing and employment. Most dictionaries define xenophobia as a “fear and dislike of strangers” but South African xenophobia is more of a dislike or rather hatred of black foreigners more than it is about fear. None of the white students interviewed indicated receiving any negative treatment but almost all the black students have been treated negatively and called derogatory names just because they are regarded as coming from poor countries. Foreign black students have a different experience than their fellow white foreign students hence it is very difficult to detach South African xenophobia from the countries history of racism. There is therefore a very close link between xenophobia and racism in this country. People become victims of xenophobia based on their skin colour and country of origin.

The goal has been achieved by means of a detailed literature study and the interpretation of data obtained through interviews. As South Africans, we have to change our narrow perspective so that we become aware of the strength and resilience of international students. It is hoped that insight and a better understanding of the phenomenon of xenophobia will decrease marginalisation and increase acceptance and that this study has contributed to a better understanding of xenophobia and its impact on international students in institutions of higher learning.

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## **APPENDIX 1**

### **QUESTIONNAIRE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

1. When did you come to South Africa?
2. Why did you come to South Africa?
3. Did you face any problems when you were applying to study in South Africa and this University in particular? If yes, please specify.
4. Do you perceive South Africans to be xenophobic? If yes, please specify.
5. What do you think are the origins of xenophobia in South Africa?
6. What types or form of xenophobia have you experienced on campus?
7. What negative impact has it had on you?
8. Are you staying in the universities residence?
9. Do you find it easy to socialize with South African students on campus and in res?
10. How often do you interact with South African students?
11. As an international student do you often feel threatened or uncomfortable on campus?
12. What do you fear most about being on campus?
13. What Problems do you face as a foreign student on campus?
14. What other challenges are you facing as an international student?
15. Is there anything that the Institution can do to further protect you from xenophobic experiences?

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE INTERNATIONAL OFFICE**

1. How many international students are currently enrolled at this institution?
2. What is the split between the number of part-time and full time students?
3. How many international students are enrolled for their under graduate diplomas and how many are enrolled for their post graduate degrees?
4. Are there any clubs or societies for international students here at the university?
5. Are there any special arrangements done by the international office prior to their arrival and even after arrival?
6. In what ways are International students of benefit to this institution?
7. Has there been any xenophobic related complaints received by your office from the students?
8. What are the remedial mechanisms in place for students who have experienced xenophobic attacks on campus?
9. How are those complaints followed up?
10. Do you think that there is anything that the institution can further do to help international students that have experienced any types or form of xenophobia?