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Xenophobia, afrophobia or xenophilia? Semantical tools of criminality in South Africa

Martin Mujinga

Research Institute for Theology and Religion, College of Human Science, (UNISA).
ORCID-<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8098-2515>

Abstract

Scholars from the studies of migration and secular history of South Africa argue that the country has a long history of violence. This callousness continued unabated during apartheid. During this period, brutality was enforced among the weak and defenceless black South Africans. However, since 2000 South Africa saw another surge of violence targeting fellow Africans. The attack of foreigners were attributed to limited resources leading to poverty, unemployment, overpopulation, and poor service delivery argued to be necessitated by black immigrants' presence. African immigrants were also accused of crimes and drug dealings. The attacks were in the form of beatings, displacements, killings, lootings and destruction of foreign owned shops and homes. Although the national attacks were experienced mainly in 2008, 2015, 2019 and 2021, however, scholars grapple to name the phenomena. Academics, politicians, victims, victors, survivors, and civil society have given contrasting names to the attacks. Using desk research methodology, the chapter analysed the terms used to describe the acts. Although xenophobia and afrophobia have dominated scholarship, the paper argues that these terms are a disguise to criminal acts by some black South Africans. The paper concluded that South Africans have moved away from their constitution which is all inclusive and from being victims of apartheid to political and economic victors contrastingly turning into criminals. Moreover, some South Africans have lost the value of Ubuntu philosophy leading the former victims to be both the victor and the criminal in the name of fighting for rights in the country that is rightfully theirs.

Contribution: The paper concluded that by practicing the acts of criminality, South Africans have moved away from their constitution which is all inclusive and from being victims of

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apartheid to political and economic victors contrastingly turning into criminals. In addition, the country also lost the Ubuntu philosophy leading the former victims to be both victors and the criminal in the name of fighting for rights in the country that is rightfully theirs.

Keywords: Xenophobia, Afrophobia, Xenophilia, South Africa, Criminality, Semantics