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Perceptions of young South Africans living at a vocational centre in Hillbrow, on the violent attacks of foreigners: Exploring the view of South Africans on the violent attacks of foreigners in Hillbrow

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ABSTRACT

Violent attacks on foreign nationals are a worldwide phenomenon that is also evident in South Africa. The negative consequences of these attacks can be felt from individual, family, community/societal and national perspectives. Most of the attacks that have been perpetrated in South Africa have been associated with young people (Tella, 2016; King, 2013). Hence, the primary aim of the study was to explore the views of young South Africans living at a vocational centre in Hillbrow, Johannesburg. The study adopted a qualitative approach and it was also exploratory in nature. Narrative, research design was applied. The study conducted semi-structured interviews with fifteen participants and two key informants who were selected through purposive sampling. Thematic analysis was used to analyse data. The violent attacks on non-nationals have overwhelming effects and consequences on human rights and the general well-being of non-South Africans. The study is significant in adding to our understanding of the issue, and emboldening the rethinking of refugee policies around human rights education and integration. The study provides information that could facilitate the integration of foreign nationals into South Africa and the development of a harmonious relationship between foreign nationals and South Africans. The main findings were, that young people understood violent attacks on foreign nationals to be expressions of anger and frustration and as a corrective measure. Furthermore, the reasons for ill-treatment of foreigners was linked with poor service delivery, criminal activities, competition for limited resources and perceived increase of foreign nationals. Finally, the findings of the study revealed that the integration of foreign nationals was not welcomed and hostility towards foreign nationals was evident.

Key Concepts:

Violent attacks, violence, vocational centre, foreigners, human rights