

THE NATURE AND HARM OF XENOPHOBIA

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Abstract

This research is intended to discuss xenophobia, and understand its nature and harms from a philosophical perspective. Much of what has been written about xenophobia largely reflects an empirical account, with limited discussion on philosophical moral theories which may be useful in addressing it. In this essay, I attempt to answer two questions, namely, what is xenophobia, and what is wrong with it. I explore xenophobia from various perspectives, whether it is a mental or a behavioral attitude, and the role of fear in its pervasiveness. In answering the second question, I contend that it causes harm, from individual and collective standpoints, and that it is not in essence, an institutional problem. I argue for the adoption of Kantian ethics to tackle and eventually overcome xenophobia and its harms. I examine the accounts of xenophobia provided by Michael Neocosmos and Ronald Sundstrom in undertaking this ethical exploration.

Declaration

I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Arts, Applied Ethics for Professionals, in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university.



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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	5
Chapter 1.....	9
Ronald Sundstrom.....	9
1. Definition of xenophobia.....	9
2. What is wrong with xenophobia.....	16
3. My views of Sundstrom's account	19
Chapter 2.....	33
Michael Neocosmos.....	33
1. Definition of xenophobia.....	33
2. What is wrong with xenophobia.....	37
3. My views of Neocosmos' account	41
4. My views on the nature and wrongs of xenophobia	55
Chapter 3.....	63
1. A Kantian view	63
2. Kant's theory.....	65
3. Xenophobia and Kantian morality	71
CONCLUSION	76
BIBLIOGRAPHY	80

Introduction

Xenophobia is a broad concept, has many dimensions, is complex and can be defined in many different ways, as a result of which it is difficult to settle on one definition. The *Collins Dictionary* defines xenophobia as a “strong and unreasonable dislike or fear of people from other countries”. Xenophobia, understood roughly to start with, as fear or hatred of the foreigner, manifests itself in various forms globally, and may or may not be triggered by political and economic events. Yakushko Oksana writes thus: “Xenophobia is typically related to times of economic and political instability or imbalance that result in the migration of large groups of people across borders as well as to the host community’s reaction of feeling threatened by the newcomers (2008:49). In some instances, people are not pushed by major threats to their personal safety to cross borders, but rather attracted and pulled by prospects of personal advancement and economic prosperity, in an increasingly inter-connected world. There are, however, indeed instances where push factors like resource scarcity, political turmoil and threats to personal safety result in people fleeing their home countries. This is a factor that must be taken into account when we reflect on how immigrants are treated. Refugees do not always flee their homelands out of choice. Recognition must also be given to the fact that migration can be motivated by pull factors that are a function of global commerce. Such migration not only enhances the chances for immigrants to achieve success in life, but their diversified skills contribute positively to innovation and to the economic growth of their adopted countries. My reference to non-indigenous inhabitants broadly as immigrants, includes those in a country legally and illegally. I use other descriptions interchangeably, such as refugees and foreigners.

The title of then Senator John Kennedy’s 1958 book, *America is a nation of immigrants*, suggests that the United States recognizes the contribution made by immigrants to its economic and cultural successes. Oksana refers to the United States as having historically been recognized as a “melting pot of assimilated immigrants”, (2008:43). The anti-immigrant posture of the current

US President, Donald Trump, however, has made the immigrant a scapegoat for economic stagnation and unemployment, in addition to being accused of constituting a threat to the security of American citizens. Similarly, in Jonny Steinberg's review of forced migration, large numbers of immigrants from Mozambique and the Congo fled the civil wars of the early 1980s and 1990s to South Africa (2005:5). These refugees did not have a formal status, and were never welcomed or integrated into most communities as they were regarded as illegal. They largely survived by doing menial jobs in some poor and rural apartheid homeland communities, and forming defensive ethnic networks to preserve their cultural and ethnic identities. Authorities of the former homeland of Lebowa (now Limpopo), banned foreigners outright from settling in the territory. If they ventured into territories designated by apartheid laws for the exclusive settlement of white citizens, in search of jobs, they would be arrested and deported without regard for rights or due process. In the post-apartheid era, the new government embarked on an aggressive programme to integrate South African communities in order to remove apartheid's ethnic and racial divides, and create greater social cohesion. The unintended consequence of this exercise is that it brought into sharper focus, and increased the resentment of, the presence of foreigners by local communities for various reasons, among which was access to social goods.

The Institute of Justice and Reconciliation suggests that the social cohesion experiment was not a great success, as evidenced to this day by the growing social distance and chronic racial divide among South Africans. According to their barometer survey, "43,5% of South Africans rarely or never speak to someone of another race" (2012:45). In my opinion, the social distance is even larger between South Africans and foreigners, and there is little or no contact between the two groups.

This context is provided merely as a backdrop to examine the nature of xenophobia and its wrongs, and not as an account of migration patterns, why migration occurs, or its benefits. It is merely intended to be an introduction to a deeper understanding of what xenophobia is, and the role morality might play in preventing and overcoming its harms. Furthermore, this thesis is not

intended to provide a historical or empirical account of theoretical developments relating to xenophobia, but it is rather a Kantian enquiry into how we ought to treat others, specifically foreign others, in accordance with moral deontological duties. Moral consideration, such as impartially treating others with respect and dignity, is not limited to Kantian ethics. While the latter is the main focus of my essay, I also draw on other considerations that may not necessarily originate from Kantianism or deontology, but that are relevant and necessary to prevent harm to others, such as friendliness and *Ubuntu*. The latter is described as humanity towards others. Individual character traits, a sense of morality and institutional support are key components of the cultural orientation of human beings. They are central to humanity's ability to treat others as rational and autonomous beings, concepts which I will explain later in my detailed discussion of Kant. The principle of *Ubuntu* (humaneness), while a good, is not a source of Kantian duties, but it is relevant in as far as it obligates us to treat others with respect. Thad Metz describes it as "communal relationships with others" (2011:538). He regards identifying with each other, sharing a way of life, caring for each other's quality of life and exhibiting solidarity towards each other as key aspects of such communal relationships (2011:559).

Existing literature on the subject of xenophobia is mostly a reflection of how people see and experience it in their daily lives, and less about what it exactly is, and what kind of harms it causes. Contemporary accounts of xenophobia have highlighted, from a purely social/political standpoint, the negative impact on foreigners of social exclusion, hurtful comments and the use of derogatory language, an unjustified superiority complex and physical attacks. This notable empirical literature on xenophobia has come from, among others, the Human Sciences Research Council and the International Organisation for Migration (Misago, Landau and Monson 2009). This body of work does not necessarily directly address xenophobia as an ethical or moral issue, but provides an empirical account of its causes and effects and suggests possible political policy solutions. The literature is nonetheless helpful in as far as it raises awareness of the harmfulness of social exclusion. The literature also provides a concrete, contextual backdrop of some practical real human-life examples

within which the nature of xenophobia and its consequences can be understood. It also highlights what is already known and has been said about xenophobia. It is however mostly silent about what we still need to uncover, particularly from an ethical perspective. A strictly empirical account is not sufficient to understand xenophobia's ethical dimension. It is nonetheless an enabling resource to assess its nature, harms and wrongs. I will use the concrete empirical background to undertake an abstract, ethical exploration of the concept of xenophobia. In addition, the empirical account will be useful in making practical recommendations that attempt to address xenophobia's negative impact and diminish the chances of its rise in society.

The body of available literature on xenophobia to which I have referred, covers empirical, and to a lesser extent, philosophical dimensions. In undertaking an ethical exploration of the topic, I have selected to focus on the reflections given by Ronald Sundstrom and Michael Neocosmos. Their views are similar in how they recognize the wrongness of xenophobia, but different in other ways. Let me state at the outset that the broad scope of their multiple points of view on xenophobia, makes it impractical to cover everything in this short report. My discussion is therefore not exhaustive of all of their views.

My choice of the two academics was influenced by their authoritative contribution to a public discourse on xenophobia. Their accounts are comprehensive and extensively cover many elements of the debate on the topic. Sundstrom addresses xenophobia from a public morality standpoint, while Neocosmos accentuates a mostly political perspective.

In the first two chapters, I discuss their accounts, and evaluate their definition of xenophobia, its nature, harms and wrongs. In order to consider the relevance to xenophobia of the moral theory referred to in my introduction, it is necessary to answer two key questions:

1. What is xenophobia?
2. What is wrong with xenophobia?

In answering these questions, I will attempt to explain what xenophobia is and what it is not, its nature, and harms. Furthermore, I offer my views, not only of their accounts, but on my understanding of xenophobia and what I think may possibly be effective solutions to preventing its emergence. My discussion on how Sundstrom and Neocosmos view its nature and wrongs, includes my views on whether xenophobia is individual or institutional. Throughout this report, reference to the role of state institutions does not refer to physical structures per se, but to human beings who occupy positions of power and influence within those institutions.

In the final chapter, I argue that preventing and overcoming xenophobia and its harms will require the adoption of a fundamental moral approach. A purely political response to what is essentially also a moral issue does not suffice. It is not enough to condemn xenophobia merely because it causes injury or death, or because of its discriminatory nature. I therefore argue for a fundamental Kantian ethical response, according to which the intrinsic value of humanity is considered sacrosanct, if we are indeed to eventually prevail over the prevalence of xenophobia.

Chapter 1

Ronald Sundstrom

1. Definition of xenophobia

Sundstrom begins with the rough understanding of xenophobia as the “fear of others, and in particular the fear of the foreigner” (2014:23).

Sundstrom however regards reliance on this definition as shallow and inadequate for purposes of a thorough social evaluation, as it neither clarifies the moral status of xenophobia, nor highlights the irrationality of its “beliefs,

attitudes and acts” (2013:70). The definition narrowly focuses our examination of xenophobia on fear as the primary or sole consideration for the existence of xenophobia. The definition further constrains the focus in understanding xenophobia on fear of the others, not just any others, but the foreigners in particular. It ignores other negative factors such as hatred or the jealousy, which may or may not be triggered by fear, or themselves lead to fear.

For Sundstrom, xenophobia is better understood as civic ostracism, by which he means attitudes and beliefs associated “with national inclusion and exclusion” (2014:30). In this environment, the individual defines himself within the framework of the membership of social and political systems that identifies his group. Members see themselves through the prism of others who look like them, and in many cases, seek approval for their individual actions from their own members. In other words, their individual outlook is shaped by an exclusionary, collective life. The influence of group life within these systems “is profoundly formative of the self” (2014:23). Social arrangements are made in a way that facilitates a shared culture and the formation of a group life that gives privileges only to people of a certain identity. Identity enables access to privileges and social goods such as jobs and rights. The nature of the social arrangements encourage individualism and denying privileges to other identities according to Sundstrom. The relationship between members excludes foreigners, as the latter’s cultural background is viewed as alien and presumed to be inferior. Foreigners are systematically alienated in this environment of shared culture and identity. They can never enjoy equal status and a fulfilled life as their identity cannot possibly be viewed as fitting the subjective political criteria for legitimacy and inclusion. Even if the foreigner volunteers to subject himself to the policies and culture of a new nation state, he would still be regarded as an outsider, because origin and physical features cannot be revised. So xenophobia is also about exclusion, premised on identity and nationality. The social arrangements that Sundstrom is talking about, is a feature that obtains in most liberal democracies. They are designed in a way that deliberately or inadvertently ostracises the outsider, who will permanently remain part of “them” and can never become part of “us”, the civic mainstream. Sundstrom argues that xenophobia is not beneficial for the creation of an

enriched group life, which should be supported by inclusion, and not characterized by “civic exclusion” (2014:23).

In his discussion, Sundstrom points to the immorality of ostracising foreigners on the grounds of cultural identity and nationality. Ostracisation is encouraged by among others, immigration policies that can become cumbersome and difficult for immigrants to comply with. The requirements for nationality are sometimes so onerous that foreigners can almost never become citizens, and will remain “perpetual foreigners” (2017:71). The exclusion of the foreigner is enabled by an arrangement that excludes, and ostracises.

Ostracism may well be a result of policies which are intentionally designed for that purpose, or that are simply neglectful. Due to their exclusionary characteristic, the difference between exclusion and ostracism is not immediately clear. Immigration status, identity or nationality may lead to exclusion, as the concept is ordinarily understood. Ostracism is however more than just being excluded on these grounds. Policies that facilitate ostracism have the effect of culturally alienating those who are seen as not belonging to a particular nation. Sundstrom uses the example of Frank Wu, an Asian American lawyer born, living and working in the United States, to demonstrate the attitudes of ostracism and the perpetual foreigner narrative. If Frank gave the name of an American city in answer to a question of where he is from, a white American is likely to follow up. “Where are you really from?” (2014:27). In the mind of the enquirer, Frank must be a foreigner, he can never be of Asian ethnicity and simultaneously, truly belong to the real nation of America. The real nation as opposed to the abstract one, refers to those who claim their American-ness by “blood and soil”. The abstract part of the nation is the one whose membership is facilitated by “law and bureaucracy”. So even if he is native born, Frank is still made to feel like he does not belong, and always has to explain how he can look Asian but claim American authenticity. That attitude is ostracising.

Sundstrom says the outsiders might be officially accepted, meaning, provided with official documents to become citizens, but even then, their “belonging is

probationary” (2017:71). They can only truly belong after they assimilate. It is not clear what Sundstrom’s interpretation of assimilation is, as he mentions it only in passing. Given its relevance to xenophobia, I discuss it in greater detail in Chapter 3 of this report.

In order to understand xenophobia as a distinct concept, Sundstrom argues that both the differences and inter-relatedness of xenophobia, racism and nativism be recognised. He points out that xenophobia, racism and nativism are related, but they are not the same. The social connection between these concepts however need to be acknowledged in order to fully understand that they cannot be interpreted as existing in isolation from each other. It is also important to note that, as a result of the social association, the differences are not always obvious. Sundstrom thinks it better to say what xenophobia is not, in order to clearly distinguish it and accurately state what it is. The concepts are similar in how they all reinforce discrimination and prejudice, but are conceptually different (2017:72). It is however necessary, Sundstrom argues, to explain xenophobia and its moral status, as a separate concept from racism and nativism. Xenophobia is an aversion to a foreign culture, to someone’s foreignness and status as an outsider. Racism is about disliking, hurting someone or discriminating against him purely based on his skin colour. It is possible for one culture to embrace the cultures of the various races within one nation-state, but to be xenophobic towards people of the same race who come from other countries. A racial minority may still be subjected to discrimination, even as they are accepted as citizens. Sundstrom cites the situation of African Americans as a proof point, who until 1950 were “civic insiders and racial outsiders” (2014:34). Even after being officially recognized and granted citizenship, they were denied the right to vote and were often subjected to official racial discrimination and violence, often without consequences for the culprits.

Members of the organization, Stop the Islamisation of Europe (SIOE), for example, do not accept being called racist, because they perceive themselves as not hating people of other races. Sundstrom, however, regards the following anti-Muslim message, displayed on their website, as both racist and

xenophobic: “racism is the lowest form of human stupidity, but Islamophobia is the height of common sense” (quoted in Sundstrom 2014:22). The anti-Islam rhetoric targets Islam, a minority foreign religion in Europe, and its followers, who are Muslims and a minority racial group in Europe. That makes the message, for Sundstrom, both racist and xenophobic, which the SIOE may or may not notice. Their flawed logic suggests that racism is bad, but xenophobia, demonstrated by the group’s anti-Islamic rhetoric, is somehow acceptable. The image of a white hand shaking a black one, part of their propaganda, is supposedly meant to convey their public anti-racism standpoint. Sundstrom asserts, in a passing reference to the holocaust, that Europeans tend to be more sensitive to being called racist, but often do not realize when they are being xenophobic.

In addition to racism, the other concept Sundstrom petitions us to distinguish from xenophobia is nativism. Nativism is a political process that actively excludes foreigners and allows only natives access to the resources of the nation. The resources are “hoarded” and protected from being “exploited by foreigners” (2017:72). When the discourse on general xenophobia starts to make claims of a purified nation state for instance, nativism sets in. Nativism differs from xenophobia in that it is a “national political project” concerned with actively excluding the outsiders in order to preserve the purity of a nation. Unlike xenophobia, nativism is not a general anti-immigrant concept. Its objective is specific, to “defend the nation state” against intrusion by foreigners (2014:31). In addition to anti-immigrant policies, a nativist approach can make participation in religious and cultural ceremonies explicitly about excluding outsiders. The discourse of nativism, is inherently also racist, so nativism can inadvertently promote racism, in that the cultural ceremonies can be used a “nativist barriers” (2014:32). Nativists believe there is an authenticity and essence of being that can only be found in natives, and that is impossible to acquire through some other process. Indigenous members and foreigners are accordingly “separate fundamental, as well as social beings” (2017:71). Nativism therefore encourages communities to maintain identities clearly defined by race and ethnicity. The inhibiting and discriminatory nature of its bias against immigrants encourages and reinforces xenophobia. So the difference between nativism

and xenophobia is that nativism is politically explicit, and xenophobia is not. It is also possible to be xenophobic without making nativists pronouncements, but nativism as a concept, depends on xenophobia.

Sundstrom further argues that xenophobia is encouraged by a society that is based on self-determination and nationalism. Self-determination refers to the rights of a community to determine its political status and to pursue economic, political and cultural development without external interference (UNPO 2017). In its quest for self-determination, such a society uses its institutions to determine the privileges associated with membership, including rights and duties. Membership of such a society is determined among other things by common practices, such as worship, culture, values and language. A devotion to these practices and related cultural traditions must and can happen within the limits of permissible morality. After all, it is not an inherent human trait to loathe other human beings. Instead of encouraging multi-culturalism, such membership can deliberately or unintentionally promote nationalism, which in turn not only leads to xenophobia, but nurtures and shelters it. The defined membership of such a society notwithstanding, it is still possible for others outside of such membership not to be victimized by xenophobic practices if inclusive nationalism is embraced.

Sundstrom is of the view that xenophobia is gradually transforming into a discourse that is characterized by the targeting of immigrants on legal grounds in liberal democracies. Nations states are central to determining the conditions for membership for outsiders, to regulate immigration. In their quest for political autonomy, they use their power to decide who qualifies for citizenship and who does not. It should be remembered that membership is not just a political concept, but comes with actual rights and privileges for those who meet the criteria. Sundstrom believes that as a result, racism against foreigners has “taken a nationalistic character and is expressed in nativist policies” (2014:33) in modern states. As a result, xenophobia is becoming less of a general concept, and increasingly reflects this development. The expression of nationalistic tendencies according to Sundstrom, are not new, but are part of the history of racism. It is helpful to understand the mutual connections in these

concepts, but even more important to isolate xenophobia, so that it is not hidden but exposed and dealt with adequately. Racism is often condemned prominently, and legal instruments exist to combat it. The same cannot be said about xenophobia, which at best, is ignored. Xenophobia can of course be covered by broad anti-discrimination clauses and policies. Given Sundstrom's strong advocacy for xenophobia to be isolated from racism, he would question whether general anti-discrimination policies could effectively tackle xenophobia.

As I will explain later in my argument, xenophobia has had devastating consequences for immigrants and indigenous populations. Sundstrom argues therefore against watering it down, or obfuscating its true meaning. In his view, xenophobia is strengthened by the loss of its distinctive conceptual meaning. By conflating it with racism for example, we obscure this distinctiveness and fail to isolate it for moral condemnation over its "creation and division of friends from enemies" (2017:73). The reason he strongly proposes a distinct focus on xenophobia, different from racism, is precisely that the power of xenophobia lies in its ability to hide behind racism, to be invisible, as in the SIOE example cited above. If we are successful in rejecting and evading accusations of racism, "charges of xenophobia offer little traction" (2017:77). Sundstrom rejects the casual assumption in popular culture that xenophobia and nativism are necessarily absorbed by racism. These concepts are intertwined, blend into each other and the differences are often subtle. If a better-qualified Malawian male is overlooked for a promotion in favour of a white male at a South African company, how can we know whether this is a racial or xenophobic incident? (This is my example and not Sundstrom's). If the decision is justified and the explanation successfully thwarts racism accusations, no one is interested in enquiring whether xenophobia was at play. It is probably also easier and convenient to apportion blame for any xenophobic incident to racism, and explain away the black and white binary as incidental and not racist. Xenophobia is not always black and white. Of course it is not clear if the SOIE does or pretends not know that their message is xenophobic. Either way, this example clearly demonstrates that an uninhibited, casual public discourse of racism can indeed "shelter xenophobia" (2017:79). In short, Sundstrom sees

xenophobia as a “deep, endemic problem” (2013:77) which deserves targeted pinpointing, and which must therefore be distinguished from the related concepts just described.

Sundstrom acknowledges the existence of xenophobia at both the psychological/mental and behavioural levels, and including either implicit or explicit attitudes. In other words, xenophobia can have a mental and/or behavioral orientation, which plays out in various emotions, including a biased attitude, or in some cases violence. I offer my interpretation of these points in the section discussing my views on Sundstrom’s account.

In summary, Sundstrom’s definition, in broad terms, characterizes xenophobia at individual psychological and behavioral levels. Xenophobia in this regard, is reflected in the attitudes, emotions, behavior and beliefs of groups and individuals. These emotions, admittedly some but not all driven by fear, prevail and are specifically targeted at foreigners. The foreigner’s only crime is that he is not indigenous to a particular nation state. His physical features and his cultural background make him an outsider. This understanding is, in my opinion, an effective launch pad and a solid basis to begin exploring the essence of xenophobia as more than just an innocent fear of the stranger.

2. What is wrong with xenophobia

Sundstrom correctly points out that factors such as envy may lead to xenophobia. An individual’s inability to compete in an economic system might make him envious of the success of outsiders. The envy may well be a result of how the locals are unable to keep up with the business ingenuity and entrepreneurial instincts of immigrants. Being envious breeds unnecessary resentment against innocent foreigners, and where diverse communities are supposed to live in harmony, immigrants become victims of hostility.

The nature of political systems in liberal democracies makes vulnerable immigrants targets of not only economic and political exploitation, but leaves them exposed to unwarranted xenophobic violence. Given the sovereign right

of the political structure to determine the criteria for inclusion and exclusion, the civil rights of immigrants are often threatened. Sundstrom underscores that the violation of rights is not limited to immigrants., and may in fact extent to their native-born children. Immigration policies can be changed arbitrarily to extend the exclusion to the children of immigrants, even if they have birthright citizenship. Sundstrom uses the example of Barack Obama, who could theoretically have been denied the opportunity to become President of the United States. His birthright citizenship would have been imperiled by the immigration status of his Kenyan father. Sundstrom points out that in the United States, strict anti-immigrant laws have led to an increase in racial profiling and harassment. Unscrupulous businesses also benefit from the “underground economy of low wage labour” (2017:76). Excluding others on the basis of identity therefore risks “ignoring civil rights protections and undermines effective citizenship” (2014:23). Social justice becomes “an intra-national” affair (2017:73), instead of a consideration in universal morality.

A combination of particular xenophobic attitudes and beliefs are described by Sundstrom as being concerned with “national inclusion and exclusion” (2014:30). In this and other instances, the political structure grants itself the sovereign power to determine who is included and excluded, and to create “communities of character and meaning”.(2017:73). Through this political process, a common form of worship emerges, as do “languages, manners and mores, narratives and monuments, and virtues and values” (2017:73). Using cultural differences as an excuse to determine who qualifies to be the “insider” and the “outsider” is wrong. Sundstrom views the institution as having either a collective intention or neglectful orientation that aims to “ostracizes a group from civic mainstream” (2014:26). Using cultural grounds as a pretext to make a determination of the “we” and the “they” (2017:77), in order to exclude, is disingenuous and harmful to the interests of others. Due to their “outsider” status, the foreigner is “ostracized” (2017:71), and cannot be part of the social and political structures of the real, indigenous nation. Their outsider status disqualifies them from being accepted as “authentic participants of the cultural, linguistic, or religious tradition” of the society that they adopt as their new home. (2017:71). A xenophobic orientation encourages individualism, in what is

supposed to be a shared life, which should include others. Individualism contributes to exclusionary politics and social practices that are harmful to innocent outsiders.

The growing nationalistic tendencies transform societies, where, immigrants are often expected to give up their culture and assume that of the host community. Nationalism has positive aspects, but the infringement of the rights of others occasioned by unfair exclusion, Sundstrom points out, is undesirable. Nationalism's exclusionary aspects create unnecessary adversarial divisions, the "good us and the bad them". Xenophobia is associated with a fanatical, negative nationalist sentiment, an attitude that can lead to aggression, anti-social behavior and extreme political ideologies. Anti-immigrant communities "embrace fear and justify hatred of foreigners" (2017:69). In the context of xenophobia, extremist nationalists can become too conscious of the need to protect their identity, at the expense of the identity of others within their communities. Negative nationalism can breed a superiority complex and discrimination against minority groups, leading to xenophobia. Xenophobia is therefore harmful to individuals and to society, in that it undermines many of the ideals of a multicultural society, including unity and diversity. It also violates rights, freedoms, equality and fairness. Nationalism must not be allowed to justify xenophobia by facilitating exclusionary access to power. Exercising undue influence over foreigners and denying them access to social goods under the guise of nationalism should be denounced. Controlling and subjugating another rational and moral being, based on his foreign status and an unfounded fear of "being run over" (2017:69), is impermissible. Nationalism leads to xenophobia, and ultimately causes hostility between indigenous communities and immigrants. Society's preoccupation with inclusion and exclusion causes social and political harms, and creates xenophobic divisions between the locals and foreigners.

Xenophobia unjustly targets innocent people trying to secure an economic existence. Xenophobia unfairly projects foreigners as being a burden on the resources of indigenous communities, and a factor in the deterioration of their quality of life. Sundstrom denounces anti-immigrant communities who equate

accepting the moral responsibility to protect foreigners with a moral obligation for self-destruction. He opposes the theory of “lifeboat ethics”. Sundstrom is opposed to the beliefs of the theory of “lifeboat ethics”, according to which pro-immigrant locals must themselves save the immigrants by “jumping overboard”. They argue that “each lifeboat has a specific carrying capacity” (2017:74). Here the risk of overpopulation is being used by anti-immigrant advocates as an excuse to limit migration, as in their view, it would negatively impact and ruin the quality of life of everyone else. As a result of the unwarranted restriction on immigration, foreigners are denied the right to lead and pursue fulfilling lives in the new territories of their adopted communities.

Sundstrom suggests some possible solutions to counter the emergence of xenophobia. First, it is important to ensure that xenophobia does not lose its distinctive meaning. In this regard, we must consistently morally condemn the attitudes and beliefs with which it is associated. If we can create laws that prohibit and persecute racists, surely the same can be done to fight xenophobia. Sundstrom’s point about isolating xenophobia by de-coupling it from racism and nativism, is well founded. I suspect that he would not be satisfied with xenophobia being designated as just one of the practices that can be addressed by reliance on broad anti-discrimination legislation. Second, thought leaders should elevate the conversation around xenophobia from a minor moral concern to a public discourse that accords it the appropriate level of attention. Accordingly, they should explain the factors influencing migration, and emphasize the collective responsibilities towards immigrants from a political and moral point of view. Finally, civil society should provide shelter to immigrant communities and actively engage the anti-immigrant rhetoric at community and other levels.

3. My views of Sundstrom’s account

My views on Sundstrom’s discussion in this section, include opinions and arguments that others have made, that are relevant to the topic of xenophobia. To support my arguments, I also provide greater contextual detail on concepts

such as harm, nationalism and different forms of xenophobic orientation. Sundstrom mentions some of them to varying degrees of detail in his account.

The definition of xenophobia, merely as “the fear of the other, particularly the fear of the foreigner”, is in my view, indeed superficial. Fear does indeed exist, but failure to assess its negative consequences is a shortcoming that makes it difficult to understand xenophobia from a moral standpoint. It makes it sound like fear is something that should be regarded as normal and innocent, and accepted as a factor in our everyday lives, about which we can do nothing. I can accept an individual’s fear of venomous snakes, or deadly wild animals, or heights as legitimate. Xenophobia, on the other hand, is not fear of any of these, but fear of other human beings because of their “otherness”. I would even go further and downgrade the fear to more of a discomfort with foreigners. It is not, in my estimate, genuine fear that foreigners will somehow ruin my life and must therefore be avoided. Xenophobia should, from the onset, be understood as more than just innocent fear, but explained to capture the irrationality of that fear from a moral point of view. My preferred formulation, partly in support of Sundstrom’s point about its shallowness, would thus be something like the following: Xenophobia is a combination of irrational negative effects about a foreign moral being, characterized by emotions of fear, hatred and envy. Such a description immediately subjects xenophobia to a deeper examination, so that the significance of the morality of irrationally fearing others is emphasized. Defining it merely as fear of the stranger, indeed carries the risk of glossing over and concealing and protecting its true meaning. Sundstrom’s dissatisfaction with the inadequacy of defining xenophobia this way, is in my view, therefore justified.

Sundstrom acknowledges the existence of xenophobia mental and behavior levels. I articulate my own views of various forms of xenophobic orientation. I am of the opinion that it is possible for someone to be actively xenophobic without being mentally oriented that way, what I refer to as an active xenophobe. Conversely, it is possible to harbor a xenophobic mentality, without acting it out, what I call a passive xenophobe. Someone may hate foreigners, but never act against them, abuse them or publicly display anti-foreigner hatred.

I believe that there are different types of xenophobic behaviour, which I describe below. First, it is possible for a South African to behave in a xenophobic manner, such as using a derogatory term to refer to a foreigner from another African country, without being mentally oriented that way. Such an individual does not have a xenophobic mental attitude, but exhibits xenophobic behavior. He neither strongly dislikes or fears foreigners, nor harbours xenophobic feelings, attitudes and beliefs. Exhibiting xenophobic behaviour may be influenced by other factors including personal interests, for example, joining a mob to steal from businesses owned by foreigners. Participation in the act of stealing from a foreigner may purely be motivated by a selfish desire to profit from something without working for it. The victim's status as a foreigner is purely co-incidental, and not the primary motivation for the perpetrator's decision to participate in the theft. The perpetrator might even respond the same way in a situation where the victim was an indigenous trader. He is possibly influenced by the behaviour of his community, and imposes on himself the need to demonstrate his allegiance, to be compatible with the group. In xenophobic communities, even a non-xenophobic individual may exhibit xenophobic behaviour, by for example, avoiding friendships with foreigners. This usually happens because such an individual avoids the risk of being ostracised by his/her own community.

Someone else may be mentally xenophobic but not act out that emotion. Once xenophobia is embraced, it is still possible for such a person to remain a passive xenophobe. Often such a person makes wrong and unfounded assumptions about a group of people because of where they come from. Whenever he meets people from a different country, it is difficult to open up to them easily. I acknowledge that it is completely normal to feel a little self-conscious around strangers. However, for such a xenophobe, the anxiety associated with meeting a stranger can cause them great distress, making them fearful and uncomfortable around people who look different. This kind of xenophobe is apprehensive and avoids groups of people that look foreign, and jumps to irrational conclusions about them just because of their otherness. When someone is attacked for being a foreigner, a passive xenophobe looks on, with tacit approval of the harmful anti-immigrant act. He stands idly by, but will not himself participate in the attack or intervene to stop it. This attitude, in my view,

makes him guilty of ignoring his moral responsibility, namely, to prevent the infliction of harm on another (innocent) moral being.

A third kind is a combination of the two: A person has a xenophobic mentality and portrays it explicitly in his behaviour. This behavior manifests itself in the way he stigmatizes and dehumanizes others based on their ethnic or religious affiliation. He makes hurtful public generalisations about an entire nation because of the (bad) actions of a few members of that nation. He accuses foreigners of stealing jobs, discriminates against them for job opportunities or housing rentals, even if they qualify. This xenophobe deliberately excludes a foreigner from a conversation in a social setting, for instance, by speaking a language in which only locals are able to communicate. In worst cases, his actions are physically violent towards foreigners.

To sum up, it is possible for someone to be only mentally xenophobic, to fear and hate foreigners, in attitude only, without acting it out. It is also possible to demonstrate xenophobic behaviour, acting it out, without necessarily being a mental xenophobe. These two state of affairs are however not the only prevalent examples of xenophobia. A mental xenophobe who also acts out his xenophobic emotions at the same time, is an example of xenophobia manifested in both behaviour and attitude. Given only these bad choices, I prefer a mental xenophobe, who does not act out his emotions, such as physically attacking another person. As both a mental attitude and physical behaviour, xenophobia cannot be morally justified. If I were however to choose between two bad situations, I would prefer a mentally passive xenophobe because such an attitude is not in itself physically harmful. Granted, a xenophobic mental attitude can lead to individual behavior that is not necessarily physically harmful to others, but nonetheless harmful in other ways. Not all xenophobia is necessarily violent, and the absence of violence does not mean the absence of xenophobia. A xenophobic mental attitude and other physically non-violent xenophobic behaviour, including the mere use of derogatory language and unjust discrimination, are harmful. Some are in favour of the good of foreigners and the benefits they bring to their adopted communities, others wish them ill, and yet others wish them neither ill nor good.

In my view, it is not enough morally to be merely positively disposed towards foreigners but indifferent to their welfare.

Some psychiatrists describe xenophobia as an anxiety disorder, a medical condition which may even require to be treated with drugs or therapy, and may affect mental health. This is, however, a contentious claim as there is no general consensus among health care practitioners on this standpoint. The American Psychiatric Association rejects prejudice as a mental disease. Mental health, according to Laurie Manwell et al, is not just the absence of a mental disease. It refers to how an individual is able to function within a social environment (2015:5). Understood this way, mental health is therefore defined by these social factors. The combined social factors together contribute to an individual's mental well-being, as well as to the "health" of the community in which he lives (2015:5). Consistent with this definition therefore, Manwell et al think it is a mental health issue, but not a mental disease.

Alvin Poussaint, himself a psychiatrist, disagrees with the APA and thinks xenophobia is a mental disease. He regards the disrespectful treatment of ethnic minorities and scapegoating them for society's problems as "symptoms of a serious mental dysfunction" ((2002:3). The person suffering from xenophobia is said to experience extreme fear when they meet a stranger, usually a foreigner. The fear leads to personal discomfort and withdrawal from social situations where they might have to interact with foreigners. In extreme cases, they may become physically or verbally violent towards foreigners. I do not believe that xenophobia is a medical condition, but accept that it is a mental health issue, consistent with the social determinants described by Manwell et al. Individuals are influenced by external factors to embrace or reject it.

I assert that xenophobia is not congenital, it is learned. Xenophobia, in my view, is acquired, as no one is born with a xenophobic mentality. It may well be a result of how someone is brought up or socialized, indeed how we are taught the rules and values of society. Gordon Allport, a racial prejudice scholar, believes that the emotional valuations children make are learnt from their parents and teachers, and are "adopted ready-made" (1954:45). Over time, the

child becomes more attached to what he knows (his family, race, religion, language, cultural traditions), than what he does not. Even as he gradually comes into contact with others outside his cultural sphere of influence, and learns new things, he is never too far detached from his standpoint. The choices and preferences he makes are therefore guided by his upbringing. Bandura, Grusec and Menlove assert that behaviour is learned from the environment through “observational learning” (1966:500). Children learn behaviour (good or bad) and differences, by observing how others react (right or wrong) to specific situations. A child who notices differences in the physical features of other human beings, and is taught from an early age that differences are a normal part of our makeup, is unlikely to accentuate differences as a reason to irrationally fear others, and to be xenophobic. Children who are raised to believe that their culture is superior for example, can develop an exaggerated sense of the importance of their status over others. This manifests later in life in how they become disdainful and start to exhibit what Sundstrom calls “the explicit prejudices and problematic implicit attitudes against foreigners” (2017:77). They become fearful and prejudicial and perceive foreigners as sub-humans and a threat to the purity of their culture.

The attitudes associated with xenophobia are inherently negative. Xenophobia stems from, among others, the fear or dislike of something we do not know, and with which we are not familiar. The lack of knowledge leads to the development of negative feelings towards the object of unfamiliarity, in this case, foreigners, both as individuals and as a group. A prejudicial disposition towards strangers may bring about loathing and a host of other negative emotions. Immigrants are often a target for prejudice, evidenced sometimes by how they are subjected to conduct that is denigrating and humiliating. In other instances, hurtful anti-immigrant language and images are used to describe them and their circumstances. They are talked of in negative terms such as an “invasion of illegal aliens” (Flynn 2018), infiltrators, intruders, invaders, criminals and terrorists. Oksana Yakushko notes that while such references are commonplace, we often fail to recognize that they are linked by “an underlying set of attitudes based on fear, dislike, or hatred of foreigners” (2009:37). An innocent foreigner becomes a victim of these harmful attitudes. He is

stereotyped as lazy and backward, reflecting prejudicial perceptions of an African foreigner for example. The community is prejudiced against a foreigner of a particular religious affiliation, who is assumed to be extremist and criminal. When he is unjustly verbally abused, locals do not intervene, to use Piper's description, because he is portrayed as some "unwelcome intruder" (1991:2). It is irrational to harbor unprovoked adversarial attitudes towards innocent, other equally valuable beings. The attitudes, motivated simply by mere differences in the origin, culture and values of immigrant communities, are distressing and hurtful.

Xenophobia is harmful in all its forms. Harm is broadly understood to mean inflicting injury intentionally, but of course not all harm is necessarily physical. Harms exist in different forms and xenophobia can indeed exist without violence. Joel Feinberg views harm as a moral and legal concept, connected to the interests of an individual or group. According to him, "an act is harmful if it wrongfully sets back the interests of another person, in violation of an obligation to the person whose interests are set back" (1984:37). If someone is found to have violated immigration laws, our obligation is to process and regularize his immigration status. He could have fled his homeland for any number of legitimate reasons, including political or religious persecution. Deporting him therefore wrongfully sets back his prospects of a better life. There is nothing wrong however in the extradition of a wanted criminal back to his country to account for his actions¹. Facilitating some kind of legal status promotes the interests of immigrants, and indeed ensures that they have a sense of belonging, and are protected from unnecessary setbacks. An organized system of regularizing members of society after all facilitates the gathering of reliable data. The data is useful for the efficient and just distribution of rewards and punishment. Immigrants ought to be supported out of a genuine commitment for social justice and to advance their human values. Helping out because of selfish interests, such as hiring cheap labour from desperate immigrant communities is exploitation, as Sundstrom points out. I believe in

¹ I deliberately use "deporting" and "extradition" to emphasize the importance of rights and highlight the need for the legality of actions in dealing with immigrants.

fact, that the quicker immigrants can be integrated into local communities, the quicker they can start benefiting their adopted communities. Exploiting them undermines their rational and autonomous nature. I discuss these concepts in detail in my later outline of Kantian ethics.

As Sundstrom's account demonstrates, the harms of xenophobia can be physical, psychological, social, economic or political. Much of the discussion on xenophobia unfortunately ignores many of its other harms, and focuses mostly on the physical harm. Many of the harms of xenophobia are easy to identify, while those of racism can sometimes be subtle. It is easy to see refugees being visibly harmed through forced deportation or violent attacks because of their (foreign) physical features, because they do not "belong". Piper identifies this as "political discrimination" which emanates from "cognitive discrimination" (1993:1). The latter refers to someone's ability to distinguish between the attributes or characteristics of an object, on the basis of which he makes a favourable or unfavourable judgment about that object.

Sundstrom correctly argues that xenophobia should be thought of as an ethical issue that deserves moral consideration. He suggests that pro-immigration activism should be vigilant in ensuring respect for the dignity of foreigners, and singling out xenophobia for condemnation, as opposed to conflating it with broad anti-racist activism. De-coupling xenophobia from racism enables the accurate identification of its harms so that they can be adequately addressed and condemned. That means, instead of casually treating xenophobia as just another form of racism, it should be isolated from it, rather than be hidden in it. I paraphrase Sundstrom's point made earlier in this regard: people do not generally like being called racist, but they are often unaware when they are being xenophobic.

He acknowledges fear as a cause of xenophobia, but not the only one. I agree that in some instances, envy and resentment may be responsible for xenophobia, a fact that refutes the indispensability of fear to xenophobia's manifestation. Some of the xenophobic resentment of foreigners is a result of the envy of their economic and professional success. How can someone arrive

in South Africa with nothing, from a poor backward African country, and achieve success where I have failed, an indigenous South African might ask. The question is obviously premised on the wrong notion that success is determined by someone's origin and social background. The answer is likely to be irrational, envy eventually creeps in, and xenophobia rears its ugly head. Chances of success in life are not determined by where someone was born.

Sundstrom makes what I consider to be a practical and convincing argument about the moral requirement to respect other human beings, pointing out the necessity for individual and collective responsibility. In his view, xenophobia is wrong when politicians for instance use it to "gain political capital by whipping up fear and resentment" (2017:75). Reckless utterances by politicians lead to emotions that encourage individualism, and ignore the detrimental effects of xenophobia to the lives of immigrants. It is however, expedient to blame only politicians, and by extension, state institutions for xenophobia. A selective focus on condemning only the state for the harm caused to foreigners is, in my view, both inadequate and misleading. Individuals have the rational competence to both disregard divisive calls to reject immigrants, and make it their ethical obligation to be sympathetic. Ultimately, the responsibility to welcome immigrants is an individual and collective one, which cannot, and should not be entrusted to state institutions. I recognize that the policies of political institutions can be designed in a way that does not advance the interests of foreigners. Human beings within institutions design these policies, and ultimately, only they possess a moral status and therefore the ability to tackle xenophobia. The protection of immigrants is collective responsibility. Sundstrom asserts that leadership must emanate from "religious authority, moral or political theory, or social and environmental conditions" (2017:74). By this he means family, religious and political leaders. In his view, moral beings have an equal moral status, and all human beings have the responsibility to ensure the advancement of that equality. It is true that disregarding the dignity of immigrants, as pointed out, opens them up for "economic and political exploitation and waves of xenophobic persecutions" (2017:75).

In sum, the mistreatment of any human being is morally impermissible, whether that individual is a foreigner or not. When anyone is treated with equality and respect, his ethnic identity and cultural origin become irrelevant. Identity has regrettably been used as an excuse to violate the rights and dignity of immigrant groups by host populations, or commit atrocities, often with violent, catastrophic consequences. Xenophobes use the fear of strangers and identity as a pretext to supposedly preserve and foster the survival of their communities. They create an environment of social exclusion, where meaningful social relations and the application of social justice is limited to members only, in what Sundstrom calls “an intra-national” affair (2017:73). An indigenous criminal has access to due process, but a foreigner is arbitrarily arrested and summarily expelled. Something is wrong with a society that respects the rights of a native criminal, but ignores those of a law abiding foreigner. Just because someone is in a territory illegally, does not justify denying him rights. Sundstrom powerfully condemns the injustice of what he calls “rightlessness born of statelessness” (2014:25). Unequal treatment is morally unacceptable, as it violates rights and excludes immigrants from access to communal living and co-existence.

I believe that a simplistic perception of the world reduces complex social, cultural and historical phenomena to ostensible good and bad. A homogenous society seems to be an acceptable social arrangement because everyone looks the same, and thinks and feels in a particular way. Anybody else from a different background might be viewed negatively and suspiciously because they are seen as strange, invasive or even a threat. It is wrong and unjustified to make sweeping assumptions about the character of an entire group of immigrants on the basis of the wrongs committed by one or a few members of that group. South Africans, and others who think someone is backward because they come from a poor country with famine or drought, are ignorant of the history of colonialism and exploitation. They also dismally fail to appreciate the basic fact that something like famine may come from a drought, and that the latter is a natural phenomenon. I believe that while human beings notice differences because they are able to think and reason, they are also products

of their own experiences. I agree with Sundstrom that “life within groups and institutions is profoundly formative of the self” (2014:23).

Xenophobia is a political and normative cultural orientation, and not always a mental attitude. While fear of that which is foreign is an important element of xenophobia, I suggest that fear constitutes only one element of a complex concept. In a cultural context, our orientation and background determine our attitudes, emotions and behaviour towards foreigners. If that orientation is narrowly ethnically focused, our relationship with foreigners will reflect negative attributes such as cultural superiority, resentment, stereotyping, hatred and social exclusion. Xenophobia is therefore about a subjective social construction of the difference between the objective reality of what is “foreign”, and what we, subjectively, perceive that reality to be. Such construction is arbitrary and not based on facts. I am not convinced by the argument that xenophobia is an anxiety disorder. I nonetheless concede that healthcare professionals are probably best placed to express a scientific view on whether or not it is. I have already pointed out that Poussaint’s view does not reflect an agreed position by all healthcare professionals. Again, I do not discount the account by medical experts, but the public manifestation of xenophobia that I have observed in South Africa for instance, is different. I have yet to encounter someone who displays xenophobic symptoms of “extreme anxiety” and “excessive sweating”, with an “increased heart rate” because they have just met a foreigner.²

Xenophobia’s fear, is not only a result of ignorance and prejudice, but it is engendered by an orientation that makes one believe in the exaggerated superiority of one’s culture. The objective of cultural socialisation, however, should not be about cultural inferiority and superiority. It should be about teaching children, in making choices later in life, to be proud of and prefer what they are familiar with. Preference and devotion to one’s culture however does not mean hostility towards other cultures. There are also competing concepts of national identity, none of which are better than others. For some, it is English,

²These symptoms are referenced from the Association for the Psychological Science on xenophobia as a mental anxiety disorder (Science Daily, 5 February 2009).

Islam, for others, it is just freedoms and rights. Absent xenophobia, a country like South Africa can be a model multi-cultural nation of linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic diversity. However, the structure of the political system makes such an ideal unrealizable. (Foreigners have limited rights, cannot vote and are often denied access to crucial social services).

Sundstrom encourages vigilance and the expression of moral outrage against xenophobia's distinct irrational beliefs about foreigners. I also agree with Sundstrom on the need for a new focus in understanding and addressing xenophobia as topic in "public morality". This approach will stimulate a public discourse that focus on its immorality, and as Sundstrom says, "discourage the public's acquiescing to its new prominence" (2017:68).

The feared foreigner referred to is not just any foreigner. He is rather a certain kind of stranger. He is described by Adrian Piper as one who does not conform to one's "preconceptions about how persons ought to look or behave" (1991:3). A person does not for example, fear family or community members, who he may not have met before, and who are therefore strangers. He does not fear them because they conform to his particular subjective conception of how he imagines a genuine, ideal or typical native ought to look like. One's family or community members often have similar physical features, share a common cuisine, speak the same language and have the same cultural and geographical origin. This stranger not only looks different, but also possesses and utilizes strange and unusual objects.

Xenophobic prejudices are not limited to foreign human beings, but extend to objects with which foreigners are associated. Xenophobia is fear and hatred not only of people from other countries, but also of goods, due to societal and cultural differences (Kenton Bell 2013). It is not uncommon to notice xenophobic fear in how someone regards foreign food or cultural objects with suspicion, skepticism or revulsion. For example, an African wax print garment or a djembe drum, are not mere commercial goods exchanged in cross border trade. They convey a specific cultural identity, values and meanings, which we fear might dilute our own. Someone may avoid trying out dog meat or mopani

worms, not because there is something wrong with the food, but out of fear and contempt for foreign cultural cuisine. Each culture has its own views about what is edible, how food should be prepared, and how it should be eaten. One culture uses utensils such as a fork and knife, and the other uses bare hands. It is xenophobic to have misgivings about either of these ways of eating, simply because we are unfamiliar with the culinary practice of a specific culture.

Xenophobia is therefore understood to be the fear of a foreigner, a particular kind of foreigner, and fear of the cultural objects and practices with which the foreigner is associated. The United Nations Human Rights Commission puts a face on these foreigners. They are “migrants, refugees and asylum seekers”, as well as “persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities” (2013:1).

At this point, it is necessary to return to the claimed centrality of fear in how xenophobia plays out. I accept that fear causes xenophobia, and that in some but not all cases, it leads to the development of other negative feelings. I however also believe, as I have already mentioned, that being envious of a foreigner’s success for instance, has nothing to do with fear. Fear is often signified by irrelevant apprehension and revulsion towards foreigners, people who obviously come from a different culture than one’s own. The fear may not only be a direct outcome of coming across a strange person, but also the fear of being dominated and in the process exposing one’s culture to dilution. In his description of the in- and out-groups, Oksana refers to this as “intergroup anxiety” (2008:46). The fear may also be influenced by blindly following negative stereotyping and intolerance towards cultural outsiders.

One of the most prominent features of modern democracies is the growth of nationalism. Nationalism contributes to the ongoing practice of driving away foreigners, creating a view that they do not belong to a particular nation. Sundstrom holds that foreigners continue to be viewed by the host communities as an international problem, which happens to have arrived in our country. Their stay is always presumed to be temporary, and it is expected that at some point, they will leave. Nationalism is understood to mean the degree to which one

places the common identity, cultural and ethnic origin of one's nation above individual interests, or the interests of other nations. The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines nationalism as "loyalty and devotion to a nation, especially in a sense of national consciousness". The foundation for such nationalism does not necessarily always emanate from a political nation state. It may, for example, be based on a mono-ethnic, culturally conservative black Zulu speaking community which worships ancestors, within that nation state. Caring about one's nation manifests itself in the individual's attitudes and the actions one is often prepared to take in supporting the self-preservation of that nation. There is nothing wrong with Zulu or Afrikaner nationalism, as long as such nationalism does not regard others outside of their nation as less worthy. An over-emphasis on the exclusivity of elements of nationalism, such as identity, common culture and language, conceals the moral wrongness of xenophobia, and the latter is consequently overlooked.

Nationalism does not always have to be associated with negative connotations. It has positive aspects that ought to promote national pride, such as accomplishments in various fields like science, technology, sports and the arts. Nationalism does not have to be projected by a display of superiority over others. The "others" are often regarded as less than us, "inferior races", to use Franz Fanon's cynical reference to how we wrongly perceive others (1961:17).

Nationalism need not necessarily be perceived negatively, as pride in one's nation does not inherently imply hatred or resentment for outsiders. The actions of true nationalists are indeed guided by a sense of morality that takes into account the humanity and values of others outside of their community. Extremism and blind devotion create conditions for unconstrained nationalism, which is not helpful in fostering solidarity with strangers. Nationalism should project the moral unity of a people, and engender a sense of common identity. Various cultural groups within one country are united by their common heritage, destiny, ideals and a quest for their collective welfare. They embrace multiculturalism, and look to what makes them one, rather than what divides them.

Chapter 2

Michael Neocosmos

1. Definition of xenophobia

Neocosmos has written extensively on the subject of xenophobia and the fundamentals of how it comes about. In order to critique his account fairly, it is necessary to point out that his primary focus is on xenophobia in post-apartheid South Africa. The significance of being specific about the post-liberation period is that it provides an important context for his discussion of xenophobia within a society in transition. In my views on his account, however, I will also cite relevant incidents of xenophobia that may not necessarily have occurred in South Africa, or from his account.

Neocosmos defines xenophobia as discrimination, associated with racism, aimed at people who are considered “non-indigenous”. Xenophobia manifests itself through an approach of actively excluding and being hostile and violent to others because of their “foreign status”. (2010:1). It is a political discourse, which results from political ideologies. Even as he acknowledges the role of fear in how xenophobia plays out, the fear is always linked directly to a specific political context. I will return to the topic of fear later as my discussion of his definition of xenophobia develops. He asserts that the debate around xenophobia must focus on the concept as a political discourse and practice. By this he means the political landscape and factors that “structure the field of politics” (2010:11), must be taken into account if we are to correctly diagnose why xenophobia exists. He believes in the “centrality of politics”, if we are to earnestly understand xenophobia (2010:10), and thinks it is better to be conversant with the political environment which allows it to thrive. Xenophobia in this sense, can only be effectively understood in the context of the institutional practices which define the field of politics. That means, it cannot be divorced from the political policies and decisions which enable it. The xenophobic state is at the centre of encouraging xenophobia by neglecting its

obligations towards foreigners. I discuss aspects of the political narrative which encourage xenophobia later in this account.

Neocosmos sees xenophobia in South Africa as a direct outcome of “state practices” (2010:10) designed by the apartheid state and entrenched by the post-apartheid government. One of the outcomes of these practices is that of making citizenship contingent on indigeneity. Accordingly, a person must be a native in order to qualify for citizenship. There are privileges that come with citizenship. Inevitably, without citizenship, some social benefits are not accessible. Xenophobia is therefore about the process of “social and political exclusion” of some groups of the population” (2010:13). The exclusion in South Africa, not only affects foreigners, but sometimes citizens, who he describes as “native foreigners” (2010:9). Citizens have previously been mistaken for foreigners because of their physical appearance (a darker shade of black). They have subsequently been harassed by local law enforcement because the visible differences in their physical features resemble those of foreigners. The state plays a key role in this process, in that it determines the requirements and entitlements of citizenship, the “in-group” and the “out-group”. The practice in South Africa, in his view, has contributed to nationalistic tendencies and “individual arrogance and entitlement at the expense of the rest of the world, particularly Africa” (2010:5). The earlier general description of nativism in my discussion of Sundstrom’s account, is applicable, and in Neocosmos’ account, refers to the essence of South African-ness that can only be found in natives. There is of course the unsettled question of who South Africa’s real natives are, according to Neocosmos. He asserts that indigeneity is never a historical fact, but that it is rather always (subjectively) defined by those with political power. It is structured to suit the definition and requirements of citizenship, so that ultimately, it can be used as a criterion to exclude those who are deemed not to qualify. Citizenship is therefore defined in a way that “encourages exclusion and promotes a xenophobic discourse” (2010:66).

Neocosmos points to aspects of the political discourse, which he claims are responsible for the rise of xenophobia. First is the state’s narrative on xenophobia, according to which the state recklessly conveys a message that

South Africa's development is inhibited by "an invasion of illegal immigrants" (Neocosmos 2008). In this context, citizens are made to believe that foreigners are criminals, they spread diseases and are responsible for the country's high unemployment. Neocosmos grudgingly accepts that "there may be a grain of truth" to the assertion that poverty and unemployment trigger xenophobia (Neocosmos 2015). He however dismisses other explanations as speculative and inadequate. He does not for instance regard foreigner criminality and fear of diseases as genuine causes of xenophobia in the country. Equally, he thinks the argument about South Africa's apartheid past of isolation and exclusion, and a deficit in people's economic expectations in the post liberation period is a red herring.

Immigration legislation is exclusionary, Neocosmos charges, and gives government officials excessive administrative powers to the detriment of vulnerable immigrants. The rights of immigrants are violated when they are coerced through threats and physical violence. Immigrants have often become victims of abuse, corruption and extortion at the hands of officials. The police and government agencies are known to have encouraged local communities to uproot illegal immigrants for example. Neocosmos questions exactly how this is supposed to be done. What is clear, according to him, is that xenophobic attacks were "not a sudden occurrence" (2010:118), and therefore that such statements must be avoided.

Neocosmos criticizes the state, which on the one hand wants to be seen to disapprove of xenophobia, but on the other, enables an environment in which it thrives. The government may well think xenophobia is bad. The message is however conflicted if in the same breath, xenophobia is somehow assumed to be inevitable because there are legitimate concerns about resource limitations.

The negative political discourse is also fuelled by the tone of the language used in media reporting, in government circles and in civil society. Neocosmos claims that the use of references such as "illegal immigrant" are responsible for "intensifying the de-humanisation" of immigrants and deepening exclusion. It "criminalises" humanity's efforts to secure economic survival (2010:2). As

things stand, being a foreigner in South Africa is itself a crime. Neocosmos condemns the adversarial tone of utterances like foreigners are “encroaching” on the informal economy, “illegal”, “hordes of immigrants”, “stealing jobs”, “flooding” into our country” (Neocosmos 2008). Equally, concepts such as “economic migrant, political migrant, refugee”, are irrelevant legal European concepts which have no relevance for South Africa, given the history of labour migration in the southern African region (2010:6). Neocosmos accuses the media of being uncritical, and simply repeating the government’s narrative. He concludes that the media is an “ideological apparatus of the state (2010:95).

He regards such language as an affront to immigrants, giving rise to the “politics of fear”, in an environment defined by the fear of politics (2010:151). Fear does indeed play a role in heightening xenophobic attitudes. The politics of fear means South Africans become fearful and anxious that foreigners are about to take over their country, to dominate and control every sector of the economy. The fear of politics emanates from the misplaced notion that political opinion is an exclusive domain of the government and its politicians. According to this logic, citizens must be grateful for the kindness of the government and its generosity in providing social goods. It is an environment where criticism of the government is frowned upon, and citizens must uncritically accept what they are fed by government. The government correctly sees it as its responsibility to find solutions to both the problems of xenophobia and limited resources. Strangely, the same government that seemingly tries to find solutions to these problems, creates an ideological boundary that essentially eliminates immigrants from equal consideration. Understanding xenophobia within this framework therefore explains why the political fear created by such a discourse is fertile ground for xenophobia to occur.

Second is the narrative of South African exceptionalism. Neocosmos is of the view that xenophobia is driven by arrogance, that many South Africans perceive the country to be exceptional in Africa. He argues that a pro-Western ideology has helped continue the apartheid thinking of South African exceptionalism. South Africa is viewed by some of its citizens “as existing apart from, and superior to the rest of the African continent” (2010:142), because of its colonial

European cultural frame of reference. Its relative economic sophistication in the areas of industrial technology, tourism, education, sports, music and the arts, is indeed linked to its relations with the western world. Association with the developed world therefore also falsely assumes that South Africa is superior to the rest of the continent: According to this view, one does not think of South Africa as part of Africa, but instead, “its intellectual and cultural frame of reference is in the United States and Europe” (2010:142). Neocosmos suggests that the arrogance is not only driven by the feeling of superiority, but it is also part of a “scapegoating’ process”. Many expectations from the population remain unmet in the post-apartheid era, with the result that the foreigner “comes to embody unemployment, poverty and deprivation” (2009:587). He condemns the prevalence of xenophobia in South Africa, “given the massive international support for the struggle against apartheid” (2010:1).

Neocosmos’s definition of xenophobia is anchored on citizenship and the politics of identity, according to which hostile action is “directed at those who are deemed to be non-citizens” (2010:1). His critique of xenophobia is largely based on institutional obligation, although he acknowledges the existence of collective anti-immigrant attitudes. He for example accuses all South Africans, irrespective of race, gender or class, to be equally xenophobic. While the middle class may not attack their foreign neighbours, he charges that “their hatred and fear of the other is as deep as any other South African” (Neocosmos 2015). The hostile sentiment, expressed through the use of state institutions, essentially denies foreigners the social goods (rights, duties and entitlements) afforded to citizens. He rejects an entitlement policy, where the state uses citizenship as a criterion to determine who is included or excluded from access to social goods. Xenophobia in his view, can be remedied by a “rethinking of citizenship as an active political identity”, which could help in providing alternatives for what he calls “state induced exclusion” (2010:12). For Neocosmos, such a review of citizenship will lead to the desirable outcome, which is the opening of borders to all Africans who want to come in.

2. What is wrong with xenophobia

Neocosmos denounces xenophobic violence against innocent foreigners. In May 2008, 62 people were murdered and many more injured in a wave of xenophobic violence in South Africa (Bearak, Dugger 2008). Not that killing of any innocent person is justified, but Neocosmos points out that 21 of them were South Africans. Hundreds of foreigners were subsequently displaced and given shelter in makeshift camps, surviving on food and clothes donated by sympathizers. As far as Neocosmos is aware, only one perpetrator was arrested for the crimes. This was proof that foreigners rarely get justice in South Africa and that the state is indifferent to their problems. By denying the victims of xenophobia the right to social justice, an impression is created that the state legitimizes and tacitly approves of the actions of the culprits. In order to discourage immigration, governments are often indifferent to the plight of immigrants. The indifference enables hatred and the infliction of agony and misery on already terrorized families who may have fled one or other form of persecution in their home countries.

He is also of the view that xenophobia unjustifiably scapegoats foreigners for social ills. Neocosmos thinks the 2008 violence originates from a state discourse of the politics of fear. He accuses the state of creating fear that foreigners will flood into South Africa and the benefits of the post liberation era will become irrelevant (2010:141). A Minister of Home Affairs in the Mandela Administration famously cautioned against the prospects of success for South Africa's reconstruction and development project. If the citizens were going to compete for scarce resources with "millions of aliens who are pouring into the country" (2010:85), they may as well bid the rebuilding project goodbye. The Minister also accused Nigerian immigrants of being drug dealers. A government bureaucrat once warned that the lives of immigrants in South Africa would be made unbearable as government was planning to "hound and prosecute" them (2010:86). Other South African politicians have previously accused immigrants of being responsible for the spread of diseases, crime and unemployment. Society's response and the statements made by politicians are consistent with a state political discourse that scapegoats the foreigner for social ills. Neocosmos furthermore observes that xenophobia is becoming the hallmark of South Africa's public culture.

Neocosmos argues that a state-centric approach to immigration violates the rights and dignity of foreigners. He thinks the concept of apartheid's "group rights", according to which only a section of the population were entitled to rights, is being continued in the post-liberation politics. Only this time the group that is being denied rights, and separated from South Africans, comprises foreigners. The claimed human rights culture in South Africa is not only about building a new nation, it also actively delineates foreigners from South Africans, and the attendant rights. Neocosmos notes that the foreigners are imprisoned even when they have not committed any crimes. They have suffered exploitation by being coerced to pay bribes to corrupt government and law enforcement officials for the crime of being foreign. It is not easy for immigrants to obtain the necessary documentation that allows them to stay in the country legally. The police run "extortion rackets" and raid places predominantly inhabited by immigrants, beat them up and destroy the documents of those who are unwilling to buy their way out. Neocosmos opposes the wanton abuse and imprisonment of immigrants, and the deprivation of basic human rights, all because they want asylum, and seek a better life for themselves. Respect for fundamental human rights cannot depend on someone's immigration status. Being stateless as it were, simply implies that one does not have the necessary legal immigration documents to be in a particular foreign territory. It does not in any way mean that the undocumented foreigner does not have rights.

The South African immigration legislation, according to Neocosmos, is premised on the notion that immigrants come to the country to abuse the nation's hospitality and resources, and not contribute to economic development. The laws emphasize exclusion, and are designed to subjugate those who for whatever reasons, are deemed not to belong. He is critical of the tone of media coverage, which he accuses of fuelling xenophobic stereotypes by not being analytical, but instead, repeating "state propagated ideologies" (2010:13). The media for instance, associates Africans from all over the continent, whether economic or political migrants, with criminal activities, ignoring the immigrants' genuine reasons for coming to South Africa. They have been needlessly accused of rape, drug dealing and other crimes. Neocosmos

disputes the assertion that rising criminality in South Africa is directly linked to the rising number of illegals. He points to research that found on average, that 98% of the total number of crimes in 1998 were committed by South Africans (2010:86).

Immigration legislation has also reduced citizenship to indigeneity. Citizenship means nationality and political identity, which in turn allows access to resources, duties and privileges for those who qualify. So the nature of its construction is meant to exclude. It is as if exclusion is necessary to facilitate the existence of a defined community, as if I cannot exist unless I exclude you (2010:13). Indigeneity makes citizenship exclusive, and ultimately means entitlements are not made available to anyone who is not indigenous and therefore not a citizen. The country's highly regarded constitution makes a legal distinction between citizens and foreigners, which Neocosmos regards as discriminatory.

While poverty has been said to be responsible for xenophobia, Neocosmos argues that it is difficult to establish South Africa's "xenophobic profile". He questions why overwhelmingly Africans, and not the wealthy and businesses are targeted, if the reasons are indeed related to poverty. Neocosmos argues that Africans, and not European foreigners, are targeted because they are marginalized and politically weak, in that South Africa's political system excludes them (2010:14). In addition, immigrants are seen as "illegitimate competitors" (2010:78). The state prevents them from coming into the country because they will overwhelm the economic resources of a nation struggling to feed its own poor. The barriers used to limit immigration to South Africa include a requirement to possess specific skills, which inevitably negatively impact Africans. Neocosmos concludes that xenophobia in South Africa takes a racial dimension in this case and is therefore also racist.

Neocosmos proposes some solutions to fight xenophobia, among others, universal political prescriptions, with an inclusive citizenship. He suggests that in pre- and post-apartheid South Africa, citizens simply went along and never

contested “state propagated ideologies” (2010:13), including those relating to the political description of citizenship.

Citizens should not agree to treat others differently because of the imaginary and fanciful fear of foreigners created by politicians. He suggests that they should confront their fear of getting involved in politics, and come up with an alternative narrative. Alternative views on how to understand and overcome xenophobia can only be produced by an active citizenry, willing to contest authority and government propaganda. Accepting government views uncritically and censoring ourselves needlessly not just on xenophobia, but on other social issues, inhibit our ability to think independently. People may well depend on government for social goods, but what they often fail to realize is that the goods are made possible by the citizens themselves.

The confusion here arises, Neocosmos thinks, from a state discourse that has successfully blurred the lines between the state and the nation. The state is interpreted to be the nation and whatever the state does, is supposedly good for the nation. Citizens must refuse “to be politically what state institutions make them” (2010:13). He argues that politicians and state institutions cannot be trusted to address xenophobia because, in his view, they are responsible for encouraging it in the first place. Politics is a civic duty that the population cannot simply defer to politicians.

3. My views of Neocosmos’ account

Xenophobia is wrong for many reasons, many of which Neocosmos identifies correctly – exclusion, discrimination, the violation of rights, indigeneity based on citizenship and anti-immigrant derogatory language. It is my view that some of these harms are a result of a public discourse that is, at best, limited to political arguments in the way Neocosmos suggests. Describing xenophobia in narrow institutional terms, and proposing a purely political solution, is inadequate for a serious understanding of its nature, its wrongs and the prevention of its harms. A solution that is detached from individual moral responsibility is unlikely to succeed in defeating xenophobia. Fighting

xenophobia should be less about changing political systems, and more about changing hearts and minds. It should be about ensuring that the police, the media and civil society, whose poor treatment of immigrants Neocosmos is unhappy about, have the right moral orientation.

Recent world events have demonstrated that providing hospitality to immigrants is no longer merely regarded by xenophobic communities as an economic and moral burden, but an actual threat to national security. The development has led to innocent immigrants being harmed by hostile elements in host nations. In addition to the 2008 xenophobic attacks in South Africa cited by Neocosmos, there are other examples that illustrate this point.

Actions by the United States government (Holpuch, Gambino 2018), caused an international outcry, when over two thousand underage children were separated from their parents. The latter were incarcerated for immigration law violations. It is not clear how the immigrants, or their children, constitute a national security threat to anyone. In one instance, funding for some American cities offering sanctuary to immigrants was cut off by their government. The city administrators' only crime was that they were providing "a safe haven for law-abiding illegal immigrants" (Rumore. 2017)

In 2012, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu blatantly warned that "illegal infiltrators flooding the country threatened the security and identity of the Jewish state" (Sherwood 2014).

In 2012 and 2017, the Rohingya Muslims became victims of state-sponsored xenophobic attacks. The Rohingya are a religious minority which had settled in Myanmar for over a thousand years (Schwartz 2018). Due to their dialect and ethnic origin, the government viewed them as a threat to the integrity of the Buddhist nation-state. Unprecedented violence was subsequently unleashed against them, during which their villages were burnt, civilians killed and raped, and many of them were displaced. Instead of being given the opportunity to enjoy a truly worthy life, they were targeted for the crime of being differently religiously oriented. In this way, the nation-state succeeded in cleansing itself

of an “infestation” by foreign elements and preserving the purity of its cultural and religious traditions. They have blocked the infiltration and encroachment of their community by unwanted intruders whose “foreign otherness”, makes them incapable of belonging. The social structure has accomplished its intended, morally impermissible objective: using nationality to achieve exclusion. It did not matter to them that achieving this objective meant using brutal force, that would result in destructive results for innocent citizens.

The xenophobic harms emanating from any attack are more not just physical. The immigrants’ future career prospects are diminished, as is their ability to secure financial stability. Their chances to lead a reasonable life of happiness and enjoy freedom are impeded. Their friends, family and community are emotionally and mentally devastated, and become psychologically fearful of the environment in which they live. The entitlement to be respected and supported in pursuit of their values is undermined. Of course physical attacks cause injury, disability and sometimes death. The various harms illustrated here are therefore also financial, psychological and social. They inhibit liberties and a reasonable life of happiness.

Human beings have the moral framework to choose how they want to pursue their values, and should not be compelled to adopt a religion that is not their own. Feinberg regards as morally wrong both the harm-causing actions of the perpetrator, and the bystander, who witnesses the attack but chooses not to prevent it. He argues that people have a right to be saved by those who can do so without unreasonable risk” (2003:126). The Rohingya’s humanity was violated not only by the perpetrators, but as well by those who could, but chose not to stop the attacks. I suggest that the harms to immigrants caused by the incarceration of Mexican immigrants and the Rohingya Muslims could only have been prevented by individuals in civil society, and not institutions. Policies can help facilitate the safety of immigrants, but institutions cannot themselves be held accountable in the same way that individuals can. I believe that embracing this understanding will ultimately make host communities more welcoming and hospitable. Against this background, I object to Neocosmos’s view that state institutions are the “fundamental root of the problem” (2010:3) of xenophobia.

Comparable to the abuse suffered by immigrants at Lindela that Neocosmos denounces, illegal immigrants were abused at the Holot detention centre in Israel in 2014. In ordering the closure of the centre because of the abuse, Supreme Court Justice Fogelman said the following: “infiltrators do not lose one ounce of their right to human dignity just because they reached the country this way or another” (Kay, Kain 2014). It is certainly not unreasonable to object on the grounds that Israel cannot accept unlimited numbers of immigrants, but that is a problem which requires a different solution. Violating their rights, because they just happen to be immigrants, is certainly not that solution. Territories may begin or end at the border crossings, but fundamental rights and dignity transcend those borders, irrespective of what methods immigrants use to cross borders as Justice Fogelman says. The point here is that while countries may have physical borders, morality has no boundaries. Kwame Gyekye articulates this view adequately: “in human flesh there is no edge of cultivation - no boundary” (2010:14). Even if they were illegal immigrants, abusing them just because of their immigration status violates their dignity and rights as human beings. A foreigner’s immigration status is an immigration issue, which should be treated differently, subjected to a legal process perhaps, but certainly decoupled from the right to social justice.

Neocosmos claims that all South Africans are naturally prejudiced and xenophobic. It is patently unfair to label the entire population in South Africa xenophobic because of the xenophobia exhibited by some. It is fallacious to suggest, because of the rogue actions of a few, that therefore all police officers are bad. Such stereotyping is usually based on a particular context of history or negative past experience with foreign individuals or groups. In all parts of the world, there are people who are insular, have never crossed the borders of their countries, and who, as a consequence, project a limited, simplistic and narrow outlook on life. They are, as a result, prone to make arbitrary and unfounded generalizations about foreigners.

The claim of the existence of natural prejudice is devoid of the truth and not substantiated by evidence. In a 2008 Plus 94 Research, “taking all job

opportunities” ranked as the highest stated cause of xenophobia in South Africa. Only 5% of respondents cited natural prejudice as a reason for xenophobia. The competition for resources is the same in the United States, and perhaps in various other countries. Low income Americans, more than any other income group, are angry with immigrants, believing that they are taking their jobs, healthcare and housing. Providing a view into the battle between the poor and immigrants, the Pew Research Center found that 44 percent of the “least financially secure” in America believe immigrants hurt the United States because “they take our jobs, housing and health care” (Lopez, Bialik 2017). Pew found that the political views of the poor are generally more liberal than the rich, except on immigration. On only one item, perceptions of the economic impact of immigrants, are the least financially secure more conservative than those who are better off. 44% of the least secure say immigrants are a burden on the U.S. because “they take our jobs, housing and health care.” That is considerably higher than the share of the most financially secure (27%) who express this view.

Another reason can be alienation and isolation from other cultural and ethnic groups, as was the case in apartheid South Africa. I agree with Neocosmos on this point. Norman Duncan supports the view that the antipathy expressed by South Africans towards other Africans in recent years is “a residual effect” of the hatred towards the outside world fostered by the apartheid state” (2012:4). The hatred is entrenched by the stereotypical view that foreigners and cultural strangers are either inferior, or dangerous. South Africans occasionally talk of “going to Africa”, as if South Africa was not part of the continent. Africa has historically been viewed by South Africans as backward, uncivilized and uneducated, because of factors such as drought, famine, levels of poverty, conflict and the occasional outbreak of deadly diseases. The feelings of superiority over others, displayed by South Africans, may result from such isolation, as well as our own inadequacies. Piper regards a superiority attitude as an acknowledgement by someone, of their own personal shortcomings and inadequacies. Such a person is “naturally beset by feelings of failure, inferiority, shame and worthlessness” (1993:18). A combination of isolation, narrow-mindedness and inexperience with diversity can also lead to xenophobia. It is

not uncommon to hear unjustified generalizations such as: Germans are Nazis, or Muslims are terrorists". During the xenophobic attacks of 2008, many South Africans went to the rescue of foreigners with food parcels, blankets and other assistance. To claim therefore that South Africa's xenophobic profile is difficult to assess because all citizen social classes, gender and races are naturally prejudiced, is a strange logic. Neocosmos retorts that the gesture was only a ruse meant to delegitimize the xenophobic actions of the perpetrators, in other words, to deny that South Africans are xenophobic. All of the factors outlined above, considered collectively, may not justify but certainly elucidate why xenophobia occurs. Neocosmos' charge of the existence of prejudice and the anti-other attitude as a natural South African circumstance ignores all these realities. I argue instead that xenophobia is partly fuelled by a competition for resources, stemming from the precarious position of the poor and marginalized in society. Viewed in the context of its relatively well advanced economy, compared to those of the immigrants' sending countries, it is obvious why South Africa is a destination of choice. The post-apartheid era brought with it many social and economic expectations for a better life. A process to begin the greater inclusion of all citizens into the mainstream of the country's economy, including access to housing, healthcare, education was to follow. Political and economic policy failures to address the problems of the poor have been widely acknowledged to be the reason for xenophobia. A South African Institute of Race Relations article cites some of the policy failures responsible for increased xenophobia. They include inadequate service delivery, ineffective rule of law, weak border control, poor education, corruption, high unemployment and slow economic growth (Cronje 2008). I disagree with Neocosmos that xenophobia in South Africa is a result of attitudes of arrogance and exceptionalism. This may well reflect the views of some, but not all South Africans.

Given the economic context, xenophobia in South Africa is mostly regarded as a problem of the poor. There is partial validity to this view, but as I point out, xenophobia is not always only about poor locals fighting poor foreigners over limited resources. In the event that it is about access to economic resources, the locals fighting immigrants would logically be the poor. So I assert that poverty makes poor locals believe their situation is exacerbated by competing

with immigrants, for resources to which they are entitled. If it is about poverty, Neocosmos wonders, why are local wealthy people or capital not the primary target? I argue that low-skilled immigrants occupy low wage informal sector jobs and run informal businesses, spaces that unskilled South Africans feel belong to them. Competition is not between poor locals and rich locals, so this explains that immigrants are targeted.

There are of course other reasons why xenophobia occurs. While economic opportunity is a significant trigger, it would be misleading to single it out as being solely responsible. Those who have the power to give or withhold opportunities, are not necessarily poor. So xenophobia, for various reasons and in different circumstances, may also be about social status, race, religion or gender. In some other geographies. It may be propelled by the fear of the loss of status by the dominant group as I have pointed out, in which case, it becomes a political discourse, in line with Neocosmos' views.

A PNAS survey of 1200 American voters in 2012 and 2016 revealed some interesting data points (Mutz 2018). "Traditionally high-status Americans", referring to white men, feel their local and global status is threatened by America's growing racial diversity and a "perceived loss of US global dominance" (Mutz 2018). President Trump's likely voters are said to be those who believe "whites were discriminated against more than blacks, Christians more than Muslims, and men more than women". White American males may feel threatened by the increasing assertion of the rights of blacks and women, and Christians may fear the growing defense of Islam as a peaceful religion by the establishment. So xenophobia is not always a "war of the poor against the poor" (Mbude 2017).

The end of apartheid also led to the relaxation of previously strict border controls, resulting in increased economic migration into South Africa from other African countries. This development would inevitably lead to friction and increased competition for limited resources and jobs between locals and arriving foreigners. South Africans complain that the presence of foreigners deprives them of economic opportunities to which they feel entitled. They

develop resentment because of unmet expectations for economic participation, and the resentment often leads to violence against innocent foreigners.

As if impervious to the potentially explosive sensitivities described above, Neocosmos advocates for the adoption of open borders among southern African countries (2010:73). Neocosmos objects to even the use of the term “illegal” (2010:2), to refer to those in the country without proper documentation. In his view, it is intended to intensify the de-humanisation of the foreigners. He cites the response to xenophobia of a South African shack dwellers organization, Abahlali, thus: “An action can be illegal. A person cannot be illegal” (2010:147). Instead, Neocosmos proposes an (African) “universalising ideology” (2010:62). A universalizing ideology refers to an idea around which Africans can rally for development as a group.

I concur that treating others as sub-human and mocking them is wrong, and accept that the use of some anti-immigrant language is offensive. I nonetheless assert that the use of the word is an innocent description of someone’s immigration status and part of the immigration legal jargon.

Open borders refers to the right to enter, live and work in another country without the constraints of visa requirements (2010:73). He recommends a political solution that among other things, decriminalizes immigration, abolishes detention centres, pays reparations to frontline states, and allows the free movement of people. In the same breath, he acknowledges that half of South Africa’s population is said to live in poverty. How then can he justify radical recommendations of opening the country’s borders to anyone who wants to come in? This in my view, will complicate an already complex and volatile relationship between the state, society and particularly African immigrants. A culturally diverse country like South Africa has historical ties not just with Africa, but with other parts of the world, including Europe and Asia. If open borders are extended to southern Africa for reasons of cultural linkages, it makes sense to do the same for other relevant geographies as well. This will however require a justified bias towards the welfare of citizens, and that migration patterns be matched by available economic opportunities in order to achieve success. The

absence of reciprocal immigration policy, economic development considerations and population sizes will, in my opinion, make such a decision inequitable. Removing movement barriers may sound like the morally right action to take, but it is not a realistic, practical solution. Irresponsible migration will not only hurt citizens, but will ultimately harm the very immigrants the state may be trying to accommodate. In view of the legitimate expectations by both sides, there is therefore a need on the part of the state to develop and implement sound and inclusive immigration and economic policies. Such policies can only be successful if they strike a balance between responsible immigration and unreasonable discrimination. Open, porous borders, in my view, defeat this objective.

Immigrants no doubt have a positive effect on the economies and the lives of the inhabitants of their new countries. They often bring in new business models, products, skills and ideas. Immigration opponents complain that immigrant beneficiaries, access jobs and in turn send their earnings to their home countries instead of benefitting the economies of their host countries. Many immigrants nonetheless succeed against political hostility and an unreceptive environment.

It is however, also true that uncontrolled immigration will put pressure on the resources of the usually richer, receiving state. Immigrants from poorer geographies logically prefer destinations with good and accessible welfare benefits. If indeed economic resource competition is a factor in the immigration debate as I believe it is, the state is justified in putting the needs and expectations of its citizens first. Neocosmos regards the bias expressed in the state's obligations towards its own citizens as simple discriminatory, exclusionary politics. It is the function of the state to limit and regulate immigration, not without restraint, but within the parameters of applicable laws. Advocating for open borders and rejecting the need for justified bias undermines the credibility of aspects of Neocosmos' otherwise partially valid argument.

Neocosmos disapproves of the xenophobic victimization of foreigners on the vacuous basis of citizenship. He criticizes the political structure for relying too heavily on political identity and an indigeneity inspired citizenship. The creation and implementation of restrictive policies that deny foreigners a fulfilled livelihood, also hurt their life chances and ambitions. Even after living and working in South Africa as migrant labourers for many years, Africans are still denied citizenship. The government stokes irrational fear of intrusion into their communities and encourages a group identity that excludes others. He argues that the quest for identity should not be influenced by peripheral factors such as where someone was born, the language he speaks or how they worship. It should be a process driven by a fundamental moral conscience. Simon Bekker and David Carlton assert thus: "A moral choice, not a factual discovery, is central to the achievement of a collective identity (1996:69). South Africa, in my opinion, should learn from how other countries effectively facilitate immigration, without necessarily opening up the border for all and sundry, for the reasons I have advanced in this discussion. I agree that deserving immigrants should not be unjustly denied citizenship, but equally, immigration cannot be conducted with reckless abandon.

I agree with Neocosmos that immigrants should be accorded appropriate care irrespective of where they find themselves. The state's responsibility to protect its borders and put its citizens first does not mean the dignity of others should be impugned, and their rights violated. Rights are universal, and not just something that "can only be claimed through one's own state" (2010:101). The United Nations Refugee Agency pointed out that for the murders during the 2008 violence, only one perpetrator was reportedly punished. In South Africa, as in many other parts of the world, accountability for xenophobic hate crime is rare. This in my view, is a result of state indifference and I think Neocosmos is right to make this assertion. Ignoring the plight of foreigners may be intended to appease indigenous communities in return for political office, or the absence or lack of enforcement where laws exist. Neocosmos has highlighted too much power and corruption among state officials as possibly another reason why immigrants and refugees are abuses. They are often subjected to beatings and murders by mobs, and their property often looted or destroyed. Harassment

and verbal abuse are commonplace, and in the absence of the punishment of perpetrators, immigrants are attacked with impunity. Failure by the authorities to enforce prescribed laws, opens up the opportunity for informal power by members of the community to take over. The manifestations of xenophobia, which derive from xenophobic perceptions and take attitudinal or physically violent forms, can be sanctioned only if there are laws qualifying them as crimes. Ginsburg et al assert that xenophobia leads to violence due to the “weakening of mechanisms for mutual accommodation and inhibitions against killing (1994:35). Social justice should be accessible to all, and not be reserved certain groups.

Attending to the needs of immigrants however is not the same as saying citizens should not receive preferential treatment. Empirical arguments about xenophobia are often biased towards the immigrant, “the more people suffer, the more deserving they are of a place in the host country” (Landau 2018). Immigrants are viewed as victims and often receive international attention and attract assistance in resources from both the government and the non-government sectors. There is in fact, a perception among locals that foreigners instead unjustly receive preferential treatment because they can claim xenophobic abuse. To be clear, I am not advocating for the prohibition of immigrants at all. Rather, I support an orderly, inclusive process that accommodates the interests of immigrants and addresses the needs of locals. After all, if one group can see the benefits of the inclusion of immigrants in the labour market, the other can surely be educated and conscientised to embrace such a view. Society has a moral obligation to do so.

The constitutional legal exclusion that Neocosmos finds problematic, makes immigrants vulnerable to economic exploitation and discrimination. I share this view and expand on how it might play out. Businesses take advantage of an underground economy of low-wages to maximize profits at the expense of foreigners. South African businesses, particularly the hospitality industry, prefer to hire foreign nationals because of their perceived work ethic and relative educational sophistication. This of course feeds the prejudicial foreigner sentiment that presumes South Africans to be lazy and uneducated. The

sentiment exacerbates these stereotypes and hardens xenophobic feelings and attitudes on both sides. Perhaps the hospitality industry's reasons for preferring foreigners are genuine. Immigrants are vulnerable because they usually do not have the necessary permits that allow them to either stay or work in the country. If the foreigners are paid the prescribed minimum wage, there is nothing wrong with that, in my view. If they are however, work long hours and paid low wages because of their vulnerability, they are being exploited. Such exploitation legitimizes the objections raised by their South African counterparts, that foreign workers depress wages. "Immigration lowers the income of native, low skill workers" (Miron 2010). When foreigners accept low wages, the labour rights of indigenous communities are undermined. Locals can readily assert their rights relating to working conditions and fair compensation laws. Paying low wages may indeed be the real reason immigrants are preferred over locals. Employers are of course not about to acknowledge with great fanfare, their true motive and unethical conduct in this regard. Immigrants, given their outsider status, will be reluctant to do anything that might jeopardize their opportunity to earn a living, even if it means sacrificing their rights.

Neocosmos argues that the reason foreigners should be treated with respect, is reciprocity for their hospitality to South African exiles during the apartheid years. How does one establish which foreigner supported or opposed apartheid? In my view, this criterion is misplaced. The just treatment of any human being cannot depend on our view of their involvement or otherwise in defeating or condoning some inhumane historical political system. Should those immigrants who condoned apartheid actively or passively, but still arrive in South Africa be treated unjustly then? I have a contrarian view. The dignity of human beings must be respected, not in reciprocity to some past benefit, or because of relationships and cultural linkages, but because it is morally right to do so. The African foreigners who are victims of morally reprehensible acts of violence in South Africa may well be people with whom South Africans share a common ancestry. Recognising a common ancestry is indeed important for the continuity and preservation of family ties. Ancestral and cultural linkages, while important, should not distract from our moral responsibility to treat all others with respect.

It is not uncommon to hear a South African say, “so and so is from Africa”, an attitude that implies that South Africa is not part of Africa. Africa in this sense, is viewed as more than just a geographic location, it is associated with inferior development, which often means poor and primitive. The language describes mostly black African immigrants as disease ridden, uneducated, backward, criminal and accuses them of stealing jobs. Perhaps because of a crime committed by one foreigner, whole immigrant communities are accused of being criminals, and often harassed by the police. Immigrants have been violently attacked in South Africa, injured, their businesses looted or destroyed, and others killed. In worst cases, xenophobia can escalate into genocide. Public opinion on anti-immigrant violence indicates that 71% of South Africans believe the violence against foreigners is a result of the fear that foreigners “will take over” our country, according to a study by the Human Sciences Research Council. Another 30% insists the violence is in response to the immigrants’ own criminal activities (Gordon 2018). Neocosmos is correct in condemning sweeping over-generalisations about innocent foreigners and meting out collective punishment.

In conclusion, I consider xenophobia a moral issue, and therefore believe in humanity’s individual and collective moral responsibility to fight it. I am therefore of the view that through changing attitudes can progress be made towards overcoming xenophobia. If humanity was to be based on the principle of the equality of mankind, there would be no need to regulate behavior. I believe that individuals can adapt behavior and attitudes, so others can feel included and respected. I am however, not convinced that regulating behavior is a realistic approach to changing xenophobic attitudes. Expressing negative sentiments or enquiring about the legal status of an immigrant in a country that has laws regulating immigration, may well be interpreted as freedom of speech. Others may regard it as hate speech. If it is viewed merely as the expression of an opinion, a thought, how can it be criminalized, they might ask? Attitudes are impractical to police. Some might argue that implying that someone is in a country “illegally” is inflammatory and evokes negative sentiments. It may eventually lead to such a person being harmed, and therefore the freedom of

speech line would have been crossed. It seems to me though, that while xenophobia is directly linked to immigration, it will be difficult to frame a xenophobic violation, with a view to effecting a corrective legal remedy. There is a thin line between xenophobia, and freedom of speech, when such a question is posed. It does not seem plausible that such a thought, or opinion, can be criminalized and successfully prosecuted.

Apart from a perfunctory appeal for citizens to challenge government, Neocosmos does not address individual or collective moral responsibility towards immigrants in any significant manner. It is also not entirely clear whether he even considers an ethical moral approach as a possible solution to overcome the hostility of xenophobia. Politics and political institutions do play a role of course in how immigrants are treated, as privileges can be unjustly given only to people of a certain identity or nationality. At a minimum, Neocosmos could have pointed out that social institutions are often structured in a way that encourages exclusion and xenophobia, which Sundstrom does elegantly. The role of institutions notwithstanding, my argument is that xenophobic attitudes can only be harboured and remedied by individuals. Understanding xenophobia merely as a consequence of the structuring of political systems, and therefore only blaming the state for its prevalence, is in my view, inadequate and misleading. Rather, recognition that prejudice and hostility lead to intentional harm against innocent others, is a good first step to attracting the moral consideration that xenophobia deserves. It is an opportunity to assess the dangers caused by irrational fear, and deliberately work to change our individual and collective attitudes to prevent xenophobia's persistence. It is an approach that encourages introspection, and the need to look at foreigners through a universal moral lens.

The state no doubt has the responsibility to protect inhabitants, citizens and foreigners alike. The difficulty is that xenophobia may well be considered morally unacceptable, and in conflict with a culture of human rights, but it is not regarded by many nation-states as illegal and can therefore not be legally punished. After all, a state, such as South Africa, is itself considered by commentators like Neocosmos to be promoting xenophobia through their

exclusionary policies and practices. I think rather that social institutions, families, churches and schools, using a moral approach, are likely to succeed in changing attitudes.

4. My views on the nature and wrongs of xenophobia

In this section, I consider the nature and wrongs of xenophobia in the context of its various, multi-faceted harms. I examine individual and collective responsibility for xenophobia and question the validity of the concept of institutional xenophobia. The discussion reflects my views about xenophobia, expanded to reflect examples and a broader scope of literature beyond just Sundstrom and Neocosmos.

The consensus in the empirical and philosophical accounts of xenophobia given by Ronald Sundstrom and Michael Neocosmos, and indeed many others, is that xenophobia is wrong. There may well be legitimate reasons why one group feels a certain way about another, but a xenophobic response is certainly not a morally acceptable treatment of other, equal moral human beings.

Xenophobia is recognisable in various ways, some of which include mocking someone because of their accent and nationality, or making offensive statements about their (assumed inferior) culture. Xenophobia is also identifiable through the use of blatantly offensive or rude language. Irresponsible political rhetoric is a force-multiplier to the risk posed to the safety of immigrants. During his presidential campaign in 2016, US President Donald Trump disparagingly referred to Mexican immigrants as criminals, murderers, drug peddlers and rapists (Reilly 2016). He further suggested that a solution to blocking unwelcome immigrants would be to build a wall, for which Mexico would pay. Such inflammatory utterances cause xenophobic fear and create mistrust and may lead to violence. A supporter at the same rally responded by arrogating to herself the responsibility to shoot the illegal invaders, a chilling attitude that gives credence to assertion that xenophobia does lead to violence.

Xenophobia is at play when someone inexplicably resents foreigners and avoids attending events where he might have to socialise with them. We know people are being xenophobic when they are afraid that their culture will be diluted by immigrants, and use denigrating language to describe them. One of 18th century America's founding fathers, Benjamin Franklin, negatively portrayed the arriving German immigrants. They could never adopt the culture of the English. They would "swarm into our settlements, and by herding together would establish their language and manners to the exclusion of our own" (Navarette Jr.2007).

South Africans use a derogatory word to refer to foreigners, "makwerekwere", mimicking the sound of the "strange" languages foreigners speak. It is wrong to use debasing, anti-immigrant language to describe foreigners. I have discussed this in detail in the account given by Neocosmos. In other parts of the world, immigrants are similarly described as undocumented aliens, intruders, an invasion, an infestation that would pollute, dilute and weaken the social integrity of our communities. Depending on the tone of how it is used, even the word "foreigner" itself can be seen as rude. "South Africa's economy benefits from foreign tourists" is neutral, and different in tone from, "these foreigners are a nuisance", which is rude, and negative in sentiment. The resentful description of immigrants portrays them as if they were some kind of danger about which locals should be cautioned.

In South Africa, xenophobia has a racial dimension as mostly, but by no means exclusively, black African migrants are the target. Immigrants of all racial groupings from Europe and North America have historically enjoyed the privileges reserved for South African host communities, irrespective of whether they looked similar or different from those communities. They have also not, as individuals, or as a group, experienced the kind of hate crimes and degradation visited on black African immigrants. The xenophobic violence that escalated in 2008, affected a "very particular demographic", black African foreigners, and "there is no evidence to suggest white Europeans were attacked" (Patel, Essa 2015). The presence of foreigners should be regarded as an economic benefit, and not a detriment to our wellbeing.

The nature of xenophobia makes it difficult to pinpoint, with precision, only one specific reason why someone may exhibit a xenophobic attitude. In addition to the fear and other factors alluded to above, xenophobia may be attributable to the environment in which someone finds himself or to a past bad experience with a particular ethnic group. An example of the latter is the French's past experience of Muslims. In 2007, France adopted a controversial law that prohibited students from publicly displaying signs of religious affiliation. The law specifically targeted the headscarf worn by Muslim school girls. Joan Wallach Scott asserts that the response was motivated not only by the events of 11 September 2001 in the United States and the war on terrorism that followed, but also by the symbolism of the veil as it relates to the French's bad experience from Algeria's 1954 War of Independence (2007:41). Xenophobia is therefore also noticeable in rising religious intolerance, and I use some examples in the next paragraph to validate this point.

Religious bigotry has been on the increase in multi-cultural societies in recent years. It has, in the process become a trigger for xenophobia in countries like Nigeria and Kenya. The Pew Research Centre's 'The Rising Tide of Restrictions on Religion' survey seven years ago reported that "three quarters of the world's human population of seven billion live under strong government curbs on religion, or among serious social hostilities involving faith issues" (Beaumont 2012). As demonstrated by the various attacks on the majority culture, the intolerance mostly comes from the religious minorities, as happened with the 1998 attacks on US Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, in which 224 people were killed (McKinley Jr 1998). I however, also note that in some cases, the attacks come from the majority culture, as in the Rohingya massacre. Religiously motivated attacks, in particular those of 11 September 2001, resulted in the increased xenophobic scrutiny of particularly the activities of the Islamic religious minority in the US and parts of Europe. The victims of the xenophobic attacks are naturally justified in being angry, but retaliating with policies that limit immigration under the pretext of fear of further attacks, is morally wrong. Vindictive immigration policies breed mistrust and hatred, and affect innocent members of the targeted religious group negatively. Religious intolerance, and indeed intolerance of any kind, sows unnecessary social divisions. I maintain

nonetheless that the heinous acts of a small band of religious extremists, do not justify adversity and xenophobia towards an entire peaceful religion.

There are also irrational excuses that some religious minorities should not be welcomed because they are unable to adapt to new environments. I do not share the pessimistic anti-Muslim view expressed by some American citizens (Dufflo 2007) in this regard. The view is that Muslim immigrants will prove difficult to integrate into non-Muslim societies because they have a fundamental incapacity to adapt. The so-called 7/7 terrorist attacks in London on 7 July 2005 reflects this view. Islamic suicide bombers blew up three subway trains and a bus in London's transit system, killing 52 people (Buchanan 2015). Yet whereas the attacks on the United States on 11 September 2001 was the work of a foreign terrorist group, the London attack was the work of British citizens. The question therefore is why individuals, born and brought up in Britain, would be radicalized to commit such a heinous act. One of the bombers, in a video message, accused Britain of "continuously perpetuating atrocities against my people" (Dufflo 2007). He further insisted that he had the responsibility to protect and avenge his Muslim brothers and sisters elsewhere in the world. I interpret this as a geopolitical conflict issue that has nothing to do with failure to adaptation. There are thousands of Muslims in Britain and other parts of the world who have nothing to do with terrorism. They have never committed a crime in their lives. They value their religion but at the same time respect the right of others to worship their way. They have no interest in imposing their faith on anyone else, much less through violence. It is regrettable that innocent Muslims are as a result, increasingly targeted and unjustifiably associated with extremism because of the radical actions of a few. The extremist actions of the religious minorities are wrong, but so is the disproportionate response of many governments.

Governments everywhere have obligations towards the welfare of their citizens. They are purposefully favouring citizens in the distribution of social goods. However, preferential treatment should be carried out in a way that does not promote xenophobic hatred and entrench social inequality. The bias toward citizens should of course not be determined on frivolous and unjustified

grounds. I believe that social obligations to citizens can be fulfilled in a way that is pro-citizen, but not anti-other.

Subsidized housing and welfare grants for instance, should prefer citizens for whom a particular country is their only home. It should be remembered that these citizens are not just demanding entitlements merely on the basis of being in the country. They fulfill their obligations and civic duties, such as paying taxes, voting and contributing individually towards the success of the whole. Granted, not everyone has the capacity to fulfill these duties but that does not make them less of citizens. Citizens can of course obey laws and pay taxes to avoid the legal consequences of doing the opposite, so not everyone who complies necessarily has the same motive. On the other hand, (poorer) foreigners do not always have a verifiable legal status, most of their informal businesses constitute the gray economy, and are therefore not tax compliant.

Immigration status however should not determine access to the health, education and other social services. The worn-out excuse of “resources cannot currently cope with the demand” should not be applicable to critical services. How can the birth of an immigrant’s child be postponed, or someone’s education or right to due process be deferred? Apart from a futile attempt at absolving those responsible, these excuses cannot be rationalized, are clearly xenophobic and therefore morally impermissible. Respect for fundamental rights should guide any approach to the implementation of preferential treatment. The state has obligations to prefer its citizens no doubt, but that is different from assuming the state is equally entitled to violating liberties and social justice. I also strongly believe that policies of state institutions should be designed in a way that helps foreigners succeed. Many of the wealthy states can indeed afford to extend services to immigrants, but conveniently hide behind existing exclusionary policies and the official requirement for bias towards their own citizens. In Brad Hooker’s view, they can assist immigrants if they have “an equal concern for the good of each” (2010:31). Accommodating the needs of citizens on the one hand, and caring for immigrants on the other, are not mutually exclusive goals.

When we do our best to contribute positively to the welfare of others however, it should not be at the expense of our own welfare and viability as a community. The allocation of individual or public resources, time and energy to ourselves, our friends, and complete strangers, will always be influenced by the proximity of relationships. One is naturally inclined to favour one's own children over the children of neighbours. It is almost a natural instinct to assist friends and family first, acquaintances, one's own church community, because relationships count. I would suggest that it is pointless to talk about special relationships if everyone in the world carries the same weight and is considered the same to benefit from affections, love, and other material resources. Hooker states the obvious view thus: "most humans have an immediate and intense special concern for themselves, their family, and their friends" (2010:3). Our existence would be absurd as it would become one big, monolithic and altruistic world where personal relations either did not exist or would have no unique meaning. Against this background, I assert that preferential treatment is justified. A public articulation of the reasons for such justifiable preferential treatment should however be done in a considerate, respectful manner. It should avoid xenophobic rhetoric that unnecessarily antagonizes immigrants, and inflames social tensions.

Following the general discussion on the nature and wrongs of xenophobia, I now examine whether institutions are capable of being xenophobic.

Sundstrom regards the immorality of xenophobia as an individual and collective responsibility, Neocosmos singles out the state institution as being responsible for xenophobia, in that it fails to give immigrants equal access to all the social goods. He advocates that immigrants must be treated with dignity and equal respect, but blames state institutions for undermining and failing to promote these values.

I am of the view that human beings do not always take responsibility for their action/inaction regarding social problems, xenophobia included. The reason may be because there is no personal benefit or reward to be gained from getting involved. It may also just be because of indifference to problems affecting

others. In my opinion, a lack of deep personal moral conscience accounts for inertia towards xenophobia. It is generally easier to blame the state for social ills, and overlook the personal role that individuals should play in helping address social ills. Blaming the state underplays individual responsibility with regard to the conduct and behavior of indigenous populations towards immigrants. The state has a role to play no doubt, and should step in and take corrective action against anti-social behaviour. The purpose of intervening would be to manage conflict, create harmony and foster a peaceful co-existence. Feinberg, reviewed by Harlon Dalton, thinks that it is the state's responsibility to criminalise individual conduct that causes harm to others. The necessity to prevent harm to others "is always an appropriate reason for the state interference with the citizen's behavior" (Dalton 1987:882).

Xenophobia impacts the relationships and interactions between locals individuals and foreigners, foreigners and institutions, and institutions and locals. It is about nationality and identity. It is about entitlements and access to power. Xenophobia can prevail at a policy or institutional level, according to which organizations promote practices and rules that are designed to exclude people of other nationalities.

The manifestation of institutionalised xenophobic discrimination plays out when foreigners and their children are ostracised. They are excluded from essential social services, such as health, education and housing. Others are unfairly excluded by policy and institutional culture from jobs for which they qualify. In some instances, it is not always easy to accurately assess whether someone is legitimately overlooked for a job promotion because they do not qualify, or because of their foreignness. I note here that not all use of discriminatory public policy is bad, particularly if it is intended to favour individuals from groups who have suffered, or continue to suffer discrimination. Set-asides for minorities such as women and the disabled can be justified as a way to bring these groups into the economic mainstream. Employment equity and black economic empowerment policies in South Africa are still discriminatory against people from other lands, but acceptable as their objective is to address a past injustice.

This should be understood as positive discrimination, and not institutionalized xenophobia.

The discussion above is meant to highlight the use of policy in public institutions that has often been interpreted as promoting xenophobia. It is as a result of the use of policy, some of which may be inadvertently anti-immigrant, that institutions are thought to be xenophobic. My argument in this regard is that institutions cannot be xenophobic. Institutions do not possess the capacity necessary to make them xenophobic. They are not the type of things that deserve moral consideration, because they are not moral beings. They are therefore, from an ethical perspective, incapable of being xenophobic. In my view, only human beings are moral beings, and are therefore capable of being xenophobic. To be moral means one has the ability to judge the rightness or wrongness of actions, in as far as they affect oneself or other beings. The moral power to recognize the humanity of others, rests with every individual, and not Neocosmos's political structure. Institutions cannot be described in these terms.

In practical terms, an institution cannot inflict physical harm, display superiority, or even know that someone is a foreigner. Fear, prejudice, envy and hatred, xenophobia's emotions, can only be harboured by a human being. These feelings are a necessary pre-condition for xenophobia to occur. In this sense, states are like machines, they do not have the ability to care, to empathise or to be indifferent in a way that moral beings can. I concede however, that political institutions can be (ab)used to promote xenophobic policies. Atrocities committed by the Nazis in Germany, the Afrikaners in South Africa and the Hutus in the Rwanda genocide of 1994 all reflect policy abuse for nefarious purposes. I therefore assert that, strictly speaking, institutional xenophobia does not exist. Institutional xenophobia in my view can only be spoken of if it refers to institutional policy failures to protect immigrants. In this context, individuals within institutions promote immigration laws that determine grounds for inclusion and exclusion, such as the way the laws define identity and nationality. It is worth keeping in mind though, that the design and implementation of such laws or policies is an individual or collective function of

rational, moral beings. Social arrangements begin at the level of the individual, and so should the adoption of the right actions. The next step would be to reconcile individual actions with institutional arrangements, to promote social cohesion and to promote principles that engender a peaceful co-existence.

Blaming xenophobia on institutions (creations that are incapable of moral accountability), as Neocosmos does, fails to grasp the deeper, more important moral consideration with which the individual must confront the issue. He does not explicitly absolve individuals of their personal moral responsibility, but does not call them out either. Individual and collective pro-immigrant advocacy proposed by Sundstrom, is therefore more persuasive from a universal morality standpoint. The somewhat institutional approach offered by Neocosmos is less so.

This might mean that Neocosmos indeed does not regard morality as the most relevant factor. I deliberate on the deeper moral consideration in more details later in my discussion of Kantian ethics, which I consider to be fundamental to understanding xenophobia in-depth.

Chapter 3

1. A Kantian view

As mentioned in the introduction, empirical accounts of xenophobia are abundant, but the concept has not been sufficiently critiqued from a moral perspective. In thinking about morality, we think about what is right or wrong, principles or values, and what makes something good or bad. Values are a matter of principle and are expressed in principles which guide how we ought to treat others. These principles dictate that we respect the sanctity of these values. Of course people can agree or disagree about what actions are good and moral, and what makes those actions partial or impartial. The starting point

would be to treat every individual as an equal, and to consider our moral principles of conduct as those actions on which there is broad and general acceptance and agreement by all individuals.

It is perhaps necessary to first, briefly recap the context of the circumstances that give rise to migration, in order to contextualize the (Kantian) moral consideration that should be given to immigrants. Immigration occurs for various reasons, including people being pushed out of their home countries by war and fear of religious or political persecution. Others emigrate because they are pulled to their destination countries by better economic prospects for jobs and standards of living, often resulting in xenophobic tensions with local populations for economic and cultural reasons. Governments legitimately use immigration policies to determine who is or is not allowed to stay in a country. The governing authorities, everywhere, have the territorial responsibility to protect their borders and ensure the security of their inhabitants. In addition, policy makers think about whether a nation can afford the human and financial resources needed to support immigrants and the possible effect on the livelihoods of indigenous populations. Some of these policies however, are discriminatory, violate the fundamental rights of individuals, curtail their freedom of movement and encourage xenophobia. There is therefore in my view a need to highlight the wrongness of xenophobia in this regard. We need to turn the spotlight on the morality of excluding ordinary people, who just happen to be foreigners merely looking for an opportunity to improve their lives. So far, a country such as South Africa has sought to address xenophobia purely as a political problem. This approach is in my view, unlikely to achieve visible progress in overcoming xenophobia and its harms. I believe that complementing political efforts with a moral and ethical approach will yield enhanced, positive results.

I now explore xenophobia from a Kantian moral perspective, but first outline Kantian ethics, as my discussion focuses on aspects of this theory that are relevant for how we treat others.

2. Kant's theory

Kant's theory is concerned with adopting an absolute moral system of rules, according to which people have a duty to respect inviolable values and principles. In this context, the moral law prescribes a variety of duties and obliges us to follow the "Categorical Imperative", a fundamental Kantian principle. Quoted in Harry van der Linde's account, the imperative "demands that one act only on those personal policies of conduct (maxims) that one can rationally will to become universal laws or principles that guide everyone's conduct" (2004:807). This first formulation of the Categorical Imperative means that if we obey the command, we uphold and respect the right of others for moral self-government, which are necessary to pursue individual values or ends. Such ends must be based on only coherent and understandable rules of conduct to which we can all rationally agree. Our duty is guided by our recognition of the humanity in everyone, irrespective of their social status – in Thomas Hill's words, to "even the most foolish and depraved" (1980:86). Using someone purely as a means to achieve a particular end undermines his autonomous and rational nature. Below follows an explanation of what Kant's means and ends.

Kant's Formulation of Humanity, or the end in itself formulation, says thus: "Act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means but always at the same time as an end" (Hill 1980:84). I rely on this particular formulation to argue that we have obligations to treat immigrants as ends.

An end is what we want to bring about, and a means is the way to get there. Stated differently, humanity (oneself and others) should never be used as a means to bring about an end, a particular state of affairs. Instead, it should always be regarded as existing independent of any other cause. Treating something merely as a means, according to Hill, implies failing to treat it in "some other appropriate way while one is treating it as a means" (1980:87). Onora O'Neill, quoted in Samuel Kerstein's account, explains the basis for the wrongness of an agent's action in treating another merely as a means. This,

he says, happens if in his treatment of the other, “the agent does something to which the other cannot consent” (2009:172). A prospective immigrant employee would for instance not agree to a job offer if the employer brazenly disclosed his intentions to use him as a means (underpay him), to achieve a particular end (earn higher profit margins at the immigrant’s expense). Kant’s theory, according to Hill, is understood to be a prohibition of “all kinds of manipulation and exploitation of individuals for selfish or even altruistic ends” (1980:84). It follows therefore that if we consider an immigrant as a rational human being, we cannot treat him as a mere means towards achieving a particular, subjective goal. His rational nature is itself an objective value that must be respected, and not a state of affairs that needs to be created. That simply means we must respect humanity for its own sake, and our behavior and mutual relationship with others should be based on the respect for this principle, and not motivated by self-interest. We are prohibited from using others as objects and binding them to something to which they would not rationally consent. Hill further believes that understanding humanity as an end in itself is supposed to “set a rational and moral limit to the ways we may treat people in the pursuit of our relative ends” (1980:89).

The above context makes it clear that the core idea of Hill’s reconstruction of Kantianism is therefore anchored on the assertion that “humanity is an end in itself”. It is an objective end in its own right, “a self-existent end” (1980:87). Ends are ends for their sake, having intrinsic value, and there is no need to improve them, or to amplify them. According to Hill, Kantianism is more broadly about “a principle of respect for persons”, ends, who count equally, and whose rational capacities should be regarded equally (1980:84). If humanity is an objective end, it cannot be substituted with something else, to which “it should serve simply as a means” (1980:88).

Let me examine what Kant means by humanity in a person. First, “humanity refers to the class of human beings”, according to Hill (1980:85), who have a rational nature, in other words, who use reason to determine and pursue certain values. We are creatures with inclinations, instincts and desires, and these make us rational and therefore morally valuable. Humanity not only refers to

the characteristic in a person, such as love and kindness or loyalty. It also includes the rational capacities in a human being, by which I mean the capacity for moral deliberation, the ability to act according to principle. We are required to respect someone's rational capacity as morally valuable. Respecting moral values means we are limited in what we can do to other creatures of equal moral value, whether it is people we know, or strangers. Human beings have humanity, a feature that, according to Hill, is distinguishable from animality, by "the power to set ends" (1980:85). Through reasoning, one is able to determine or "legislate to oneself" (1980:86) certain principles of conduct or behavior, and has grounds for the choices one makes, in other words, we can set ourselves ends through reason. Only human beings are able to set ends, through reasoning, because they are rational beings. We do not know of rational species other than human persons. Humans are distinct from animals in that they do not always act on instinct, but base their actions on principle. Hill further explains the power of humans to set ends as the ability to "understand the world and to reason abstractly, foresee future consequences, adopt long-range goals, avoid temptation and accept principles without concern for punishment or the promise of reward" (1980:86). The power to set ends enables us to create a just and ethical society that caters for the welfare of its members on an equitable moral basis. The identity and nationality of its members (indigenous or foreign) are irrelevant to the principles on which our moral deliberation is founded.

An ethical system that is based on duties, commands us to respect and be helpful to other human beings, without expecting something in return. Our responsibility, to paraphrase Kant's Categorical Imperative, is therefore to always act in a way that we could will everyone else to act, in a similar manner under similar circumstances towards all other human beings. Kant's Categorical Imperative refers to "the moral obligation to be helpful to others, according to one's means, and without hoping for any form of personal gain thereby" (Johnson and Cureton 2016). Stephen Darwall, quoted in Frey and Wellman, describes the duty of beneficence thus: "how our actions affect the good of others (other persons at least, and perhaps any other being who can have a welfare or good) always has some relevance to what we should do morally" (2003:32). If we can help prevent a risk to someone's life without

endangering our own lives, we are obliged to fulfil that duty. If we accept that immigrants have a welfare, we will know not to act towards them in a way that affects them negatively, such as subject them to alienation, exploitation, ridicule and discrimination.

Human beings must respect themselves and others as beings with autonomy and a rational nature. Out of respect for the humanity in oneself and others, Kantian ethics require that we not only contribute to the mutual furtherance of one another's ends, and desist from actions that undermine humanity, such as stealing, lying or killing (murder or suicide), but that we also respect the humanity in persons. Kant embraces the principle of helping others, although he is not specific on whether or not there are limits to this duty of beneficence, and what those limits are if they indeed exist. Hill however contends that agreeing with Kant's "humanity as an end principle", means "we ought to promote the ends of others" (1980:89). We should adopt those ends and make them ours. Says Hill, "if our interpretation is right, what the dignity of humanity should require is that one should help others to set their own ends and rationally pursue them" (1980:97).

Kant not only supports moral rules that respect humanity in persons as an end, but also prohibits causing harm to others. One of the actions that undermine humanity, and from which we must desist, is killing, with a few exceptions which I describe below. The act of killing another human being, or even killing oneself, is degrading to the human being and is therefore impermissible. Nothing of a higher price, justifies killing another person. Equally, nothing of some permanent comfort, such as avoiding a pending painful divorce, justifies ending one's own life. Hill argues that Kant is unequivocal about the wrongness of killing others, or committing suicide. Causing "pleasure and pain" is thought to have a mere price or value, and any act committed for purposes of "increasing pleasure, diminishing pain, or achieving any contingently desired goal is wrong" (1980:95). Kant does not of course claim that all killing is always wrong. His sense of the value of humanity is one that does not "imply that the life of every person with humanity must always be preserved" (1980:94). In some instances, such as in a just war, self-defense or seeking justice for punishment,

killing may be justified. Immigrants are however just ordinary human beings and not some aggressors who invade territories to wage war or cause destabilization, and whose killing is therefore justifiable.

The act of degrading or attacking immigrants to achieve a particular outcome is prohibited by Kantian ethics as it undermines their humanity. Let us say immigrants are perceived, rightly or wrongly, as a reason for the deteriorating welfare of poor South Africans for instance. Host populations might resort to anti-immigrant rhetoric and xenophobic attacks, in order to get the government to attend to their economic plight. The government might indeed respond with anti-immigrant measures that discourage immigration. The host community's logic is that by being hostile to immigrants, their government will act against the immigrants. That will in turn reduce pressure on economic resources, and it is hoped (falsely), improve the chances to maximise the welfare of the affected communities. I do not believe that the anti-immigrant actions of the community and their government will eventually lead to an improvement in the welfare of the locals. Blaming immigrants for the deteriorating welfare of locals is no more than scapegoating them. Even in the unlikely event that the government would improve welfare of the poor as a result, the actions would still be in violation of Kantian ethics. For Kant, it is immaterial if a good outcome (improved welfare) is produced by the actions of the community. The primary consideration is whether or not deontological rules were obeyed or violated in carrying out an action. Kant thinks that it is rational to advance our own interest and welfare, as long as we do not do it in a way that is harmful or disrespectful to others. In other words, we should always act in accordance with the dictates of what we morally ought to do. Treating immigrants as a means (attacking them) to an end (getting government's attention for our economic plight) is morally impermissible.

Respect for humanity in this context recognizes that a person has autonomy and a rational nature. The autonomous and rational nature means he can self-govern, determine for himself his values, his ends, and has the capacity to think, using reasoning, how to pursue those ends within Kantian moral rules. Accepting that individuals are an end in themselves, implies that they must lead

lives in which their rational capacities are supported and fully realized. Recognising the autonomy, rationality and dignity in humanity, therefore implies respecting those values, against which we cannot act, irrespective of the (good or bad) consequences of those actions. In Kant's view, actions may well have good consequences, but if the consequences are not good, it does not detract from the value to be pursued. Accordingly, we should obey the Kantian command against stealing, lying or killing, purely because these actions violate deontological duties, and not because we are afraid we might be exposed and punished.

It is perhaps necessary to contrast Kantian ethics or deontological duties with other moral theories relevant for the topic of xenophobia, such as utilitarianism, a form of consequentialism. In consequentialism, "morality is all about producing the right kinds of overall consequences", the rightness or wrongness of an action is determined by its good or bad outcome (Sinnot-Armstrong 2015). A consequentialist's morally right action is therefore one that produces a good outcome. Utilitarianism is a particular kind of consequentialist theory, according to which an action is right, insofar as it produces the greatest happiness or desired satisfaction for the greatest number of people. The act of killing a popular city mayor in order to win elections is morally impermissible, from both the Kantian and utilitarian perspectives. The act undermines the mayor's rational nature, the killers use him as a means to achieving an end, an election success, and violates a Kantian deontological duty against killing. Utilitarians will certainly disapprove of an act that does not achieve the greatest happiness for the great number of city residents, among whom the mayor is popular.

In deciding how we act, Kant's theory however, does not aim to produce or prevent a particular outcome, such as would be the case for consequentialists or utilitarians. To be sure, damaging an individual's welfare and that of his community is morally relevant, but not the primary concern of Kantian ethics. In this sense, welfare always has moral relevance, but it is not the source, or the only consideration for Kantian duties, as it is for utilitarianism for instance. In fact, killing is also condemned by other moral theories such as Ubuntu, because harming others does not promote the values of friendliness, respect,

dignity and solidarity. For Kantianism, and in contrast to consequentialism, how one acts should be motivated by a moral duty, and not by an ulterior motive, such as producing a good or bad state of affairs. The act of harming an individual however, is wrong, as it disrespects him, as well as undermines his rationality and autonomy as a human being. An action is either right or wrong in itself, and for Kant, the right always comes before the (consequentialist) good or bad, or in Ben Eggleston's utilitarianism phrasing, the "greatest good for the greatest number" (2012:452). The action may well produce happiness for the greatest number of people, which is indeed the concern of utilitarianism, but not the objective of Kantian ethics. The Kantian moral rightness of our actions is not only meant to refer to how we treat others, it is also relevant to how we treat ourselves. It is morally impermissible, for example, for a leader to commit suicide as a means to resolve an acrimonious relationship with his community.

I have already stated that recipient communities are fearful of immigrants out of, among other things, ignorance about the latter's differing cultural orientation. In addition, we look at immigrants from a standpoint of protecting our autonomy, and disregarding theirs. We merely see them as a threat to our comfortable existence. Rarely do we think about the arrival of immigrants as an opportunity to embrace the ideals of multi-culturalism and diversity. Much less do we think about them as equal human beings over whom we ought not to exercise undue control. Thomas Nagel points out that "everyone's life matters, and no one is more important than anyone else" (1991:11). Every person is equally important, and deserves impartial treatment.

3. Xenophobia and Kantian morality

In considering the kinds of things that deserve Kantian moral consideration, human beings are top of the list. In thinking about the relevance of morality in our relationship with immigrants, we must first acknowledge that immigrants are human beings. Kant argues that every human being has dignity, which means that each person has what he calls 'unconditional' and intrinsic value. (There are of course arguments, perhaps not relevant for this discussion, for other sentient beings such as animals to be treated the same). An immigrant is

human and has dignity, which derives from the human characteristics of autonomy and rationality, and is therefore morally valuable. The rational nature gives each immigrant the capacity to recognize and obey Kantian moral law, according to which he can set ends and make choices independently. Understanding this context and adopting this approach is necessary if we are to overcome xenophobia from a Kantian moral perspective. Humanity consists of immigrants, locals, men and women of any nationality, creed and origin, who all have intrinsic value, and therefore deserving of moral consideration. It is the above context that prompts me to examine the appropriateness of assimilation within the framework of Kantian ethics.

I find the topic of assimilation, referred to in my discussion of Sundstrom, both prominent and relevant in the public discourse about xenophobia. I discuss below how assimilation can be good or bad for host communities and/or immigrants, and how it does or does not violate Kantian ethics. For purposes of clarity, I differentiate between voluntary social integration, and forced or imposed assimilation. Voluntary social integration is the front-end of a usually slow process that may or may not ultimately morph into natural, spontaneous assimilation, depending on whether or not families choose to assimilate.

The *Cambridge Dictionary* defines assimilation as “the process of becoming similar to others by taking in and using their customs and culture”. In this context, assimilation refers to a gradual adoption of the majority culture by an ethnic minority. It involves acquiring a new language and gaining new experiences about the various cultural or religious practices of host communities, and then, further, internalising and embracing them. Naturally, it takes generations of spontaneous adaptation or even intermarriages for differences between various cultural groups to dissipate.

Social integration on the other hand, is about welcoming arriving immigrants into a new, culturally different territory. It is about about being accepted into the culture of the dominant group, without requiring them to adopt the culture of the dominant group. In a UKZN case study, Baruti Amisi and Richard Ballard suggest that if foreigners do not feel welcome by the host communities, they

will retreat to form their own groupings. These groupings are based on linkages with “others like me” (2005:15). Where social integration embraces the culture of the new arrivals, assimilation expects them to give up their identity and their distinctiveness. Assimilation is in my view, bad, if it is meant to be a form of forced social integration. Immigrants are coerced to do things according to our culture, because theirs is often presumed to be inferior. In this scenario, the immigrant’s fear of punishment, or promise of reward for assimilation failure or success, may lead to unnatural social integration. The cultural values of others should be given equal consideration. I agree with Will Kymlicka’s assertion that, “our good is neither universal nor unique” (1990: 216).

In forced assimilation, foreigners hide their true identity and censor themselves to avoid standing out. They might even prefer relocating to a country with a similar culture and language where they blend in, and avoid becoming targets for xenophobic abuse. Voluntary social integration promotes diversity and multiculturalism, where immigrants can embrace the culture of their hosts without giving up their own or creating parallel communities. Imposed assimilation encourages a mono-ethnic culture. Kevin Hetherington, quoted in the same case study, expands on this point by stating that diverse cultures are meant to bring people together. Xenophobia however, has an opposite effect. It makes them “often just as much about assuming or creating a new identity, or embracing marginality, and being openly and proactively different” (Amisi and Ballard 2005:15).

In Kantian ethics, new immigrants, by virtue of being human, are ends in themselves. Kant’s description of moral beings refers to “all rational and autonomous beings, no matter their species”, (Shafer-Landau 2012:169). If we embrace this principle, there are limitations with regard to how we might treat them, in the process of pursuing our own ends. One of the limitations in this case is to not expect immigrants to give up their ends, in favour of ours. Their ends may include pursuing life within their linguistic, religious and traditional customs. Immigrants should be able to make their own decisions and choices freely, within Kantian values, and not influenced by interference by others. If we make their acceptability contingent on successful forced assimilation, how does

that help them pursue these ends? If we were in their shoes, would we accept throwing away our identity, in order to fit in somewhere? I do not think we would allow others to interfere with our rational agency, by imposing on us conduct that we would not agree to. Kant would respond to this situation by asking if the forced assimilation maxim is universalizable. In other words, whether the pro-forced assimilation advocates would themselves willingly accept being required to conform and adopt the identity and culture of others. Forcing the Rohingya Muslims for instance, to acquiesce to a foreign religion, is outright unjustified.

Kant's principle of justice is that individuals be allowed "to pursue their own life plans subject only to the constraint that others be allowed a similar freedom" (Hill 1980:96). Restrictions cannot be imposed on how individuals make decisions and choices without undermining their autonomy. Imposed assimilation therefore undermines the rational nature in others.

Kantian morality tells us what we ought to do or what we ought not to do. Consequently, if our actions are based strictly on respecting moral rules, forced assimilation does not meet this threshold. Forced assimilation fails to recognize others as ends, prevents them from pursuing their ends in the same way that we would want to be allowed to pursue ours. In social integration, however, we act in a way that supports the goals of immigrants, by obeying moral rules that helps them pursue their lives successfully. Against this background, I regard voluntary social integration, which over time might result in natural, spontaneous assimilation, and not forced assimilation, as morally desirable.

In addition to understanding the harmful effects and consequences of xenophobia, we must also accept our Kantian individual and collective social obligations towards foreigners. The actions of the perpetrators of the 2008 xenophobic violence in South Africa violate deontological duties which prohibit causing harm to others, and this must be understood to mean not just physical harm. I have pointed out elsewhere in this report, that xenophobia is mostly associated with physical harm, because its effects are visible. Kant however points out that even mockery is harmful, whether or not it achieves the intended

outcome, because it “reflects a disrespectful attitude toward the humanity of others” (Hill 1980:97). In addition to attacking them, unjustly accusing immigrants of crime, denigrating them as invaders, or referring to them in derogatory terms is morally wrong. Kantian beliefs enjoin us to adopt the motives of immigrants, and treat them as ends. It seems to me that if we are to treat other human beings as an end in themselves, the starting point is to respect them as rational and autonomous beings, deserving of equal respect.

Acting in accordance with Kantian duties is sufficient to ensure the respect of all other human beings, including immigrants. If Kantian ethics had from time immemorial been part of every child’s upbringing, I suspect the word xenophobia would not even exist in our lexicon. Obeying deontological duties would have been enough to prevent the violence against others that we have seen in recent times. There are of course doubts and objections about the practicality and attainability of Kantian morality. Some may object that universal morality is not possible because we are always attached to our personal standpoints. Our personal standpoints, they might argue, are influenced by our own experiences within a community. This attachment will therefore not enable us to see things from the standpoint of the other person. They argue that, because human beings are products of their own experiences, their moral compass is based on what they have learnt or how they have been socialized within a particular community. This in my view is a weak argument, as it suggests that human beings are incapable of acting on the basis of a universal set of morals, and their evaluations and judgements are of necessity always guided by community. I maintain that community influences morality, in particular during an individual’s formative years. It is however not a sole preserve, the best, or for that matter the only source of morality for all individual actions. Our worldview changes as we grow up, and our rational capacity allows us to back up our moral choices with reason. It’s not as if morality is congenital or something that is inherited. In some cases, I want something different (marry someone from a different nationality or race group) from what the community expects from me (marry from within my own race). As my circumstances change, I become more conscious about what my actual values should be, and adapt accordingly. Just as social conventions change and humanity evolves,

individual standpoints can be reviewed. Preferences are subjective as they do not have a permanent objective standard of measurement. Against this background, I assert that universal morality is possible.

CONCLUSION

Migration has been happening for centuries, and the movement of people between different geographies is a permanent feature and reality of human existence. Countries are increasingly becoming inter-connected and as the geopolitics evolve, nations will inevitably be affected positively or negatively, on the basis of which their populations may or may not move out of their homelands. Migration is a reality in an evolving world, and people are continuously pushed or pulled by economic, political, social and environmental factors to find new homes. Migration has, however, brought with it concerns from local populations about security, economic survival and cultural dilution. In recent times, Europe and North America have experienced crimes involving foreigners and citizens. These include drug and human trafficking, flying planes into buildings, setting off suicide bombs on trains, blowing up shopping malls or driving trucks into unsuspecting crowds. In South Africa financial fraud, rape, home invasions, murder, cash in transit heists crimes have involved both foreigners and citizens as well. Foreigners therefore do not have a monopoly on committing crime. Crimes perpetrated by foreigners have nonetheless added to the prevailing anti-immigrant sentiment. These are the sorts of crimes that not only legitimize fear, but also provide ammunition for anti-immigrant advocates to lobby for stringent policies.

Largely because of these factors, immigrants continue to be targets of xenophobic abuse, and the efforts of pro-immigrant governments and anti-xenophobic citizens have not been successful in reducing xenophobia's prevalence. Anti-xenophobia marches and social cohesion/education campaigns may be helpful in creating awareness, but certainly fall short of a sustainable solution. Similarly, ad hoc law enforcement measures, deportations, refugee camps and building border barriers in an attempt to keep foreigners out, have not yielded results. The state should play a role in

influencing the direction of the good, and not be an idle spectator. The state should create an environment in which individuals, foreign and local, are able to pursue their own ends. This is possible only when their rights, autonomy and rationality are respected. The state should therefore provide effective mechanisms for corrective action to human rights violations and implement mechanisms and policies to prevent re-occurrence. Kymlicka says that a neutral state, one that is detached and uninterested in intervening in the social challenges of its population, cannot “adequately protect the social environment necessary” for human beings to pursue their own ends” (1990:245).

The truth is that migration has been happening throughout the history of mankind, and it is not about to stop. Immigrants will enter a country either the right way, or use other, illegal avenues. Immigrants however do not arrive in a new country to take over government, or the indigenous people’s liberties or even their way of life as some fear-mongers have suggested. Host nations ought to shed their xenophobia, and consider more feasible, inclusive, humane and practical bridge-building alternatives. These might include the reform of political and immigration policies. A structured approach such as putting immigrants on a path to become citizens will no doubt go some way in helping to combat xenophobia. Stronger pro-immigrant and active grassroots organisations must be created to advocate for the rights of immigrants. It should not matter whether politicians make us believe that our culture or religion is superior, our way of life more civilized than others. We should actively reject being aggressive towards others in order to maintain our status.

The laws that discriminate against immigrants on the basis of nationality, must be challenged. Politicians and policy makers should take active steps to create policies that decriminalize illegal immigration, and protect the rights of immigrants. Immigrant-led movements and rights groups must become more vocal with public education outreach programmes than they are currently. Local populations and immigrants must learn not to reciprocate hatred and resentment, but instead demonstrate to the perpetrators the value of a peaceful co-existence. In so doing, they can positively influence a large part of the world on the wisdom of non-violence against other, equally morally valuable, human

beings. Those who are opposed to xenophobia should elevate the anti-xenophobic discourse. These measures, while commendable, are however, in my view, not enough. They are only a temporary stopgap measure. Institutions, including family, religious organisations and political bodies, can help shape culture and attitudes by promoting the adoption of moral rules from an early age. They can help create awareness on the importance of a shared way of life, but the ultimate responsibility to act with moral consideration is an individual or collective one.

Xenophobia can indeed be eliminated if human beings recognize their moral obligations towards one other. Human beings are entitled to basic human rights. It follows therefore that someone else is obliged to respect those rights, irrespective of the nationality of the individual to whom the obligation is owed. The harms caused by xenophobia can be reduced by the adoption of Kantian ethics. The adoption of a fundamental moral approach is a desirable approach to understanding xenophobia, and a likely ultimate solution to correcting its wrongs. I argue for morality, particularly Kantian ethics, in tackling xenophobia, as I believe public and civic initiatives, while valuable, are deficient. I suggest that xenophobia should be tackled from a moral angle, which requires obedience to deontological duties. Fulfilling deontological duties towards myself and other human beings can be done in a way that recognizes that immigrants are as important as locals.

I believe that it is possible to build a society where children are brought up to disapprove of violence and the xenophobic language of hatred in their relationship with strangers. Irrational hostility towards foreigners is indeed reversible, if we individually and collectively understand how we *ought to be*, and what we *ought to do*, in relation to others. On this point, it is necessary for the individual to take personal responsibility in how he relates to and treat others. That responsibility will require that the individual understands both the “self” and the “other”. The way to acquire such knowledge is to be inquisitive and authentically curious and observant about other cultures, ethnicity, behavior and group dynamics. We should examine and understand how confidence and conflict play out in different cultures. A local should seek to

understand what motivates or frustrates a foreigner, and determine how he can be helpful. He should work against assumptions and continually evaluate bias, reflecting on his own actions at home, at work and in public settings. No one's physical features, race, gender, nationality should be regarded as proxies for superiority, inferiority, power, confidence or dominance. Our visible and invisible differences in identity and experience should be a strength, rather than a weakness.

The moral ideals of Kantian ethics, are said to be impractical and too difficult and demanding for human beings to live up to. We should nonetheless always strive to live up to them, because it is an approach that has the most chances of success. A political response has so far proved to be inadequate. Giving up on Kantian ethics is not an option as it diminishes our prospects of success in targeting and overcoming xenophobia. We should continually be mindful of whether our actions can be embraced by everyone else, and treat humanity never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end.

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