

# Ubuntu Ideality: The Solution to Xenophobic Practice in South African

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**Abstract**— The current xenophobic outbreak in South Africa has elicited various reactions and concern from diverse circles. This concern stems from the fact that South African just came out of apartheid regime with the support of other nations, including Africa. During the struggle, Black leader anchored their struggle on a Socio-Religious and political philosophy, styled 'Ubuntu' in Zhosa/Zulu word. 'Ubuntu' defines human relationship in terms of universal brotherhood of all persons. It abhors discrimination of any sort. Ubuntu as philosophy of social and humane living promotes conviviality, humanity, propriety etc. However, few year into democratic South Africa, xenophobia resumed the centre-stage of the nation's polity. The question is why the sudden paradigm shift from love to hate? It is in an attempt to proffer plausible answer to this question that this research is designed and executed. Using the sociological and historical method, the researchers discovered that xenophobia is alien to African culture and its entrance into Africa is inspired by various horrendous circumstances. Notably, xenophobia in South Africa is a reaction to socio-political and economic circumstances in the country. Therefore, this paper concludes that if African, and particularly South Africa, the home of Ubuntu, must know peace and eliminate xenophobia in the continent, she must re-study and re-tool her traditional philosophy of social and humane living notched out in Ubuntu ideality. It is in the practice of Ubuntu that African nations will find their relevance in the global village.

**Index Terms**— Xenophobia, Ubuntu, Ideality, Solution, South Africa.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The horrendous xenophobic outbreak in South Africa occurred this year just about a week after my paper titled "*Ubuntu Ideality: The Foundation of African Humane and Compassionate Living*" was published by an International Journal. In the published article, I had gone neck deep in projecting the socio-political philosophy and practice of humane living in Africa. Thus with the new xenophobic development I felt betrayed and almost concluded that the world is full of contradiction and that contradiction is the only principle governing the world and its social relationships. We experience contradictions in almost all realms of life situations, ranging from social, political, economic, religious and ideological. It therefore seems that contradiction defines the real meaning of human existence and its origin is hidden in historical obscurity. However, the most puzzling

contradiction that attracts human questioning and became the outgrowth of this present research, is when ideology is mismatched with practices, separating practice from ideology. Then the question becomes, is ideology in socio-political fields, mere illusions of the mind? Is ideology not meant to have practical relevance to human organizations and affairs? Is ideology simply a mechanism of wheedling the simple minded masses? Or is ideology a mere deceptive device used by the intelligentsia and the ruling class to achieving their whims and gaining power and political acceptability. These and more questions agitate our minds, more especially in relation to the current practice of xenophobia in South Africa, a nation distinguished for Ubuntu ideology.

Notably, South Africa, with the fall of apartheid declared itself, a "Rainbow Nation" and consequently endorsed a world-renowned constitution in which it states inter-alia, that South Africa belongs to all, who live in it, united in diversity [see the Post of April, 23,2008 @www.xenophobiainsa.edu./org]. This modern South African socio-political platitude squares up with the ancient Socio-political philosophy of humane living as hidden in "Ubuntu" Okoro [2015] enunciates on the basic principle of Ubuntu, when he writes:

A true African humanist/socialist does not consider one class of man as his brethren and another class as his enemy. He/she does not form alliance with his brethren for the extermination of the non-brethren but rather regards all human beings as members of an extended family [ 1-9, see also Gade 2011: 303-329].

To this, Nelson Mandela, the great South African Leader, socialist and noble Peace prize awardee affirms, "I have always known that deep in every heart there is mercy and generosity. No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin or his background or his religion" [see Nanda 2011:1-9]

Ubuntu, which is an African principle of social and humane living was developed and nurtured among the Bantu people of South Africa. In Ubuntu social ideology, the Bantu people [South African people] define and maintain the equality of all people irrespective of theircolour, race and religion. In Ubuntu social philosophy, human beings are defined in context as "*being-with-others*". Okoro [2015] explicates more on the extended meaning of the "*being-with-others*" ideality, as he opines:

Implicated in the above definition of human beings as "being-with-others" is the inclusive nature of human community. This also defines identities, nature, values and responsibilities of one towards another in a community. This distinctive nature of Ubuntu is expressed in the imagery of

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"We not me". The central notion of Ubuntu hinges on the idea of collectivity of people rather than the individuality of persons within a given community [1-9].

Now if Ubuntu ideality is the basic African [South African] socio-political philosophy that sustains the South African people in their trying period of oppressive apartheid, then they have to urgently proffer plausible answer to the million dollar puzzle posed to them by the author of the xenophobia article published in the South African Posts of 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2008 as he writes, "the terrible irony is that the very victims of apartheid, oppressed and marginalized because of their skin colour and race, have now become oppressors themselves [and this beats our imaginations]

The post continues its dirge of the heinous activities of the practices of xenophobia as it recounts some striking incidences of xenophobia within a period of time. It notes therefore with dismay that only in April, 2008, Six Mozambicans families living in shacks in Diepsloot were displaced and their shacks destroyed [1-5 see [www.xenophobia.sa.edu.org](http://www.xenophobia.sa.edu.org)]. Other incidences occurred in May 28, 2008, when tens of thousands of migrants were displaced amid mass looting and destruction of foreign owned homes, property and business across the country. The uncanny attacks on the foreigners resurged in 2013, when other foreign owned stores in Diesploot were looted and owners hunted, though the officials deployed state police to halt the attack [see Khadija 2013:1-3 [www.xenophobia.sa.edu.org](http://www.xenophobia.sa.edu.org)] Here xenophobic attacks become a slogan, a trade glib, and repartee in major discussions in South Africa and of course in the entire global community. However, the government has matched the frequency of the slogan with policy statements, expressing shocks on the barbarity of the incidence of violence against foreigners [see Khadija 2013:1-3].

It is against this background on the contradictions between the principle of Ubuntu and the practice of xenophobia that most African scholars and intelligentsia, who have gone neck deep into writing and defending African humanistic principle in a volatile world began to express grave concern that if the Africa moral/humanistic foundation is destroyed that the world will run aghast. Here they note with nostalgia what the cross cultural current and the intricate web of globalization, socialization and association have brought to the home of hospitality for all [Africa]. Thus the South African Ubuntu ideology, which is her contribution to the global community, having been vitiated upon by the practice of xenophobia, is therefore criticized, cajoled and dismissed as metaphysical ideology not relevant in public life of the contemporary era. This paper therefore becomes a product of critical re-thinking on this moral contradictions that is already placing Africa in general and South Africa in particular at the dark side of contemporary history. This re-thinking is with the aim of calling African back to her moral/human roots, for in this lies her relevance in the comity of nations.

## II. XENOPHOBIA AND COGNATE CONCEPTS IN PERSPECTIVE.

Xenophobia has become a socio-political concern of the contemporary world in general and Africa in particular. The

phenomenon though a contemporary manifestation of psycho-social hatred of one group towards another, is also found in the ancient methods of grouping people in their nexus. The term xenophobia in its root denotes aphobic [fearfully] attitude towards a stranger or of the unknown. It is derived from two Greek words, *xenos* meaning foreigner/stranger and *phobos* which means fear. Xenophobia is therefore a term with psychological connotation used in socio-political discourse to describe a strong dislike for foreigners or generally, people who are different from one's self [Vorster 2002:1]. Though our concentration in this study is South Africa, but it has been underscored in many contemporary literatures that xenophobic practice is as ancient as the history of human development, its progenitor being the racial distinction of human being according to race, colour, geographical location, culture and religion. It was Vorster [2002] who first tied xenophobia with racism as he maintains that xenophobia can be seen as racism in its broadest meaning and both are driven by the same factor [9]. These factors as enunciated by Vorster [2002] include prejudice, stereotyping, bias, discrimination, while Religion and Culture become the chief driver of the xenophobic actions [9].

Xenophobia manifests in collective fear and results to aggression by a community against migrants. Here Solomon [1996] considers xenophobia in its broadest sense as meaning racism. According to him, this is because both are driven by the same factor and psychological feelings of prejudice, stereotyping, bias and discrimination. Muller [1996] spotlights religion and culture as the purveyors of xenophobia from historical antiquity to the modern period" [410]. The reason behind Muller's assumption is that religion and culture provide strategic meaning, interpretations and practice of one's social values. Thus through religious and cultural paradigm, foreigners are defined as inferior and as such deserve the right not to be treated as human beings.

Therefore in tying xenophobia with racism or racial studies, Vorster [2002] maintains that several countries have become prone to xenophobic actions. He further states that xenophobia has in the recent times lead to the reinstatement of policies with the undercurrent of racism, formulated to resist migration of people from other races or ethnic group [8]. This migration policy design thus became the harbinger of xenophobic groups in the international arena. Notable among the xenophobic groups are but not limited to the following: Front nationals in France, The Centrumdemocraten in Austria and centrum Partiji in Netherlands, and the Deutsche Volts union [DVU] in Germany, the Vlaams Blok [VB] and Front National In Belgium [see Cashmore 1994:346 and Anon 1992:27]

Having related the question of xenophobia with the issue of racial construct, Madiano [1996] opines that the concept of race describes a group of people with the same physical characteristic and with a notable culture and social similarities [146 see also Vorster 2002:3]. According to the above postulation, racism is therefore associated with prejudice and social intolerance. Here Marger [1994] categorized race and racism in such a skilful way that fits into the scheme of the present work. In the scheme, he enunciates

thus: Racism is a belief system or ideology structured around three basic ideas, namely:

1. Humans are divided naturally into different physical types
2. Such physical traits as they display are intrinsically related to their culture, personality and intelligence
3. On the basis of their genetic inheritance, some group are innately superior to others [7].

The implications to Marger's postulation is that the underlying assumption in the concept of race and practice of racism is that human beings are grouped into hereditary and cultural groups according to their assumed ability and disability, which influence their social behaviours. According to Marger's ontology, human beings are ranked according to superiority level and this determines the standard of relationship, acceptance and/or rejection accorded to one in any social forum. It is this ranking that gave birth to both the slavery and colonializing policies of the 15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Hence the justification of Africans as inferior being brought to the Western world for civilization and socialization in the following lines:

...so their lot was quite the contrary of what it had been since before they had lived in perdition of soul and body. Of soul in that they were pagans, pagans without the clearness and the light like the beasts, without the holy faith and of their bodies: in that they lived like beasts, without any custom of reasonable being-for they had no knowledge of bread and wine and they were without covering cloths or consequent of homes that house them all, they had no understanding of good but know how to live in bestial sloth [Raboteau 1978:3 see also Okoro, 2012:251-259].

Against this backdrop, it is noted that the idea of race and racism is bedevilled with bias and poor definition of the other and this gave birth to intolerance between groups and races of humankind. According to current research in sociology and psychology, the race idealism gave birth to ethnic grouping, which therefore identifies themselves against the lines of language, religion, culture, decent or combination of these [see Schutte 1995:2]. Race ideology are found on diverse social matrix and backgrounds. This warrants Marger [1994] to insist that sometimes historical ethnic groups may arise from the vagaries of old ideology and found their common course and solidarity on a new foundation and front. Accordingly, racists' beliefs are not limited to ideas about groups commonly referred to as races [8]. Therefore Vorster [2002] avers that race and racism can also be applied to attitude of any ethnic group [6 see also Marger 1994: 28].

However, the single defining paradigm common to all race study is that racism and ethnicism are the consciousness of differences and consequent tension between one group and another, classified in terms of 'Us' and 'Them'. Categorization of people in their nexus brings about the 'We' feelings, which in turn generates in-group respect and solidarity. Thus the group in question, whether considered in terms of ethnic, racial or religious, considers the other group of 'them' as inferior. This judgment is spawned from the value system of judging group and this results into superiority claim and an influenced disposition towards the other group [see Marger

1994: 28]. In the same vein, Vorster [2002] identified racism as a by-product of ideology, greed and fear [3].

Notably, the ideology of superiority of one's own group and the attribution of inferiority position to the other group from one's own group are inherent in racial behaviours. In a critical analysis of the relationship between racism and ideology, Lake and Rothschild [nd] note that among many historical examples of ideological given, which include but not limited to theological, religious, philosophical, have been used for undue justification of various manifestations of racism such as colonialism, slavery, genocide and apartheid [4]. As already mention in this paper, theology as part of ideological given has been manipulated in history to justify and promote racism [ Okoro 2012:251-259]

The second major source of racial attitude is greed [see Vorster 2002:3-4]. Accordingly, greed was the umpire of slavery and colonialism before the postmodern era. It designed the colonial structure of violence which subjected the indigenous people to the point of genocide-extermination. This was done in order to gain/acquire their rich natural resources. Here again Lake and Rothschild [nd] note that ideology played key role in the justification of the undue greed, since colonialism was considered positively for expanding the western Christianity and civilizing the seeming savage indigenous people of the continents [7].

The third major cause of racism is also noted to be fear. Lake and Rothschild [nd] also made a striking discovery on this phenomenon in South Africa when they observe thus:

The white minority's collective fear of the black majority in South Africa was very important component in the development of apartheid structure in South Africa. Collective fear creates a strong solidarity of groups, especially minority groups around the notion of 'protection' of own interest [4see also Vorster 2002: 4 and Monshupouri and Montameni 2000:712].

Besides the apartheid, which was somewhat restricted to South Africa, Globalization agenda of the modern culture has been considered at different circles as a major source of racial conflict and a manifestation of collective fear. Okoro [2010] made explicit observation on the relationship between globalization and racial conflict in the following lines:

...the commercial culture of globalization has introduced alien forces, which has resulted in the breaking down of community life and the destruction of the indigenous culture-creating ethnocide. Thus the tribal people are exterminated by the process of attrition, through this means their land are taken away, their rivers poisoned, their culture violated and their lives made intolerable [550-576 see also Dass 2002:1-7].

Chomsky a Russian Professor of Globalization and Global Issues in 2003 allies implicitly with this position, that globalization is behind the modern practice of discrimination as he made the following remarks concerning the U.S attitude in the global village politics as he reiterates, "U.S through the instrument of globalization intends to take over the world using the missionary style-self-righteous American exceptionism in some sort of global war against evil" [45], Further Berber [2004] and Okoro [2010] attribute all sorts of

idiocy on President Bush, like ignorance of the Middle East, neo conservative bias, fundamentalist dogma and cowboy-like desire for confrontation. Therefore, terrorism can be traced to a fundamental motivation-struggle for power, noting that political globalization has extended US supremacy and interest in the world community [Berber 2002:7 and Okoro 2010:38-52].

Here Vorster [2002] maintains that in the contemporary world the fear of globalization is a potent force in new racial conflict. He thus underscores that the modern conflict and terrorism are simply a reaction of the people, whose national, religious and cultural identity are fast eroding away [4-5]. In consequence therefore, Okoro [2010] notes with nostalgia:

In a situation where more and more people are utterly disillusioned about the prospects associated with modernization and the capacity and willingness of the new political and economic elites to deliver their promises, they [people] feel abandoned and are thrown back on their ethnic, cultural and religious identities to provide a sense of coherence and purpose for their lives [550-576 see also Kondrad 2005:45].

Following from the above enunciations, Vorster [2002] opines that the fear of globalizations is seen as the reason for the resurgence of fundamentalism in religion and ethnic/cultural values [4-5].

To cap up this discussion, this work therefore surmises that racism, though an ancient ideology, manifests itself in several forms in modern history. However, the overt artery of manifestation is in the creation and perpetuation of the structure of violence. This is in the form of state organized genocide as evidenced in colonial history. Within this reins, several nations disappeared, some were reduced to a state of intangibility by both the United State and European sophisticate powers in Africa, Latin America, Austria, and New Zealand. The Modern history is also replete with tales of ethnic cleansing as witnessed in Central Africa, and Eastern Europe [see Wilbery 2001:13 and Melson 2001:301] Notable strategy for ethnic cleansing include but not limited to deportation, terror, and legal forms of exclusion from the state affairs.

The main purpose of racism is to create a sense of inequality within a state by means of social stratification. According to Vorster [2002] social stratification flows from the supposition that the society consists of irreconcilable groups. It is this dialectical principle that gave birth to 'We-them' social attitude and structure [5]. Through the 'we-them' structure the policy of apartness is idolized and sustained. On the first hand, the idolization of the 'Us' and the our history separate from the general history or rather 'their' history leads to the seizure and ultimate control of power of the state for personal/group advantage. On the other hand, while the 'us' zone portends a positive image of superiority, the 'them' zone is bequeathed with a negative image of the self. The 'us' consider the 'them' as having different culture, language, and religion or/and color. The dividing line is therefore drawn as follows:

We are superior -----They are inferior  
We are innocent -----They are guilty  
We are noble -----They are miscreant/ ignoble

We are peaceful -----They are dangerous

We are the saints -----They are the devils

Against this backdrop, we demonize and alienate them through social stratification [see Vorster 2002:6]. It is therefore this attitude that has led to the contemporary stereotyping. Marger [1994] did quintessential work on modern stereotyping in America and observed such aphorism regarding a generalized image of group as follows: If you are white, then you are rich and oppressive.. If you are Black, then you are prone to drugs and criminality. If you are an Arab, you are a terrorist, Muslim and cruel. In South Africa, the stereotyping reveals that the White people are regarded a racial, while the Black people cannot do anything for themselves and have HIV/IDS [Marger 1994: 8-10]. The above stereotype can result to aggression by the 'We' against the 'Them'.

The 'them' here in this study being the migrants, whether legal or illegal. It is therefore on the basis of the above discussion that Solomon [1996] notes that xenophobia in its broadest sense can be seen as racism. According to him, both are driven by the same factor of socio-political and psychological feelings. Hence xenophobia is an outgrowth of prejudice, stereotyping, bias and discrimination. Though xenophobia and racism share many similarities and often overlap in their conceptual framework, however, there still exist minor difference between the two. Notably racism is prejudice based on physical characteristics such as skin colour, hairy and facial features, while xenophobia is based on negative behaviour found in the notion that person [s] are foreign/stranger to the community and as such deserve [s] no rights of fair and hospitable treatments.

### III. XENOPHOBIA IN SOUTH AFRICAN: A HISTORICAL RECONSTRUCTIONS

We shall start this section by first of all restating the basic African philosophy of social/human relationship that has been vitiated upon by the modern practice of xenophobia in South Africa. A notable maxim that is common in most African communities is expressed in Akan Language thus, 'honam mu nna nhanoa' [*humanity has no boundary*]Akan is one of the major tribes in Ghana. The maxim literally means that in human flesh there is no edge in cultivation-no boundary. It is generally understood as meaning all humankind is one specie'. Therefore humanity has no boundary [see Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy, September, 2010@ www.africanethicsofhumaneliving.xenophobia/s.a.org]. The implication of the cliché is that humanity is one specie, with shared values, feelings, hopes and desire. Accordingly, there is no word for 'race' in major African languages and dialects. However, there are words for people, human beings and persons. It on this point that the language of the autochthonous African communities differ from the languages of the rest of the world, especially the west. While other languages will designate a group, 'black race' or 'white race', African language will say black people or white people [Ndii Ojii or ndii ocha in Igbo language].

Actually, Africans in all their nexus conceive humanity to embrace all human beings, their geographical or spatial

confines notwithstanding. They understand all humanity as belonging to one universal family of mankind. This ideology underlies the concept of Ubuntu in Africa. Hence Okoro [2015] opines that in Ubuntu ideology, all human beings are considered as belonging to one single family and as such none is to be discriminated against [1-9]. If this is the definition and understanding of mankind among Africans, then the question is how does xenophobia found its way into African Society and more especially South Africa, the nursery of Ubuntu? In our survey, we note that there are so many precursors to this insidious socio-ethical phenomenon into South African Society. These precursors range from linguistic, psychological, histo-social, economic and political. However, there is no clear cut boundary between any of the harbingers of xenophobia in South Africa, as all dovetail into one another in certain inseparable way.

Beginning with Linguistic antecedent to xenophobia, an anonymous writer did a critical survey of the emergency of derogatory nuances in South Africa and among South African and made the following observations:

In apartheid regime, the most obvious and terrible name was 'kaffer'. This means 'dark-skinned people'. This refers word after the apartheid has become a taboo in South African society, however, some people still use it. With the end of apartheid, another derogatory name, 'Makwerekwere' was invented. This refers to foreigners in South Africa. Makwerekwere specifically is used to address the dark-skinned people from other countries of Africa other than South Africa [see [www.xenop.hQbjaj.nsouthafrica.edu/org1](http://www.xenop.hQbjaj.nsouthafrica.edu/org1)].

This word is developed purposely to differentiate the South Africans from the other black people, who are not South Africans. In fact Makwerekwere is reserved for other African migrants to South Africa, which stereotyped them as undesirable [see Anon 2015:1-31]. Makwerekwere does not only define the person as an inferior being but also his/her language as noisesome, meaningless, mere babbling and without intelligibility to the local people of South Africa. The derogatory names given to the South African migrants serves the single purpose of typecasting and with this measure, the migrants are treated as aliens, who are inferior in nature and as such deserves no human right applicable to other human beings in the state. Therefore with the linguistic labelling, migrants became reduced to sub-humanity and consequently discriminated at all realms of the societal structure.

The xenophobic discrimination and the aftermath attack in South Africa have taken deep and resulted into serve discriminations of the non-South Africans nationals. This horrid situation has warranted some deep concern from well-meaning global citizens. The stern picture that xenophobia in South Africa presents could in no less unyielding terms be described thus:

Prior to 1994, immigrants from elsewhere faced discrimination and even violence in South Africa, though much of that risk came from the institutionalized racism of the time due to apartheid. After the democratization in 1994, contrary to the general expectations, the incidence of xenophobia increased [see Neocosmos 2010: 15]. Between 2000 and March 2008, at least 67 people died in what were

identified as xenophobic attacks. In May 2008, a series of riot left 62 people dead...the attacks were apparently motivated by xenophobia [Laudau 2011:16]. In 2015, another nationwide spike in xenophobia attacks against immigrants in general prompted a number of foreign government to begin repatriating their citizens from South Africa [see [www.wikipediafreencyclopedia.xenophobia.sa.edu/org](http://www.wikipediafreencyclopedia.xenophobia.sa.edu/org)]. All these resulted as a result of stereotyping of other Africans through linguistic nuances.

The second antecedent is noted to be apartheid. Apartheid as a socio-political reality of the experience of South African has also been spotlighted as another major precursor of xenophobia in South Africa. Hence any reliable socio-political history of South Africa must take recourse to the colonialization of the country by both the British and the Dutch in the Seventeenth century. The Dutch, who were known as the 'Afrikaners or Boers' were dominated by the English people, resulting to the Dutch moving to establish new colonies of Orange free state and the Transvaal [see the history of apartheid in south Africa @ [www.sa.apartheid/org.edu](http://www.sa.apartheid/org.edu)]. However, the discovery of diamond in these new colonies made the British people to invade the new colonies and this action resulted to the historic Boers war of supremacy. Though, Britain granted them independence but the contention for power continued in the colonies till 1940's when the Afrikaners' National Party got the overwhelming majority in the national election of 1948. This government led by Daniel Francois Nelson made apartheid the official policy of the state. Toit and Giliomee [2013] gave an explicit account of scenario thus, 'Racial segregation in South Africa began in colonial times under Dutch empire until 1795, when the British took over the Cape of Good Hope. Apartheid as an official structured policy was introduced after the general election of 1948' [7]. With the apartheid policy in place, the inhabitants of the country were classified into four racial groups, viz: Blacks, Whites, Coloured and Indians. This policy brought with it the idea of separate humanity and separate development. Here Baldwin [1999] observes that the separation policy removed about 3.5 million non-white South Africans between 1960 and 1983 from their homes and forced them into segregated neighbourhood' [34].

Actually, it could be interpolated following from the facts that apartheid regime and practice bequeathed negative psychology on South African locals, who went through this negative socialization. Consequently, they lost through this conditioning the basic African culture of humanness towards the other as defined in the Ubuntu Philosophy of social living. Mazruri [1980] spotlights on this differential gap between the traditional South African and modern South African values as he avers:

...African societies are not the closest culturally to the western culture but they have been experiencing what is perhaps the most rapid pace of westernization...The continent is controlled disproportionately by westernized African-Europeans languages that are recently on rampage in the continent destroying or undermining one local culture after another. Africans are caught up between rebellion

against the west and imitation of the west [2-3, see also Okoro 2009:26-38],

Notably, the long period of socio- psychological torture of apartheid of the local South Africans may have occasioned a total loss of both the spirit and material elements of African social values, part of which is Ubuntu [brotherhood, humanness, solidarity etc.] Hence Okoro [2009] enunciates that through the process of apartheid, African culture, which defines African personality, history, destiny and social values was vitiated upon by the corrosive western culture, thereby leaving the South Africans a people without histo-moral roots. He notes that it is the spirit of African culture that provides the basic motivations and inspires reflections on -its Wellenschaung-its philosophy, vision and interpretation of life, its hierarchy of values and priority of needs and aspirations [26-38 see also Iwe-1991:141]. Against this backdrop, Njoku notes that it is through the vehicle of culture that man expresses himself or herself intelligibly in any social continuum. By this he asserts that culture as an expression is *a way of life* consciously or unconsciously acquired [206]. He expatiates on the value of [African] culture as he writes:

The conviction of philosophical anthropology is that man can only realize his social fulfillment through language, arts and other avenues, which embodies and communicates by means of ideas in the socio-cultural world...culture is a word picture -a sort-construct-which the society hands over to its members-such world pictures is apprehended through experience [206].

It is on this note that Okoro [2009] affirms inter-alia that the inter-subjectivity of personal and communal everyday life is socialized, acculturated, man-made and given to individual by the society for apprehension and expression [26-38]. Here the socio-cultural world is explicated and mediated to the individual within the community through the medium of a socially constructed and approved interpretations of experiences. Thus Iwe [1991] surmised that any culture that losses itself to another has to that extent become a slave to the later [142]. The implication of Iwe's assumption is that South African culture being on the fringes or rather on the periphery of South African polity has become enslaved and consequently lost its meaning, value and relevance to the modern South African locals through the long trauma of apartheid. Therefore xenophobia is an alien culture that found its way to African soil through colonialism and consequent dehumanization and discriminatory practices of the west in African soil [in this case through apartheid].

The next precursor is globalization. In the idea of Hickel [2014] xenophobic violence elsewhere in the world seems to focus on globalization as a primary driver [1-14]. In spotlighting globalization as part of the purveyors of xenophobia, the proponents maintain that the two theories of global political economy have relevant implications on our understanding of xenophobic action in South Africa. They opine that the first trend in the global social-political economic structure designated Marxian neo-liberal economy undermines livelihood of the poor and weak members of the society and consequently promotes competition over scarce

resources, such as jobs and housing [see Appadurai 2003: 42]. Against this backdrop, Okoro [2010] enunciates that globalization has created a socio-economic inequality between and among nations of the globalizing world by adopting the economic ideologies of neo-liberal capitalism. Here he notes that neo-liberal economic principles put absolute values on the operation of the market system and subordinate the people's life to the functions of society, the politics and the government to unrestricted free market forces [38-52].

The second strand of economic globalization, focus on identity politics and holds that the cultural flow that characterizes globalization induces a state of hybridity, flux, moral anomie etc. and these create and fuel a psychology construct of violence. Accordingly, Africans and particularly South Africans have uncritically imbibed or rather forced into imbibing the materialistic and individualistic values of western culture. Perhaps, with the new western culture jointly bequeathed to the South Africans by apartheid and globalization, they rejected and consequently discarded as irrelevant the African primal culture based on universal family-hood of all humankind. Therefore, among the globalized South African, the indigenous culture became disoriented and decimated [see okoro.2009:26-38]. Summarily, Okoro [2010] opines that globalization in its various penetrative forms of westernization, secularization, democratization, consumerism and growth of market capitalism represents an onslaught against the indigenous and the less privileged people in their conservative culture [26-38].

Poor economy and underdevelopment have also been underlined as another necessary precursor of xenophobia in South Africa. Frye [2011] enunciates on this point as he notes:

Seventeen years into the new democracy of South Africa, the formal freedom heralded by the defeat of apartheid is yet to be matched by economic liberation for millions of the poor, particularly Black South Africans. Poverty, unemployment and inequality continue to restrict life choices and opportunities in a manner similar to the laws of the formal regime [1-5].

Before adjudicating office in 1998, President Nelson Mandela, the Ubuntist father of South African nation notes with dismay that the issue of poverty needs to be given serious attention by the successive government. This was reported by the CNN news of April 19, 2014 thus:

It is up to the present and next generation to take up the cudgels where Mandela have left off. It is up to them, through service to deepen our democracy, entrench and defend our constitution, eradicate poverty, eliminate inequality, fight corruption and serve always with compassion, respect, integrity and tolerance [Faith Karami CNN New documentary of April 19, 2014].

Frye [2011] also notes that the democratic government of South Africa has not adhered to the counsel of President Mandela and as such failed to address the critical issues of the economy with regard to poverty, underdevelopment, unemployment etc. among the Black people of South Africa.

Frye laments that the separate development policy of the apartheid regime has continued to play dominant roles in the developmental paradigm of modern South Africa. In his own words:

The impact of separate and spatial planning under apartheid means that majority of poor black people live in far removed from urban centres, either in rural areas or at the periphery of the cities in formal township or in the increasingly sprawling informal squatter camps established on the vacant areas of peri-urban laws [1-5].

According to the same source, the issue of poverty has been de-politicized as it has become part and of course minor part of the general discussions on development and underdevelopment. Therefore, the question of poverty became webbed into the delivery of specific planned programmes and policies to designate beneficiaries, whose needs were addressed by the programme. The implication here is that the poverty question and the selected programmes and policies ducked foreigner, especially, Black people of non-South African origin, as scapegoats for the expression of indignations for being excluded from the official developmental policy of the state [see Frye 2011:1-5] Khadijah [2013] echoes the above assumption in the following lines:

In South Africa, foreigners, especially Black foreigners have come to be perceived as direct threat to the future economic health of the country. They are seen to be sponging off public services, while diligently chipping away at the economy for their own selfish survival. There is the belief that the socio-economic burden created by the influx of African migrants is unsustainable [1-5]

It is on this point of fact that scholars and researchers opine that the xenophobic attacks on black migrants in South Africa is a reaction to and expression of their indignation of structural marginalization by the democratic government in power. Therefore, they consider migrants as having come to take the scarce employment and business opportunities in South Africa thereby denying or rather robbing the South Africans their means of livelihood. An anonymous writer justifies this assumption thus, 'Many Somali owned spaza shops have been attacked, although this could be for economic reason, since Somali business model is different to South African one. It involves collective bulk buying of stock and therefore lower prices for customers' [1-4 see also [www.xenophobia.sa.edu/org](http://www.xenophobia.sa.edu/org)]. Furthermore, there is this general belief that foreigners can be the selling points of employment. This is because South African citizens notch the opinion that foreigners work harder than the South Africans. Actually, the refugees and of course migrants in South Africa are prepared to take up odd jobs and work for less money than the South African locals. This is because mainly they need to survive in a foreigner land. This is observed in the followings:

The migrants are also highly educated or skilled and since they do not qualify for social welfare in South Africa and sometimes have no extended family here, they may be prepared to work virtually any job such as the extreme example of a chartered accountant with no work permit

hawking fruits on a pavement [Anon 2015:1-5 see also [www.xenophobia.sa.edu.org](http://www.xenophobia.sa.edu.org)].

Consequent upon the prevailing scenario, the South African locals accuse the African migrants of taking their scarce jobs, undermining business owned by the locals and contributing to high crime rate and they therefore respond with xenophobic attacks on various fronts. In an apt summary of this scenario, Hickel [2014] writes:

... The primary problem with immigrants is that they undermine the economic opportunities of the local citizens. According to my interlocutors, they do this by both out competing South African owned business in the informal economy and by undercutting the labour market by working for rate far below the minimum wage, allegedly as low as R25 per a day-foreigners steal our jobs [1-14]

Here the South African post concludes the matter in shrill knock, 'In south Africa, immigrants from Somalia, Zimbabwe and Central Africa are target of xenophobic reaction because they are considered as competitors for jobs and public services' [ The post, 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2003:17, see also [www.xenophobia.sa.edu/orel](http://www.xenophobia.sa.edu/orel). Here simple logic provides that in a country where unemployment figures soars high and where the majority of the citizens struggle to eke out a living, that an influx of strangers can cause inflame of attitude of xenophobia.

#### IV. UBUNTU IDEALITY: THE ANTIDOTE TO XENOPHOBIC PRACTICE IN SOUTH AFRICA

The outcome of our socio-historical survey shows that xenophobia as a defining paradigm of human relation is an alien custom in Africa in general and South Africa [the home of Ubuntu] in particular. Xenophobia as sociopolitical and psychological phenomenon entered African through various arteries and networks of interactions. It came to destroy the last cord that bound Africans together and defines Africans as people without a historical past, socio-political philosophy and contributions to make within the global village arrangements. Therefore the urgent need to eliminate this insidious phenomenon from African mental construct and the only viable armament is the African Traditional culture. While xenophobia elites on hatred of the stranger/the other person otherthan oneself, African traditional socio-political philosophy hinges on Ubuntu.

Notably, Ubuntu is the sum of African socio-political and Religio-economic philosophy and defines African humane and community living. Here Okoro [2015] defines 'Ubuntu as a holy grail that binds all persons of African community and in fact all humanity, regardless of social status, faith, clan, race etc. together in an inseparable manner' [1-9]. Ubuntu as a Bantu word found expression in other African communities, Like the Igbo people of Eastern Nigeria and Akan People of Ghana. Ubuntu ideality among the Igbo people is described in compound words such as 'Umunna buike', Igwe buike, Onye aghana nwanneya, 'Ibu anyi ndanda' In East African, the technical equivalence is 'Ujanaa' In all the various taxonomies, the underlying ideology is 'Humanness' -humanity towards one another, social living and social

responsibility. In his epic work, *Azouzu*, a professor of African Philosophy written in 2007, describes Ubuntu as, 'Being human', the perpetual and constant will to demonstrate/show humanness, humane, respectful and polite attitude towards others [208].

On the origin of the Ubuntu as a socio-political and religio-economic concepts among African, Okoro [2010] notes that the idea was generated by the Bantu people of the Lower Congo [South Africa]. This ideality was the outgrowth of their deep reflections on what constitute the essential nature of humankind. The Bantu people of South Africa therefore came to conclusion that the operative elements in all living things is 'vital force' and this has become the true nature of all humanity. In consequence he notes, 'Bantu People of lower Congo...presents to us in Ubuntu the idea of Vital force' as the core of social harmony and solidarity...The Bantu philosophy is an ontology organized around the basic concept of which Temple designates, 'Vital force' [ see Okoro 2010:136-159, Osuagwu, 1999:139]. Notably, Ubuntu embodies oneness or rather wholeness principle, which enfolds all creations [see Okoro 2010:136-159, also Ramosel 2007:47]. Thus Ubuntu as a philosophy of social and humane relationship represents personhood and symbolizes human existence, community living and solidarity.

Hence in Ubuntu ideality, Africans accentuate the essential nature of humankind that can only be realized through social intercourse with others. Yonah [2006] explicates on this extended meaning of Ubuntu as he avers, '...the spirit of Ubuntu is [is not based on elusive concepts but] implicitly on the union of the opposites, hence, while maintaining their inherent contradictions are not elusive. It creates a unified and interconnected conceptions of human existence. The collective solidarity characterized Ubuntu through love, caring, tolerance, respect, empathy, accountability and social responsibility[37].

Hereto, Ubuntu a socio-political philosophy stimulates the idea of life force that sustains social equilibrium within the cosmic and natural fields of existence, hence it constrains from discriminations of other human beings on the basis of race, gender, ability or handicapped. Thus Africans accepts all people as belonging to one community of the living [see Yonah 2006:27]. The summary of Ubuntu ideality is that the individual in traditional African community as an elan vital or vital force is protected. However, individualism is not emphasized at the expense of the African community ideation. This accounts for the most reason behind the rejection of materialism and individualism as a defining paradigm of African social philosophy. Steve Biko, a South African Socialist and politician explicates on African community ideation in the following lines:

We regard our living together not as an unfortunate mishap warranting endless competition among us but as a deliberate act of God to make us a corporate answer to the varied problems of life, hence in all we do, we always place man first and hence all our actions is usually joint community oriented actions rather than the individualism of the West [42 see also Okoro 2013:87-112].

Ubuntu ideality therefore as a complex, elaborate and interconnected socio-political and religious philosophical

ideology dovetail into several practical areas of African living experiences as it defines the worth and meaning of different life realities and human relations paradigms for the people. It is through this that the concept of life, social relation, politics, economy etc. receive their interpretations and meaning among Africans.

According to Ubuntu defining archetype, Africans consider life itself in its holistic nature, technically styled Holism. Holism as an ideology delineates nature in its unified and interconnected system of human and natural existence [see Okoro and Okoli 2014: 922-933]. By this Africans do not only consider life as merely sacred but also as irreplaceable substance that inheres all things, humans, animals and plants. Accordingly, it is only this life substance that all humans and non-humans share equally and this equalizes all lives and determines equality of all lives [see Masahiro 1991:83-113]. Therefore, Africans maintain in their traditional ontology that the life force of the creator is present equally in all creatures. Davidson [1969] description of this ontology fits into our present work. Here Davidson observes:

The overall relationship of God, man and nature constitute an integral whole. It is not that God breathe life separately into each individual who then goes off by himself/herself rather the creative divine breath continues to flow as it were in the life of the creatures and this sustains their continual existence [28]

It is on this instance that every life in African ontology is considered perpetually connected to one divine source and this influence the African ascription of sacredness to all live [more especially human life]. Against this backdrop, Okoro and Okoli [2014] maintain that it is African belief that life has an eternal origin and destiny flowing from the creator that make them to revere it as sacred and also as a gift to any community and as such must be handled with utmost care and caution [922-933]. Therefore at no point will Africans in the traditional society consider any life even that of the most obdurate scoundrel/criminal as worthless or irredeemable and as such traditional African rejects whatever means that involves a waste of life. Thus Okoro [2013] observes that in African [Igbo] jurisprudence there is no form of capital punishment as a jurisdictional sentence to any offence/offender [83-112].

African holism ideation has influenced non Africans, hence Michelle Brenner an Australian professor, sharing the African holism ideation became an astute practitioner of the same [holism] and was inspired to found the Holistic Practice Beyond Borders [HPBB], describes the experience thus, 'there is basic oneness in the universe and beyond and in search for the transcendent is precisely this oneness that we are seeking, oneness that unifies all creation' [143]. In African holism, life is defined as inclusive, whole and truly connected with all other forms of life. Ervin [2004] spotlights more on this ideology when he opines, 'Holism as a concept tells people that they are not machines, however complex and sophisticated and truly separated from each other and the environment. Humans are conscious elements in the dynamic universe interacting with each other as well as the biosphere' [39-52]. In this perspective of human interconnectedness, Ubuntu ideality defines African existence as living together



in mutual support which flows naturally and effortlessly. In this way xenophobia [hatred for the other person different from oneself] was never conceived nor practiced in African traditional society.

Against the background of the inclusive nature of human existence, Africans through the Ubuntu define social living as expressed in this Zulu idiom, 'Khulumaisintu'. This literally translates as, 'Speak the language of the people' and underscores the character of well nurtured/natured person or one who has a good upbringing, a lady or a gentle man of the euro American type. The complimentary interpretation of khulumaisintu is 'one is an animal while two is a community' [see Okoro 2015:1-9]. Here, Africans define humanity in its community and nexus, hence a person is a person through other persons. Therefore, human beings are defined in their relationship with one another in the community. This idea gave birth to this popular idiom, 'your pain is my pain' and 'my wealth is your wealth' [see Okoro 2015:1-9]. On this note, Prof Ebenezer Emele Uka, a professor of African sociology and Intercultural studies made the following observation:

...Folk [African] and traditional societies are homogenous and their members have strong sense of solidarity ...the people know one another. No one is considered a stranger. A high proportion of social relationship in the traditional community are primary, long lasting and intimate, having an intricate significance and are valued as ends. The family and extended kinship network are central to life's experiences. These relationship dictate an all-embracing participation in which members need, seek, sacrifice for love and for one another [52-53].

Here the social solidarity principle of Ubuntu become real and manifest. Thus the co-operative and solidarity living among traditional Africans pervade all levels of African social intercourse -domestic, village, clan and age-grade [see Iwe 1991:144]. This system of living becomes a means for promoting social harmony, social security and the protection of individual rights. In the solidarity of relationship African traditional society found and sustained their personhood and philosophy of living [see Okoro 2015:1-9]. This belief in community and harmonious living gave birth to the African democratic principle which state that, 'what concerns all, all should be duly consulted and participated'. The principle respects and values members in the community as premium in their considerations [see Ifemesia 1979:55 and also Okoro and Njoku 2012: 50-64].

Notably, the privilege enjoyed by community members in African traditional society is also extended to strangers and visitors to the community. Okoro [2015] notes this in following lines:

Ubuntu ideality inspires us to open ourselves to other people, to learn more about ourselves through knowing other people. Thus a person who really cultivate the spirit of Ubuntu is always open and available to other people. He affirms and respects other people and does not feel threatened by the strength and abilities of the other person [1-9].

Okoro [2015] goes on to enunciate further on the benefits of a stranger in African traditional society thus:

Through Ubuntu norms, Africans consider humanity as

belonging to one single family and as such there is no discrimination in relationship and in the practice of Ubuntu. Thus in African traditional society travelers were not required to carry provision on their journey. What they must necessary do was to dress properly and be the road. The spirit of Ubuntu demonstrate through African hospitality mandates Africans to provide for and protect the stranger in every home he/she enters. Africans are mandated by the spirit of Ubuntu to make their guests comfortable without any material cost, while the guest are required to display humanity and candour to his/her host [1-9]

Campbell, a British anthropologists, a traveler and an African cultural historian, gave a personal testimony of his experience of this African hospitality practice as he states, 'Hospitality is one of the most sacred and ancient customs of Bantuland and is found everywhere. A native will give his/her best house and evening meal to a guest, without the slightest thought that he/she is doing anything extraordinary' [45]. We therefore note with admiration that it is this concept of common humanity in African ontology that is the fulcrum of African hospitality practice. The ideology of common humanity in African traditional society brings to bear the fact that all human beings irrespective of their race, colour, ethnicity, gender etc belong to the universal set, as 'brother' [Nwannem my mother's child in Igbo].

The idea of 'brother' in African ontology is broader than its English equivalence. 'Brother' ideology as a description of intimate relationship of all humankind denotes various and complex relationships linked with bloodties in the first instance. However on the second and expanded instance, it is used significantly andcomprehensively to lift people from purely biological determined blood ties to human level, where the essence ofhumanity is held as transcending the contingencies of human biology, race, ethnicity and culture [see [www.african.ethics/sa.edu/org](http://www.african.ethics/sa.edu/org)]. This idea of 'brother' in African worldview stimulates among other virtues, hospitality, generosity, concern for others and communal feelings. Kenneth Kaunda, an African Statesman describes in vivid term how this 'brother' ideality is expressed in relation to strangers among the people, thus:

...we will talk for hours with any stranger, who crosses our path and by the time we part, there will be little we do know about each other. We do not regard it as impertinence or invasion of our privacy for someone to ask, personal questions, nor have we compunction about questioning others in like manner. We are open to the interest of other people. Our curiosity does not stem from a desire to interfere in someone else's business but in an expression of our belief that we are wrapped up together in this bundle of life and therefore a bond already exists between myself and a stranger before we open our mouths to talk [1966:32 see also [www.african.ethic/sa.edu/org](http://www.african.ethic/sa.edu/org)].

Against this backdrop therefore, Africans also expressed this 'brother' nuances even in the economic sphere as ones brother's keeper. It was no less a scholar than Equinox that reiterated this fact when he notes among the Igbo people of Eastern Nigeria, thus, 'everyone contributes to the common stock...and we are unacquainted with idleness, we have no

beggars [see Ifemesia 1979:3 and also Okoro 2009:26-38]. Uka, [1991] adds weight to the ongoing discussion when he says that wealth creation in Africa especially among the Igbo people in the traditional society is for social significance and not for wealth itself. Therefore, the rich ones support the poor, the needy and the infirm within the immediate family, extended family and community at large, including the stranger within the gates [65]. African traditional economy is therefore noted to be a sharing economic system. In the words of Uka [1991].

...the person earning a yam title [Igwa nnu ji] with a thousand or more yams shares them with all the members of his community...By contrast a wealthy man in industrial capitalist society would be more apt to use his wealth to create further wealth rather than spend it or share it [65].

The implication of all these Ubuntu considerations in summary is that traditional Africans recognize, emphasize and respect the humanity of all people and this is conveyed intently and consciously in their expression of love. Africans imbibe this humanness principle very early in life through their traditional education, which Okoro [2010] describes as pragmatic, productive, and functional, providing a gate way to the life in the community as it inculcate a sense of social responsibility [136-159]. Therefore, Africans consider human beings as the supremecreation and the greatest asset one can possess and the noblest course one can live, and die for [Okoro, 2009: 38]. Therefore, xenophobia is an alien to African culture and must be eliminated before it eliminates Africans from global history and relevance.

## V. CONCLUSION

This paper took a socio-historical survey of the traditional African moral values as embodied in Ubuntu ideality and this was done in relation to the current xenophobic practice in African among Africans in South of Africa. The outcome of the survey is that xenophobia is an alien culture that has been smuggled into African through various networks and highways. This has also vitiated on African moral culture of intense humanness, conviviality and propriety. It is also discovered that Ubuntu as the fulcrum of African compassionate and humane living is like a holy grail that binds African community in interlock web of social relationship. Therefore, Ubuntu is in grave contradistinction with current xenophobic practice in African south as xenophobia defaces African moral and historical pedigree. It notes that if xenophobia is allowed to thrive as it is eminently doing, then Africa will be sidelined into the dark path of human history and reduced into socio-philosophical obscurity. Hence this paper advocates for the re-studying of and re-tooling of Ubuntu philosophy of social living in African as an instrument of social cohesion. It is in Ubuntu ideality that African can be placed in socio-political map of the current global village schema and by its she will make a notable contribution by healing the wounds of the global village already crisscrossed by violence and be relevant in the comity of nations.

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