An exploratory study of attitudes toward African migrants and migration among students at the University of the Western Cape

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Supervisor: Prof. K. Mwaba

I declare that "**An exploratory study of attitudes toward African migrants and migration among a sample of students at the University of the Western Cape"** is my own work, that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

Guillermina Ritacco

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October 2009

Signed: . . . .

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

In the context of recent attacks that occurred against foreign nationals (migrants) in South Africa, this study sought to explore attitudes toward migrants and immigration among a sample of students at the University of the Western Cape. Previous studies in South Africa and elsewhere have suggested that in most countries, nationals tend to hold negative attitudes toward migrants and express protectionist attitudes toward migration policies. Research around students' attitudes toward migrants and immigration has shown similar trends. The present study employed a sample survey design to investigate: a) Students' attitudes toward African migrants, b) Students' attitudes toward migration into South Africa and c) Degree of contact that students have with African Migrants. A convenience sample of 183 undergraduate psychology students was used. Students' age ranged between 18 and 38 years of age (x = 20 years). Data was collected using a questionnaire comprising of 27 questions related to attitudes towards migrants and immigration as well as a section on contact with migrants. The results show that students showed exclusionary attitudes in terms of immigration, limited contact with migrants and negative attitudes toward African migrants. However, attitudes toward migrant's rights were positive. The implications of these findings are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Rationale

South Africa looked on in horror as xenophobic attacks rippled through communities. Attacks aimed at foreigners as well as foreign owned businesses reached a climax in the early months of 2008. Although attacks have occurred frequently over the years, none have been as wide spread and violent as those seen in 2008. Thousands of people were displaced, losing their homes and businesses. Foreigners were forced to take refuge in churches, community halls, police stations and schools to escape the violence aimed against them.

While some foreigners have returned to their countries of origin, others have slowly reintegrated, with others still living in informal refugee camps, too scared to return to their homes in South African communities. Many have tried to explain these attacks and what led to some South Africans reacting in such a violent manner. Part of the answer lies in South Africa's history, part in explanations of social behaviour and part in terms of socioeconomics. What has stayed constant in South Africa is a legacy of negative attitudes towards those whom are seen as different (Lefko-Everett, 2008).

Before the demise of the apartheid era, the Aliens Control Act was introduced in South Africa, which basically saw the welcoming of white immigrants into the country while keep blacking African immigrants out (Lefko-Everett, 2008). Although the Act was amended in 1995, changes were few and the protectionist stance of the government against immigration stood firm. In 2002, the new migration legislation was passed which was followed by a haste pausing of publication due to disagreement of its compatibility with the liberal constitution of South Africa (Lefko-Everett, 2008). Following this,

amendments were made and Acts passed that reflected the constitution as well as meeting international standards with regards to immigration policy. Steps were also put in place to protect foreigners entering and living in the country with the establishment of a 'Counter-Xenophobia' Unit in the Department of Home Affairs (Lefko-Everett, 2008). Given this change in government opinion and legislation, it was expected that there would be a similar trend to reflect in South African society and for xenophobic attacks, rife in the transition period of South Africa, to have been dissolved.

In the context of recent attacks that occurred against mostly African foreign nationals (migrants) within South Africa, this study seeks to explore the attitudes toward migrants and immigration among a sample of students at the University of the Western Cape. More specifically, the study looked at general attitudes of students toward migrants and immigration as well as looked at the contact that students have with migrants from other African countries and how contact could relate to attitudes toward migrants.

1.2 Aims and objectives of the study

Aim: The aim of the study is to determine the attitudes toward African migrants and immigration among a sample of students at the University of the Western Cape.

The objectives of the study are the following:

- To establish students' attitudes toward African migrants.

- To determine students' attitudes toward immigration in South Africa.

- To find out what contact students have with African Migrants.

1.3   Significance of the study

Hostilities have grown and the threat of continuing violence persists with regards to migrants entering into South Africa. Over the years, little has helped in calming or changing these attitudes and perhaps there is little that can be done. The legacy of apartheid and the constant struggle of people to fight poverty leaves little hope that change will come in the older generations. Presumably, hope should be in the country's youth. Given that university students are in a position to receive more positive as well as negative information about other countries and people and in turn to make more objective judgments, the focus should be on them. It should be acknowledged that these students are coming from the very communities that have been shown in previous research (see Hill and Lefko-Everett, 2008) to have persistently negative attitudes toward African migrants. Hence, intervention programs aimed at this level would be very effective. Students going out into the world represent a wave of new attitudes and ideas; they represent the potential for a bigger and more positive change needed in society.

It is with this in mind that the proposed study seeks to investigate the perceptions and attitudes of students' towards migrants and immigration. The knowledge gained may inform program and policy makers and encourage institutions and other organizations to engage with the need to fight xenophobic attitudes at this level. On another level, little data is available on students' attitudes towards migrants and immigration and so the proposed study hopes to fill this gap in our knowledge.

LITERATURE REVIEW

To follow is a discussion of the definition of xenophobia, as well as situating the study of xenophobia within the South African context. Following this is a discussion of xenophobia within a global context. Although the focus of this study is the occurrence of xenophobic attitudes within the South African context, it is important to note that xenophobia is a global phenomenon and not specific to South Africa.

2.1 Defining Xenophobia

"Xenophobia is defined as a negative attitude towards, or fear of, individuals or groups of individuals in some sense different (real or imagined) from themselves or the group(s) they belong to" (Hjerm, 2005: 294). Xenophobia has elsewhere been described as resentment not only of people from another country but also a resenting of everything that is foreign i.e. ethnic group, culture, disease or race (Campbell, 2003). Within the South African context, xenophobia has been articulated and operationalized around negative attitudes toward people from other countries based on their non-citizenship and on beliefs that they are a threat to the well being of the country and its people (Crush, 2000; Campbell, 2003; McDonald and Jacobs, 2005).

2.2 Xenophobia: A South African perspective

"The savagery cannot be blamed on a small group of angry and disenfranchised poor people, angry with the government and the ANC, and fed up with the growing number of desperate Zimbabweans in South Africa. We would argue that finger-pointing in this manner diverts attention away from a more fundamental issue: that South Africa has become and remains a deeply xenophobic society. Blessed with one of the most progressive constitutions in the world, accepted enthusiastically into the global community in 1994 and seen globally as an African leader, South Africa has shamed

itself. And it has done so because xenophobia is not the preserve of an alienated few. It is wide spread and pervasive, overt and subtle, permeating all interactions with non-South Africans and affecting the world-view of South Africans" (SAMP, Migration Policy Series, No. 50, 2006).

The most comprehensive and consistent research done to date on the attitudes of South Africans toward migrants and migration policy has been that done by the Southern African Migration Project (SAMP). Nationwide surveys have been conducted since the 1990's, allowing for a longitudinal view of South African's attitudes. The most recent report from SAMP has been the reporting of the survey results for 2006. The general trend found is described as follows:

"South Africans exhibit levels of intolerance and hostility to outsiders unlike virtually anything seen in other parts of the world" (pg. 1).

In trying to create a new South Africa and instil in people national pride and a sense of belonging, South Africa has also created a exclusionary national identity (De La Rey, 1991). The strength of South Africans national identity is well illustrated in the SAMP 2006 survey. More that 80% of the respondents, across racial groups viewed being a South African as an important part of how they view themselves. A strong national identity such as this sets the stage for an; 'us' versus 'them' mentality as illustrated by the inter-group conflict paradigm. Whereby group identification, categorization and comparison, leads to inter-group conflict (De La Rey, 1991).

In terms of attitudes toward immigration, those agreeing that people form other countries should be prohibited from coming into South Africa rose from 16% in 1995 to 37% in 2006. The view that foreigners should be allowed in when jobs are available dropped for

29% in 1995 to 23% in 2006. Other results for example showed that support for the electrification of South Africa's borders rose from 66% in 1999 to 76% in 2006. Similarly, in terms of forcing foreigners to carry identification documents at all times, the figures stayed at 72% from 1999 to 2006. Clearly, South Africans attitudes towards letting foreigners in and keeping them out have risen, with a desire to keep people out at all costs.

Nearly 50% of respondents showed support for the deportation of foreigners including those living legally in South Africa. Similarly, 74% supported a policy of deporting those who do not contribute economically to South Africa. Overwhelmingly, 84% of South Africans support the deportation of those foreigners who have committed serious criminal offences. Only one third are in support of giving foreigners an opportunity to legalize their status in the country. What this shows is that the generally negative attitudes held are accompanied by support for harsh and punitive policy measures against immigrants. Attitudes show little change towards to positive since 1999.

Another area of inquiry by SAMP was attitudes towards what rights foreigners have while in South Africa for example, the right to legal or police protection, the right to health care etc. An influential factor in South Africans attitudes was the legal status of the foreign national (foreigner) i.e. those seen as 'illegal' where afforded less rights that those who where 'legal', although even 'legal' foreigners where still afforded less rights that citizens. Sixty seven percent of South Africans felt that "illegal immigrants" should never have the right to legal protection versus only 12% who felt that should. Similarly, 65% of South Africans felt that "illegal immigrants" shouldn't have the right to police protection, with less support for this for visitors and refugees. Clearly, very few supported affording

foreigners, regardless of their legal status, the basic human rights, which goes contrary to the progressive and liberal South African Constitution.

The more generic attitude and those most publicized are those pertaining to ideas that migrants steel jobs, are a criminal threat and are carriers of disease. In 1999, 45% of South Africans saw migrants from neighbouring countries as a criminal threat, 56% felt that they were a threat to jobs and the economy with a further 24% believing that they bring disease. In 2006, the association between foreigners and crime intensified reaching 67%, as did the idea that they bring disease, to 49%. Few South Africans reported knowing anyone who had lost a job to a foreigner although this did not improve South Africans' beliefs that foreigners were a threat to job security. The only positive change recorded in terms of economics was a rise in the support that foreigners bring much-needed shills to the country, from 58% in 1999 to 64% in 2006.

As mentioned above with regards to knowing people who have lost their jobs to foreigners and in line with this, SAMP looked into how much contact South Africans have with foreign nationals. The various surveys showed little to no contact across the board leading the author to suggest that South Africans form their attitudes mainly on hearsay, media and other representations: " Perception of, and attitudes toward foreigners were as a result of second-hand (mis)information" (Pg. 31). This is of particular relevance to the proposed study in terms of future intervention and education programs aimed at alleviating xenophobia and its consequences.

On a xenophobic index, subtle differences in the levels of xenophobia emerged between different groups. Those who identified themselves as 'upper class' and 'lower class' respectively, showed the highest levels on the xenophobic index. Similar results where found by O'Connell (2005), where richer and more egalitarian countries as well as poorer

and less egalitarian countries showed the least favour to migrants. It was also found that xenophobic attitudes appear to the more prevalent amongst those with lower levels of education. This in turn gives fuel to the need for education programs and broad based initiatives aimed at the reduction of xenophobic attitudes and prejudices at all levels in South African society.

Of particular importance given the violent attacks witnessed in South Africa in 2008 are the results reported by South Africans on the likelihood that they would take action against foreigners. Up to 44% of South Africans reported that they would report foreigners to the police (SAMP, 2006). A further 32% said that they would report foreigners to their employers, with 36% saying that they would report foreigners to local community associations. 16% said that they'd get people together to force foreigners to leave with a further 9% saying that they would use violence against foreigners. The relevance of this is those attitudes are indeed leading to action (SAMP, 2006). Although only a few reported that they would use violence against foreigners, given the right situation it seems that many more are inclined to violence.

It is quite clear from this that some South Africans do not want foreign nationals in their country and are prepared to take action against them (Hill & Lefko-Everett, 2008). The continuing threat that these attitudes pose, in terms of the probability of action, are a huge concern for South Africa. Although a comprehensive study in terms of a representative South African sample, one would suggest that work should also focus on primary school children as well as high school children and young adults in the university context. In terms of younger children and high school children, the impact of parent's attitudes, peer attitudes and media needs to be assessed and programs put in place to ward-off the development of such negative attitudes toward foreigners (Hjerm, 2005).

2.3 Xenophobia: A worldwide perspective

Although the focus of the proposed study is within the South African context, it must not be assumed that xenophobic and anti-immigrant attitudes are a phenomena specific to South African. The opposite is in fact true and research worldwide has shown that xenophobia is a concern all around the world.

In a study of 12 European societies (Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal and the United Kingdom) from 1988 to 2000, Semyonov and Raijman (2006), show how anti-foreigner sentiments have steadily risen from 1988 to 2000. The results showed a steep climb in anti-foreigner sentiments in the period between 1988 and 1994, with the levels levelling off post 1994. Although not at high levels, anti-foreigner sentiments exist and have existed for long periods of time in these societies. The research looked at sizes of foreigner populations, economic condition, phase of the immigration cycle and how these impact anti-foreigner sentiments over time (Semyonov & Raijman, 2006, *see also* Morris, 1998). Negative attitudes toward foreigners were shown to be more pronounced among socio-economically vulnerable and weak populations (i.e. those of lower education levels and the unemployed) and among politically conservative populations (i.e. supporters or right-wing ideologies). Similarly, in societies where they are at the beginning of the immigration cycle (i.e. immigration to the country is in its early years), the perceived threat was higher and so sentiments where more negative (Semyonov & Raijman, 2006).

Another important factor highlighted in the results was the impact of the political-ideological climate of the country and how this influenced attitudes. More conservative ideologies lend themselves to more negative attitudes (Semyonov & Raijman, 2006). This point is also important in looking at the South African context in that the political climate of the receiving country is important. In South Africa for example, migration has long

been seen as threatening, during and after apartheid, with political leaders themselves voicing their concerns of threat, thus setting a stage for the potential of negative attitude development.

Similar results have been shown in other research (see; Hjerm, 1998; Campbell, 2003; O'Connell, 2005; Hjerm, 2005 and Hill & Lefko-Everett, 2008) where attitudes toward immigrants have, on a continuum, stayed closer to the negative end rather than the positive end. Similarly, attitudes around economic vulnerability, the spread of disease, concern over resources, concerns around culture and integration as well as the economic well-being of the host country, are seen consistently across countries, although with varying degrees of importance being emphasized. For example, consideration of migration vs. immigration and how perceptions of these impact attitudes is also noteworthy i.e. Campbell (2003), showed that for Botswana citizens, short term and specific-term stays in the country where preferred over the permanent stay of foreigners.

Again, it's not an exclusively South African Phenomenon and not all South Africans share the same sentiments. South Africa however, has been labelled as one of the most hostile societies in terms of anti-foreigner sentiments (Hill and Lefko-Everett, 2008).

2.4 Students and youths' attitudes to migrants and immigration

Little research has focused on students specifically, although some studies have looked at youth's perceptions and attitudes to migration and immigration. A study conducted in Greece looked specifically at student's attitudes towards their immigrant classmates (Dimakos & Tasiopoulou, 2003). The results showed that students showed mostly negative attitudes with little variance according to gender. Results did show however a relationship between age and attitudes where negative attitudes decreased with age (Dimakos & Tasiopoulou, 2003). Similar results to the South African results were found in terms of a general concern that immigrants raise crime levels, take the jobs of locals

resulting in unemployment and are seen as a health risk, although this is not a comparison between the same groups (Hill and Lefko- Everett, 2008). Although the author didn't suggest any form of intervention or education program, the results show that negative attitudes can occur at all levels and are influenced by the attitudes of the general public, families, media and peers and that given the exposure, students are a positive focal point for change.

Similarly, studies conducted in Germany (Watts, 1996) and Sweden (Hjerm, 2005) on adolescents and youths suggest the existence of anti-foreigner sentiments (xenophobia) among these groups (see also: Voci & Hewstone, 2003; Stephan et al., 1999;Torney-Pruta et al., 2001). Looking at the results of the Southern African Migration Project for South Africa in 2006, according to age groups (16 to 24 years of age), there is little variation across responses suggesting that negative attitudes exist across age groups for that particular sample. This is of particular interests as the focus on youths and students is of relevance in informing intervention programs.

Given that Universities are becoming more global in terms of student exchange, co-publication with foreign universities etc, Universities are excellent places for people to learn and practice the tolerance that needs to be carried out into society. Students leaving University to join the work force are a wave of potential change needed in society. This is not to say that intervention and education programs are not needed at other levels, on the contrary, they are, what is being conveyed is that students are able to act as ambassadors of the values a society wishes to convey. Students live with families, in communities and have the potential to effect the much-needed change in these contexts.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

Within the field of Social Psychology, one of the most theorised and researched areas has been that of the so-called "contact hypothesis". Pettigrew and Tropp (2006), for example performed a meta-analysis of over 500 studies on contact. This just gives one an idea of the vast amount of research that has been done on this topic. In the contact hypothesis, Gordon Allport (1954) argued that prejudice between groups could be reduced by personal contact between group members but only if certain conditions where met in the contact situation. Allport stipulated four of such conditions, which he believed, had to be met in order for inter-group contact to be successful in reducing prejudice. Contact refers to a condition where people are in a state of touching, meeting or communication with each other (The South African Pocket Oxford Dictionary, Oxford University Press, 1988: pp. 159), put simply, when people are in interaction with each other. The conditions where as follows: the groups to be in contact should have equal status within the contact situation, the groups should have shared goals, they should co-operate on some or multiple tasks and lastly that the relevant authorities and institutions should support the contact between the two groups (Allport, 1954). Varied results have been published since Allport's initial formulation of the theory but for the most part, the hypothesis has been supported (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

The meta-analysis by Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) found that inter-group contact typically reduces inter-group prejudice. Multiple tests also showed that their findings did not appear to be as a result of either participant's selection or publication biases (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). The analysis also showed that contact effects typically generalize to the entire out-group, this means that contact with one person of a group can change a persons attitudes toward that group as a whole (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Although studies have centred on interracial contact, the researchers suggest that these results indicate that

contact can be extended to other groups, in the case of the proposed study, to groups of citizens. Although the study showed Allport's original conditions for contact as non-essential, the research does show that these conditions lead to an even greater reduction in prejudice (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

It is from this theoretical framework that the proposed study seeks to examine students' attitudes toward migrants and immigration, and how these attitudes relate to levels of contact with African migrants. According to this theory, it is expected that higher levels of contact will correlate with more positive attitudes and lower levels of contact with more negative attitudes.

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<center>**CHAPTER THREE**</center>

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The research design was a cross-sectional sample survey looking at students' attitudes toward migrants and immigration at the University of the Western Cape. The survey will allowed for the collection of the data needed to address the questions posed by the research project i.e. allow one to collect original data for describing this samples attitudes toward African migrants and immigration as well as provide information on the levels of contact this sample has with African migrants. Although surveys do not allow for great depth, they are an adequate and reliable way of collecting data from large samples, which would otherwise be difficult to collect (Babbie & Mouton, 2004).

3.2 Participants and sampling

The participants of the study were 183 undergraduate psychology students at the University of the Western Cape. Student's ages ranged between the ages of 17 years and 38 years of age with a mean age of 20 years. Both male and female students were included in the study.

This convenience sample was selected by using non-probability sampling, namely, convenience sampling. This means that the data has the limitation of being unrepresentative of the population and so the results cannot be generalized.

3.3 Data Collection

Data was collected by way of a questionnaire developed for use in this research project. The questionnaire comprised 27 questions related to attitudes towards migrants and immigration as well as a section on contact with migrants. Contact was operationalised in terms of level of contact. The level of contact has to do with the relationship type so for

example, having a family member whom is an African migrant is seen as a 'higher' level of contact than having a friend who knows African migrants.

Questions were based on questionnaires in the SAMP projects, namely from the National Immigration Policy Survey (Hill and Lefko-Everett, 2008). Although no reliability or validity considerations have been published as yet, the survey has been used since 1999 within South Africa as well as in other countries. The consistency of results over the years suggests it to be a reliable survey but reliability propositions do need to be systematically tested.

The question response format was predefined, with the format being set up in such a way that scores would reflect either more negative or more positive attitudes. The limitation of this format is that responses are limited in scope and depth; the strength however, being that it allowed for comparison between individuals or groups as they are fixed responses and no interpretation as such is needed (McDonald, 2000). The questionnaire was given to all students, whether South African or not to reduce social desirability bias. Those questionnaires completed by foreign students were excluded from the results and analysis.

The questionnaire was piloted on a convenience sample of 8 students. Students where asked to participate and those willing were told about the study and what was expected of them. The students were given time to complete the questionnaire followed by a discussion session regarding the clarity and understandability of the questions. The students didn't report any problems in completing the questionnaire and said that the questions were clear and easy to understand. In light of this, the questionnaire was taken to be acceptable for use in the above mentioned research.

3.4 Procedures

Permission was sought to conduct the study from the Senate Higher Degrees of the Western Cape. Next, permission was sought from the Psychology Department as well as from lecturers, to allow the researcher access to students. Lecturers were asked to allow the researcher to administer the survey before their lecture or before the end of their lecture. The reason for this was for ease of administration i.e. students were seated and ready to write, not imposing on them unnecessarily. Students were informed about the study and then invited to participate. Those who indicated willing to participate were then given the survey to complete as well as consent forms to read and fill out. The survey took about 30 minutes to complete, with most students completing in 15 minutes. The survey was then be collected by the researcher and kept in a safe place for data capturing.

3.5 Data Analysis

The data of the study was analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics were used to show the distribution of the attitudes toward migrants and immigration as well as degree of contact with migrants.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

All students were informed that their participation in the research study was voluntary. They were also informed about the background of the study, and that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Given the nature of the research i.e. exploration of attitudes, information about the study was kept minimal to avoid biasing the participants or portraying desired attitudes. Social desirability is a huge problem in research so avoiding information that may convey attitudes or beliefs was important. Given that xenophobia was an issue that has been in the media and singled out as a problem, the research procedure tried to limit social desirability bias to the greatest extent. Students

were given consent forms and which indicated that the information they provided would be confidential and anonymous.

While no harm was anticipated as a result of participation in the study, as a precautionary measure, students were informed that should they feel a need to seek counseling; a counselor was available at Student Support Services of the University.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

The study drew a sample of 183 first year students from a psychology I class, at the University of the Western Cape. Of the 183 students sampled 177 of them were South African Citizens and permanent residents. The ratio of citizens to permanent residents was 170:7. In the total sample 63 students identified themselves as "black", 107 as "coloured", 3 as "Indian", 8 as "white" and 2 as "other".

Table 1: Race

Table 2: Gender
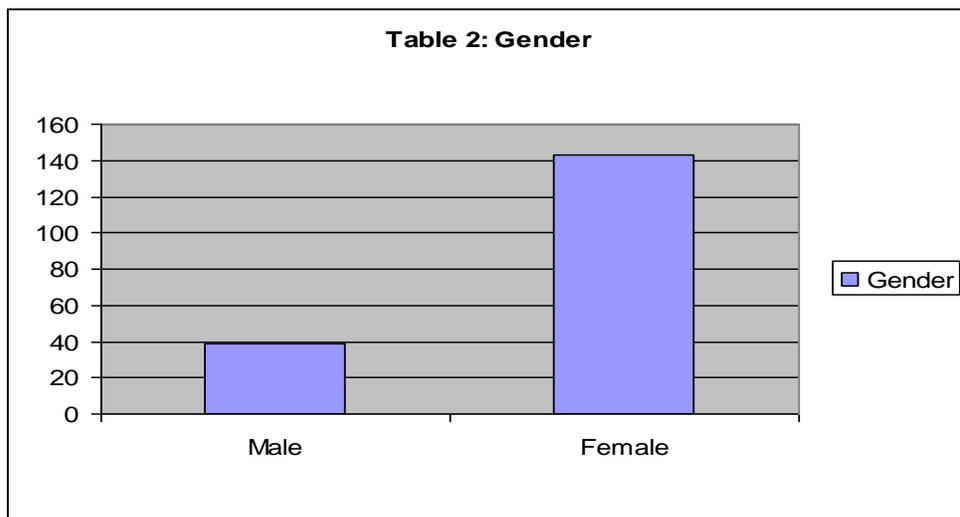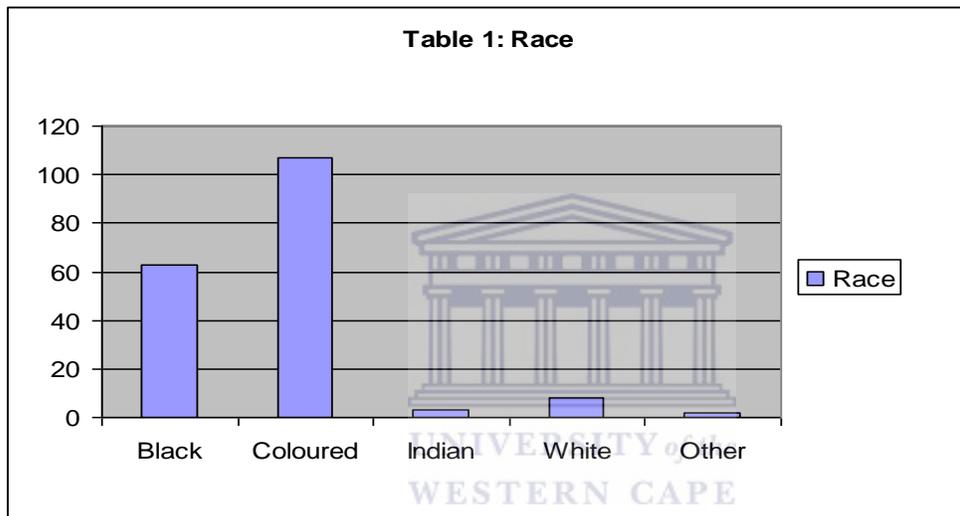
4.1. "Being a South African" – National Identity

The first five questions of the survey looked at national identity and centered around what theses students felt was important to being a south African. For the question on how important being born in South Africa is to being a South African, 61% said it's vary important, 31% were neutral and 7% said that it was not important at all. When asked how important speaking an African language is to being a South African, 49% said it is very important, 37% were neutral, and 14% did not think it was important at all. When asked how important it is to support non-racism to being a South African, the overwhelming majority 81% said it is very important, 15 % were neutral and a small 3% said it isn't important at all. When asked about the importance of supporting the South African constitution, 76% felt it is very important, 19 % were neutral and 4 % said it is not at all important. The last of the questions pertaining to national identity looked at whether students felt contributing to the South African economy was important. The majority 80% felt that this is very important, 15% were neutral and 4% who didn't think it was important al all.

Table 3: National identity
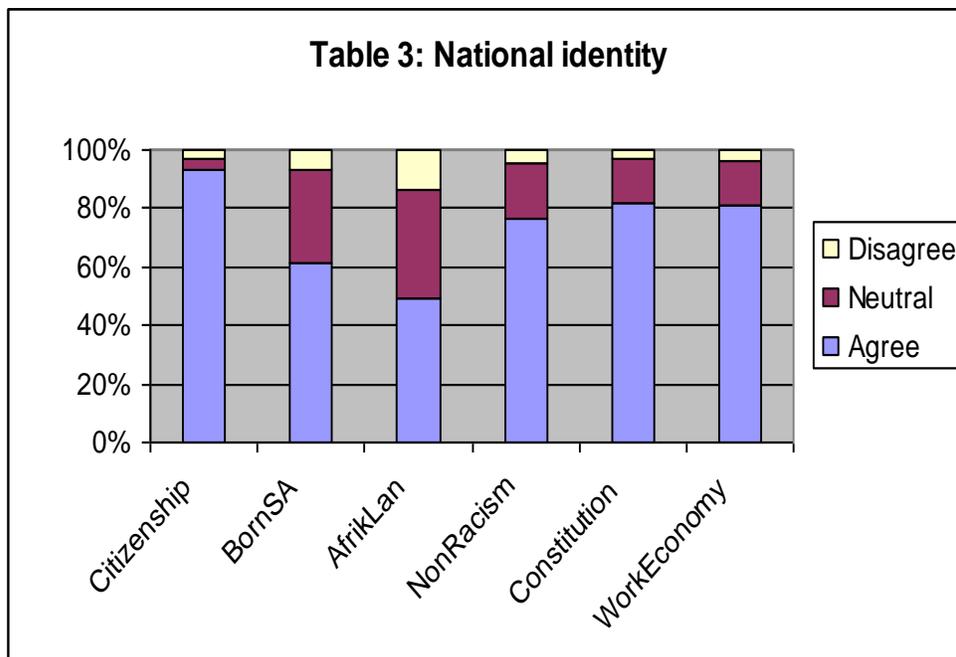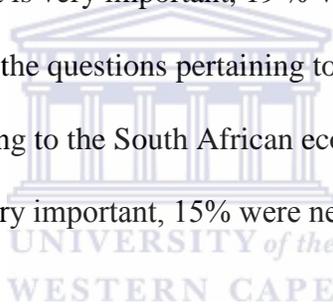
4.2. Attitudes toward migrants and immigration

Attitudes toward immigration and migrants were tapped using 11 questions. The first of these questions looked at whether participants thought African migrants create jobs in South Africa? Fourteen percent said that African Migrants create jobs, 48% were neutral and 38% disagreed that African Migrants create jobs in South Africa. The next question looked at whether they felt African Migrants commit crimes in South Africa. Here 22% agreed that African Migrants commit crimes, with 51% as unsure and 27% disagreeing with the statement. In terms of social welfare, 44% believe that African Migrants are using South Africa's welfare, 45% were neutral and 11% saying they disagree with this. Thirty-two percent of the respondents believe that African Migrants bring disease, 45% where unsure and 23% disagreed that African Migrants bring disease.

A large proportion, 62%, disagreed that SA should let anyone who wants to enter into South Africa. Twenty one percent were unsure about this with 17% saying that South Africa should let in anyone who wants to enter. Similar to this, 69% of respondent felt that South Africa should strictly limit the number of people entering the country, with 23% being neutral on the matter and 8% disagreeing with the strict limits. When asked whether South Africa lets too many migrants into South Africa, 72% agreed, with 21% being neutral and 7% disagreeing with this statement. Fifty-three percent of the respondents felt that South Africa should turn on the electric fence surrounding the border, with 22% being neutral and 25% not believing this was necessary. In terms of whether African Migrants should be forced to carry Identity Documents at all times, 30% felt they should, 40% were unsure and the remaining 30% didn't think that this should be necessary. Twenty-three percent felt that SA should make it easier for African Migrants to work here while 43% were neutral on the matter and 34% felt that South Africa shouldn't make it easier for African Migrants to work in South Africa. Lastly, when

asked whether they thought that all African Migrants should be deported, 63% said they shouldn't be, 22% were neutral and 13% said that they should be deported.

Table 4: Attitues toward African Migrants

Table 5: Attitudes toward African Migrants
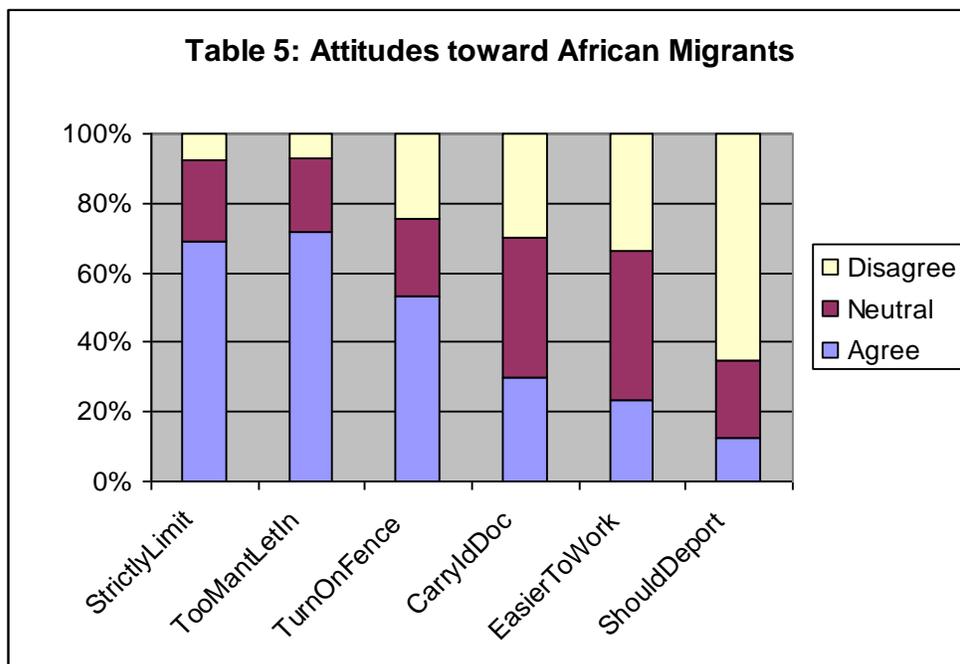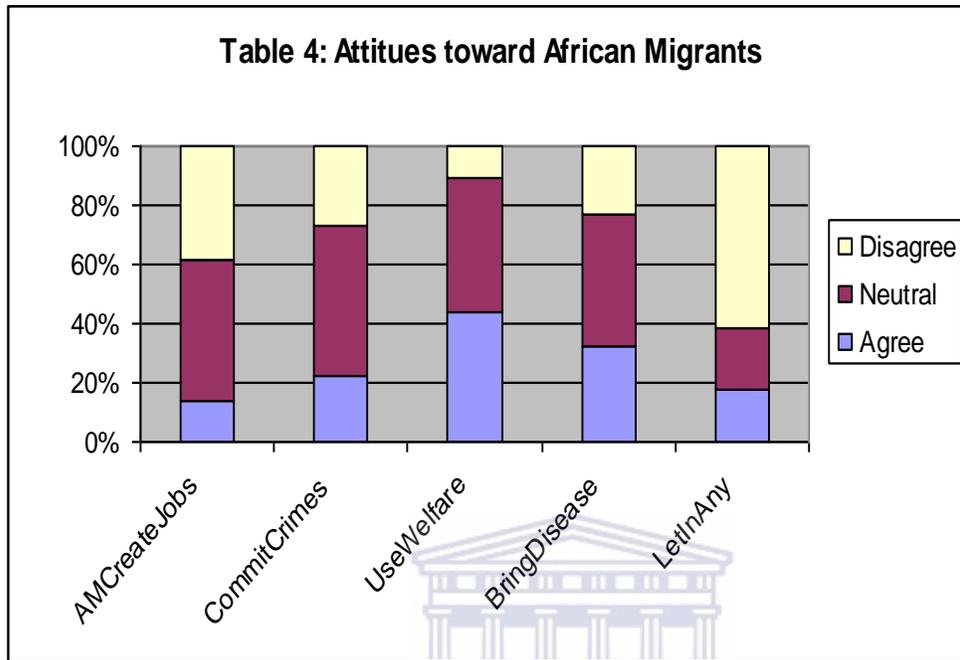
4.3 Attitudes around migrants' rights

In terms of freedom of speech, only15% of respondents felt that African Migrants should not be granted the right to freedom o speech, 32% were neutral on the matter and 53% felt that African Migrants should be granted the right to freedom of speech. Fifty Four percent of these students felt African Migrants should not be granted the right to vote, with 23% saying that they should be granted this right. When it came to being given the right to legal protection, 57% believed they should be accorded this right, 32% were neutral and11% did not feel they should be accorded this right. The distribution of attitudes was similar when asked whether African Migrants should have the right to police protection with the majority 67% saying they should be given this right, 27 were neutral and only 6% saying they shouldn't have this right. Finally, 49% felt that African Migrants should have the right to social services, 32% were neutral on this and 19% felt that they should not be given the right to social services.

Table 6: Rights of African Migrants
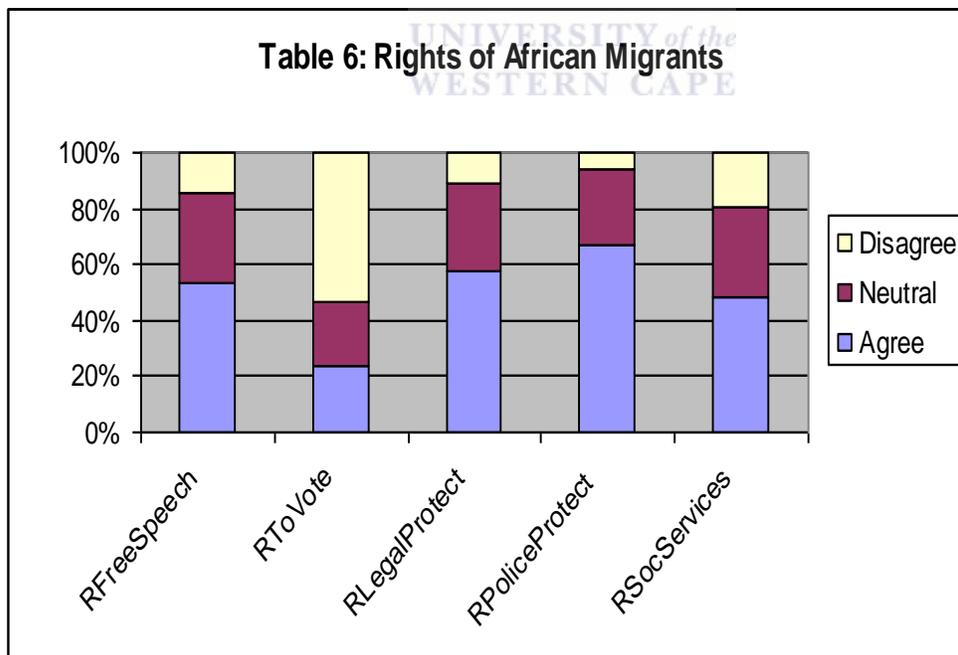
4.4 Contact with African Migrants

The last seven questions of the survey looked at whether respondents had contact with African migrants and what the nature of the contact was i.e. acquaintance, friend-of-a-friend, friend or family member. Thirty-four percent of the respondent reported having regular contacts with African migrants, 36% were unsure and 30% said they didn't have regular contact with African migrants. Sixty-six percent reported having African migrants in their communities, 18% were unsure and 15% said that there weren't African migrants in their communities. Sixty-three percent reported knowing African migrants, 15% were unsure with 22% saying that they don't know African migrants. Similarly, 67% reported having friend who knew African migrants with 17% saying that their friends didn't know African migrants. Fifty-nine percent of the respondents said they had friends who are friends with African migrants and 21% who said their friends didn't have African migrant friends. Thirty-nine percent reported having African migrant friends with 43% saying they don't have African migrant friends. Lastly, when asked if any family members were African migrants, 7% said they had migrant family members, 10% were unsure and 83% reported not having African migrant family members.

Tale 7: Contact with African Migrants
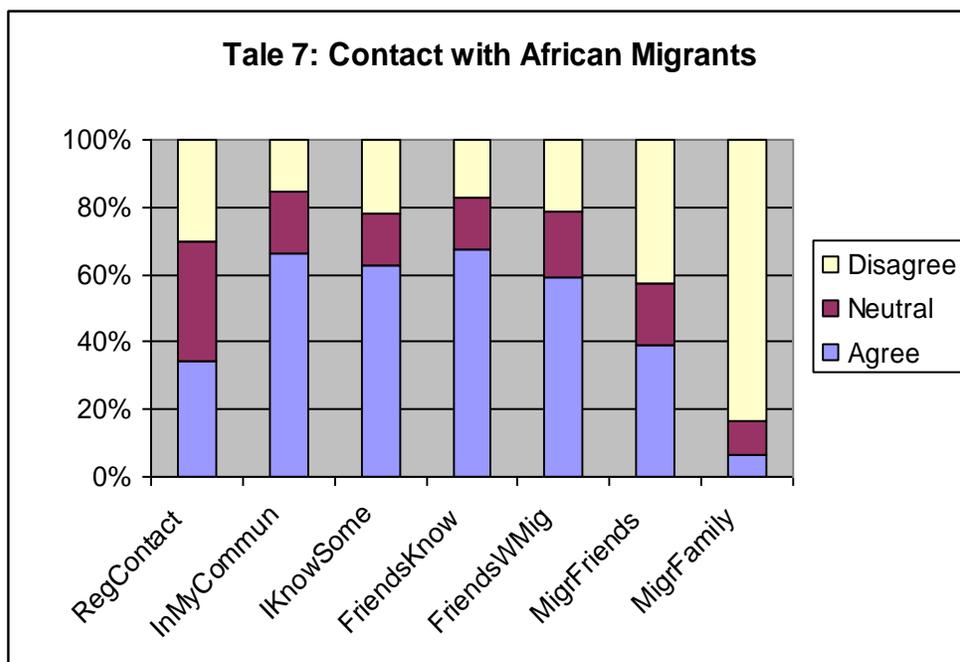
CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

For discussion purposes the sample of responses from the projects sample are compared to those obtained by the Southern African Migration Project (SAMP) sample. There is strong recognition that the samples vary in terms of many demographic variables as well as sample size, but a number of the questions do tap similar constructs and so provide some basis for comparison. These comparisons are tentative and are used in more illustrative terms rather than saying anything concrete about either sample.

From the results it is clear to see that among the students there is a strong sense of what is important to being a South African. Taking the salient themes mentioned in the SAMP report on xenophobia in south Africa, a consistent proportion of around 50 % of participants said that being born in South Africa, speaking an African language, supporting non-racism, supporting the South African constitution and contributing to the south African economy are all important to being a south African. The importance of national identity and the salience of national identity is of great importance in the study of intergroup conflict in that it acts the marker of 'difference' between groups and the way members of different groups position themselves against each other (Allport, 1954).

An interesting point on the results of national identity has to do with the racial make-up of the sample and the question about the importance of speaking and African language. More generally, when one speaks of an African language people do not think of English and Afrikaans as being included in this. The sample was predominantly "coloured", who are mostly Afrikaans and English speaking. Hence, the lower frequency of reporting the importance speaking an African language could in part be due to this. Despite this there

was still a clear acceptance among the students as to what is important to being a South African along the dimensions given.

Having established their sense of national identity and in light of this, attitudes toward migrants and immigration are discussed next. Although the questions were given in one section, the questions on attitudes are further divided into three groups: attitudes toward migrants, attitudes toward immigration and lastly attitudes toward migrant rights within South Africa.

When looking at immigration, attitudes were exclusionary. As a whole, participants felt that not just anyone should enter, they felt that South Africa should strictly limit the number of people allowed into the country and that too many migrants were being let into the country. In light of what was discussed above regarding group salience, these results are not surprising. If we look back to what was found in the SAMP survey, similar trends emerged. For the SAMP sample, only 2% said that SA should let in anyone who wants to enter vs. 17% in the University of the Western Cape (UWC) sample. In terms of strictly limiting numbers of migrants 38% of the SAMP sample believed these limits should be in place with 69% of the UWC sample feeling the same. Although to varying degrees depending of what is asked both samples exhibit similar trends of exclusionary attitudes.

On other questions such as whether South Africa's border fence should be electrified/ turned on, 76% of the SAMP sample though it should be with 52% of the UWC sample feeling the same. In the SAMP sample, 76% said that migrants should be forced to carry identity documents while only 30% of the UWC sample was in support of this. When asked about deportation of migrants, only 13% of the UWC sample supported deportation while 47% of the SAMP sample supported this.

So what this shows is that, although to varying degrees, there are some similarities in people's attitudes toward immigration. Both samples exhibited exclusionary attitudes assuming different points of importance. In terms of actually limiting migrants, the UWC sample was more conservative while in terms of setting physical boundaries, carrying identification and supporting deportation, this sample showed more favourable attitudes.

When looking at attitudes directed more specifically at migrants, the research used both the SAMP survey as a guide but also dominant discourses surrounding migrants in the media. These included discourses around job loss and job creation, crime, use of welfare and resources as well as that of bring disease.

As the results indicate, large proportions of the sample where neutral on the dimensions under question. This may have been due to lack of knowledge around these issues or the way the questions were asked although this didn't come up during the piloting of the survey. In terms of job creating, very few of the sample felt that migrants create jobs in South Africa. Although not as directly comparable as other questions, the SAMP sample was asked whether migrants took locals' jobs with 62% believing this was so. What is particularly important about this is that one of the dominant discourses around why the xenophobic attacks flared in 2008 was around this very issue, the issue of jobs. At the time locals were negotiating increases and declining dismal wages with employers then turning to very desperate migrants who would not dispute any wage. Locals were left angry, without increases and jobless.

Another prominent discourse was around the committing of crimes. Only 22% of the UWC sample believed African Migrants committed crimes while in the SAMP sample 67% of respondents felt this way. Where the use of welfare/ resources and bringing of

disease were concerned both the SAMP and UWC samples exhibited similar attitudes. Both felt migrants use resources and bring disease to South Africa.

Attitudes toward migrants in terms of the rights that participants felt should be afforded to migrants were on average more positive. Barring the right of migrants to vote which the majority of the sample did not thing they should have the right too, more than 50% of the sample believed migrants should have the right to free speech, legal protection as well as police protection. When we compare this to the SAMP sample the trend is similar with 33% agreeing that migrants should have the right to legal protection as well as 48% saying they should have the right to police protection. When comparing the UWC and SAMP samples in terms of migrants' right to social services and resources, those agreeing they should be accorded this right was around 49% for both samples.

Again the results of the UWC sample are close to those found in the South African representative sample of the SAMP survey. It is emphasised again that these comparisons are made cautiously and open to correction with the goal only of illustrating how this sample may compare to other samples.

It seems that generally students have some contact with African migrants be it through direct i.e. being friends with or knowing an African migrant or indirect contact i.e. having friends who know or who are friends with African migrants. Most contact it seems is closer to the indirect end of the spectrum rather than direct contact. By this it is meant that the highest frequencies of contact reported are those of knowing and African migrant, having African migrants in their community or either having friends who know or are friends with African migrants.

Going back to the contact hypothesis, researchers having turned away from the merely seeking of ideal situations for contact have started looking at the role of friendships in reducing intergroup conflict/ prejudice. So friendship is said to give a different quality of contact that aids in not only reducing prejudice but also in generalising positive attitudes from one out-group member to the rest of the out-group. The sample here had low levels of cross group friendships as well as contact in general and could in part explain the negative attitudes exhibited by the students toward African migrants.

A more comprehensive and quantitatively based research project would be needed to show empirically whether such a relationship exists between friendships and attitudes toward African migrants. From the literature however this explanation is a plausible as any other until other explanations are offered. Having expected the university setting in that is a place where every make and creed meet without boundaries that students would exhibit far more positive attitudes, one cannot ignore the role of the media as well as the fact that contact is often superficial and doesn't allow for stereotypes and negative views to be disproved. In addition, having used only first year students, relatively new to the campus, means that their time for contact has been limited.

In conclusion, it seems that the attitudes expressed by these students follow similar trends to those shared by other South Africans within the larger population. Attitudes where negative to varying degrees and show that there is defiantly potential for the improvement of attitudes toward African migrants. The university presents itself as a safe platform for the exploration of diversity which should be capitalised on if South Africa wants to effectively combat prejudice in all its forms.

CHAPTER SIX

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Limitations

As is inherent to happen, no research endeavour is ever perfect or without room for improvement, current company included. Although limitations often link to the weaknesses of a study they also pave the way for future researchers to learn from these and to produce work in the future that is stronger and sounder as a result. The discussion to follow is on the limitations of the study, looking broadly at limitations pertaining to the sample and sampling as well as to methodological issues.

In terms of the sample the following were problematic: due to time constraints, the sample was neither randomly sampled nor representative of either the University population or the South African population. Within the sample all racial groups, except for the 'coloured' group were underrepresented. This was further compounded by the fact that the sample was drawn from one department, namely the psychology department and so there is a possibility of having sampled only one 'type' of opinion as a result. The sample was also small in comparison to other opinion/ attitude samples and so adds to the unrepresentativeness of the sample as well as its inability to be generalised.

Another important aspect of the sampling was the age of the participants. Although the range was from 17 years to 38 years, participants at the higher end of this range were a very small minority. On average students were 19 to 20 years of age. Acknowledging that the university presents students with on of the first opportunities to really 'mix' with people of other racial groups as well as different nationalities, the use of first year students and looking at intergroup contact is limited. By this it is meant that they have not been at the university long enough to have had prolonged contact with other groups. This

could be a reason why the results show limited contact of students with African Migrants although the other possibility being that these students avoid this contact. Whichever the case, it comes out as a possible limitation.

Another aspect in terms of the limited age range also pertains to maturity of students and knowledge of current affairs. Being a young sample, exposure to issues surrounding xenophobia, immigration and the possibility of discussing these issues may have been limited. As such many students may have been unsure about their own opinions or even unfamiliar with the subject matter.

Linking to the above mentioned limitations, the results showed that many participants chose the 'neutral' option in answering. There are many possible explanations for this. In its simplest, students maybe didn't have an opinion as thus chose to remain neutral. There is also the possibility that they didn't understand what was being asked and so didn't shed an opinion. The other which is also a methodological as well as individual issue is that of social desirability. The use of self-report measures has been constantly under scrutiny for self report bias in the form of social desirability. Although the research tried to cater for this by allowing all students to fill out the survey and then exclude non-South Africans responses in the analysis, given the sensitive nature of the research social desirability was inevitable.

In terms of the survey itself, questions were broad and limited in number. Again, this was in part due to time constraints. The time constraint was both I terms of time needed to complete the data collection but also the time needed for the students to complete the questionnaire. Giving students a very long questionnaire would have run the risk of them losing interest and increasing the possibility of the use of response sets to get through all

the questions. This would have possibly produced invalid and unreliable results which thus would have given a more inaccurate picture of student's attitudes. In terms of the broadness of questions again this links back to the time factor. If there was more time available, more questions would allow for more specific questions yielding a fuller picture of attitudes.

In terms of the scale used only three responses where provided. This was limiting in that it basically allowed for a yes. No or 'don't know' in terms of response. This may have been perceived as limiting and perhaps having used a 5-point likert scale (Strongly agree, agree, neutral/ don't know, disagree and strongly disagree) would have allowing for meeker answers such as 'agree' to be chosen instead of just having agree to chose from as an extreme. The scale also limited the analysis in that it didn't allow for statistical analysis. If a 5-point likert scale had been used the researcher would have been able to draw up correlations which may have been more descriptive and telling of the relationship between contact and attitudes as well as of the relationship between national identity and attitudes toward migrants and immigration.

Lastly, an alternative possibility for this research topic in terms of methodology could have been qualitative techniques but more specifically focus groups. A limitation of the survey method is that it may be superficial and does not allow for further probing or clarification. The reason focus groups could be more beneficial in terms of this topic is in that immigration does not affect people in isolation but rather affects people as a nation. Focus groups would allow for discussion around the topic while at the same time allow for the expression of attitudes as well as for the justifications of such attitudes. Gathering more information around why people hold the views they do would enrich our

understandings about attitudes and possible prevent incidences such as those of the xenophobic attacks.

6.2 Recommendations

Universities present a unique platform of interaction where people from many different contexts are brought together and co-exist. As such universities present a particularly important arena where the reduction of xenophobic attitudes can take place. It is important for universities to raise awareness about xenophobia. Awareness can centre around why people are coming into the country, what the actual impact is of people coming into the country as well as challenging some of the common held stereotypes about African migrants. Raising awareness and providing people with accurate and truthful information allows them to make choices based on this information rather than the often exaggerated information provided by the media and uninformed locals.

In addition to this universities should encourage activities that promote intergroup contact such as having cultural events and information sessions. This allows students to be exposed to people and cultures different from their own but also allows them to find common ground. These intergroup interactions will allow for the reduction of anxiety often felt in intergroup interactions (Allport, 1952) and thus may encourage more intimate interactions such as friendships.

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APPENDIX A:

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Letter Inviting Students To Participate In A Study Being Conducted At The University Of The Western Cape Around Student's Attitudes Toward African Migrants And Migration

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Researcher: Guia Ritacco Psychology Masters 1
Department: Psychology

Dear Student,

I am undertaking to conduct a study around students' attitudes toward African migrants and immigration policy.

Participation involves completing a questionnaire that should take about 30 minutes. You are not required to put you name on the questionnaire and so responses cannot be identified. You are entitled to remove yourself from the process at any time, should you wish to do so, with no repercussions. You will also have access to the findings once the study is complete.

Your assistance in this regard would be mostly appreciated.

Yours in research
Guia Ritacco (student researcher)

APPENDIX B:

Letter Of Participant Consent

Research topic:

An exploratory study of attitudes toward African migrants and migration among a sample of students at the University of the Western Cape

Please read the following carefully and sign below:

I have been informed what the above-mentioned study is about and accept the invitation to participate. Furthermore, I understand that I am entitled to anonymity and that I may leave the process at any time, without repercussions, should I so wish.

Signature (participant)   **Signature (student researcher)**

_____   _____

INSTRUCTIONS:

Good day and thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. The questions look at your attitudes toward people from other counties as well as practices governing whether these people can come into South Africa.

Please answer all the questions honestly and to completion.

Select the one of the choices provided that best describes your attitude to that particular topic by placing a cross "X" over your choice.

The questionnaire should not take you more than 30 minutes. Pease do not write your name on the questionnaire.

A. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Sex:
1 Male   2 Female

Race:
1 Black   2 Coloured   3 Indian   4 White   5. Other

Age:

Citizenship:
1 South African   2 Non-South African   3 South African Permanent resident

B. BEING A SOUTH AFRICAN

1. How important is being born in South Africa to being a South African
1 Important   2 Not Very Important   3 Not At All Important

2. How important is speaking an African Language to being a South African
1 Important   2 Not Very Important   3 Not At All Important

3. How important is it to supporting non-racialism to being a South African
1 Important   2 Not Very Important   3 Not At All Important

4. How important is supporting the Constitution of South Africa to being a South African
1 Important   2 Not Very Important   3 Not At All Important

5. How important is working and contributing to the economy of South Africa to being a South African
1 Important   2 Not Very Important   3 Not At All Important

C. ATTITUDES

6. African migrants create jobs for South Africans

1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

7. African migrants commit most of the crimes in South Africa

1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

8. African migrants use this country's welfare services

1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

9. African migrants bring diseases to this country

1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

10. South Africa should let anyone into South Africa who wants to enter

1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

11. South Africa should strictly limit number of African migrants who can enter South Africa

1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

12. South Africa is letting in too many African migrants into the country

1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

13. South Africa should turn on the electric fence that surrounds part of the border

1 Support   2 Neutral   3 Oppose

14. African migrants should be required to carry identification at all times

1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

15. South Africa should make It easier for African migrants to work here

1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

16. All African migrants should be deported even if they are here legally

1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

17. African migrants should be granted the Right to freedom of speech

1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

18. African migrants living in South Africa should be granted the Right to vote

1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

19. African migrants should be granted the Right to legal protection

1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

20. African migrants should be granted the Right to Police protection and protection of property

1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

21. African migrants should be granted the Right to social services

1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

D. CONTACT WITH AFRICAN MIGRANTS

22. I have regular contact with African migrants

1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

23. There are African migrants living in my community

1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

24. I know African migrants

1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

25. I have friends who know African migrants

1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

26. I have friends who are friends with African migrants

1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

27. I have friends who are African migrants

1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

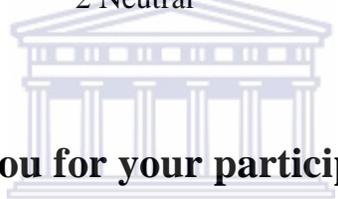**28. I have family members who are African migrants**

1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

Thank you for your participation ☺