



Public Panel Discussion and Seminar

Taming the Demons?

Reflections on Xenophobia, Social Cohesion and Violence in Contemporary South Africa

11 May 2008 began two weeks of violence that left scores dead and tens of thousands displaced. Many of the victims were from beyond South Africa's borders. Others were citizens living amongst fellow South Africans who did not want them there. On the fifth anniversary of the 2008 'xenophobic' attacks, the ACMS is convening a workshop to reflect on the meaning of those attacks for the nature of South African society, where we have come in addressing the roots of communal violence, and the progressive governance of diversity.

9.00-11.00

Scarcity, Inequality and the Governance of Diversity

- **Sandile Memela**, Chief Director of Social Cohesion, Department of Arts and Culture
- **Rashid Seedat**, Head, Gauteng Planning Commission
- **Zwelinzima Vavi**, General Secretary, Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU)
- **Sicel'mpilo Shange-Buthane**, Director, Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa (CORMSA)

11.30-13.00

Forging Communities on the Move: Space, Mobility and Discourses of Diversity

14.00-15.30

Rationing Rights; Obscuring Opportunity?: Reflections on Work, Labour and Livelihoods

10 May 2013, 09.00 - 15.30

Graduate Seminar Room, South West Engineering Bdg., East Campus, Wits University

All are welcome. Please RSVP by 8 May for purposes of catering:
For more information: Lenore Longwe – 011 717 4033 | tamingdemons@migration.org.za

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www.migration.org.za



Taming the Demons?

Comparative Perspectives on Xenophobia and Social Cohesion in Contemporary South Africa

The expansion and diversification of South Africa's urban centres and rural communities have generated new social relationships and patterns of conflict and conviviality. Five years ago, these resulted in two weeks of violence that left scores dead and tens of thousands displaced. Many of the victims were from beyond the country's borders. Others were South Africans whose fellow citizens who did not want them there. But while violence continues, elsewhere people from diverse backgrounds continue to live side by side in relative peace if not yet prosperity. Whether conflictive or convivial, examining these relationships offers important insights into the changing nature of South Africa's on-going socio-economic and political transformations. On the fifth anniversary of the 2008 'xenophobic' attacks, this colloquium is intended to explore comparative perspectives on the roots of violence, the politics of conflict and the governance of diversity.

Hosted by the African Centre for Migration & Society (ACMS) at the University of the Witwatersrand, the event brings together scholars and critics from diverse and comparative perspectives to critically examine the scholarship, practices and discourses—official and popular—around cohesion, consider the ethical, ideological and empirical assumptions informing them and discuss the various(dis)connections of official discourses with vernacular meanings and expressions of community and cohesion amongst the country's diverse residents.

This workshop builds on almost a decade of pioneering ACMS research on issues of migration and xenophobia in South Africa and across Africa.

The **African Centre for Migration & Society (ACMS)** at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg is dedicated to research, post-graduate training, and outreach on all aspects of human mobility. African-based and African-oriented, the ACMS explores immigration, migration and urbanization across the continent. Through its pioneering research and partnerships, it has reshaped scholarship on migration in Southern Africa while supporting the work of government departments, international organizations and South African civil society.

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Papers and Presenters

Introduction and Welcome:

- **Tawana Kupe**, Vice Chancellor Finance, University of the Witwatersrand
- **Loren B Landau**, Director, African Centre for Migration & Society

Panel I: **Scarcity, Inequality and the Governance of Diversity**

- **Sandile Memela**, Chief Director of Social Cohesion, Department of Arts and Culture
- **Rashid Seedat**, Head, Gauteng Planning Commission
- **Zwelenzima Vavi**, General Secretary, Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU)
- **Sicel'mpilo Shange-Buthane**, Director, Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa (CORMSA)

Chair: **Loren B Landau**, ACMS, University of the Witwatersrand

Panel II: **Forging Communities on the Move: Space, Mobility and Discourses of Diversity**

- **Jay Johnson**, University of California, Los Angeles
Integration and Diaspora: An Analysis of Discourses Used by Migrant Civil Society Organizations in South Africa
- **Ingrid Brudvig**, University of Cape Town
Conviviality in Bellville: Excerpts from an Ethnography of Space, Place, Mobility & Being
- **Pedzisayi Leslie Mangezvo**, University of Stellenbosch
Xenophobic exclusion and football: Navigating Space, Rights and Entitlements among Zimbabwean Male Migrants in Stellenbosch
- **Adoné Kitching**, University of Cape Town,
In Heart or in Hand: Exploring the Limits of Legal Citizenship in Understanding Complex Experiences of Belonging

Chair: **Jean Pierre Misago**, ACMS, University of the Witwatersrand

Discussant: **Noor Nieftagodien**, History Workshop and NRF Chair in Local Histories and Present Realities, University of the Witwatersrand

Panel III: Rationing Rights; Obscuring Opportunity? Comparative Reflections on Work, Labour and Livelihoods

- **Marcel Paret**, University of California, Berkeley
A Class Struggle Approach to Immigrant Incorporation: Explaining Divergence in the United States and South Africa

- **Mary Hyland and Ronnie Munck**, Dublin City University
Xenophobia and Trade Union Revitalisation in Ireland: Beyond Inclusion vs. Exclusion

- **Miriam Di Paola**, University of the Witwatersrand
Labour Responses to Xenophobia: The Case of the National Union of Metalworkers in Ekurhuleni

Chair: **Iriann Freemantle**, ACMS, University of the Witwatersrand

Discussant: **Aurelia Segatti**, ACMS, University of the Witwatersrand

Abstracts

Ingrid Brudvig, University of Cape Town

Conviviality in Bellville: Excerpts from an Ethnography of Space, Place, Mobility & Being

This study provides insight into the experiences of mobility and migration in contemporary South Africa, contributing to a field of literature about multiculturalism and urban public space in globalizing cities. It is a study of how the mystique of conviviality configures amongst a diverse migrant and mobile population that frequents Bellville's central business district surrounding the train station – an area located approximately 25km from Cape Town, and a prominent destination for informal trading, shop keeping, and other ad hoc livelihoods. Understanding the emergence of conviviality and the forms it takes in this particular locality lies at the heart of this paper. I argue that conviviality emerges out of shared understandings of Bellville as a zone of mobility, of safety and of livelihood opportunities; and of negotiated meanderings within particular spaces of the Bellville central business district. Bellville's migrant networks become convivial when individuals innovatively sidestep away from tensions broiled in rhetoric of the "outsider" and instead negotiate space – both physical and social – to derive relations that often result in mutual benefits. Ethnographic research in Bellville further demonstrates how the emergence of conviviality in everyday public life represents a critical field for contemplating contemporary notions of belonging.

Miriam Di Paola, University of the Witwatersrand

Labour Responses to Xenophobia: The Case of the National Union of Metalworkers in Ekurhuleni

This paper explores an issue that is hidden from the public eye as well as from most sociological research: xenophobia in the industrial workplace. The lack of research on xenophobia in the workplace is a striking phenomenon potentially explained by assumptions that it does not affect progressive trade unions or organized workers. This paper explores whether and how new forms of xenophobia in South Africa are related to the complex interaction between frustrated economic expectations, the reproduction of an apartheid practice that stigmatizes the other (albeit along new lines), and a strong nationalistic discourse. In particular it explores the widespread belief that foreign co-workers to be responsible for 'driving down wages and conditions'; a belief supported by many managers' who claims foreigners work 'harder for less'. Through research at the Marco Polo bus factory in Ekurhuleni, this paper interrogates these assumptions by looking into actual relationships between South African and foreign workers and unions' role in this regard. It demonstrates that xenophobic sentiments and practices are indeed present in formal workplaces hereby challenging assumptions that xenophobia is found only among unemployed people or informal workers. It also illustrates forms of solidarity among workers of different nationalities. Such solidarity stands in contrast to the union which has yet to develop a coherent strategy to address xenophobia in the workplace. As it now stands, the management of anti-migrant sentiments in the workplace is basically left to those individual shop stewards who choose to engage the workers about such biases.

Mary Hyland and Ronnie Munck, Dublin City University

Xenophobia and Trade Union Revitalisation in Ireland: Beyond Inclusion vs. Exclusion

Trade unions have, historically, espoused a discourse of international solidarity and can thus be expected to be stalwart *opponents of xenophobia*. However, trade unions are *embedded in nation states* and, by and large, represent national labour forces. Trade unions have also, at least historically, been *bastions of masculinism*. Thus, trade unions have shown a clearly differentiated attitude towards migration “on a continuum ranging from exclusion to inclusion” (Kahmann, 2006: 186). European trade unions have increasingly been acknowledging the *importance of migration and integration, along with the social responsibility of the labour movement* in that regard (see Avici and McDonald, 2000), however there is variation in trade union responses to these issues (see Wrench, 2004). A central question in the debates over the role of trade unions in initiating/amplifying racism/xenophobia against migrants and other racialised groups, or alleviating and combating it is *the question of representation*. There is the broader question of ‘organising the unorganised’ in terms of the relation between ‘race’, poor work and trade unions. In particular with unskilled workers, many of them immigrants, there are difficulties in organising and effectively representing these workers. We often note the important *role of local community-based organisations in supporting migrant/ethnic minority workers*, sometimes in conflict with the official trade union organisation. We argue that the binary opposition between inclusion and exclusion does not explain the diversity of trade union responses to xenophobia. Instead, an alternative conceptual framework is advanced underpinned by the recognition that the response of trade unions towards racialised as well as gendered labour is contingent on a wider set of economic, political and ideological circumstances, and the type of strategy trade unions employ to protect the economic interests of their members. In particular we will develop the important role of trade union revitalization debates currently underway to answer the decline in the economic importance of trade union and the necessity to organize new layers of workers and take on a broader community agenda.

Jay Johnson, University of California, Los Angeles

Integration and Diaspora: An Analysis of Discourses Used by Migrant Civil Society Organizations in South Africa

In response to widespread attacks against foreign nationals and South African ethnic minorities in May 2008 that resulted in the establishment of temporary camps for displaced persons, public officials called for the “reintegration” of foreign nationals into South African communities. While previous studies have focused on discourses of integration of the nation-state, I analyse how different migrant civil society organizations use or neglect various discourses of integration in addressing the building of connections across social categories in relation to external conditions in South Africa and the internal characteristics of the organizations. Based on qualitative methods including interviews, I compare two migrant civil society organizations, Global Zimbabwe Forum – South Africa (GZF) and People Against Suffering, Oppression, and Poverty (PASSOP), which address Zimbabwean migration in South Africa. I argue that particular discourses used by a critical mass of individuals in the two organizations are linked to interconnected patterns of network building and identity framing ranging from bridging across national categories and bonding within national categories related to class-based identities and discourses. In particular, GZF supports economic empowerment through starting businesses among the “diaspora,” while PASSOP promotes a “working class” identity involving South African citizens and foreign nationals including Zimbabweans in South Africa.

Adoné Kitching, University of Cape Town

In Heart or in Hand: Exploring the Limits of Legal Citizenship in Understanding Complex Experiences of Belonging

When considering the complex ways in which diverse identities are negotiated and played out in South Africa, it is evident that notions of nationality and legal membership to the nation state are categories that are becoming less and less descriptive of everyday experiences of belonging. The paper presented here endeavours to problematize legal conceptions of citizenship in order to consider the ways in which foreign nationals (who are often made invisible by the law) practice citizenship, even without the documents that might substantiate their claims to belonging. Here I draw on recent fieldwork conducted amongst traders in the Church Street Antique Market in order to consider the role of both the legal system and the practice of everyday life on the street in negotiating a sense of belonging. The paper therefore essentially serves as an attempt to make sense of citizenship in hand and citizenship in heart – to consider whether legal notions of citizenship necessarily simplify and limit our understanding of complex experiences of belonging which can, in reality, take so many forms. These questions are raised not only in relation to the case study presented, but more generally as a means through which to explore alternative ways of thinking about what it means to be a citizen and to uncover potential ways of living with diversity and understanding social membership that is not predicated on legal markers alone, but also on the very everyday experiences that inform a sense of belonging in South Africa.

Pedzisayi Leslie Mangezvo, University of Stellenbosch

Xenophobic exclusion and football: Navigating Space, Rights and Entitlements among Zimbabwean Male Migrants in Stellenbosch

Neoliberal globalisation was supposed to be the vehicle through which there would be dissolution of borders and ‘free’ movement of goods, services and people. Yet in reality, it has deepened the intense contestation over resources and has subsequently led to various forms of popular mobilisation against those branded as ‘outsiders’ or ‘others’. Using the experience of Zimbabwean male migrants living and working in Stellenbosch (Western Cape), this paper analyses how football has been deployed by migrants to negotiate and/or assert issues of space, rights and entitlements in an environment they consider to be largely hostile, even if not overtly violent. The paper explores how a seemingly innocuous endeavour such as playing football is laden with the politics of availing space, rights, benefits and resources to certain groups of people (migrants) in contemporary South Africa. The paper concludes with an analysis of what it means to be a Zimbabwean male migrant in Stellenbosch today and how xenophobia and football have demarcated particular versions of masculinities among the Zimbabwean migrants.

Marcel Paret, University of California, Berkeley

A Class Struggle Approach to Immigrant Incorporation: Explaining Divergence in the United States and South Africa

In the spring of 2006, between 3 and 5 million protesters took to the streets in the United States in a massive wave of protests for immigrant rights. Two years later, in May 2008, a wave of xenophobic attacks against foreign-born black residents spread throughout South Africa, leaving more than 60 people dead and up to one-hundred thousand displaced from their homes. Comparative approaches to immigration and citizenship are unable to explain this divergence, largely because they pay little attention to the class structure and dynamics of collective struggle. Drawing from Bonacich's theory of the split labour market, this paper develops an approach to immigrant incorporation based on the

collective struggles of two groups: the organized working class, including unionized workers; and the precarious working class, including insecurely employed, low income, and non-unionized workers. I argue that the divergence between the recent events in the United States and South Africa may be understood as a reflection of the different interaction between these two sets of collective struggles. Not only did the precarious working class have a very different political and economic composition in the two cases, giving rise to very different collective struggles, but the organized working class related to those struggles very differently, reinforcing their divergence.