

Crime, Fear of Crime, and Xenophobia in Durban, South Africa

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Abstract

Crime, violence, and a corrupt police force are some of the issues preoccupying South Africans in the contemporary period, judging from the work of fiction writers, media headlines, and websites of various policing forums. Xenophobia is another feature of contemporary South African society, with foreign nationals across South Africa subjected to on-going violent attacks, and perceived to be the cause of crime and fear of crime. This article examines these two issues, crime and xenophobia, in the context of Ward 33, a mixed income suburb in Durban, focusing on how residents and police view the presence of foreign nationals in the local community and the social, economic, and political factors shaping attitudes towards foreign nationals. This study found that demographic change, particularly foreign nationals moving into the neighbourhood, is one of the factors leading to greater levels of distrust and generating stereotypes (drug peddlers, prostitutes, unemployed foreigners / potential criminals) about newcomers. From a policing perspective, the crime threat is seen to emanate from urban decay and the presence of 'undesirable' elements, particularly foreign nationals. The narratives associate crime with race and nationality. The 'unpredictable stranger' remains the target of generalised as well as specific anxieties, for which there is no short-term solution. The significance of this study, focusing on middle class elements in society, is that xenophobia is not confined to a 'lunatic fringe' of South African society. Urgent government intervention is therefore needed at multiple levels to address the problem.

Keywords: fear of crime, policing, moral panic, Durban, violence

Introduction

Crime, violence, and a corrupt police force are some of the issues that preoccupy South Africans in the contemporary period. The works of Anthony Altbeker and Jonny Steinberg, amongst others, address crime, policing and criminal justice in post-apartheid South Africa. Altbeker's best-selling works, *Fruit of a Poisoned Tree: A true story of murder and the miscarriage of justice* (2010), *The Dirty Work of Democracy* (2005), and *A Country at War with Itself* (2007), speak to issues of crime, violence, and policing in South Africa and how to address these problems, which resonates with ordinary South Africans. Jonny Steinberg's *Midlands* (2001), *The Number* (2003), and *Thin Blue* (2008) are award winning explorations of crime, violence, the police, and the judicial system in South Africa. The popularity of these works underscores the concerns of many ordinary South Africans regarding these issues.

Xenophobia is another feature of contemporary South Africa. A combination of the Greek words, *xenos* (foreign) and *phobos* (fear), the term 'xenophobia' is defined by most dictionaries as a 'hatred or fear of foreigners.' This manifested most violently in South Africa during May 2008 when more than 60 foreign nationals were killed and thousands more were displaced or subjected to mass looting and the destruction of their homes and businesses countrywide. While there has not been a repeat of these mass attacks, foreign nationals continue to be targeted in various ways. In 2011, for example, around 50 people were killed, 100 seriously injured and more than 1,000 displaced (*Daily Maverick* 31 May 2013). A 2012 survey found that 60% of South Africans believe that 'people from South Africa are superior to those from other parts of Africa' while 60% regarded themselves as South African but not African. Foreign Africans were also seen as robbing South Africans of jobs and being responsible for criminal activity. Eighty percent of those surveyed believe that foreigners are preferred to South Africans because they are prepared to work for lower wages while 55% believe that 'most criminals in South Africa are foreigners' (Kuper 2013).

In the week that I was writing this article (the end of May 2013), mainly Somali-owned shops were attacked and looted by residents in Diepsloot, Johannesburg and Booyens Park, Port Elizabeth. At least 15 shops were ransacked and two Somali nationals killed (*The Mercury* 31 May 2013). This article seeks to marry these two issues, crime and xenophobia, by

examining the perceptions of residents in Ward 33, Durban of whether and how foreign nationals are contributing to crime in the neighbourhood. Specific questions include: How do residents view the presence of foreign nationals in the local community? How do the police view foreign nationals? Are they seen as contributing to urban incivility and higher rates of crime? What are the factors shaping attitudes towards foreign nationals? (Bauman 2000). The first part of the article provides an outline of the study site, a brief explanation of the methodology employed and the extent of the fear of crime in the area (Hartnagel 1979); the second part focuses on attitudes towards foreign nationals and the relationship of these attitudes to crime.

Study Site

Ward 33, the site of this study, comprises of three suburbs – Umbilo, Glenmore and Glenwood – which are diverse in terms of their residents. While parts of Glenmore and Glenwood would be classified as ‘middle class’, Umbilo is a largely working class or lower middle class area. Glenwood is one of Durban’s oldest suburbs, with colonial-style mansions higher up in the vicinity of the University of KwaZulu-Natal as well highly priced apartment blocks. The area has bustling business activity with the presence of the Glenwood and Davenport Centres and St. Augustine’s hospital. In the Bulwer, Ferguson, and Davenport Roads area, a number of homes have been converted into restaurants, boutiques, coffee shops, medical practices, and guest houses. Glenwood High, Durban Girls High, tree-lined streets, and parks all add to the image of order and affluence. There are many pedestrians and shoppers during the day.

Glenmore is located to the south of Glenwood, making it further from the Berea. The area comprises of free standing homes for middle to upper income people as well as cheaper priced apartment blocks. Unlike Glenwood, however, Glenmore does not have the same level of daytime retail business activity. Umbilo is a mainly middle to lower income suburb, further from the university and closer to the harbour area. The area has many free standing homes, which probably date to the 1940s and 1950s. Umbilo also lacks the daytime business activity of Glenwood and the homes and grass verges are not as well maintained. However, the area had / has many businesses, particularly factories, in the Umbilo / Sydney Road areas and this

adds to its feeling of being derelict and not as well maintained as Glenwood.

Respondents underscored the changing demographics of Ward 33 over the past two decades as a result of residential deracialisation and the influx of foreigners. These residents are not imagining demographic change. A comparison of the 2001 and 2011 Census figures shows that there has been significant change in Ward 33.

Table 1: Population, Ward 33

	2001	2011	Difference	% Change
Black African	7280	11525	+ 4245	+ 58.31
White	16455	11778	- 4677	- 28.42
Indian or Asian	2191	2659	+ 468	+ 21.36
Coloured	1078	1421	+ 343	+31.81
Other		298		
Total	27,003	27,681	+678	+2.5

Source: Census 2001 and 2011, Department of Statistics.

There has been a dramatic decline in the white population which dropped from 60.93% in 2001 to 42.54% in 2011. In contrast, the Black African population increased from 26.95% to 41.63% over the same period. This census data most likely does not take into account another change the presence of students during the academic year, who may not have filled out the census form, either due to tardiness or because their parents did so in their areas of residence, as well as foreign refugees and migrants. This ‘blackening’ of the ward is important because of the link that is often made between race and crime in the post-apartheid period (Letka 2008).

Methodology

This study is based primarily on qualitative research methods which were deemed the most efficacious way to probe responses to the crucial questions outlined above. Key informants interviewed (n=12) for this study included members of the police force and Community Policing Forums (CPF), as well as ordinary residents. In addition, I attended several meetings of the Umbilo CPF and took field notes. Qualitative research means different things to different people but in its most general sense it is 'a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible'. Such research may include the use of life stories, interviews, observation, case studies, visual texts, and so on. Together, these sources of information may be used to describe the 'routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives' (Denzin & Lincoln 2008: 4-5).

In research on fear of crime, qualitative techniques were originally employed by feminist researchers in the 1970s who felt that quantitative surveys failed to account for experiences such as sexual harassment and domestic violence. Qualitative methods allow researchers to get closer to the respondent's point of view through ethnography and interviews. Qualitative researchers can also appreciate the constraints on the everyday lives of their subjects because their research focuses on the details of specific cases (Denzin & Lincoln 2008: 17).

Qualitative research is, however, potentially problematic. It is not a neutral process because interviewers wield power over the process by interrupting informants by asking questions when they are speaking and even editing the recorded transcript, possibly to support their own arguments (Abrams 2010: 129). The assumption that the interviewer and interviewee have shared understanding of the questions asked and the responses given is not necessarily true, while interviewees may not provide an honest assessment of their feelings. As Gadd and Jefferson point out (2009: 132):

subjects are ... psychosocial subjects with a split consciousness, constantly unconsciously defending themselves against anxiety. This affects what and how anything is remembered, with painful or threatening events being either forgotten or recalled in a safely modified fashion; it also affects how such memories are

communicated to any interviewer, given that the context of the interview may be more or less threatening. At both stages, the act of remembering and the act of communication, meaning is rarely straightforward – and never wholly transparent. The interviewer too is a defended subject, and so the same applies; the meanings – of the questions asked and how answers are understood – will also be affected by the interviewer’s dynamic unconscious with its own ‘logic’ of defensive investments.

Once the data are collected and analysed, the researcher has to interpret the material. Qualitative interpretations are then constructed. This interpretive practice is both ‘artistic and political’, as there is no single interpretive truth but rather ‘multiple interpretive communities’ (Denzin & Lincoln 2008: 35).

Despite these potential problems findings can be tested for their reliability and validity. While qualitative studies do not use formalised sampling methods and the operational procedures used to assess validity and reliability in quantitative research have no corresponding operations for qualitative research (Trochim 2006), this is done through testing for transferability instead of external validity, dependability instead of reliability, and confirmability instead of objectivity (Golafshni 2003: 600-602). While a strong argument can be made that objectivity can never be achieved, validity can be determined by answering such questions as ‘Are these findings sufficiently authentic that I may trust myself in acting on their implications? Would I feel sufficiently secure about these findings to construct social policy or legislation based on them?’

Guba and Lincoln (2008: 271-275) identify several criteria of ‘valid’ inquiry: fairness, ontological authenticity, educative authenticity, catalytic authenticity, and tactical authenticity. Fairness refers to balance, that is, that all stakeholders’ views, concerns, and perspectives are represented; ontological and educative authenticity refers to the raised level of awareness by individual research participants and by individuals with whom they come into contact; and catalytic and tactical authenticity refer to the ability of the research to prompt action on the part of the research participants and the ability of the researcher to provide training in particular forms of social and political action.

Crime and the Fear of Crime

Crime Statistics for Ward 33 were obtained from the website of the Institute for Security Studies' Crime and Justice Hub at the website '<http://www.iss.co.za/crimehub/pgcontent.php?UID=1000205>'. The Institute has developed a 'crime map viewer' where information can be accessed on the different types of crimes that occur in specific localities. This data are gathered by recording the crime statistics for each police precinct within the country as recorded by the South African Police Service (SAPS). This provides an opportunity to compare the different crime levels of police precincts for specific categories of crime as well as a means to compare the annual changes in specific crime categories since 2003. Statistics for Ward 33 are based on data recorded at the Umbilo Police Station. These statistics are for the whole area, thus making it impossible to distinguish between the three suburbs that make up Ward 33. If people from the area report their experiences of crime at other police stations, these might not be reflected in these statistics. Conversely, if people from other areas report crimes at Umbilo Police Station, these will be reflected in statistics for this ward. However, such instances are not expected to affect overall trends and the inferences that we draw from them.

The 'Ward 33 Crime Statistics 2005-2011', which run to several pages and cannot be included here, show that incidents of crime per 1,000 people for Ward 33 increased in cases of assault, sexual crimes, residential robbery, and carjacking (that decreased from 2009 to 2011); while they declined in cases of common assault, residential burglary, culpable homicide, general theft, murder, aggravated robbery, theft out of motor vehicles, common robbery, and attempted murder. Notwithstanding the statistics, interviewees are adamant that they are besieged by crime, in particular serious crimes such as carjacking, residential housebreaking, and street robberies. The perception that crime is rampant, and that white South Africans in particular are targeted, is a national phenomenon even though, as De Wet (2013) shows, 'the risk for rape, aggravated assault and robbery, as well as murder and attempted murder is considerably greater for the poor black township dweller than say, a rich white person.'

Why is the perception of rampant crime so strong if it is not supported statistically? To get to the heart of this problem we need to ask, as Hall *et al.* (1978: viii) do with respect to Britain: 'How has the 'law and

order' ideology been constructed? What social forces are constrained and contained by its construction? What forces stand to benefit from it? What real facts and anxieties is it mobilizing?' The role of the media (Heath & Gilbert 1996), police, and social networks suggests that, in addition to actual victimization, the construction of fear of crime has a social as well as a statistical or legal basis. According to Hall *et al.* (1978: 52), agencies of public significance such as the police and media do not simply 'respond to 'moral panics'. They are part of the circle out of which 'moral panics' develop. It is part of the paradox that they also, inadvertently, amplify the deviancy they seem so absolutely committed to controlling.' Information about criminal activity or potential criminal activity received through the media, social networks, government agencies, citizens' groups, and the police increases residents' perceptions of levels of crime in the neighbourhood and their anxiety over it. Such information, at the very least, reminds residents that being a victim of crime is very likely in the neighbourhood and that they should be aware of potential risks.

Aside from the media, marginality is another factor possibly generating fear. Criminal activity and reaction to it, does not occur in a vacuum. The relationship between the majority of respondents in this study and those perceived to be the cause of criminal activity has a long and acrimonious history that very likely has a bearing on present perceptions. Feelings of marginalisation among minority groups in South Africa around issues of politics, economics, sport, education, work, and so on are contributing to a general feeling of being 'under siege'. The moral panic around crime is part of a wider crisis of 'belonging' and should be seen in relation to insecurities which include personal anxieties as well as national and international concerns which, cumulatively, are producing 'anxiety which might find an outlet in crime talk' (Enders & Jennett 2009: 202-203). The root causes of the fear run deep and finding solutions is not as simple as beefing up physical security measures around homes.

While statistics may indicate that residents' perceptions of crime risk are not objectively warranted, does it really matter whether fear of crime matches the reality of crime? Many residents are so consumed by fear of crime that it is an everyday topic of conversation and even influences the kinds of preventative measures they are taking, including areas or persons to be avoided.

Foreign Nationals and Fear of Crime

One of the factors associated with rising crime and fear of crime in the ward is the presence of foreign nationals. Mary, who has lived in the ward for several decades, related her experience of being a victim of crime:

Robbers came and broke into our house. You know, the 30 second thing before the alarm company comes and they just came, five of them, and smashed the doors down and grabbed everything and ran. This is three months ago. It was June [2012]. They came, smashed, got in, smashed the front door, tried to make off with everything, my laptop and tried to grab everything within the time but they were chased. We have a very strong neighbourhood watch in the area and they were chased by the neighbourhood watch.

In Mary's case, fear of crime resulting from victimization has resulted in her taking steps to reduce the likelihood of being a victim in the future. It subsequently emerged that the perpetrators of the crime were 'illegal immigrants'; she feels strongly that 'the issue of illegal immigration has to be clamped down on' as they are negatively impacting crime in the ward.

The role of foreign nationals in causing crime was also emphasised at an Umbilo CPF meeting on 12 November 2012 when Brad, a security consultant and guest speaker that evening, spoke of the nefarious influence of 'Nigerians and the like' in the ward, expressing xenophobic sentiments that reflect negative stereotypes widely held in the ward. When a member of the audience complained about the presence of a nightclub in the area, Brad said that every area had a similar nightclub with 'drug dealers and prostitutes' because the police were 'thinly stretched,' lacking the resources and 'courage to do anything, and the local security companies don't have the teeth to do the things we would like them to do - like raid these clubs or try and close down drug dealers.' The result is that 'foreigners have flooded in here. How are they making money? Out of drugs and buying stolen property ... [and] prostitution.'

Several interviewees complained that prostitution was rife in the ward and they linked this to crime. For example, Sarah said, 'I tell you right outside your gate, when I see them I see red [because] it definitely brings unsavoury characters into the area.' At the same CPF meeting, several

speakers linked prostitution to crime. As Brad explained,

These women have a drug dependency or alcohol dependency problem, so they attract the Nigerians, and all of a sudden you have got everybody attracted here just because of the prostitutes. If you get rid of the prostitutes I guarantee you, you will get rid of the rest of the bulk of the petty crime, because it all follows.

The literature does not point to a clear relationship between crime and prostitution. Some studies suggest that where prostitution is illegal it can result in increased crime and violence, and that there is a reduction in crime when it is legalised (Liberatory 2004). However, judging from the response of those who attended the CPF meeting in Glenwood, residents of Ward 33 as well as interviewees, view the presence of prostitutes as proof of the overall decline of the area into one that attracts unruly elements, including drug dealers. Such perceptions are contributing to the overall ‘moral panic’ about crime in the area.

Naomi, who moved to Durban from Cape Town in 2005, noted a significant ‘decline’ in the ward over the past six years. By ‘decline’, she was referring to an increase in ‘levels of crime and grime’ due to ‘a lot of, excuse me, Blacks moving into the area’ who are ‘not very worried about litter. You see them walking, and they are eating something and [they] throw it on the ground. When we first moved in here, it was so beautiful.’ With regard to crime, Naomi is convinced that ‘as much as the police say it’s not increasing, I don’t know whether it’s because we are so aware now that we are hearing about everything, but crime is definitely on the increase here in Glenwood.’ Naomi identified an area known to locals as ‘Whoonga Park’, situated under a bridge on a railway line where Che Guevara Road meets Maydon Road, as problematic:

They call it Whoonga Park, I think its Albert Park, I am not sure, under the bridge where the railway line is, down Moore Road, where you turn off to go to Maydon’s Wharf and to south coast, there are about 200 people that are there and they are all foreigners. And the amount of prostitution!!! It was in the Sunday Tribune. They call it Whoonga Park and, of course, that is where all the crime is. They run

there and they hide amongst the people and I have found that the crime, as much as the police say it's not increasing, I don't know whether it's because we are so aware now in the last year, two years that we are hearing about everything, but crime is definitely on the increase here. The police say it's not but I don't believe it.

Place is important in crime and criminal activity; within neighbourhoods, certain spaces are more prone to criminal activity and are usually avoided by locals (Eck & Weisburd 1995: 1). Warwick Chapman, former longtime Democratic Alliance (DA) councillor for the ward, provided another example:

About halfway up to the Berea Centre on your left hand side is a tiny little lane called Morans, it's one way, from Berea to Moore. And on the right hand side of Morans for almost the entire length is a park. Drive past it and hang your camera out of the window. It's a dumping ground. It's a taxi rank, it's a construction yard and when I say hang your camera out the window, hang it out carefully because there is also loads of undesirables hanging around. But it's worth having a look at that public open space. And then say to yourself what impact does that have on the local community? You know, you have got a couple of gangs living there, you have got foreign nationals there.

Councillor Chapman was concerned that gangs and foreign nationals are taking over parts of the ward, leading to the perception of urban decay and the collapse of 'law and order'. Academic research supports the notion that people feel confident and safe visiting certain places and associate other places with the threat of physical harm and avoid those even though criminal activity can take place anywhere (Wolfgang 1985). Locals usually avoid the places mentioned by Councillor Chapman and other informants. As noted, crime statistics, news reports, and word of mouth help to establish a psychological link between the likelihood of a crime occurring in a particular place and a person's fear of being a victim.

Visual cues based on a place's geography can influence perceptions of how bad crime is - or is not - in a neighbourhood. Areas that are densely

populated, have physically deteriorated, have a substantial number of transients, and contain 'less-than-desirable' commercial establishments are associated with high crime and deviant behaviour (Stark 1987: 894). According to our respondents, parts of Ward 33 fit this profile and cause them to associate the ward with crime. The 'broken window' thesis, as this perspective is known, argues that neighbourhoods characterised by decay generate fear of crime among residents and indicate to potential criminals that residents are unlikely to act in the event of criminal activity. Perceptions are important because people are less likely to walk in areas that they regard as unkempt and which are associated with danger, and more likely to walk in well maintained places. Outsiders also perceive such environments as dangerous and this fear has a snow-ball effect. Urban flight can lead to abandoned buildings which, in turn, in the opinion of residents, may attract more of the kinds of people that compound the crime problem. In this context, crime can become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Policing and Foreign Nationals

According to Captain Patrick of the Umbilo SAPS the arrival of foreign nationals, as refugees, migrants, and illegals, is affecting the demographics of the ward negatively as they are 'not being housed properly and there is no proper structure to deal with them, they have also contributed to the crime.' Warrant Officer Percy is also concerned about foreign migrants and refugees, and places the blame squarely on South African foreign policy:

If you look at our foreign policy it's like the biggest detriment to this country because I don't think there is any country in the world where they allow a person to come here seeking refugee status with no place to live. You understand, like in England if you apply for refugee status you get registered with the Home Affairs Department or whatever, they put you, they give you a subsistence to live that you will be able buy a loaf of bread and you will be able to live. Here, in South Africa, it's like those pictures I showed you. Those are all foreigners. They all have got refugee status so that is a potpourri of people from all over Africa. So the only thing, the only recourse, they have got, they sell drugs and there is prostitution and

there are common petty crimes to feed themselves.

At the CPF Area 1 meeting on 4 October 2012, which I attended, Captain Marais of the Umbilo SAPS reiterated this discourse when he said that many foreigners were living in abandoned or partially demolished buildings in the area. They 'steal anything to make a buck, be it copper or bins'. Unemployed and homeless, they 'walk around all night scrounging in the bins for food'. From a police perspective, foreigners, whether refugees or migrants, and whether legal or illegal, are contributing to crime in the ward.

'Whoonga Park' presents special problems for the police. The park is named after whoonga, a local marijuana variant containing rat poison, HIV medication, heroin, crystal meth and detergents such as bleach or ammonia. Also known as Nyaope, this street drug came into widespread use in the townships of Durban around 2010. The park is seen as a key supply area. A front page report in *The Mercury* (23 May 2013), titled 'Criminals go underground to flee through stormwater tunnels', pointed out that criminals were using 'an intricate web of storm-water tunnels extending for kilometres beneath Durban' which they used to escape after committing crimes. The two metre high tunnels run from the Durban Harbour to the area known as Whoonga Park, near Albert Park. From there, the tunnel splits into three, with one stretching up Berea Road and the other two running through the lower Berea area. Further splits take the tunnels through to Umbilo and Glenwood. Police Inspector Eugene Msomi was quoted as saying that the police would inspect all the tunnels and find ways to close them to the public. Previous attempts to fence the tunnel openings failed as criminals jumped over the fences. Hoosen Moolla, a senior manager at the Inner City eThekweni Regeneration and Urban Management Programme (iTrump), said that the tunnels could not be closed because of the need for stormwater flow. This made it impossible to prevent residents of Whoonga Park from using them for criminal activity. According to the newspaper report, while police were inspecting the tunnels, 'South African and foreign nationals who live in Whoonga Park and appeared to be high on drugs, sang and shouted insults at the police and media.'

Xenophobic tendencies are apparent in the ward and often relate to being a victim of crime. Both Captain Patrick and W/O Percy pointed to what they viewed as an irony; Premhid pointed out that the foreign nationals

who are seen as a ‘problem’ rent accommodation from white landlords. ‘Who else is going to pay R5000-R6000, to stay in a scrawny old Umbilo house where you have got borer coming out of the floor, the place is all dilapidated?’ The same landlords, he added, belong to the Umbilo Business Forum (UBF), CPF, Umbilo Action Group (UAG) and other civic organizations that complain about crime, drugs and police inaction in the ward. It is unclear whether this is based on perceptions or fact, but the Captain felt that residents were contributing to problems for which they blame the police. At the CPF meeting on 4 October 2012, Captain Glen Eagle of the Umbilo SAPS made the same point.

Police work has a social and structural context, and at the present time there are strong feelings of xenophobia in the country at large. As noted earlier, xenophobia is a national problem in South Africa. Members of the police force are part of South African society and, as such, may not be immune to such prejudices. The fact that the police deal on an on-going basis with migrants and refugees may, in fact, exacerbate their prejudices (Hall *et al.* 1978: 49). Some commentators attribute the ‘barbaric’ incident on 26 February 2013 when a 26 year old taxi driver, Mido Macia, a Mozambican national, was handcuffed by police officers to their van and dragged several hundred metres through the streets of Daveyton, just east of Johannesburg to such prejudice. He was later found dead in police cells. Nine police officers have been charged for his murder. African National Congress (ANC) secretary-general Gwede Mantashe responded, ‘if you are a foreigner and killed in our country, it is xenophobic.’ In this case, the roots of xenophobia are to be found within the police force and not among Daveyton residents who offered their full support to the deceased and his family (Kuper 2013). Dennis Matusse of the International Community Unifiers (ICU) issued a statement that ‘actions like this from the police only helps to increase perceptions that lives of other Africans living in South Africa are cheap, thus fuelling Xenophobic attacks’ (ICU 2013).

Captain Patrick is adamant that the Daveyton killing was ‘a once off. You can interview the members, how they felt. And I’m telling you, this is a sorry incident.’ However, it is dangerous when police, without hard evidence, begin to see some part of the population, such as foreign migrants, as potential criminals and a threat to ‘law and order’ because this may determine who they focus on in their day-to-day policing functions. Police

have limited (hu)manpower and resources and, from their perspective, it makes sense to deploy these in areas where they are most needed. A focus on the so-called ‘problem’ group may result in more arrests within that group which, in turn, is likely to increase the crime statistics relating to that group and thus create a ‘crime wave’ around certain kinds of crimes or individuals. In this way, the police may inadvertently create the crime wave itself and through issuing these statistics, shape the general public’s attitude to and fear of crime (see Hall *et al.* 1998: 42). While CPFs are meant to bring the police and community closer together, because the ‘problem’ segment of the ward is not integrated into the local community, the gap between them and the police remains wide and the relationship is one of suspicion and fear.

Understanding Xenophobia

Demographic changes in Ward 33, in the form of more Black people moving into the neighbourhood, and particularly the presence of foreign nationals, are amongst key factors leading to greater levels of anonymity and distrust in the neighbourhood and a feeling that the old order is collapsing, and is generating stereotypes (drug peddlers, prostitutes, unemployed foreigners / potential criminals) about newcomers. These mechanisms are one of the means by which residents categorise individuals and places to make sense of their world. As Sacco (2005: 135) points out:

Increases in levels of ethnic or racial heterogeneity contribute to a sense of discomfort on the part of the neighbourhood residents who feel that their neighbourhood is undergoing a decline. Dramatic increases in the number of ‘strangers’ make the environment seem less familiar and perhaps more threatening.... While it may be politically incorrect to express racist attitudes openly expressions of anxiety about crime and criminals are usually regarded as perfectly appropriate forms of public discussion.

There are many ‘threats’ to the neighbourhood from a policing perspective. Within the neighbourhood, the crime threat is seen to emanate from urban decay and the presence of ‘undesirable’ elements, particularly foreign nationals. As crime and word of crime is spread through various media,

residents' fear of crime increases (Lemanski 2006). The narratives associate crime with race. Although respondents tried not to couch their views in racial terms, the terms 'crime' and 'black crime' or 'foreigners' crime' sometimes appear to be synonymous. The movement of people across neighbourhood, provincial and national borders is likely to intensify in the future as social cohesion is seen to decline (Beauvais & Jenson 2002). In this era of great mobility, Farrall *et al.* (2009: 108) observe that, 'we have less direct knowledge about those around us,' and the 'unpredictable stranger' is the target of generalised as well as specific fears and anxieties. Across South Africa, the number of xenophobic attacks is increasing. In the local context, the term 'stranger' is increasingly associated with South Africans of colour and African foreign nationals.

Increasing xenophobic violence can be attributed to various economic, social, political, and historical factors. One view is that it is a protest against the ANC government's poor service delivery record, with citizens' anger directed at innocent foreigners (Alexander 2010). Another explanation is that foreign nationals are competing with the poorest of the poor South Africans and are seen to be taking away their jobs and life opportunities. The significance of this study, focusing as it does on middle class elements in society, is that xenophobia is not confined to a 'lunatic fringe' of South African society. Urgent government intervention is needed at multiple levels to address the problem.

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