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University of San Francisco, kacruchett@dons.usfca.edu

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The Role of African Non-National Storytelling in Challenging Xenophobic Discourses in
Post-apartheid South Africa

by

Kelly Cruchett

University of San Francisco

San Francisco, California

Masters of Arts in International Studies

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ABSTRACT

A growing body of literature on xenophobic violence in post-apartheid South Africa has shown that this form of violence targeted towards African non-nationals is closely linked to a xenophobic discourse of national chauvinism that has been deployed by powerful institutions since the nation's independence. This capstone project seeks to highlight the role that non-national storytelling plays in addressing the issue of anti-African xenophobia and xenophobic violence in post-apartheid South Africa by challenging the discourses that contribute to it. Through the analysis of a NGO's youth summit that revolved around the stories of four non-national speakers, this study examines the impact these storytelling sessions left on both the speakers and the audience and what it reveals about storytelling's potentiality for diversifying the way in which migration and xenophobia is understood and talked about in post-apartheid South Africa. It discusses how non-national storytelling holds significant importance at both the personal and interpersonal level, and takes on even greater significance when situated in the context of South Africa's post-apartheid nation building process. It argues that by allowing non-national storytellers to explore and embrace their identity while simultaneously creating opportunities for national / non-national empathy and solidarity building founded on shared feelings of racial subjugation, non-national storytelling takes on a larger role as a decolonizing force that can create alternatives to colonial discourses around nationalism, belonging, and what it means to be African in post-apartheid South Africa. It is by inquiring into the efficacy of non-national storytelling in anti-xenophobia efforts that this paper seeks to highlight the benefits of having the power of narrative building be placed in the hands of those most marginalized by the issue at hand.

INTRODUCTION

“We enter into a covenant that we shall build a society in which all South Africans, both black and white, will be able to walk tall, without any fear in their hearts, assured of their inalienable right to human dignity - a rainbow nation at peace with itself and the world”

- Nelson Mandela

Inaugural Address, Pretoria 10 May 1994

The words of newly elected president, Nelson Mandela captured on that day the hopes of not only South Africans, but the world as the nation closed the shameful chapter of apartheid rule and looked to the future. The end of apartheid and advent of democracy in South Africa brought about considerable increases in immigrants coming from countries within the South African Development Community (SADC), to take part in this rainbow nation as well (Crush, 2014). However, as trends in migration grew, so too did animosity towards those entering the new nation. This came to a head on May of 2008 as a wave of xenophobic attacks spread from the Gauteng township, Alexandra, to informal settlements and townships across the nation. In less than a month, these pogroms resulted in more than 60 deaths and over 100,000 displacements (Landau, 2011).

While some may find it to be a shocking juxtaposition between this “rainbow nation” rhetoric and the actions of May 2008, others see them as sides of the same coin. Scholars argue that since the advent of the “new” South Africa, leading voices have shifted the blame for the nation’s shortcomings on “illegal aliens”, and at the root of these messages is a discourse of national chauvinism (Gibson, 2011; Neocosmos, 2008). What is therefore needed to combat this endemic issue, is an alternative discourse for South Africans to embrace that is founded on equality and common humanity (Neocosmos, 2008). This need for an alternative discourse is

what compelled me to inquire into what actors could - or should - play a role in crafting it. It is my belief that the main actors that should be placed at the center of shaping this new discourse are those whose victimization is defined by having statements made about them rather than by them: non-nationals themselves.

This capstone project seeks to showcase the role that non-national storytelling plays in addressing the issue of anti-African xenophobia and xenophobic violence in post-apartheid South Africa and challenges the discourses that contribute to it. It explores how non-national storytelling holds significant importance at both the personal and interpersonal level, taking on even greater significance at a macro level when situated in the context of South Africa's post-apartheid nation building process. It argues that through the role it plays in helping non-national storytellers explore and embrace their identity while creating opportunities for national / non-national empathy and solidarity building founded on shared feelings of racial subjugation, non-national storytelling takes on a larger role as a decolonizing force that creates alternatives to colonial discourses around nationalism, belonging, and what it means to be African in post-apartheid South Africa. It is by inquiring into the efficacy of non-national storytelling in anti-xenophobia efforts that this paper seeks to highlight how networks of solidarity can be built when the power of narrative building is placed in the hands of those most marginalized by the issue at hand.

Background: The Status of Xenophobic Violence as of 2022

Xenophobic violence is defined as acts of violence targeted towards non-nationals or perceived outsiders due to their origins (Landau, 2011). In post-apartheid South Africa, xenophobic violence comes in the form of murder, assaults, looting, robbery, property damage, mass displacement and threats (Misago, 2019). These acts are characterized by the threat to life and/or

livelihood (Misago, 2019). According to the open source reporting platform, Xenowatch, as of March 2022 there have been 896 reported incidents of xenophobic violence since South Africa's independence in 1994 (Xenowatch, 2022). These have resulted in 621 deaths, 4,831 shops looted and 122,316 displacements (Xenowatch, 2022). Additionally, it is worth noting that due to issues of underreporting, the actual numbers are likely much higher than those accounted for. The three South African provinces in which incident rates are the highest are Gauteng, Western Cape and KwaZulu Natal (Misago and Mlilo, 2021). These provinces hold the nation's three largest cities, Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban. The largest spike in incidents occurred in 2008 where 150 incidents resulted in 72 deaths, 62 of those deaths occurring within less than a month (Xenowatch, 2022). 2021 marked the highest rate of reported xenophobic incidents since 2008 at 79 incidents (Xenowatch, 2022). As we see these climbing rates of incidents, it is important now more than ever to seek out new and creative ways of addressing this issue and its contributing factors.

Media

One of the main mediums for perpetuating the scapegoating of African non-nationals for South Africa's ills is the media. Through both mainstream news outlets and social media platforms, African non-nationals and their migration have been characterized as a danger to South Africans and the nation as a whole. Research into print media in South Africa has revealed how media has used narrative frames that justify the exclusion of non-nationals, further entrenched perceptions of insiders and outsiders, and reinforced fears of a national takeover by a foreign other (Chiumbu and Moyo, 2018). Most recently, these narratives of fear and xenophobia have made its way onto social media platforms, giving greater influence and prominence to xenophobic South African nationalist movements. A recent qualitative content analysis of three hashtags used by South

Africans on twitter (#PutSouthAfricansFirst, #NormaliseHiringSACitizens and #SAHomeAffairsCorruption) highlighted how among Covid-19 lockdowns that restricted travel and therefore physical xenophobic attacks, virtual spaces have become the new frontier for spreading afrophobic disinformation, rhetoric and threats (Tarisayi, 2021). These platforms have operated to stoke the flames of xenophobic fears and attitudes of South African and further alienate African non-nationals from South African society. They have also operated to construct very rigid and inaccurate depictions of non-national identity as criminal, unhygienic and opportunistic to take jobs from South Africans.

Legislation

The narratives around migration to South Africa have shown to be extremely consequential in immigration legislation, leading to a cyclical reproduction of these narratives that inform and are solidified through policy. When we look at policy as part of this discourse and take into account the role of societal narratives rather than placing them on a pedestal of assumed objectivity, we are able to see how much of South Africa's immigration law operates under the narrative that migration to South Africa has only began following the end of apartheid and therefore is overwhelmed by the relatively sudden and disproportionate influx of people coming to South Africa from other African countries (Masilela, 2010). This is a false narrative considering the nation's long history of recruiting and employing migrant labor from up to twenty different areas, however the majority coming from Lesotho, Mozambique and former Transkei. While they made up over 60% of the labor force and spent most of their lives working in the South African mines, under a "two gates" immigration policy known as the Alien's Control Act where one gate led to a path of citizenship for white immigrants, black migrant laborers' gate into the nation gave them no way of qualifying for citizenship (Harington et al., 2004, Crush, 2002). While this apartheid

era policy has since been replaced with the Immigration Act in 2002 and amended in 2007 and 2011 to be more progressive, it nonetheless still holds traces of the apartheid-era prerogative to limit certain categories of immigrants, namely low skilled workers from one of the 16 countries that are part of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), while showing leniency towards others (Moyo, 2021). This has led to low skilled African migrants wanting to obtain documentation to apply for refugee status through South Africa's asylum system. The once accommodating Refugees Act of 1998 that allowed asylum seekers to work and study in South Africa as they wait for adjudication has since been amended in 2008, 2011, and 2017 to take these freedoms away (Moyo, 2021). Legislation has also been added to make the asylum process lengthier through bureaucratic inefficiency in an effort to make seeking asylum in the nation less attractive. As recent as 2019, a reported 97% of asylum applications were rejected (Moyo, 2021). Since the COVID-19 pandemic, different services for asylum seekers and refugees at the Department of Home Affairs have been completely shut down, leaving many in limbo and vulnerable. The most recent legislation targeting refugees and asylum seekers has barred them from voting in county elections. This antagonism toward asylum seekers, refugees, migrants and all African non-nationals by the government through the form of policy sends a clear exemplary message that poor Black Africans are not deserving of a life in South Africa. This tactic of cutting freedoms and opportunities and piling on barriers to livelihoods for this population communicates to South African citizens that making life as intolerable as possible for these people may prevent them from coming.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Xenophobia and Xenophobic Violence in South Africa

In order to evaluate the efficacy of a proposed solution/alleviant, one must first attempt to understand the issue. An important body of literature seeking to understand post-apartheid xenophobia and xenophobic violence emerged almost immediately after the nation gained independence but undoubtedly grew exponentially following the wave of xenophobic attacks in May of 2008. For the past two decades, different theories and perspectives have arisen in conversation with one another with the collective desire to understand what is at the root of this phenomenon that has grown to characterize the nation of South Africa.

There is an array of literature that is concerned with xenophobia in South Africa as an abnormal phenomenon primarily understood on a subjective, psychological level as a set of attitudes of disdain for foreigners and xenophobic violence to be the active practice of those attitudes (Harris, 2002). This “new pathology” is explained through three main factors (Harris, 2002). The first of these, known as scapegoat theory, is the impulse to scapegoat foreigners for taking resources in the already unequal nation where employment, housing and education are scarce for the majority of the population, but especially so for the poor who reside in informal settlements and townships (Morris, 1998; Tshitereke, 1999). This scapegoating of foreigners is said to be caused by the poor’s sense of “relative deprivation”. Relative deprivation theory asserts that amidst South Africa’s transition towards democracy, the poor’s expectations for progress have been met with a continuation of their disenfranchisement (Tshitereke, 1999). The dissonance between what the poor see themselves as entitled to under a new regime and what they are actually receiving is, according to the theory, what creates this frustration which is then taken out onto the foreigners in the form of violence in their own communities (Tshitereke,

1999). An additional contributing factor to South Africa's xenophobic culture is its history of isolation from the rest of the continent under the apartheid regime. The isolation theory claims that this closing-off of the nation made the majority of the population accustomed to suspicion towards outsiders who grew to represent the "unknown" (Morris, 1998; Tshitereke, 1999). Under this theory, it is the fault of apartheid as a regime of brutality toward strangers that causes South Africans to become intolerant of difference (Morris, 1998; Tshitereke, 1999). A fourth theory that looks at xenophobia on an interpersonal level has to do with biocultural differences between South Africans and incoming populations. The biocultural difference theory is meant to highlight that it became easier for foreigners to be targeted during this influx of new migration post-apartheid because they had easily identifiable differences in appearance, accent and dress as opposed to those of South Africans (Morris, 1998). On a larger scale, it is claimed that these conceptions of exclusivity that have led to xenophobia are the dark yet inevitable side of nation building as South Africa goes through this transition towards liberal democracy (Harris, 2002). The less common occurrence that this xenophobia is being expressed through violent attacks, however, is attributed by Harris to the "culture of violence" in South Africa in which it is the "norm" to resort to violence when looking to resolve conflict (Harris, 2002).

These theories have become the dominating and most widely accepted explanations for xenophobia and xenophobic violence in post-apartheid South Africa. They have been used by NGOs to create and deploy educational initiatives that seek to correct these misconceptions amongst township populations in efforts to allow migrants to access their human rights (Harris, 2002; Tella, 2016). These explanations have also been widely cited by South African politicians - that is, when they are not claiming that xenophobic violence is simply criminality (Sandwith, 2013; Tella, 2016) - when denouncing the acts of violence and call for unity (Neocosmos, 2010).

While these were some of the first proposed theories for explaining this phenomenon by Morris all the way back in 1998, they have been echoed and added to by academics to this day. As late as 2020, Moses E. Ochonu built on the theory of scapegoating by highlighting the tensions between these realities of South Africa's xenophobic scapegoating towards African immigrants and its ideologies of pan-Africanism by offering a genealogy of both (Ochonu, 2020).

While these theories of scapegoating, isolation and bioculture may be the most widely accepted, there are many other voices that claim they are missing the true roots of xenophobia and xenophobic violence in contemporary South Africa all together. Michael Neocosmos almost directly refutes each of these theories in his book, *From 'Foreign Natives' to 'Native Foreigners': Explaining Xenophobia in Post-apartheid South Africa: Citizenship and Nationalism, Identity and Politics*. Neocosmos draws attention to how these explanations for xenophobia in South Africa are much too depoliticized and fail to look at the larger issues at the root of xenophobia. He deems the state-led institutions, legislation and political actors to be the real perpetrators of xenophobic practices that have created the conditions for the culture of xenophobia that runs throughout society, not just the impoverished areas that are understood to perceive foreigners as a threat for resources under the scapegoat theory (Neocosmos, 2010). Neocosmos argues that these narratives have become the hegemonic discourse for understanding xenophobia and are propped up by politicians, elites, and NGOs because it absolves the government's institutional xenophobia through their legislation, policing practices and public rhetoric around migrants. Neocosmos cites these as reasons for why these suggested state-led education programs that are targeted towards township communities could never be a sufficient solution on its own, but rather he says, the solution to xenophobia will be a political one. He argues that we must understand xenophobia as a political discourse whose history and conditions for existence are

deeply intertwined with post-apartheid politics of nationalism founded on a conception of citizenship defined by indigeneity and autochony (Neocosmos, 2010).

This critical lens that analyses xenophobia and xenophobic violence from a more political perspective has been adopted by many other scholars who wish to question the role of state actors and the power dynamics within which this phenomenon has developed. Hanekom and Webster give an in-depth analysis of the particular legislation on migration and migrant's rights along with the sentiments towards non-nationals being expressed by political leaders at the time between the end of apartheid in 1994 and the xenophobic attacks of 2008. They found that South Africa's immigration laws were some of the last to go from the apartheid regime. The Alien Control Act of 1991, a policy fashioned after the apartheid regime's pass laws and influx control that allowed tougher policing of South Africa's external borders with minimal due process and harsh penalties for unauthorized migration, had not been effectively reformed until 2005 (Hanekom and Webster, 2010; Crush, 2002). This legislation in addition to the sentiments expressed by government officials that non-nationals were responsible for crime and lack of economic development went to show that the government and its personnel continually contributed to creating an environment of xenophobia leading up to the 2008 attacks (Hanekom and Webster, 2010).

Colonial Discourse and Afrophobia

In this project, I analyze the issue of xenophobia and xenophobic violence and the role of African non-national storytelling through the lens of postcolonial theory. By looking at xenophobia and xenophobic violence in post-apartheid South Africa through the lens of post-colonial theory, I am able to identify the influence that colonial discourse plays in this issue. Post colonialism is a lens through which to analyze the cultural and discursive legacies of

colonialism and how they impact and influence the realities that previously colonized nations face today. This lens is especially important to understanding how apartheid and specifically its racialized conceptualization of citizenship, are linked to the xenophobia and xenophobic violence that is targeted towards African non-nationals in South Africa today. The apartheid era was characterized largely by its draconian restrictions on internal movement of Black South Africans. Through measures such as the Group Areas act, Black South Africans were forced off of their land and into “homelands” or “Bantustans”, depriving them of their citizenship rights to white urban areas, only allowing them to enter for work with a personal passport of sorts (Landau et al. 2005). Before 1991, an immigrant was defined as someone who must assimilate into the white population (Crush, 2008). Michael Neocosmos argues that through these policies, the apartheid government created a rural/urban binary that ruralized and devalued Black lives while urbanizing and valuing white ones (Neocosmos, 2008). As apartheid came to an end and Black South Africans reclaimed urban spaces upon independence, Neocosmos claims, this binary shifted to associate Africans from other countries as rural and backwards and South Africans as urban and progressive (Neocosmos, 2008). Broadly speaking, this process fits into what Franz Fanon deems one of “The Trials and Tribulations of National Consciousness”, a chapter in the seminal text, *The Wretched of the Earth* (Fanon, 2019). In this chapter, Fanon describes the process in which post-independence nationalism switches to “ultranationalism, chauvinism and racism” (Fanon, 2019, 103). Drawing on examples from post-independence Ivory Coast, Fanon describes this as the process when the colonized bourgeoisie that now holds power “utilizes the aggressiveness of its class to grab the jobs previously held by foreigners” however fails to present the same sorts of opportunities to the masses (Fanon, 2019, 103). As a consequence of the fact that “the only slogan of the bourgeoisie is ‘Replace the foreigners [the former

colonials],” the urban proletariat “side with this nationalist attitude; but, in all justice [they] are merely modeling their attitude on that of the bourgeoisie”. There is, however, a caveat: “Whereas the national bourgeoisie competes with the Europeans the artisans and small traders pick fights with Africans of other nationalities” (Fanon, 2019, 105). By examining xenophobia and xenophobic violence as a product of apartheid era discourses and policies on citizenship coupled with characteristics of postcolonial nation building, we can better understand it as a xenophobic discourse that is reproduced through networks of power and knowledge production (Said, 1979).

This topic of sentiments towards foreigners is what I wish to further interrogate by questioning what sorts of colonial discourses are being pushed about African non-nationals and South African nationalism, where they come from, and how they have led to Afrophobia, xenophobia targeted specifically towards those coming from African countries, in South Africa over time. In his book, *Orientalism*, Edward Said put forward the idea that there is a “network of interests” within colonial powers that rely on the production of the Orient “politically, socioeconomically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively” as somewhere that is strange and mysterious in order to justify and legitimize the domination over it (Said, 1979). This form of domination operates discursively as Said points out, drawing on French philosopher Michel Foucault’s notion of discourse as the means by which power is exercised through knowledge (Said et al., 2000; 64). Said paired Foucault’s philosophy of discursive power with Antonio Gramsci’s concept of hegemony to explain how certain impressions of the “Orient” became so dominant while others did not (Said et al., 2000; 64). Hegemony is the concept that ideas gain influence not through explicit force onto others but through consent, an unwritten agreement that is often presented as common sense (Said et al., 2000; 65). While it focuses specifically on the “Orient”, this work displays a way of identifying and challenging the

hegemonic discourses that have been constructed by colonial powers and prevail to produce and manage a designated other, a phenomenon that can be seen all across the Global South. Said's theory provides a useful frame for analyzing South Africa's discursive othering of African non-nationals by bringing into question the "networks of interest", namely, the government actors and cheap labor employers who would rather push blame for failures in services, employment and overall national progress away from themselves and onto groups who wield less power (Morris, 1998; Tshitereke, 1999; Said, 1979).

A closer look into what exactly that discourse looks like is shown in Oluweaseun Tella's "Understanding Xenophobia in South Africa: The Individual, the State and the International System". Within this article, Tella provides a thorough examination of the ways in which African non-nationals were described in both mass media and government official's speeches. They cite remarks made by previous leader of the Inkatha Freedom Party, Mangosuthu Buthelezi claiming that "all Nigerian immigrants are criminals and drug traffickers" (Tella, 2016). Tella goes on to show that these sentiments are echoed by mainstream media outlets that not only ascribe them labels such as job stealers, illegal or criminals, but go even further to equate different nationalities with certain crimes (Tella, 2016). This saturation of xenophobic sentiments among two of the most influential arenas of public discourse, Tella argues, undoubtedly influence how South Africans perceive African immigrants (Tella, 2016).

Where these discourses come from is detailed in Vineet Thakur's article, "Who is a South African? Interrogating Africanness and Afro-phobia". In this article, Thakur attempts to answer this question by assessing the concept of Afrophobia within South Africa and its role in the occurrences of xenophobic violence. Thakur describes Afrophobia as a sort of xenophobic discourse that deems any African who is "more black than a South African black" as a

“foreigner” or “despicable other” (Thakur, 2011). He sees it as a discourse that comes from internalized colonial notions of the African continent that were held under Apartheid. This was the idea that Africa, apart from South Africa, was still primitive and static.

This ties into a discourse that is intimately connected to that of Afrophobia, and that is South African exceptionalism. In his article, “The Politics of Fear and the Fear of Politics- Reflections on Xenophobic Violence in South Africa”, Michael Neocosmos yet again emphasizes that xenophobia is itself a political discourse but this time goes further to explain that it also operates in relation to a politics of fear. This politics of fear is made up of three discourses which account for why it is African migrants specifically who are being terrorized: the State’s discourse of xenophobia, a discourse of South African exceptionalism and a conception of citizenship founded exclusively on indigeneity (Neocosmos, 2008). When discussing the discourse on exceptionalism, Neocosmos defines it as the nation’s implicit yet undeniably dominant idea that due to its relatively high rates of industrialization and increasingly liberal democracy, South Africa is more comparable to a Southern European or Latin American country than it is to any other nation within the African continent (Neocosmos, 2008). I can personally corroborate this claim with my own experiences in Cape Town when occasionally hearing locals refer to South Africa as “the U.S. of Africa” (however it would not necessarily be seen as a positive) or simply “not African”. This notion is in essence neo-colonial as it sits on the association of the rest of the African continent with images of corruption, backwardness, poverty and failed states (Neocosmos, 2008). These stereotypes that have been built on Apartheid-era colonial discourses and perpetuated by media who take their cues from European sources and politicians who benefit from asserting its alignment with neoliberal economics and politics is what leads everyday South Africans to regard African migrants as seeking to reap the benefits

from their more developed civilization (Neocosmos, 2008). Neocosmos suggests at the end of his piece that it will take more than the denouncement of xenophobic violence to end it. He believes it is critical to present an alternative discourse for South Africans to embrace that is founded on equality (Neocosmos, 2008). This is one of the first pieces of literature on xenophobic violence that I read when first inquiring into to subject matter during my undergraduate studies and it instantly had me hooked and wanting to know more. It was this conclusion that made me ask in what ways could this alternative discourse around shared humanity and empathy be established that led me to look at the method of storytelling.

A scholar who has found a case in which this shared humanity was prioritized in contemporary South Africa is Nigel Gibson and his article, “What Happened to the ‘Promised Land’? A Fanonian Perspective on Post-Apartheid South Africa”. Gibson also discussed the reasons why white people coming from other countries were not being targeted the way black people were and was also led to the conception of South African exceptionalism. Gibson draws from Franz Fanon’s assertion that “You are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich” to explain that the discourse on South African exceptionalism enabled this fear of the black peril to be channeled down to the poor (Gibson, 2011). White people from other countries could never be seen as foreigners under this framework because whiteness is so closely tied to affluence, investment and business (Gibson, 2011). This goes to explain why foreigners were only identified in the townships of South Africa. The focus of Gibson’s study, however, is a grassroots organization of shack dwellers, Abahlali baseMjondolo (AbM) who have chosen to found their own politics of the poor and operate under a ‘living politic’. This living politic is based on rejecting any party, ethnic or elite politics that would have the potential to divide its members and listening to the voices and demands of the poor (Gibson, 2011). Gibson deems this

restructuring of the political system from the grassroots as an application of Fanon's call for a humanization of the world (Gibson, 2011). This organization went to prove Neocosmos' belief in discourses of commonality right in 2008 as none of the areas that associated themselves with the AbM engaged in the wave of xenophobic attacks. This encourages my own research as it may suggest a correlation between the centering of autonomy, grassroots organizing etc. and less hostility towards those who are perceived as foreign and provides a fascinating framework to analyze this phenomenon through.

Storytelling and Social Change

This project also analyzes the role of non-national storytelling as a way to reflect the theoretical framework of critical race theory (CRT). The aspects that especially aid in my assessment of the role of non-national storytelling is the way in which CRT provides a way to highlight, critique and correct racism and marginalization on both an individual and institutional level (Vandeyar, 2013). While a large portion of my study highlights how non-national storytelling addresses the issue of xenophobia on a personal and interpersonal level, it is only when these roles are contextualized by the systemic and structural racism that perpetuates this issue that it can be understood for its large-scale importance of decolonizing South African nationalism, citizenship and belonging. The central goal of this capstone, however, is to contribute to a growing body of CRT literature that is concerned with re-narrativizing the story of globalization by centering the perspectives, experiences and voices of historically marginalized populations of the world, specifically those from the Global South (Vandeyar, 2013). It is this concern that is at the heart of my foundational belief in and advocacy for the advantages of centering marginalized voices to better address global issues and ultimately bringing about social change.

This project also engages with concepts and critiques presented in Gayatri Spivak's, "Can the Subaltern Speak?". In this piece, she challenges the conclusion that Foucault and fellow French philosopher Gilles Deleuze come to in "Intellectuals and Power: A Conversation Between Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze" that representation on the behalf of the subaltern has "withered away" and that they can now in fact speak for themselves. Spivak interrogates this notion by asking if the subaltern truly can speak for themselves or not. One of the most useful parts of this essay for my own interest is Spivak's discussion on the epistemic violence that ensued during colonial domination that lingers to this day. This epistemic violence is "the remotely orchestrated, far-flung and heterogeneous project to constitute the colonial subject as other" (Spivak, 1988. p.76). Spivak's questioning of whether the subaltern can in fact represent themselves even to this day has been a question that has stuck in my mind ever since I read this piece. Her arguments lead me to questioning the existence of any spaces or opportunities for marginalized populations to represent themselves and their experiences freely. Additionally, I question whether their messages can be received by others without being mediated through colonized frames of reference. Acknowledging that globally these spaces are limited, this piece pushes me to ask why that is and what could come from creating more spaces that encourage the self-expression of marginalized individuals not only to *speak* but to be clearly *heard*.

The text that offers the most practical utility to this study when it comes to storytelling is Caren Schnur Niele's introduction to the special issue of the journal *Storytelling, Self, Society* titled *Storytelling and Social Change* (2009). This piece provides a concise overview of the many broad functions of storytelling as a tool for enacting social change and draws from many scholarly studies that exemplify these roles. Acknowledging the present struggle of not being able to measure the impact quantitatively nor to locate it precisely, Niele frames storytelling as a

catalyst for change by what it exemplifies (Niele, 2009). Its emphasis on language, for example, promotes the use of oral communication over physical conflict. She also sees storytellers as community activists in the way that they are able to both recognize and undermine harmful hegemonic narratives associated with their community (Niele, 2009). She highlights how personal experience stories by marginalized individuals have the power to reframe shared experiences through the eyes of the ‘other’ (Niele, 2009). These assertions about the capabilities of storytelling have been especially useful in articulating its specific roles within the situation of African non-national storytelling in South Africa.

Additionally, the section in which I discuss the roles of non-national storytelling at the interpersonal level utilizes the metaphor of stories acting as “mirrors” and “windows” for audience members to build empathy, affirmation and solidarity. This metaphor originated from scholar Rudine Sims Bishop as a way to think about the role of children’s literature in early education. In her piece, “Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors”, Bishop claims that books can serve as “windows” that give readers looks into worlds and experiences that may be unfamiliar to them (Bishop,1990). They can also, for some, be mirrors that reflect our own lives and experiences back to us (Bishop,1990). Bishop uses this metaphor to highlight how reading becomes a means of self-affirmation that white children disproportionately get to experience in the stories they read, while students of color rarely find any mirrors. This was meant to make the case for the diversification of children’s literature in elementary schooling. For the purpose of this capstone, however, I find it useful to use this metaphor in examining how non-national stories of experience are received by both fellow non-national and South African audiences. Judging from observation of the discussions that the stories initiated as well as responses through the post-summit survey, audience members either saw these as educational windows into the

lived experiences of non-national students with which they are very unfamiliar or mirrors that reflected feelings and experiences of otherness and discrimination that they could strongly identify with. For some, it was the “mirror” aspects of the stories of discrimination that helped them empathize with the “window” aspects of the non-national experience. It is this combination that I believe has powerful potential for building strong networks of solidarity that can contribute to social cohesion between South Africans and non-nationals by allowing them to identify the myths of difference and competition perpetuated through xenophobic discourses.

METHODS

For the purposes of this project, I traveled to Cape Town, South Africa to pursue field work from June 3rd, 2021, to August 13th, 2021. During my stay, I partnered with Africa Unite¹, a human rights NGO focused on facilitating social cohesion between locals and non-nationals in South Africa. The majority of this research has revolved around the organization's youth "School Club" program's Anti-Xenophobia Summit I planned in partnership with the NGO staff. My research utilized a mixed methods approach that relied on participant observation, interviews, and surveys.

My participant observation took place during a workshop on storytelling leading up to the summit and the summit itself, both of which were held over the Zoom group call computer application, allowing me to have full transcriptions from each event. The storytelling workshop lasted 90 minutes and was attended by two Africa Unite staff members, two poet guest speakers, and nine non-national students, two of which were presenting their first-person experience stories at the upcoming summit. The purpose of this participant observation was to see what advice the poets give to the learners and what importance they view storytelling holding. It was also meant to observe the ways in which the two stories of these non-national students were received by their fellow non-national peers. The Anti-xenophobia summit lasted 2 hours and had 63 attendees from across South Africa, including Cape Town, Johannesburg, Durban and the Eastern Cape. These events were initially minted to be held in person. The purpose of this participant observation was to see how these stories and speeches given by non-nationals were received by both non-national and South African citizens and the kinds of responses and conversations initiated by these experience stories and how they informed eventual solution proposals by the end of the summit. While these events were originally intended to be held in

¹ www.africaunite.org.za

person, they coincided with South Africa's stay-at-home order following a spike in Covid-19 Delta variant cases, therefore requiring the organization to switch over to a virtual medium.

My interviews were held with two Zimbabwean artists who have spent time living in South Africa, one is a musician while the other is a painter. The interviews consisted of questions about their motivations for their art, the messages they seek to convey, and the role they see their art and storytelling in general playing in creating change. Each interview lasted between one and two hours. One of the two interviews was held over Zoom due to distance while the other was in-person at the gallery that the artist was showcasing his exhibition at.

The surveys were dispersed among the participants of the summit following its end. The questions within these surveys were meant to encourage them to share their thoughts on the storyteller's work, what their main take-aways are and how it may have changed their own perspectives. The purpose of these surveys was to gather and analyze the impressions, reactions, and reflections of the participants following the summit that they may have not been able to express during the summit. Originally these questions were going to be posed to the participants in the form of semi-structured focus groups and short writing assignments. However, South Africa's stay-at-home order at the time required this method to also be switched to an online modality. This shift may have held the greatest limitations to my research. It is likely that the intended in-person methods would have garnered a greater number of responses than the online survey. This is because while the participants were provided data to join the summit, not all of the students had any extra data left following and could therefore not access the internet following the summit. This is indicative of the digital divide at play for many students during this time of stay-at-home lockdown in South Africa. It proved to be a major issue concerning engagement considering 17 of the 63 participants filled out the post-summit survey. However,

considering the purpose of the survey was to gather more qualitative than quantitative data, the survey remained to be especially important for the purposes of this research project. It is through this combination of interviews with those doing the storytelling, observation of the storytelling itself, and the observed verbal and written feedback of audience members that I intended to draw a more complete analysis of what can come from these interactions at the interpersonal level.

RESULTS: A TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Leading Up to the Summit: Storytelling Workshop

Before my involvement with the NGO that year, Africa Unite's School Club program started a project to create a booklet compiled of life experience testimonials from non-national students about their experiences migrating from their birth-country to South Africa and letters from local students either addressing their non-national peers in general, expressing their empathy towards them and their situations or addressed specifically to an official advocating for a migration-related cause they care about. This earlier initiative produced the Farayi and Shalom's testimonials, partially Karolyn's petition, and Sisikelelwa's empathy letter (details to follow later in this section) were showcased in the Anti-xenophobia School Summit. In preparation for this summit, the School Club wanted to equip the nine non-national students who had written their testimonials, including the two who would be showcased at the summit, with advice on how to improve their writing, speaking and overall storytelling skills. Therefore, the School Club organized a storytelling workshop that connected these nine non-national students with two professional poets, Haroldene and Petro, who shared their advice on how to become a better storyteller and improve the testimonials they already have. The first poet, Haroldene Tshiende, was a South African native who has had a long career in writing and performing poetry and has participated in events and activities with Africa Unite in the past. She has previously hosted five day writing workshops but reduced the main points of her course to give the participants a "crash course" in improving their storytelling skills. The second poet, Petro Mbwanya is originally from the Democratic Republic of Congo and now resides in Cape Town. He identifies as a poet and spoken word artist and has partnered with the NGO in the past

Due to covid-related lockdown restrictions at the time, this workshop was a webinar session and took place on July 12th over Zoom from 10:00am - 11:30am. The agenda for this workshop was to have Haroldene speak for 20 minutes and then engage with questions and comments for 10 minutes. Following her would be Petro to offer his advice for 30 minutes with 10 minutes for questions and comments as well. The rest of the time was set aside for an open discussion that included Farayi and Shalom sharing their testimonials with the rest of the group and getting feedback. The workshop went as follows:

Haroldene participated as a professional poet and writer from South Africa to help give the non-national learners advice and tips on how to improve their writing and overall storytelling capabilities. This first half was on the more practical side of staying consistent in your writing and the importance of reading to improve your writing. However, one of the points that the instructor spent much of her time on was the importance of finding your “voice” as a writer. This had much to do with finding a way to express your authentic self, according to her. This talk of self-exploration led to a larger discussion on identity and grappling through the process of understanding who you are. The instructor went on to share her own journey with understanding herself and racial identity,

...it took me quite years to understand...who am I you know. Where...do I come from? Because I'm coming from such a diverse culture from my mom and my dad side. I wasn't sure if I'm colored², am I Khoi³ or what you know...It took me many, many years to understand, ‘Who am I?’.

She emphasized the importance of valuing your voice and your perspective in any given experience, “it is so important to find your voice, what, what brought you to South Africa, what feelings, you know, if you came with a family, your own, all your family will have a different

² "Coloured" is a South African racial category that refers to someone who is of mixed European, African and/or Asian heritage. It has been both contested and affirmed during the post-apartheid era.

³ "Khoi" is short for "Khoikhoi/San" which is a group indigenous to Southern Africa

story, even though you all came together, or you experienced something together, but you, as an individual have your own story. So what is that story?” She continues to emphasize the importance of a writer’s voice even in the more practical pieces of her advice on editing and revising, “We also need to go through our work again, like edit it enough for the other person because the editor will not have your mind set, and they will take your voice away”. She also gave advice on how to let go of one’s inner saboteur, both in writing and in general. She shared a line from one of her poems:

There's a line that I did in one of my poems *Beyond the Pain*, ‘too long that I have made love to the things that nearly destroyed me’. Those things are stopping you from being free, from being who you want to be. So today, I want to bring something before you to try to stop those things that are stopping you from being free. Whether it's a secret, whether it's something that really hurts you, whether it's something that you are afraid to share, those are the things that will...take the shackles off your feet and open your mouth, and then be the voice for others.

Petro, a poet from the Democratic Republic of Congo, living in Cape Town, South Africa then joined the meeting to offer his advice on how to become a better storyteller. He also started off with the nuts and bolts of the writing process and the importance of editing. But soon after he also began to emphasize the importance of “authenticity” in one’s own writing. “You have to tell yourself, your art...or your story” he said, “It's yours. It's not anybody's and nobody can tell it better than yourself.”

Petro also discussed the importance of being confident in oneself and their own storytelling style and encouraged the students to not compare themselves to any other storyteller, urging them to “tell your story your way”. However, while Haroldene’s advice on authenticity followed a similar tone of encouragement and personal self esteem, Petro’s advice grew into takes that were more explicitly political:

So, stay in your... own skin, stay in your own body, tell your own story your own way, but follow the basic principles of storytelling. Yeah, like...when you're writing your story for example...you're African you live...for example, in Kenya, Nairobi. Why don't you...use the things that you see on a daily basis on the street?...Why don't you use those elements in your stories? You prefer to say things that are from a world you've never even been to...Most of the books we read are not written by Africans and that's...a problem for African writers or students. All we read, it's about England, it's America and sometimes I don't know China. So there is nothing we know like about Africa, that's what we read in books, which is so unfortunate, but we should try as in this generation, we should try our best to bring back like to define African literature, whether it be poetry or other forms of writing, we have to like redefine it. And...this has to be a revolution, [you] have to like...try your best to stay authentic to who you are, where you live...So just be yourself and tell your story your way and that's my battle everyday...

Both Petro and Haroldene emphasized the importance of drawing from the things in their everyday life, encouraging that these are the things that will make their stories different and special. Following the speakers' portions, the two non-national students who would be speaking at the summit, Farayi and Shalom, shared their stories about their personal experiences.

Farayi was the first to share about her experience (for full transcript see Appendix 1.1). Farayi is a 16-year-old girl who immigrated to Cape Town, South Africa with her family when she was 11 years old. She is very involved in the NGO's School Club program and holds many leadership roles within her high school's School Club student body parliament. In the testimonial she gave to the small group, she shared that she came to South Africa from Zimbabwe at 11 years old and had to wait to go to school for the first 6 months she was there because of the time of arrival. She remembers the first day of school being difficult, feeling as if she was playing catch-up and hearing everyone around her speaking a different language but overall considered 5th-7th grade enjoyable although she did have to take a taxi⁴ on her own to get to school from her home in Parow to Woodstock (approximately 11 miles). However, while she was still in 7th

⁴ A "taxi", in South Africa refers to a minibus, also known as a "kombi". As part of an informal transportation industry in the country, taxis cover routes not serviced by buses or trains, picking up and dropping off large numbers of passengers at a time, making it more comparable to an informal bus system

grade her parents moved to Kraaifontein, a township that is approximately 18 miles away, requiring her to then take two taxis or a train to get to school and back every day. She recalls having to get up at 5:00am and getting home around 6:00pm which would leave her little time to rest and study but she made it through the school year with passing grades and then started high school in Kraaifontein. This high school was an English medium school but the teacher would administer classes in what was the majority of the student's mother tongue, isiXhosa. She constantly had to ask her teacher to teach in English and they would but the next day they would go back to speaking isiXhosa. She soon accepted the reality that she would have to learn the language, "I had to force myself to learn isiXhosa so that I could understand my lessons more, so that I can feel less of an outsider".

Despite this effort on Farayi's end, it seems like she doesn't feel like much has changed:

Right now I'm in grade ten and still nothing has changed. The difference is I now I can communicate with people in their language but I still constantly feel like I don't belong here... You feel like an outsider most of the time. And I shouldn't have to feel that way, because we're all Africans here.

She continued this advocacy for how she feels she should be treated after discussing how she has been treated, "It doesn't matter what color I am, I should feel welcome no matter where I am. But I constantly feel like that from my peers, from my elders, from my teachers, [it] doesn't matter the age they are, but it's just the mindset they have". She punctuated her testimonial with a bold assertion that she wishes she could leave and spoke up on behalf of her other non-national peers at her school as well, "If I were to get the chance to just leave I would definitely leave. That's how far and how deep it has cut me and I'm pretty sure my peers as well".

Following Farayi's story, she got feedback from her peers. The other non-national peers related to her experience by saying they've gone through similar experiences with speaking a

different language at school, relating to how frustrating it can be. This story also opened up a conversation about “mutual integration”. The guest poet, Petro claimed that you need to do your part to learn about the culture you’re joining if you want to be accepted. Farayi responded by sharing that she was also viewed as thinking she’s better than others because of her accent as well as using English. She reasoned, “I did my part to learn the language and they (other students) haven’t done anything about it”. A participant, Evidence shared that while listening to Farayi share her story, he could envision Farayi riding the taxi as an 11 year old. He remembers how challenging it can be to navigate that transportation system and congratulated Farayi on her courage and going through what she had to go to school, “you’re a super woman”.

It then came time for Shalom to share her testimonial (for full transcript see Appendix 1.2)

Shalom, also 16 years old, is originally from Zimbabwe and now attends high school in Cape Town where she’s extremely involved as a student and aspiring artist. In Shalom’s story, she shared that she first came to South Africa at the age of two, but had to return to Zimbabwe when her mother passed away to stay with her sister because her father could not look after her and go to work at the same time. She then came back to South Africa with her father and aunt. She shared that while she learned the language of peers, isiXhosa, she still experienced xenophobic bullying. She expressed that she felt pressure to not tell her parents about the xenophobic bullying going on at school to not worry them because she knows they came here to give her a better life. She describes an instance with her friends where they were talking about “foreigners” negatively:

In high school, I have to deal with situations whereby I'm...with my Xhosa friends. And they're talking about like foreigners and xenophobia. And you're there having to listen to this as they speak about xenophobia and how Africans are taking our- foreigners taking over their land and invading their land, and then how they have to go, and I'm there having to listen to this? And then they look at me, and then they tell me no, no, no, you're, you're not, you're not foreign you, you you're one of us. You're Xhosa.

This contributed to her already existing conflicts over her identity:

I asked myself, questioning my identity, 'what am I really?' because with them, I'm Xhosa, but I'm not Xhosa. It feels like I'm slowly losing my mother tongue, slowly losing my roots, slowly losing myself and my identity.

Shalom discusses many of her internal struggles as a non-national in South Africa, "Even though I'm trying to fight for a better future, trying to make my mother proud, trying to make my father proud, I'm also losing myself, and I'm unable to cope."

Not only does she worry about herself and her own struggles as a perceived foreigner, but she expresses that she also worries for her father:

... I have to deal with the pressure of my father leaving me at home and leaving through the door in the cruel world full of xenophobia not knowing if he is to return home, not knowing if I will see him again. Such fears fill my mind as I see on the news my brothers and my sisters being beaten up, being killed for trying to seek for a better life, for their children and fear fills my heart knowing that in this country, I will never have a place

She expresses a fear of being found out, "...praying that no one's notices that I am not from here, praying that my accent does not break out and I do not somehow speak my mother tongue in front of them or I'll be mocked for that". She also expressed she struggles with feelings of isolation and also points out the double standard in how white foreigners are treated differently than foreigners coming from African countries like her home of Zimbabwe:

I wish that the same way people look at people in England, and they think, 'oh wow, the language is superior' and 'oh, wow, they're so fascinating' I wish they could give the same fascination to me as well in my language, while I'm mostly different like them, but when they see me they see an enemy, but I am the same color as them.

During the feedback portion following Shalom's story, Farayi related to the struggles of worrying about your own mother tongue in front of her peers, "...you just tell yourself that, 'I hope I don't make a mistake' 'I hope they don't know, I'm Zimbabwean' That's always your fear, because you don't know what's going to happen. So it was very powerful. And I really understand where you're coming from"

Another classmate was moved by what she was saying about language that part of his praise was in their mother tongue, Shona, “I just wanted to say that it was beautiful. For a moment there listening to you I just thought that- let me just put English aside and just thank you in Shona for saying that- (praise in Shona) wow that is so beautiful. I told her like - yo English (Shona) yeah and love you Shalom.” Petro offered advice to Shalom, while a bit dismissive in the way he told her she should be happy that her friends see her as one of them, he also brought up that as an African, she should know that Xhosa is her language too.

Leading Up to the Summit: Eugh “Foreign” Interview

Eugh Nyakabau was born in Zimbabwe but at an early age moved with his family to Batswana and then South Africa for reasons related to employment and school. He has also traveled to China The interview started off with Eugh sharing the meaning behind the stage name ‘Foreign’:

...I didn't want to be seen as this one type of person, I wanted people to see me as a collective, you know, and as everything else that I was, and so I looked for something that would that best described me my journey, my story, and who the world had already said I was, and trying to give them a different perspective. 'Cause I've been a foreigner my whole life, from the time I was three years old. My parents and my family and I have been moving around different countries in southern Africa. So that's why I was foreign. What I had always been, you know, and so I decided to take that mantle on.

Eugh describes this act of “taking that mantle on” as a very empowering experience.

...I felt like from that moment forth, I literally took my life into my own hands and deciding that, okay, this was the name. And now it's in giving meaning to that name. I think I'm still trying to figure out what it actually means myself. Because so far, it's its expression, you know, it's putting yourself out there without the fear of judgment, you know, and without you, yourself, being the one to judge others, living freely and as explosively as possible, you know, authenticity. So, I think that's what it is for me. And so I guess I'm still figuring it out. But so far, it's, it's about authenticity and transparency, almost like how South Africa labels themselves as the rainbow nation, you know, they cater for all that's pretty much what foreignne is, you know, and it's an oxymoron, so to speak, because foreign means out of place. You know, but here it is, it's its meaning it's inclusive.

Since he brought up the idea of South Africa calling itself a rainbow nation, I asked him if he believes it really is or if the reality of xenophobic violence is too large of a contradiction for that to be true. He believes that at its core it is, and xenophobia is one of the conflicts that comes from being so diverse:

You know, she's (South Africa) still trying to figure herself out, in my opinion, but this is who she set out to be. You know, she caters for all. She is a rainbow nation, because she's infused with so many different cultures, so many different perspectives. And with all these differences, there will always be conflict, you know, there will always be a tug of war here and there, you know, we always pray not at the same time, but those things do happen.

He believes that the "rainbow nation" is more so a goal to aspire to than it is something already achieved. I asked him what he thinks would help in the efforts to live up to that rainbow nation ideal. He said the first thing people need to start with is love for one's self, which will enable you to love your neighbor. This will enable people, in Foreign's eyes, to develop mutual support systems or improve their sense of community and work towards collective improvement. He says that he sees this progression towards more collective-mindedness more and more and believes that increased education will contribute to this.

I think when people start to open up and realize more, which they are, which is really exciting to actually see is that people are slowly opening up to the idea and realizing that I cannot do this by myself, you know, so I think the more that people start to see and think like that, the better instead of focusing on what you do not have, right now, you know, or coveting what your neighbor has, that you do not have, as compared to you guys actually sitting down and being like, 'I have this, you have that, let's put all things together. And let's try head this way', don't you think it makes sense?

Foreign emphasizes the barrier that self-hate plays in many of the communities that he has come across and believes it feeds into the conflicts that occur in said places, "...not only in South Africa, but also in Zimbabwe and also even here, in Zambia. Self-hate is like the biggest thing."

This self-hate is known in some circles to be “Afrophobia”, “You know one problem in the whole Afrophobia [problem]. Oh, it's real. That's jealousy. That's pure jealousy.”

I asked what in his opinion would help combat Afrophobia and he discussed the role that power holders play in setting presidents through their statements and actions. He claimed, “...if the President or even the mayor, you know, the chief of a certain society, community comes out and he starts preaching a different gospel about how people should literally learn to love one another and showcase it themselves. You know, it would tip the scales.”

While I didn't expect Foreignn to be a sociology and conflict resolution expert on these topics, I thought it was useful to get an understanding of how he views these issues and where he believes they come from based on what he's experienced. What was more central was understanding how these interpretations come from and inform his philosophy around self-expression in the context of these social conflicts. And what came through was his belief in valuing one's own opinion and voice so you can value others. When describing the role he sees his music playing in building a better future, he said, “I'm just trying to show and empower people that it's okay to tell your story. You know, it's okay to be different.”

He sees his music as a vehicle for sharing this opinion. He considers the hooks and catchy beats as the “bait” that he uses to hook people into taking an interest in what he has to say. He also wants his art to help people feel less alone and more confident. This theme of confidence and self-esteem is apparent throughout his discussion on his own work:

One piece of advice, to walk away with (from the summit) is dare to be, yeah, dare to be, in the sense that dare to be the person who stands up and speaks on the behalf of somebody else, you know, somebody who's less fortunate than you or less capable. Dare to dream if there are people who are...so fixed on things happening a certain way and you have an idea or an opinion about things, maybe heading in a certain direction, you know, seek out and do it. Dare to be in the sense that, do not be afraid to live or ask questions. You know, think for yourself.

This confidence in self enables him to be excited by the idea of incorporating different elements of musical styles from various cultures. He compares this to his journey of never quite fitting in :

...perfect example, I've got an accent. And I've been hearing that my whole life, right? So when I'm in Zim (Zimbabwe) I have an accent, when I'm in Bots (Botswana) I have an accent, when I'm in SA, I have an accent , when I'm here (Zambia) I have an accent, to my family, I have an accent, you know. And that's, like I say, that's, I'm a product of my environment. You know, everywhere I've gone, there's always been that little shift. And that is who I am.

I asked if there are any messages that he aims to communicate through his art. He responded that two phrases he has carried with him since he was young are “Reach beyond the stars” and “A luta continua, victoria ascerta” which translates to, “the struggle continues, victory is certain”.

This is a phrase used by many liberation struggles, including Zimbabwe’s which was most meaningful to him:

...because this life, it's not a struggle, but it's a journey. You know, it has its ups and downs. And a lot of the times we tend to forget that, especially when things don't happen the way we want or we'd expect them to, you know, and we do get buckled down into a little corner but when reminded that, like, it's, it's going to be there man, but like, victory is certain still

He also says he talks about God in his music because that has been a source of motivation and a role that he sees as why he’s here and has the things he does. Foreignn see’s the summit and the sharing of stories and experiences as a way to “open up a channel of empathy”.

Anti-Xenophobia Summit

The annual Anti-Xenophobia Summit was organized by the Africa Unite School Club team which included myself, three staff members, and one intern who had just started his internship.

The summit was held among just over 60 participants coming from 19 high schools from the Cape Town, Johannesburg, and Durban branches of the program. The event was originally planned to be held in person, however, due to a surge of the Covid-19 Delta variant in South Africa and around the world, the country was in the middle of a two-week lock-down at this time

which forced us to hold the summit virtually over Zoom. Participating students were provided data before the summit by the NGO so they could tune in on their devices at no cost of their own. However, issuing this data all before the summit proved to be difficult for the one staff member in charge of this task and resulted, as we found from the feedback surveys, in some students not being able to join the meeting on time and missing part of the summit. The event lasted two hours and fifteen minutes on a Saturday morning, July 17th 2021. The schedule for the summit was as follows:

10:00: Summit Begins
10:10: Guest Speaker #1: Eugh (aka Foreignn)
10:45: Testimonial #1: Farayi
11:05: Testimonial #2: Shalom
11:25: Guest Speaker #2: Karolyn
11:40: Empathy Letter: Sasikelelwa
11:50: Reflections and Recommendations
12:15: Summit ends

Each speech or testimonial was followed up with an open discussion about the topics addressed in the speech. These conversations were led by the School Club Coordinator at the time, Nikelwa. These discussions lasted around ten minutes each and the summit ended in a longer discussion on the kinds of solutions students, community members, and the country could pursue to address some of the major issues identified through the speeches that day.

Foreignn's Speech (See Appendix 1.3 for key passages from this speech) kicked the summit off. His speech addressed his experience moving all around Southern Africa and the treatment he has received as a "foreigner" in each of these spaces. He shared how these experiences have shaped him, his music and his view of humanity. He discussed how individuals' environments, both locally and increasingly over social media, shape their perceptions of the world and how it often leaves out the positive commonalities that connect us. He encouraged the students to find their passions and let those be the driving force that pushes

them to be the best they can be. In addition, he told participants to seek out interactions with others different from them in order to engage in the “exchange” of stories and expand their world view. He ended off with the sentiment that there is always a way to cultivate positive energy with those around you as long as you are open to do so.

Discussion:

The lead discussion moderator put forward a question concerning why racial and xenophobic slurs are used towards others. Respondents cited interpersonal reasons, not wanting to get to know others, people discriminate against those who are different and unique - they don't try to understand the way they are and scared of what they don't know or understand, they conclude that it comes down to choosing to try and understand others. An Africa Unite staff member commented to give historical and more educational input and discussed how they are meant to deliberately divide people during apartheid.

Q: How do we address this problem and better our communities?

Student response: “Charity starts at home” and sees all oppression as similar/discrimination as equal or at least coming from the same issue, wants there to be better education on these issues especially early on in grade school.

Q: How do we use social media to educate people and change our communities?

A student shared that she makes videos on social media about different topics and issues to “speak sense into people’s minds” and emphasized the importance of being a leader and an effective motivational speaker

Farayi's testimonial (See Appendix 1.1 for full speech) followed and addressed the same events and struggles she discussed when she shared her testimonial during the storytelling workshop.

Discussion

Q: How do we ensure migrant learners are getting equal access to education?

Student response: Local learners need to be allies and speak up on behalf of non-national learners and ask teachers to speak in English so non-national students do have to draw attention to themselves that they don't understand and avoid being singled out

Another student commented that she relates as a Zimbabwean immigrant living in Durban. She wasn't bullied for language since she learned to speak isiZulu quickly but still got called names like "makwerekwere"⁵.

A third student added that at her school in Cape Town located in a suburb and talked about the struggles for immigrant and black teachers. She said that her school has "only three black teachers" and one is leaving due to discrimination. She recalls that a teacher who came from West Africa was harassed by students and told to "speak properly".

Shalom's Testimonial (See Appendix 1.2) came after and also followed the same sequence as it did during the storytelling workshop. The one unfortunate difference, however, was that as she got to her encounter with her friends who shared xenophobic remarks about foreigners only to tell her not to be offended because they view her as Xhosa was not shared due to technical

⁵ "Makwerekwere" is a derogatory name used towards African immigrants in South Africa

difficulties that cut out her audio over zoom momentarily. Even without sharing that experience, Shalom's testimonial still left a huge impact on the audience.

Discussion

A different student commented in the chat to ask Shalom how it feels to be foreign and what her experience is like. This was celebrated by the moderator of the event who teaches social emotional learning, Shalom responded that it feels very isolating, "like there's a wall around you."

Another participant commented to relate to Shalom's experience as someone who came from the eastern cape to Cape Town and going to an English/Afrikaans speaking school in primary school. He was one of the older participants but said her story brought him back to his past of feeling the same way and brought up emotions and asserted that "we are all foreigners in situations, not from different countries but in different races and other kinds of ways. Another girl shared her experience of moving to Cape Town from Johannesburg and her struggle with her accent and having more Indian features

Karolyn, 18 years old at the time was next (See Appendix 1.4 for key passages from this speech). She shared about her journey as someone who is considered "stateless" in South Africa. Due to South African policy, even though Karolyn was born in South Africa, she was legally stateless because she was born to parents who came from the Democratic Republic of Congo and held refugee status. Because she is not a citizen of South Africa, she lacks any form of identification other than an unabridged birth certificate. Karolyn organized a petition for South Africa's department for immigration, the Department of Home Affairs, to reopen their services that aid in getting stateless high schoolers like herself identification cards that they need to finish high school and apply for college. She shares what this struggle was like for her but made sure to

emphasize that this is an issue that many young “foreigners” experience and the need to push hard for them to access their rights. She highlights how this is an example of how xenophobia operates at the institutional level and impacts so many people’s ability to support themselves and their families.

Discussion:

Student question: How did you do it? How did you start it?

Karolyn responded that she created her petition on change.org and was promoted by the website once they saw it was gaining traction. Another student related to Karolyn’s story by saying that her friend had a similar struggle and said that when she saw Karolyn’s petition she thought “Yes! Finally something!”. She agreed that there are many stresses of being a foreign student and just finding funding is exhausting. She emphasized that there is a lot of work left to do.

As a way to close out the summit on a positive and unifying note, a South African student, Sasikelelwa, recited his poem entitled, “Motherland” (See Appendices 1.5 for full poem). This poem carried an overall message for Pan-African unity and Black pride. This was followed up by his Empathy Letter (See Appendices 1.6 for full letter) that specifically acknowledged the struggles he imagines many non-nationals undergo in South Africa and the need for societal change. These two pieces received a great amount of applause and praise from the entire audience.

Final Discussion: Recommendations for Future Solutions

The following questions were posed to the group:

1. How do we improve access to education?
2. How do we bring an end to xenophobia-based bullying and name-calling?
3. How to integrate learners without compromising their identities?
4. How do we end violence and looting of migrant stores in our communities?

5. How do we contribute to ending xenophobia in our schools and communities?

A brief summary of responses given:

Look at yourself, it starts at home

Initiate more dialogue about issues of race, xenophobia and sexuality in schools to raise awareness, dedicate time to tell others “what you are, the color of your skin, what you refer to yourself as, is not a sin”

Focus on youth because it’s harder to change adults’ minds

Education and campaigns, institutional change, and involvement of community members

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

When placed in the context of post-apartheid South Africa's situation of xenophobic violence, the use of storytelling by African (in most of the instances that I engaged with, specifically Zimbabwean) immigrants takes on a number of roles that could garner a number of positive effects that have the potential to address the issue of xenophobic violence on multiple levels. This analysis is from the interviews, survey analysis and participant observation of an NGO's anti-xenophobia summit where four migrant speakers shared their experiences with other students from high schoolers from Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban. The conclusions drawn from this analysis is when it comes to addressing the issue of xenophobic violence, migrant storytelling takes on importance on a personal and interpersonal level, addressing each of these facets that also contribute to xenophobic violence in their own ways.

When it comes to addressing the attitudinal contributors to xenophobia and xenophobic violence, storytelling appeared to play a dual purpose as a way to both educate and let locals in on the personal lived experiences of migrants, allowing listeners to build empathy for immigrants in South Africa through relating to the speakers by relating to different aspects of their story, especially the feeling of being discriminated against or made to feel like the other. It was also indicated that these learners empathized with the speakers. They gave voice to their empathy both during the summit and in the survey, stipulating that they would like to learn more about the lived experiences of migrants in South Africa. Through interviews of artists and observation from a storytelling workshop with two poets, storytelling also plays an important role in allowing storytellers to explore and assert who they are in a way that is authentic to them.

In the ensuing sections, I will first focus on the personal significance of storytelling for the non-national storytellers, in particular how it allows them to explore and affirm their

identities. I will then turn to how storytelling impacts the audience members who are listening. By utilizing Bishop's "windows" and "mirrors" metaphor to analyze the feedback that "local" South African audience members gave in the post-summit survey, this section highlights how stories from non-nationals gave local listeners new perspectives to look through as well as relatable experiences to see themselves in.

I. The Personal: Storytelling's Role for Non-National Storytellers

1. Identity Exploration

The act of compiling a story about one's self, especially as someone who is often defined in society by who or what they are not, a "non-national", requires one to sit with oneself and ask a series of questions. For the storytellers who were a part of this research project, they all seemed to at one point ask the same question: "Who am I?" In this section I will discuss how storytelling was found to serve as a way for non-national storytellers to explore their identity through the creation process. This includes the process of "finding your voice" as a writer or artist before embarking on writing your story and the process of exploration that requires. As well as using one's story itself as a way to discuss their journey with identity struggles. Considering the plethora of negative identity traits pushed by media and politicians in the mainstream discourse concerning who African non-nationals are and what they are in South Africa to do, this ability to create space for reconciling those external voices with one's own when it comes to answering that question, "Who am I?" is essential for one finding or creating their place in a society that has failed to make space for them.

1.1 "Finding Your Voice"

As Haroldene shared her tips on how to improve as a storyteller, one of her central messages was on the importance of “finding your voice”. This is not something that must be discovered and understood only before attempting to share one’s story, but an ongoing process of discovery. Haroldene, although a native South African, expressed that this was a process she had to go through with her racial identity as someone who is mixed race in South Africa. She expressed that through her storytelling career, she grappled with her Coloured and Khoi heritage. She also shared how her identity has been impacted by the way her family has treated her. All of these different facets of her identity that are virtually out of her control, given importance by both her family and society, are things that require to be analyzed in developing her own “voice”. She shared that ultimately what gave her the ability to find comfort with herself among these predetermined identities was in part her chosen religious identity and relationship with god.

One of the summit’s performers, “Foreign” expressed a similar point of introspection as he decided to pursue his artistic career more seriously and had to decide on his stage name. He shared that this was the point where he had to ask himself who he really was and what he represents. This led him to reflect on the fact that considering how often he has moved, no matter where he is, he is seen by those around him as a foreigner. These external views were something he decided to embrace as a part of him, however being sure to distinguish his individuality and uniqueness by choosing to alter “foreign” with the “H” from his name, making his now stage name, “Foreighn”. He described this act as one where he felt he, “...literally took my life into my own hands and deciding that...this was the name”. This act of embracing a label meant to be negative by making it his own reveals how this process of self-expression can also be one of self-acceptance and self-love. He added the “h” as a way to incorporate his first name, Eugh which people assume is spelled Hugh. Adding the “h” emphasizes his individualism in spite of

this homogenizing term that people try to impose onto him. He associates this with his dedication to maintaining “authenticity” in his work.

Both Haroldene and “Foreignn” display how the process of creative storytelling gives the storyteller the opportunity to assess the ways in which they are perceived, something marginalized identities are already made to be aware of in their daily lives. This is something Franz Fanon considers third-person consciousness where othered individuals are made to be hyper aware of how they are perceived by oppressive actors (Fanon, 2008, p. 90). The process of storytelling, however, gives the space to account for those imposed identities and then go a step further to compare and reconcile with the parts of their identity that they truly connect with and gives them the autonomy to choose to put those facets of their identity at the forefront of how they are choosing to represent themselves and their stories. Within the many discourses present in South Africa that attempt to characterize non-nationals as criminal, backwards or needy, storytelling allows non-nationals the space to grapple with those imposed identities with their own inner dialogues and sense of self. This can be seen as a tool for exercising a sense of agency, as Foreignn described, in creating their own narrative. Through storytelling, it can be something someone is in conversation with both internally and, through storytelling, outwardly.

1.2 Stories About Identity Struggles

Grappling with one’s identity does not merely act as something that informs *how* one tells their story, but *what* they tell as well. Shalom displays this as a majority of her personal testimonial focuses on what it feels like to be a Zimbabwean non-national in South Africa, specifically how it has impacted how she views herself. While she shares about the treatment she was subjected to, her testimonial mainly revolves around her struggle with understanding who she is, in her friends’ eyes, in her family’s eyes, and in her own eyes. She describes often feeling isolated and

as if she is “too Zimbabwean at school” and “too South African at home”, leading her to feel as if she is living a “double life” as she learns to speak the local language, isiXhosa.

One of the major events where these conflicting identities come to a head for Shalom internally is during an instance she describes where her friends at school are spouting xenophobic sentiments about how all foreigners “have to go” in front of her and then remember that she is Zimbabwean. In describing this instance, the audience is actually able to see this conflict in identity that Shalom is talking about as she misspeaks in describing this situation. As she describes what her friends are talking about, she slips up in her positionality by saying, “...they speak about xenophobia and how Africans are taking *our-* foreigners taking over *their* land and invading *their* land...”. This highlights one of the ways in which oral storytelling can be a powerful way to communicate a speaker's personal struggles with identity. As seen from the example above, when someone talks about themselves and their experiences, there is an opportunity to observe dynamics of the speaker's identity struggle from the messages that communicate through the words they may not intentionally choose to express. This is by no means a Freudian psychoanalysis study. However, it is worth recognizing how the spoken medium of storytelling is able to display the internalized conceptions of self that a society has on someone subjected to these external forces of identity formation even as they are explicitly discussing their awareness of them.

Rather than apologizing for what they had just said, upon realizing that they are expressing xenophobic rhetoric in front of the very “foreigner” they are vilifying, her friends tell her that their rhetoric does not apply to her, reasoning that she is, “not foreign you, you you're one of us. You're Xhosa”. She goes on to express how the explicit message that her acceptance into her host society is made possible by disregarding her ties to her Zimbabwean identity was

just too much for her. She expressed that this led her to feeling as if she was “slowly losing my mother tongue, slowly losing my roots, slowly losing myself and my identity”. As Shalom is still a teen exploring her identity, she and her story of this present journey of identity struggle and exploration displays the equally important role that storytelling can serve as a way to work through or simply document experiences of struggles with identity as a young African non-national in South Africa. This can be seen through Shalom’s reflections on her testimonial following the summit. In her survey response, Shalom reported that writing her testimony made her face many emotions she had built up through her experiences but also allowed her to see how far she has come in her journey. This response illustrates how storytelling can be a helpful and encouraging source of reflection by articulating the challenges one has had to face and overcome as someone who belongs to a marginalized identity. The articulation of a story about one’s experience with the complicated journey of trying to build a sense of self in spite of all of the external voices through media, government and as we see in Shalom’s story, sometimes one’s most intimate circles of family and friends, is to assert that it is an experience that is remarkable.

2. Identity Affirmation/Assertion

By giving non-nationals a chance to partake in this exploration of identity, storytelling also encourages them to take the opportunity to affirm their identity, experience and existence. It accomplishes this by allowing them to choose aspects of themselves, their journeys and their backgrounds to showcase in their stories. This presents opportunities for bettering their sense of belonging through validating the importance of the cultural lives, expressions and experiences of immigrants as part of their inclusion and integration of society (Vandeyar, 2013). As storytellers emphasize the importance their art holds in maintaining “authenticity”, it seems as though they see storytelling as a way to stay true to themselves in a way that feels authentic to them.

Additionally, as the non-national student testimonials and discussions exposed, markers of difference as a foreigner have typically been seen as things to conceal in their everyday life. According to the biocultural difference theory, non-nationals who show difference through language, accent, appearance or dress are made easy targets for xenophobia and xenophobic violence (Morris, 1998). Under this concept of the role difference, it is expected for non-nationals to try to conceal their markers of difference for the sake of social and at times literal survival. Within the space of storytelling, however, difference is regarded as an asset to developing a unique “voice” or style as touched on in the previous section. Storytelling can therefore take on a role as an act of resistance or liberation from this urge to hide difference. Storytelling creates an alternative space where difference is seen as a positive that is encouraged as a way to maintain authenticity as a storyteller. This is exemplified most prominently through Foreignn.

Foreignn defines his identity as a “product of his environment” as someone who has been moving around Southern Africa and at one point China, all his life and has had the time and space to embrace that element of in-betweenness as who he is. It is worth noting that this has to do with a number of things such as his age and different experience moving at a younger age, gender, the nature of his movement, and the treatment he received in what he called a “really expensive school” that he got a scholarship to. He claims he never experienced any major discrimination that ever made him extremely uncomfortable. With these dynamics understood, in many ways, he displays the benefits of what the poet instructors encourage: knowing who you are and embracing what makes you, and therefore your art, different. Foreignn claims his message as an artist is largely about embracing difference and exercising the freedom of expression as a way to maintain authenticity. He takes pride in the fact that no matter where he

goes or who he is with, he seems to have an accent. The way that Foreignn has had the chance to claim and assert his markers of difference displays the ways in which storytelling is able to transform difference to uniqueness, a force that takes on great importance in the context of being a non-national in South Africa.

“Uniqueness” is the term that guest poet Haroldene emphasized the importance of in storytelling. She discussed how each storyteller holds a unique perspective in even shared experiences that contributes to a storyteller’s voice that they must hold onto throughout the writing process. The second guest poet, Petro concurred in emphasizing the importance of pulling from everyday experiences that the storytellers themselves have rather than attempting to adhere to eurocentric stories that are historically regarded in literature as more valid or noteworthy. Petro considers the act of African writers centering their experiences in their stories is part of the needed revolution in African literature to valorize these experiences. To those who are active storytellers like Haroldene, Foreignn and Petro, storytelling is an important tool for not only understanding but affirming one’s identity and experiences as it creates a space that encourages storytellers to embrace difference as an asset. in a space that that is discriminatory towards African migrants and makes non-nationals question and try to hide their identity as both Farayi and Shalom expressed in their stories, the articulation and documentation of non-national experiences serve as a way for non-nationals to assert that their experiences are in fact remarkable and worthy of being listened to. This makes storytelling, therefore, an act of personal resistance against the tropes and harmful narratives that are meant to vilify and silence African non-national voices. By centering these experiences in discussions concerning xenophobia in South Africa, storytelling is a source of empowerment for the storyteller themselves by

valorizing their personal experiences, leading to a stronger sense of belonging irrespective of public acceptance.

II. The Interpersonal: Storytelling's Role For 'Local' Audiences

1. Windows

In her piece, “Windows, Mirrors, and Sliding Glass Doors”, Bishop identifies the function stories can play as “windows” into worlds the audience has never experienced and gives them a chance to experience that world by looking through them (Bishop, 1990). By describing this world to the audience, the author of this story is giving them an opportunity to assess the world through a set of interpretations that they may have not considered had it not been for the text. When it comes to communicating the struggles of non-national experiences, this ability to at least attempt to look at shared experiences through the eyes of the marginalized is a function essential to garnering constructive empathy and solidarity between locals and non-nationals. Because the status of citizenship is so fundamental to someone’s experience in a given country, it is essential for those who have not had the privileges that citizenship provides someone to share their experience as a way to illuminate the pitfalls of institutions such as the Department of Home Affairs, mainstream media and even, as we will see, the education system. When the experience, nature and characteristics of migration are described by those who are not migrating themselves, the picture will always be an incomplete and potentially dangerous one. When discussions around these issues are initiated by non-nationals who have the freedom to articulate these experiences openly, audience members are able to see a new side to the phenomenon of migration and xenophobia that they would have otherwise never known. As seen through the

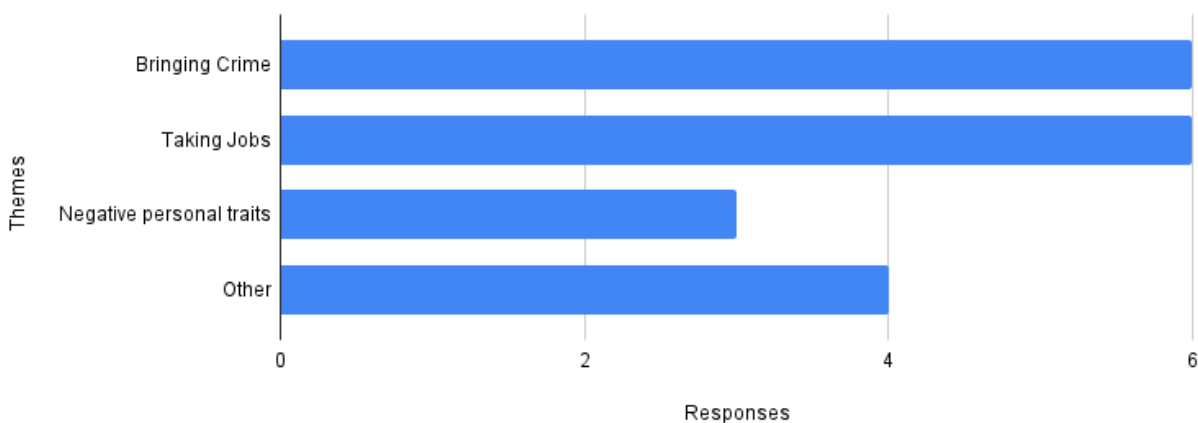
survey results, this is often a much more personal and human side that audience members are opened up to through these stories. By centering the experiences that only non-nationals could have, it tasks the audience to put mental and emotional effort to imagine what this experience must have been or felt like. This exertion of emotional effort is the same that is necessary for the building of empathy for another person who is unlike one's self. Storytelling, therefore, acts as a primer of sorts for empathy in the way that it requires intentional listening and imagination. By leaving the space for the sharing of experiences, there is the opportunity for there to be experiences that challenge prominent stereotypes and misleading narratives of marginalized groups that have been proliferated by politically motivated actors such as media and government-level power-holders.

1.1 Stereotypes

Figure 1.1: Stereotypes

What stereotypes have you heard about people who come from the same countries that the speakers/speaker's parents came from? (Zimbabwe, DRC)

14 Responses



The previous overview of the mainstream discourse around non-nationals in South Africa over media networks, social media and statements from government officials have led to the

association of non-nationals with a set of stereotypes. Previous research has shown that mass print media and social media has a history of depicting immigration as scenes of large masses of people flooding into South Africa illegally (Chiumbu and Moyo, 2018). Not only is migration portrayed in this negative light, but migrants themselves in the media are frequently associated with issues of crime, poverty and disease as well as robbing “locals” of job and business opportunities and public services (Chiumbu and Moyo, 2018). Since the increase in immigration following the end of apartheid, attitudinal surveys of South Africans have revealed that African non-nationals believe these stereotypes. The widespread nature of these stereotypes was reflected in the surveys when students were asked what stereotypes they have heard the most about non-nationals from Zimbabwe and Democratic Republic of Congo as found in Figure 1.8. The most prominent theme among the answers was that participants hear that non-nationals from these areas bring crime such as drug and human trafficking and take job opportunities away from South Africans. Some respondents reported that they have heard additional stereotypes about non-national’s personal traits like that they do not have personal hygiene, are not trustworthy, or even that they do not know how to dress (Figure 1.8). Under scapegoat theory, the construction of these stereotypes are created for the purpose of vilifying African non-nationals as the key cause of South Africa’s shortcomings, particularly unemployment among the poorer communities (Morris, 1998). This shifts the blame and attention away from the power holders in leadership positions and onto those who are in the closest proximity to the South African citizens who have been failed. These stereotypes enable the dehumanization of African non-nationals as well. By reducing all non-nationals to these negative stereotypes, South African nationals are made to feel as if they completely understand who they are and are therefore allowed to judge, criticize and ostracize them as well. This dehumanization enables the perpetuation of violence

onto those framed as the threat or burden to society, in this case, through the many forms of xenophobic violence enacted in South Africa onto African non-nationals.

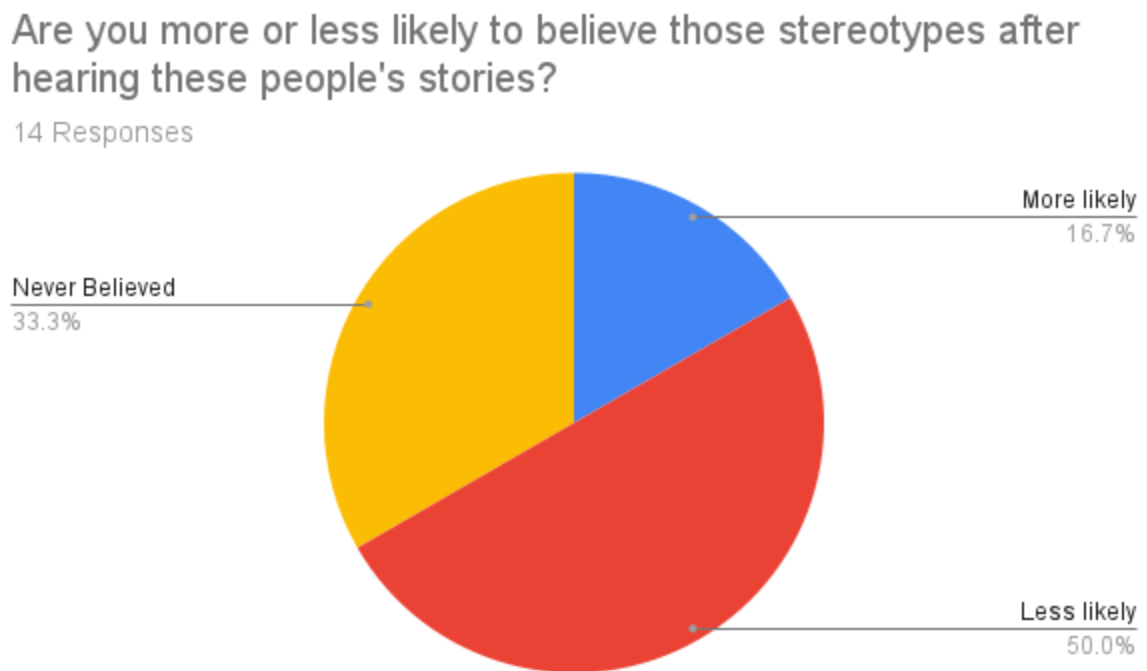
Based on the feedback given by audience members both during the summit itself and in survey responses given following the summit, listening to the stories of African non-nationals helped them develop a more multifaceted understanding of the realities of and motivations for migration for African non-nationals. This suggests that there is potential for non-national storytelling to work as a way to challenge stereotypes and highlight the divisive role that these stereotypes play in perpetuating xenophobia and xenophobic violence in the first place. In Foreign's speech, he discusses the ways in which mainstream and social media take part in perpetuating stereotypes and misconceptions about African non-nationals and their experiences by only showing the negative aspects of non-nationals' experiences.

...what I've learned...as much as social media is such a powerful driving tool for such positivity, it also can really twist the narrative. You know, it's unfortunate, because what we always see on TV as well is mostly all the negative. You know, there is a lot of good happening, right? There's a lot of harmony, there's a lot of peace, there's a lot of joy that's actually happening, but it isn't, you know, displayed, and then people just take whatever they're given, and they run with that narrative, you know, and it twists, almost their sense of belonging, but I think once you actually get on the ground, man and you start moving around for yourself, you start to see people for who they are.

Foreign actively pushes against this narrative that only portrays non-nationals in a negative binary of either villain or victim by describing his experience as a non-national as “beautiful”

and “amazing”. By presenting his journey as someone who has experienced being considered a foreigner in many spaces as an enlightening one that has led him to create art combats the stereotype that non-nationals only come to South Africa from tragic situations looking to take. Foreignn acknowledges that an improvement of life is a partial contributor that pulls people to the places they go, but makes sure to emphasize that people’s journeys should not be defined by what they are lacking. And as a multifaceted character who both makes art, is studying medicine and has a charismatic personality, Foreignn is a living example of why this point rings true and why people must open their minds to redefining what it means to be “foreign”.

Figure 1.2: Stereotype Believability



This message was clearly received by the participants as could be seen in the post-summit surveys. Some responses indicated that the stories shared during the summit helped them recognize the falsity of these stereotypes that are in the mainstream discourse. A respondent recalls, "they made it seem that they [non-nationals] are here for bad motives but from today's

summit I've learnt that they had no choice but to come here for a better living". The majority of participants were sure to communicate in some way that they never believed these stereotypes in the first place and would never let them impact the way they view someone else because they see the absurdity in them. One respondent said that they are less likely to believe the stereotypes they have heard, claiming that the summit showed that "there is more to a person than what I think there is". They, however, followed this up with a capitalized "BUT" and proceeded to insinuate that the stereotype about non-nationals' lack of hygiene holds true generally but was sure to acknowledge that "not everyone " fits it. This exceptionalizing indicates that these generalizing opinions are still quite closely held and anyone who deviates from it is merely seen as an exception to an otherwise general truth. This served as a reminder that it does not take simply one interaction to flip someone's perspective once they have been conditioned to hold these views. It rather points to the incremental shifts in perspectives that can happen gradually if conversations such as the ones in the summit can continue to be held.

1.2 Witnessing Harm and Attributing Accountability

Not only does the use of stories as windows show the audience realities they simply may have not seen, but ones they have the option to look away from in everyday life. Scholars have argued that minds and, with time, societies can be transformed when shared experiences are reframed through the eyes of the Other (Niele, 2009). Structuring this summit around the personal stories of African non-national youth enabled the potential reframing of the broader shared experience of being a young person in South Africa and, in three out of four accounts, the specific shared experience of attending high school. Prioritizing these personal accounts in the summit allowed speakers to claim the space and time to document their experiences and transform the listeners

into witnesses to issues that their positionality as perceived insiders in South Africa protects them from. Once these experiences are placed on the audience's radar, they as witnesses are required to ask a series of questions: who or what is to blame and how do we move forward now that the veil has been lifted?

1.3 Interpreting Resilience

Figure 1.3: Responses to Foreign's Intervention

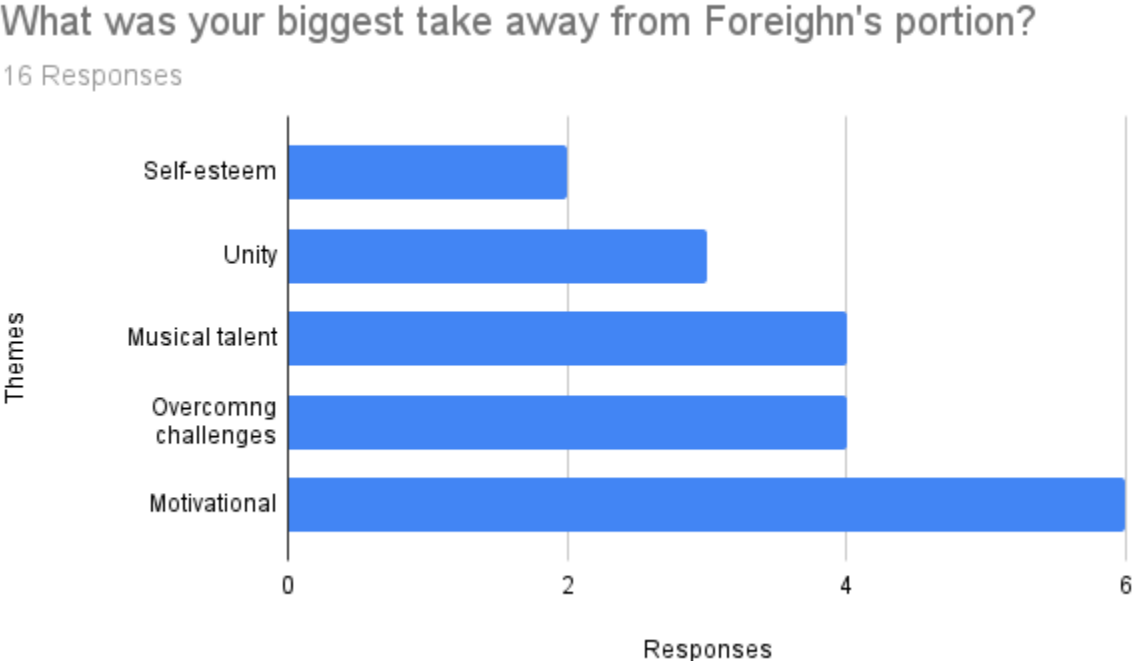


Figure 1.4: Responses to Karolyn's Intervention

What did you learn from Karolyn's portion?

18 Responses

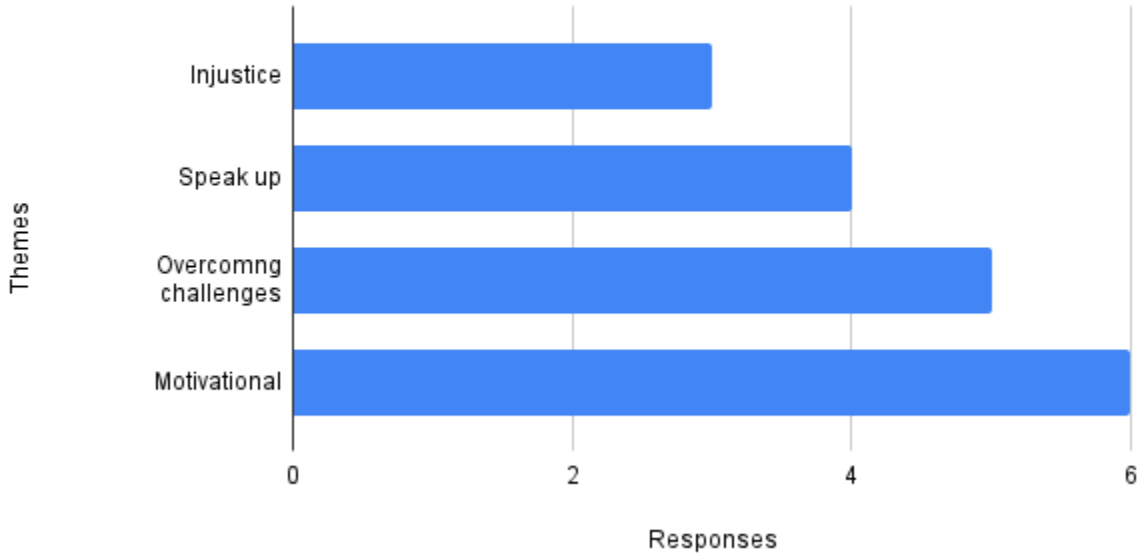


Figure 1.5: Responses to Farayi's Intervention

What did you learn from Farayi's portion?

12 Responses

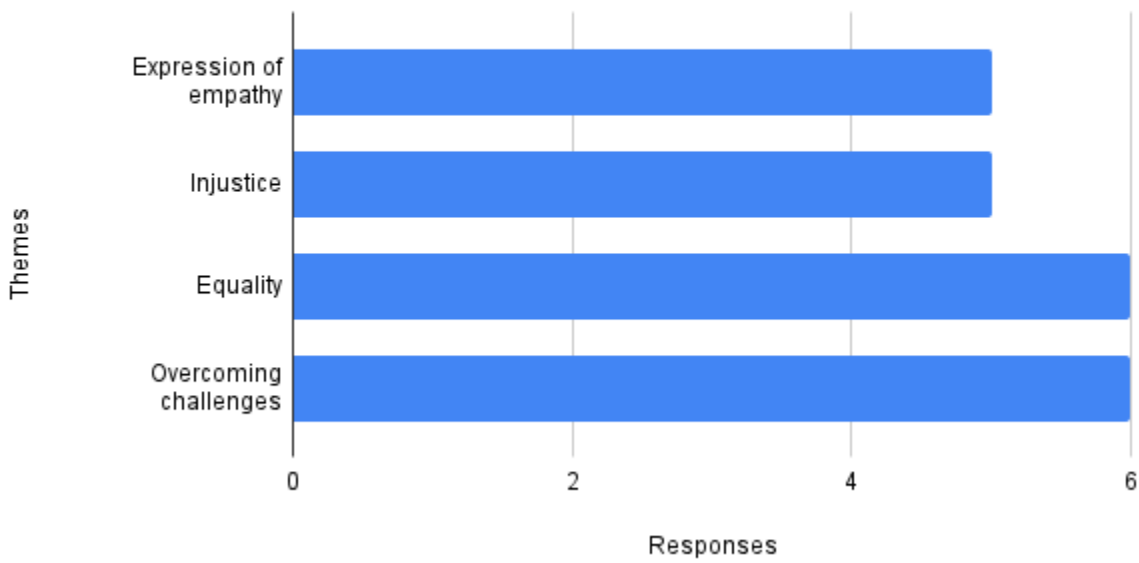
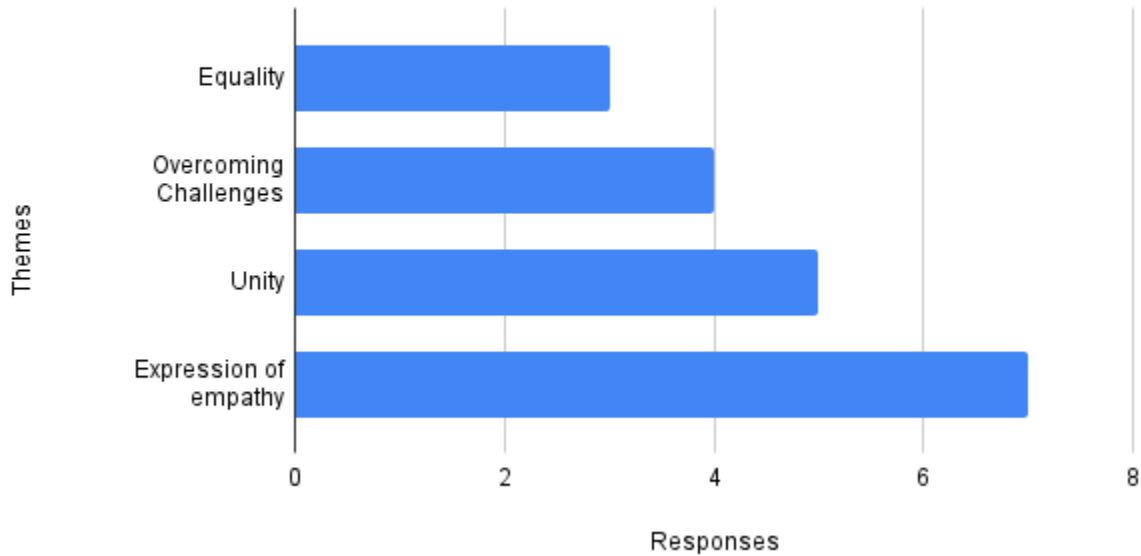


Figure 1.6: Responses to Shalom's Intervention

What did you learn from Shalom's portion?

13 Responses



The majority of reactions to Foreignn's portion had to do with an appreciation for his music and inspiration from his positive mindset (Figure 1.3). It seems participants really appreciated hearing from someone who has followed his passions and has been able to take their misfortunes and "turn that negative energy into something beautiful". This praise for overcoming hardship was found in the feedback portion for all four speakers (Figures 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6). This points to a characteristic of storytelling that both helps and, in some ways, hurts how non-nationals can be perceived when telling their story. What often makes a story a story are a few characteristics: protagonist, antagonist, conflict and, most importantly, resolution. As these four speakers told their own stories, they predictably posited themselves as the protagonists and in some form described how they overcame antagonistic forces or challenges and reached some sort of resolution on the other side. This resolve came for Foreignn when he found music, for Shalom when she found God, and for Karolyn when her petition caught the attention of Home Affairs.

The least clear-cut form of resolution was in Farayi's story as she ended her testimonial by saying that conditions are still very tough for her and her non-national peers and that if she was given the chance to leave she would. However, her story did still consist of a number of obstacles that she has been forced to overcome in order to gain an education and some sense of belonging amongst her peers.

This structure within storytelling has shown to have a number of advantages and disadvantages when it comes to presenting these people's stories as non-nationals. The advantage of narrating one's own story as the protagonist overcoming conflict is that it is an assertion of agency by the storyteller. As mentioned before, African non-nationals are often only vilified in mainstream South African discourse as criminals or as victims driven to migrate to South Africa in order to drain the nation of resources. By listening to these first-hand accounts, audience members are able to see them not for the suffering they are subjected to, but what they have been able to overcome. The risk that this narrative renders is a disproportionate praise for a non-national's ability to overcome their injustices and not enough attention to the injustice in the first place. Much of the feedback to Farayi's testimonial had a large emphasis on personal responsibility and the importance of overcoming the challenges that come your way (Figure 1.5). People's responses focused on how important it is to "work hard", "be ready for everything life throws at you...no matter what" as well as the moral that, "you're capable of anything you set your mind to and the sky is the limit". Some respondents also highlighted the inspiring parts of how Shalom overcame her challenges and praised her for not letting them get in the way of reaching her dreams, saying that she is now "stronger for it". While this focus on self-efficacy may be meant to encourage and praise someone's ability to overcome the conditions they are in, it discounts the importance of questioning or accounting for the reasons for why those conditions

exist. Critical readings of resilience research point out how in particular contexts such as poverty and marginalization, resilience can be wrongly used to tolerate systems of inequality, allow for calls for change to be brushed off, or overstate the importance of personal responsibility among those who lack power to change their own lives (Mahdiani and Ungar, 2021). The challenge when it comes to showcasing the stories of those who have been forced to overcome adversity is to ensure the audience is able to appreciate the strength required to adapt to adversity without detracting attention from the societal issues that caused the adversity itself.

However, this recognition of injustice was present among many survey responses. Many participants were sure to point out that these struggles are ones that their peers should not be subjected to. When discussing the treatment Farayi faced in school, one respondent remarked, "I believe that has made her life very difficult and she shouldn't have to live that way. The environment should adjust to her, she shouldn't have to adjust to the environment. She must be included and not made to feel like an outsider". These demands for societal change were plentiful in the feedback survey questions for both Farayi and Shalom(Figure 1.5 and 1.6). Many responses advocated for the unity, equality and rights of all Africans. This suggests that in this case, the structure of first-person accounts of struggle does not always detract from the role of societal injustice by overstating the power of the individual. This polarity between who needs to do the adaptation, the immigrant or society, is an ongoing debate in the realm of immigration and the sharing of these lived experiences do not seem to skew it one certain way or the other in this case.

1.4 Expressions of Empathy and Accountability

In between these two polarities were more general expressions of empathy for the participants and their experiences. In a mainstream discourse where it is more convenient to conceal the experiences of those most marginalized by society, it is extremely important to have witnesses validate these experiences and acknowledge the sources of harm. These acts of acknowledging and taking accountability for harm done aids in processes of reconciliation and healing. Survey responses touched on how the summit improved their sense of empathy in many ways. Respondents expressed that they enjoyed hearing about these non-nationals' experiences. Some verbs used to describe how they received these stories were "hearing", "listening", and "learning". This follows suit with what Foreignn described the action of storytelling as being "an exchange". The students valued the stories shared by fellow students about what they had been through and some especially valued how these experiences made the non-national learners feel. One respondent said the summit, "helped me put myself in other people's shoes and see their views in life". This ability to identify shows how *storytelling* elicits *storylistening* (Niele, 2009). The fact that these larger discussions were initiated by the non-nationals' stories which the summit centered itself around made it possible for the local participants to approach these issues in a very empathetic way that prioritized listening, experiences, and feelings.

A different respondent went a step further to both empathize while also taking accountability by remarking that they "now understand how our actions affect their feelings". The key words of "our" and "their" may seem to reproduce the problematic "us versus them" mindset. However, in the case of acknowledging harm, it is useful to account for "in" and "out" groups as a way to show that one fully understands that this harm is connected to a specific identity and social injustice that "in" groups cannot fully understand, however can try to by showing empathy. Many responses to Shalom's portion empathized with the challenges

themselves in addition to acknowledging that there are conditions within South African society that are responsible for this suffering. Responses acknowledged that, "It isn't easy to be an immigrant in this country", and, "It's draining having to live in a society where you don't feel welcome or not enough because of where you come from" and lastly that, "...living a double life is not good and being rejected just because you are not a South African [...]". These quotes indicate that not only have the respondents taken the time to reflect on the injustice that these storytellers have faced, but they have also taken time to at least briefly reconcile with the fact that these are injustices that have occurred in the nation they consider home. This form of reflection and accountability on behalf of one's nation shows potential for forming a more self-aware national identity that accounts for the work that is left to be done as opposed to national mythology. In contrast, one response shared that Farayi's story showed them how "immigrants are treated in some countries". This use of "some" when compared to the previous responses that more clearly acknowledged that this is the treatment immigrants receive in *their* country shows what role taking accountability can frame xenophobia as *an* issue or *their* issue that must be dealt with. Nonetheless, there is an acknowledgement of the challenges that Farayi and non-national teens like her face, which shows empathy.

1.5 Storytelling as an Educational Force

The main characteristic of stories that serve as windows is that they give the audience a look into a world that is different from their own (Bishop, 1990). This presents audience members with the opportunity to expand their world view by experiencing vicariously through characters, fictional or not, ways of living and viewing the world that they as the audience may have never considered existing before, making stories a useful educational tool. When placed in the context

of addressing xenophobic violence, stories about the experiences of non-nationals can be used to educate other “locals” about a different side of South African society that they have not experienced. Storytelling, therefore, takes on a greater role to educate their peers about a side of their own nation they did not know, allowing them to learn from their non-national peers and adjust their own view of non-nationals as well as their country.

Judging from the survey responses, this seems to be at least partially the case. A number of responses considered the summit to be "eye opening" in the way that they learned from their non-national peers. A respondent appreciated the fact that the summit opened their eyes to "the struggles migrant learners (students) face and continue to face". This highlights the quality that non-national personal stories have to provide specific insights into an issue that may be presented as something very broad or abstract in the public discourse yet impacts the lives of their peers, as the “local” participants can now see, in a very personal way.

Many who enjoyed the discussion and hearing about the non-nationals’ experiences also described the summit to be very "informative" and that they had left it having learnt something. One of the specific insights many participants left with was the difficulties non-nationals undergo as they try to obtain documentation. There is a dominant narrative in South Africa and many nations around the world that “illegal aliens” are flooding the borders intentionally out of sheer laziness and/or disdain for the law of the nation they are entering. As conservative pundits would say, these people are refusing to immigrate “the right way”, by going through the legal immigration process. However, not nearly enough attention is paid to what that legal process really looks like and the many hoops those attempting to “do it the right way” are forced to jump through. If there was, people would stop viewing undocumented statuses as the fault of non-nationals but of the system for obtaining documents itself.

Karolyn's story about the struggles she has faced as someone born to refugee parents and recognized as stateless in South Africa reveals the impact that obtaining identification documents has on someone's ability to pursue a livelihood in South Africa. It additionally shows how difficult it is for non-nationals to obtain such documentation that she has a right to through the Department of Home Affairs (DHA), a department known for its history of stalling the success of immigration and asylum processes by being slow to adjudicate applications, only answering to bribes and at times ignoring entire populations of asylum seekers if they come from a certain country such as Zimbabwe (Landau, 2005). By discussing the set-backs that being barred from applying for an ID would mean for her ability to graduate from high school and pursue a college degree, Karolyn demonstrated how the inadequacies of the DHA leaves non-nationals extremely vulnerable. She shows through her story that being left in this state of limbo keeps non-nationals from accessing services and making long-term commitments essential for cultivating a livelihood. After looking at responses for Karolyn's portion, it seems her speech served to both inform and reveal this form of xenophobia that not as many people see or think of: institutional xenophobia. One respondent expressed that they "learnt a lot" and were "extremely shocked to learn that she has been waiting for her citizenship/matric ID". This shock demonstrates that this experience of waiting for outrageous lengths of time to obtain documentation is not well known among the general public. This response displays how a non-national's personal story can be used to raise awareness of issues that are not in the mainstream when it comes to the discourses around "legal" immigration, and therefore would not be known by many who do not experience that particular struggle. Educating someone –who takes in the mainstream xenophobic discourse that there are so many undocumented immigrants because of a lack of desire to follow the

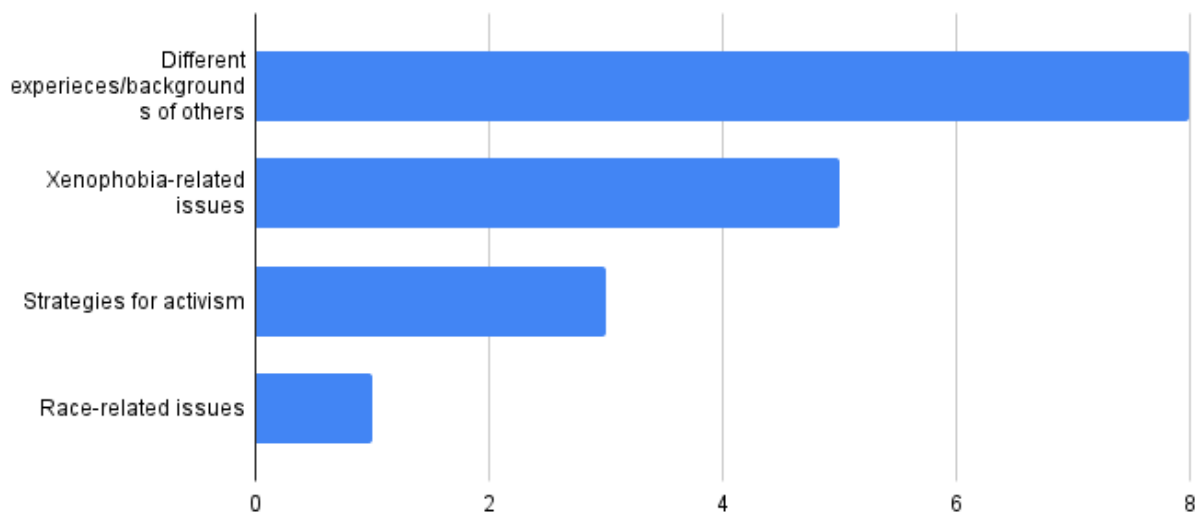
law—by shedding light on the bureaucratic pitfalls of the DHA, this story challenges the listener to adjust the schema they have formed around the immigration process.

Every storyteller and their experiences are unique, therefore each of the stories shared allows others' understanding of the migrant experience to become more and more multifaceted. With this said, four out of the seventeen respondents to the question, “Did the summit change your perspective in any way?” said that the summit did not change their perspectives. However, the reasoning behind most of these "no"s were that the respondents believed that they had already held tolerant beliefs towards non-nationals and this summit "gave a lift" to those already existing beliefs by educating them with more information that supported their beliefs in "equality of all Africans". While this highlights the selection bias of this group as they are already members of this human rights-centered club, it remains true that almost all respondents, whether their perspectives were altered or not, found the stories to be insightful to something they did not know before.

Figure 1.7: Curiosity

What did our speaker's stories make you want you to learn more about?

17 Responses



People also expressed a desire to learn about different cultures and people who come from different backgrounds, valuing the lessons one can learn from someone with a different perspective. This sense of curiosity and wanting to continue to educate oneself past the summit points to an important dynamic of viewing storytelling as a means for education. As this paper is being written, we are approaching the two year mark following the murder of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor and the subsequent global outcry against police brutality and racial inequality, spearheaded by the Black Lives Matter movement. Based on the phenomenon of white people expecting their Black friends to teach them about racism and the Black experience, there has been a growing body of literature that addresses the emotional exhaustion that comes from attempting, as someone who is part of a marginalized population of society, to educate someone in a drastically different level of power about what it is like to face the kinds of subjugation that they do (Eddo-Lodge, 2020; Wilson, 2020). While this issue is most prominent among Black and white relationships, it is important to emphasize the importance of any audience member to the story of someone in a relatively lower position of power to understand their role to use that instance to educate themselves independently that does not require the emotional labor of the subjugated. This reflects quite well when analyzing the ways in which Foreign described his art as a seed he wishes to grow in others. This metaphor encapsulates the role the story takes on as the intervention that sparks the idea yet requires effort on the part of the audience in order for it to grow. These survey results suggest a want to engage in such work on the participants' end to understand different cultures and familiarize themselves with a variety of perspectives.

2. Mirrors

Returning to Bishop’s metaphor, we can also see how stories, under the right conditions, can be mirrors, “and in that reflection we can see our own lives and experiences as part of the larger human experience” (Bishop, 1990). This paper invokes Bishop’s mirrors metaphor to highlight the ways in which audience members were able to see themselves in the stories that non-national speakers told during the summit. By examining the summit discussions and post summit survey comments in response to these stories, this section covers the ways that audience participants were able to relate to some of the broader experiences, feelings and messages the non-national storytellers shared. This will lead into a discussion about what that says about storytelling’s ability to enable empathy building through finding commonalities within the context of racial subjugation in post-apartheid South Africa.

2.1 Responding by Relating

Figure 1.8: Changes in Perspective

Did the summit change your perspective in any way?

17 Responses

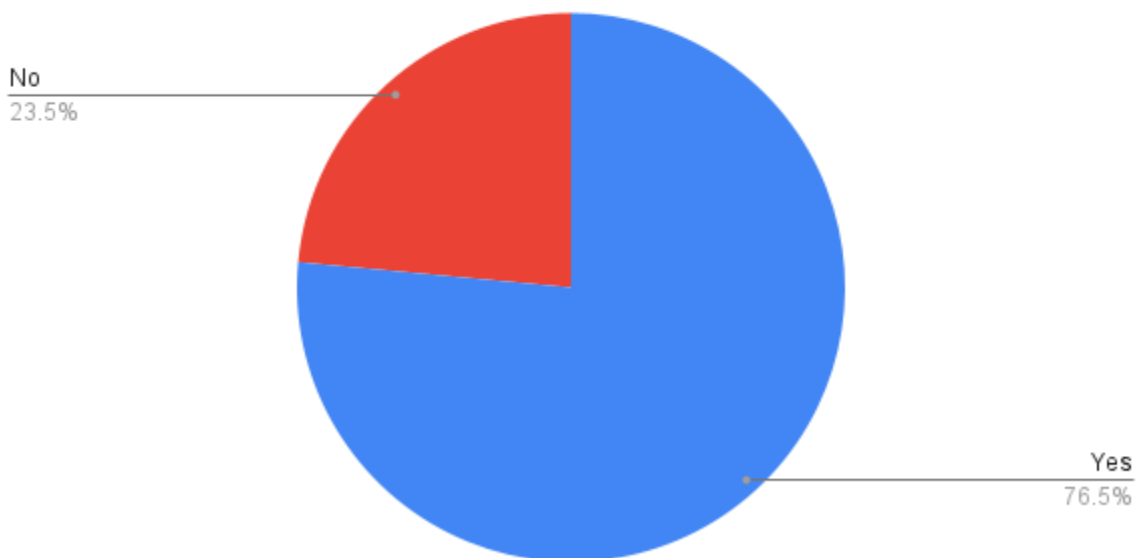
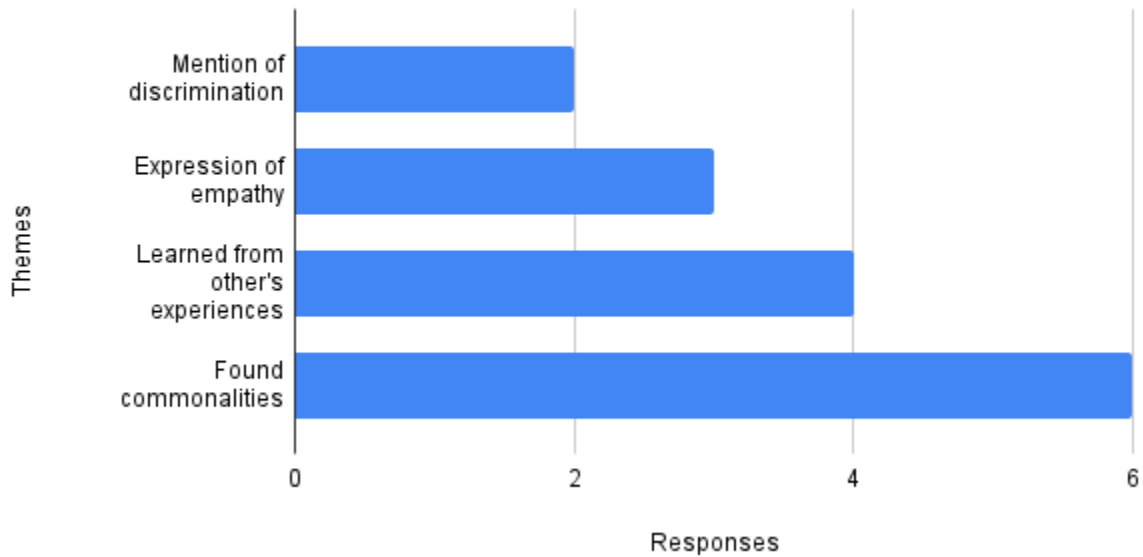


Figure 1.9 Reasons for Change

If so, how?

Out of the 13 yes responses



During the summit, as non-national speakers shared their personal experiences through speeches and testimonials, a trend started to form in the discussion where participants would then share their own experiences which they saw as similar to the story the non-national speakers shared. This reveals the interesting way that starting conversations about often polarizing and large-scale issues by sharing moments of personal struggle creates an environment that promotes and invites vulnerability among all participants. Particularly when it came to Shalom's testimonial that laid bare her personal struggles with identity and belonging, the feelings described seemed to transport many listeners back to a time when they felt similar feelings of ostracism. This desire to relate and connect to the feeling of the speaker were made most apparent following Shalom's speech as the summit's moderator posed a question to the audience about how they would like to be treated in a different country. Even though this was the prompt posed to the group, one participant went out of his way to change the direction of the conversation by not answering the

question, but rather asking Shalom's what it felt like to be in her situation. When Shalom answered by describing a feeling of isolation, the conversation took a turn into sharing similar stories by participants. This epitomizes how Foreignn previously described what motivates him to share his story:

So I wanted to not only tell my story about my journey, but talk about the experiences of others. Because when you meet people, and you interact with them, not only are you able to share your story with them, and allow them to experience yours, but you get to experience theirs, it's an exchange.

This "exchange" that Foreignn describes captures how stories help otherwise seemingly differing groups of people in a society connect through common experiences of the human condition (Niele, 2009). As previously mentioned, when stories are used as windows for the audience, the empathy that is built from when *storytelling* about unfamiliar experiences elicits *storylistening* from the audience (Niele, 2009). Whereas for when stories function as mirrors to reflect common human experience, this summit's discussion reveals that empathy is built when this *storytelling* evokes deep *storyfeeling* as well (Niele, 2009).

2.2 The Main Reflection in the Mirror: Othering

Figure 2.1: Relatability

Did you feel like you related to any of our speakers' stories/experiences?

16 Responses

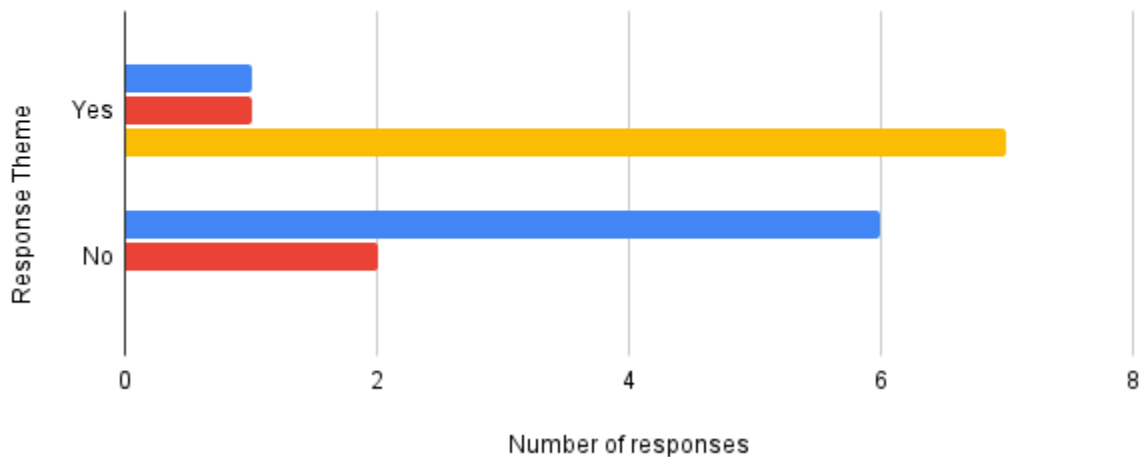


Figure 2.2 Reasons for Relatability

Did you feel like you related to any of our speakers' stories/experiences? Why or why not?

16 Responses

■ No reason provided ■ Have not had similar experiences ■ Have had similar experiences



The common thread that connected these stories was iterated early on in the summit by Foreign as he stated, “[...]each one of us has faced some sort of discrimination, whether it's about the way

that you look, the way that you sound, or the way that you may appear to be, you know, each one of us have that in common, discrimination”. When it came to the ways in which these stories were exchanged during the summit, the point that connected the differing experiences was the act of being discriminated against on the basis of race, ethnicity, sexuality or speech (including both language and accent). Considering the reality of drastic racial inequality that remains in South Africa both structurally and interpersonally as a legacy of colonialism and apartheid, racial subjugation is no foreign concept to the participants who are all people of color. As expressed through the survey responses, the recurring commonality of discrimination—mostly anti-black racism--found in each of the stories exchanged during the summit helped participants grow more conscious that “locals” and “foreigners” are much more similar as people antagonized and subjugated by societal notions of white supremacy than networks of power let on.

Many stories shared by participants following particularly Shalom and Farayi’s testimonials show the many ways in which the feeling of being viewed as the other as iterated in both of the young women’s stories connected with their peers who are recognized as South African. One girl shared her experience of moving to Cape Town from Johannesburg and her struggle to fit in. She shared that while she did not have trouble when it came to the language, she was singled out for her accent as well as for having more Indian features and not looking, “like a 'normal, South African colored girl” even though she was born in South Africa. An additional participant who was much older than the students participating said that even though he is now an adult, Shalom’s story gave him “flashbacks” to when he was in primary school having just come to Cape Town from the Eastern Cape and the difficulties he faced making that transition. He recalls going from an all isiXhosa speaking school to an English/Afrikaans speaking school in primary school and struggling to adjust to living in a Coloured community where he claims, “we're not

foreigners, but it seemed as if we're foreigners, because we're coming into a Coloured community, with people who are not used to seeing a lot of, I can say black people everywhere". This shows how learning about Shalom's experience adjusting to school in a new place has allowed this participant to acknowledge that he may not know entirely what it is like to be a non-national but does know the feeling of being an outcast on the basis of race that Shalom was describing. This led him to assert that "we are all foreigners in situations, not from different countries but in different races and other kinds of ways". This self-identification with the term "foreigner" from his experience of being othered serves to challenge the very notion that anti-African xenophobia is based on one's status of citizenship, but rather the perception of being an outsider that is much more connected to race and class. As these stories were shared and more commonalities in experiencing racism were shared, participants began to ask more straight forward and critical questions about the role of race and region of origin in xenophobia. For example, one participant was sure to call into question the double standards for how white foreigners from the Global North are treated compared to those from somewhere in the African continent,

I would say maybe, if you're coming [...] from America, other [Global North] countries, you get to be treated differently. I think people uphold you, especially in the townships and all that, but when we get to actually meet or get to know our African foreigners or immigrants, we treat them differently. [...] our mentality is that they come here to take our jobs, they come here to take our spaces, they come here to actually change our world, and change our country[...]

The double standard that this participant is spotlighting exemplifies the kinds of critiques that can be developed when one is able to see the much more prominent commonalities that are

shared between the experiences of non-national and South African populations of color. As reported in the post-summit survey, the major “reflection” of othering and discrimination in the “mirror” aspects of the non-national speaker’s stories led participants to believe in an absence of difference between themselves and their non-national peers. When asked if the summit changed the students' perspectives in any way, 13 respondents answered yes. Some of the reasons for how their perspectives were changed had to do with helping them see themselves as equal with their peers and gave an overall unifying message, some remarking that the summit "proved we are one" or that it made them "realize there is no difference between us as people". This threatens the vilifying narrative around African non-nationals and the threat that they pose to South Africa’s national identity that props up harmful stereotypes that are meant to distinguish and encourage fear around difference. Additionally, the survey revealed participants’ interest in further interrogating the underlying problem of racism when one response to the question “What did our speaker’s stories make you want to learn more about?” expressed they were interested in learning more about the "c(a)uses of black on black racism".

3. Using Mirrors to See Through Windows

When examining the responses to the post-summit survey, not only were there times where audience members connected to the stories of the non-national speakers as windows in some portions and mirrors in others, but there were also ways that the “window” and “mirror” qualities of the stories were evoked in a response at the same time. When discussing why they can relate to the stories or storytellers from the summit, respondents cited the feeling and experiences that they have experienced in order to relate to the ones they have not. This trend not only appeared in the survey responses, but also during the summit discussions themselves. As discussed in the

previous section, the common “reflection” audience members saw in the mirror aspect of the stories was the experience of discrimination and othering and the feeling of lacking a sense of belonging. In this case where “local” audience members are trying to relate to the story of a non-national speaker, it shows that the common experience of racism is used to relate to the less familiar experience of xenophobia.

The clearest articulation of this relationship was in fact from a respondent who reported that they did not relate to the speakers yet their further response shows otherwise as they remarked, “I can't say I can relate to the testimonials, I've been in South Africa all my life but I have experienced racism”. The recurring theme of associating the impact of xenophobia as similar to those of racism shows that even when someone acknowledges that they have not experienced the same external conditions or specific experiences as the storytellers, they are able to see themselves in the way that kind of subjugation made them feel and the oppressive roots they share in racial discrimination. This is exemplary of why placing the non-national storyteller at the head of the conversation about xenophobia is so vital: it is a way to both acknowledge the unique experiences and challenges that came with being a non-national in a country that vilifies them, while also sharing the ways in which this process made them feel and think about themselves in ways that can be extremely relatable, especially so as a person of color. These storytellers and their stories are able to operate as the thing that links the particular to the somewhat universal. In a social order that encourages the division and competition between local and non-national communities, these non-national-headed dialogues open the opportunity to create alternative discourses that allow both groups to identify the root of African-targeted xenophobia: white supremacy.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this capstone has been to amplify the powerful role that non-national storytelling can play in challenging the xenophobic discourses that have contributed to xenophobia and xenophobic violence in post-apartheid South Africa. Through the analysis of the Cape Town-based NGO, Africa Unite's youth summit that centered the stories of four non-national speakers, this study inquired into what potential impacts these storytelling sessions can leave on the speakers as well as the audience members. What was found was that at the individual level, storytelling can be a powerful source for rejecting stereotypes by exploring, embracing and asserting one's own identity as the storyteller. When it comes to the impact left on the audience, non-national storytelling presents them with the opportunity to see other sides to non-nationals' experiences they may have been unaware of while also connecting to the feelings of subjugation that come from being othered. When these functions come together, the audience member is able to develop a deeper sense of empathy for the other person. When this dynamic is contextualized with the external forces and networks of power that benefit from xenophobic discourses that come from apartheid-era assumptions towards the rest of the African continent, storytelling takes on a larger role as a decolonizing force that can create alternatives to colonial discourses around nationalism, belonging, and what it means to be African in post-apartheid South Africa.

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APPENDIX

1. Transcripts

1.1 Farayi's Testimonial

...So I came to South Africa when I was 11 years old. That's when we relocated here. And when I got here, I was supposed to start my grade five. But I was told that schools are full and that I have to wait for next year. So it was very frustrating. I'm getting into a new country. And I have to sit back and watch other kids my age going to school whilst I couldn't. And at that time, I was staying in Parow with my family. So I spent like six months at home because it was in the middle of the year. And I spend most of my time since I was still a child back then I just passed time by playing. And I found comfort in actually eating a lot. So I gained a bit of weight. And then the next year, I got enrolled at Holy Cross primary, but I actually had to travel because it was from Parow to Cape Town. So I had to take a taxi. And I was like 11 years old. So it was it was something I didn't expect to do. But I managed to be able to do it. And so I first day of school wasn't really what I expected because I got there and there was like a lot of different people that I wasn't used to. And they're all speaking Xhosa. And for me it was all very foreign because I had no idea what they were saying. But luckily it was an English school. So I could still learn my lessons properly, but had to start learning Afrikaans from scratch. And I was like in grade 5 and all the people around me were speaking a language I didn't understand. But fortunately because it was an English school, most of them could speak English properly. So I managed to make a few friends. So those two years of my primary school were, they were nice. They were very nice. But when I actually started high school, that's when all the problems began. So my family we moved to Kraaifontein actually, at the end of my grade seven. So I actually spent the last three months of my seventh grade, taking two taxis and a train just to get to school, which was very challenging because I had to wake up at five in the morning. And I would come back around six, which is like, no time to rest. And then you have to study and do homework and all of that. But I still managed to pass. So, when I started grade eight, I was at Masibambane secondary school. And that was even more challenging because at Masibambane, they actually teach in Xhosa most of the time, they hardly mix with English, it's rare. And so I actually had to always raise up my hand and say can you please like speak in English. And all my peers weren't very kind about that, because they preferred their own home language and all of that. And so at the extent that I stopped asking them to speak in English, and I just told myself, just learn the language so that you don't have to raise your hand all the time, because people were making me feel like an outsider and all of that. And it made me become this this mean person, because I constantly had to defend myself, when people make comments that were unnecessary

towards me. And I mostly talked to my other fellow Zimbanweans, because it was like, people were divided in groups, the Zimbabweans were on this side, and the South Africans on this side, so it was not very welcoming for me. So those those two years of high school, they weren't very pleasant. Um, there was even this other girl in my class, who constantly made comments about my nationality, and all of that. So it made me become this person who always was always so mean, because of what was happening around me. And so now I'm in the 10th grade. I've learned Xhosa and I can understand it. But the fact that I had to learn it when I didn't want to is very unfair, because it was the only way that I could understand my lesson properly. And I constantly bump into people who look at me and say, you're too pretty to be Zimbabwean. And then I'm like, like, that comment is just unnecessary. Like, what do you mean, I'm pretty to be Zimbabwean. What are you trying to say Zimbabweans aren't beautiful people? People just make such comments which are unnecessary. So I've gotten used to it, but I shouldn't have to. Because we're all Africans. Yeah. But for some reason, people are really divided. And it's just that living in South Africa hasn't been pleasant. And if I would have an opportunity to actually leave the country, I would take it, and I would leave and go live somewhere else. That's how far I've gotten. Thank you.

1.2 Shalom's Testimonial

I first arrived to South Africa when I was two years old. And then had to move back when my mother died to stay with my sister because my father could not look after me and go to work at the same time. I then returned to South Africa at the age of four with my my aunt. And then one day my aunt had to leave me she was like the only mother I had. She had to leave me and start her own life, leaving me alone with my father. And then he remarried and I have a stepmother now. And then I had to go to primary school. Even though I could speak Xhosa and English fitting in was very hard with everyone constantly mocking you, because you're an outsider. And like, everyone constantly asking you how's it in Zimbabwe? Oh, how do you speak the language. I felt like an alien. And it go home, trying not to be to Zimbabwean, to South African and school trying not to be to Zimbabwean. And so I could fit in somehow. I felt like I was living a double life. Like, at school, I have to not be Zimbabwean. And I have to be this person. And pretend as if it doesn't hurt me what the people say and at home, my I have to go at home and pretend that I'm okay. Because I know that my parents are trying to give me a better life and not having a mother to vent to tell me that everything is gonna go be okay. And things are gonna get better, was hard. And being a foreigner in South African school was very hard. Because like, in most cases in class, they'd be like, they'd mentioned Zimbabwe. And then everyone would like, look at me because I'm from Zimbabwe. And then I'd feel like an outsider, like I didn't fit in properly. Making friends was hard, too, because people

would look at you and be like, we don't want to be friends with the foreign kid. Especially in like high school. In high school, I have to deal with situations whereby I'm with my, with my Xhosa friends. And they talking about like foreigners and xenophobia. And you're there having to listen to this as they speak about xenophobia and how Africans are taking our- foreigners taking over their land and invading their land, and then how they have to go, and I'm there having to listen to this? And then they look at me, and then they tell me no, no, no, you're, you're not, you're not foreign you, you you're one of us. You're Xhosa. And then it's like, I asked myself questioning my identity. What am I really, because with them, I'm Xhosa, but I'm not Xhosa. It feels like I'm slowly losing my mother tongue slowly losing my roots, slowly losing myself in my identity. Like I find myself having to isolate myself from everyone feeling like running away, because I'm losing myself in this country. Even though I'm trying to fight for a better future, trying to make my mother proud, trying to make my father proud. I'm also losing myself, and I'm unable to cope. And not only that the pressure on school and trying to fit in in school, I have to deal with the pressure of my father leaving me at home and leaving through the door in the cruel world full of xenophobia not knowing if he is to return home, not knowing if I will see him again. Such fears fill my mind as I see on the news my brothers and my sisters being beaten up being killed for trying to seek for a better life for their children and fear fills fills my heart. Knowing that in this country, I will never have a place I will always have to be looking behind me trying looking behind me to see if I am safe. I'll always have to be have to have one eye open, praying that no one's notices that I am not from here praying that my accent does not breakout and I do not somehow speak my mother tongue in front of them or I'll be mocked for that. It's been very hard trying to fit in in this country with my family and pretend that I am okay without having my, having to deal with having a stepmother as well. But the one thing that saved me in the one thing that kept me going all these years is being is finding God being brought up in a Christian home has brought me to the Lord, my Savior, who he has filled me up in was through him, with him filling me up and knowing who he is, I did not need to know my identity, because I know to him I am who I am. And I will live. And I will find a way. And with what Mira was saying of, of how would you be able to change things? I wish that the same way people look at people in people in England, and they think, Oh, wow, the language is superior. And oh, wow, they're so fascinating. I wish they could give the same fascination to me as well in my language, while I'm mostly different like them, but they see me they see an enemy, but I am the same color as them. I am the same was from the same country as them. But I'm so marked and judged, I wish that I too could walk outside and feel comfortable. I wish that I too. Didn't have to feel like isolating myself from everyone else. I wish that I too, could be happy, like them could be happy with them and around them and not feel like I'm constantly having to force something having to force myself to be what I am not. I feel like I am losing myself each and every day in this foreign country. Thank you.

1.3 Key Passages from “Foreignn’s Speech

“the fact that I grew up in different areas, I've got to experience different people right? different stereotypes, and tackle all the myths as well associated with living in any area”

“...because I mean, let's face facts, guys, you are a product of your environment, no matter what, you know, a lot of the times, I mean, the lives that we live in now, you didn't even have a choice, you know, you were introduced to this thing, and it became who you are. But as you grow up, you start to open up your eyes. So you start to see that, hey, despite all these systems in place, I am an actual thinking liberal human being, you know, and I think once you start to focus on that, things just start to shift, it happens to each of us in a different way.”

“As much as social media is such a powerful driving tool for such positivity, it also can really twist the narrative. You know, it's unfortunate, because what we always see on TV as well is mostly all the negative, ... there is a lot of good happening, right? ... but it isn't, you know, displayed, and then people just take whatever they're given, and they run with that narrative”

“So, obviously, each one of us has faced some sort of discrimination, whether it's about the way that you look, the way that you sound, or the way that you may appear to be, you know, each one of us have a have that in common discrimination, it is what it is, you know, but it's how we deal with it,”

“we moved to Botswana when I was three years old. So that was my home up until I went to boarding school for 12 and [South Africa] up until I was like, 19. But during that time, you have different... moments in which you are, you know, disconnected from the world, so to speak. No matter who you are foreigner or not, it affects the child...”

“I'm blessed enough to have a mom who shifted my focus, you know, it's not to focus on what people are saying or doing to try to get you, you know, or to try to put you down, you can always turn that around and make it something else.”

“Because what better way to shut up your haters, you know, in colloquial terms, to shut up your haters, by by being the best, and by flexing and being the best, you know, so I always wanted to do my absolute best at everything I did”

“I love human beings, I love the way that we are. You see, the fact is, if you don't move to a certain place, you always have an idea of where people are until you get there. Right. So the fact that I was moving around and see how similar everybody was, I wanted a part in that, in spreading that knowledge.”

“We are all gifted with many talents. Every single one of us, if you haven't discovered any of us yet, don't give up keep looking for, you know, I'm still looking for different things. Because we're, you know, we're beings of we're all multifaceted human beings”

“So I wanted to not only tell my story about my journey, but talk about the experiences of others. Because when you meet people, and you interact with them, not only are you able to share your story with them, and allow them to experience yours, but you get to experience theirs, it's an exchange”

“...keep fighting for it, keep doing your best to try to educate those around you, you know, and those you meet on a daily basis. Because it's there will always be a domino effect.

“...my experiences and being a foreigner, have been have been beautiful. I don't want to lie to you guys, it has been amazing.”

“Even even in terms of racism, I haven't ever experienced racism. Well ok I have. Let me not lie, I have but not like the institutional racism, you know, obviously, the small what-whats, but what I'm trying to say is that there's been more positive energy...”

1.4 Key Passages from Karolyn’s Speech

“I'm 18 years old. I was born in South Africa to...Congolese refugee parents.”

“...if you're born in South Africa to refugee parents, you can apply for citizenship once you turn 18. It's a requirement.”

“However, due to COVID-19, the immigration office at Home Affairs, closed they suspended services”

She remembers “...watching the news, ...and they mentioned that if you in metric, you can apply for your ID, they will make sure that you get your ID because if you're in metric you need your ID for many different things as applying for university, writing your NEC and applying to bursaries and so forth. So I thought that this provision from Home Affairs was also for us South African born refugees to apply for citizenship however, this was not the case.”

“...I still have no ID, no ID number whatsoever, no form of identification other than an unabridged birth certificate.”

“Then I was like, okay, cool, I could, create a petition, so that I could petition to Home Affairs as well as spread awareness about my situation, because it's not the first I'm not the first person to go through this to go through the struggle of getting proper documents, I'm not the first.”

“...right now the petition has about more than 24,000 signatures on the petition and it adding on many signatories are adding on even today”

“Even before COVID-19 to get proper documents in South Africa, as a refugee as a foreigner is very difficult. It's like, the chances of you getting proper documents is so small, unless you do some corrupted way or whatsoever, they won't give you proper documents so easily. And now with COVID, it's exasperating like the process.”

“I had an interview with the spokesperson last week Monday, the spokesperson of Home Affairs. And before that the Friday, eighth of July, he released, they released a statement saying that if you are a refugee, a child of a refugee a dependent of a refugee you can apply for refugee ID, but you have to have your refugee status to have the refugee ID. So which shows that my petition is gaining volume, because they created that statement. So quick, to say something just to show that they are doing something at Home Affairs.”

“I think it's quite unfair, that the immigration office is closed because a lot of immigrants, a lot of us a lot of people in our place need proper documents to apply for proper jobs. So I also think that this situation of getting proper documents is the internal xenophobia at Home Affairs.”

“It's quite exhausting as foreigners to go to Home Affairs because you're met with this unfriendly like nature. It's completely unfair, the internal xenophobia that that's at home affairs and how they treat you and how they treat us as refugees.”

...there were many African countries... we sanctioned against the apartheid of Africa, we boycotted ...against the South African government at that time, even though our governments were cahoots with apartheid government as people because the government is separate from the people, as people, we boycotted...And we also thought that since South Africa represented the epitome of democracy in Africa. South Africa is more developed...than any other African country, we thought that we could also partake in this. And it's quite sad that we are treated with animosity, and alienated so isolated for us to even compromise who we are just to fit in. I think a way to come back to this... is to promote intersectionality between ourselves, open mindedness and love. Fair amount. Love.”

1.5 Sasikelelwa's "Motherland" poem

Embedded in the glow of my melanin skin as the glare of the sun kisses it's essence are roots and heritage that I inherited from my ancestors. It's a privilege that I find pride in as it profoundly tells a story that I share with all the people of the sun, my African brothers and sisters. It's in the richness of our roots, the depth of our lineage, the link in our spirituality and connection to the motherland that serves as advocacy that we are one. Tribes upon tribes ascending to a bloodline of royalty but I guess we already knew of how our motherland descendants gifted us with crowns we now call hair and power we now call melanin. I call upon all six regions of the motherland descendants, the southern and dare I name Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique,

Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Of the Northern and dare I name Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia. Of the western and dare I name Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Guinea, etc. Of the eastern and dare I name Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, etc. Of the central and dare I name Central African Republic, the DRC, Congo, Gambia and Gabon, not leaving out those of African Diaspora. May the spirit of ubuntu live through our hearts, penetrate our souls and infiltrate the dorms of our minds as we carry the legacy, lineage and heritage of our forefathers and foremothers through our veins. May our ancestors help us rise as a continent as the punches and jabs of social and systemic oppression, poverty and other major socioeconomic issues deprive us from striving to becoming a powerful continent we were meant to be. Until then, it's up to us to recognise the potential it has and the influence of our history. Until then, it's up to us to recognise its diversity yet recognise our common interests in making our motherland a better place for all.

1.6 Sasikelelwa's Empathy Letter

To my fellow African brothers and sisters. I can only imagine the conditions that you were living in, I can, and I can never wish leaving a place you consider a home. Because of circumstances you can't hope on anyone. I'm sorry, the world doesn't realize the severity of the drastic changes and traumas you might be experiencing. No one deserves the emotional turmoil, the mental scrutiny and exhaustion. The amount of empathy I have for you is one of the reasons why I find it very vital to educate people about the importance of treating everyone equally with love, care, and with compassion, as we don't know what they are going through. I know we live in a world where Africans and people of African descendants are often mistreated in brutal ways. And I know having to experience what you're experiencing doesn't make it any better. I know. We have a lot of issues we as a society need to act on and change. I know there are a lot of stigmas that need to stop as no one chooses to be a refugee to be a person of color, to have certain traits attached to our identities, but we should embrace the depth of our identities and the richness of our roots. That, among other reasons, is what I hope will keep us from not giving into despair. We can only embrace our roots and identities. If we embrace the spirit of Ubuntu among ourselves and fight the social and systemic stigmas of racism, colorism, sexism, and xenophobia. My heart aches at the idea of having your childhood and other aspects of your life robbed before your eyes and it aches that you are in need for a better place you can call home, I hope and I trust your ancestors, and God will pave liberation and a better life as living in a state of depravity and basic needs can be draining in every realm of one's being. I may not know when and how things will change for the better, but they will, at least I hope they will with all of my heart. Stay safe. And remember, you matter. And I respect your bravery with love, Sassi Machayan.