THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS IN COMBATING XENOPHOBIA: A CASE STUDY OF THE AFRICA SOLIDARITY NETWORK (ASONET)

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Abstract

Xenophobia is fed by stereotypes and prejudice towards the 'out-group' that is not understood by the 'in-group'. During two xenophobic waves (2008 and 2015) in South Africa civil society organisations instantly responded to the violence and aided the groups affected. However, since hostility towards African foreign nationals is a reoccurring issue, they were successful responding but not providing long term solutions to the problem. With this in mind the study sought to understand the role of civil society organisations in combating xenophobia. It investigates this through the case study of the Africa Solidarity Network (ASONET) which is a civil society organisation that was established in 2014 by various African nationals who believed migrants were underrepresented in South Africa and so they became a voice for refugees and asylum seekers. This study adopted a qualitative approach. The sample of the study consisted of six ASONET members from Congo, Zimbabwe and Rwanda, who were purposely selected. As a data collection tool three methods of data collection were used namely: focus group interviews with ASONET members, observation and field notes during the attendance of two community dialogues held by ASONET and document analysis that entailed analysing past community dialogue reports of the organisation. The research for this study was guided by the 'othering' and the 'political opportunities' theories.

The study revealed ASONET is a non-profit organisation committed to building a better united society for African people in South Africa. The findings revealed the organisation uses activities such as people to people solidarity, community dialogues, gender education, lobbying and advocacy amongst others to combat xenophobia. However, for the purpose of this research, the focus was on the use of community dialogues to achieve social cohesion and advocacy to connect people to policymakers. The organisation uses community dialogues to educate both foreign nationals and South Africans about their differences and break down misperceptions that lead to xenophobia. Advocating for policy change is a more challenging aspect of the organisation's work, because it entails dealing with the state including the Department of Home Affairs to encourage policies that are inclusive to foreigners.

Furthermore, the study findings revealed that civil society has a role to play in addressing the triggers of xenophobia and supporting the migrant communities but the state has a more fundamental role to play. ASONET engages in dialogues with not only the community but all levels of government to ensure the African migrant community is protected, however it was concluded that no lasting solutions have been achieved by the organisation on how to influence

policy. Based on the study findings, this study concludes with a proposition of a number of recommendations for civil society organisations and the government on how to find sustainable solutions to combating xenophobia. To this end, a coherent and transparent plan on how to achieve and measure social cohesion and integrate the marginalised into local communities is needed by both the government and ASONET, as this would also attract funding. The process of policy making should be inclusive to civil society organisations as this would ensure the rights of foreigners are protected and accountability by government structures.

Acronyms

ASONET – Africa Solidarity Network

AMEMSA – Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim and South Asian

CCS – Centre for Civil Society

DAC – Department of Arts and Culture

DHA – Department of Home Affairs

DDP – Democracy Development Program

KZNCSOC – KwaZulu-Natal Civil Society Organisation Coalition

NPO – Non- Profit Organisation

RRO – Refugee Reception Officer

SAPS – South African Police Service

SJC – Social Justice Coalition

USA – United States of America

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.0 Introduction

Xenophobia is a major issue in post-apartheid South Africa, the attacks on African foreign nationals have been a reoccurring issue. The hostility towards African foreign nationals has resulted in South Africans being labelled hostile, violent, xenophobic, and unwelcoming (Mogekwu 2005, Solomon and Kosaka 2013). The government has been criticised for failing to respond to xenophobia but rather focusing on reducing the influx of African foreign nationals in South Africa instead of finding solutions to deal with the violence. Therefore, it is essential to understand the responses that the non-governmental sector such as civil society has had in dealing with xenophobia. This research study aims to examine the role of civil society organisations in combating xenophobia focusing on the Africa Solidarity Network (ASONET) as a case study. This chapter provides the background of the study, outlines the research problem, provides the purpose of the study, and outlines the significance of the study. It also provides research objectives and questions; then briefly highlights the theoretical framework used and lastly provides an overview of the chapters.

1.1 Background of the study

Xenophobia is defined as the hatred and fear of foreigners or strangers, it is incorporated in discriminatory attitudes and behaviour and culminates in violence and abuses of all types (Mogekwu 2005). Discrimination and violence are global issues affecting countries around the world, these are motivated by the idea of superiority and nationalism (Neocosmos 2010). The author further argues that xenophobia is a problem of post-coloniality, one which is associated with the idea of belonging and dominant groups in the period following the country's independence. Xenophobia is a reoccurring problem haunting South Africa since the early 1990s, it was buried beneath the miracle of the 'rainbow nation' but erupted in May 2008 in an orgy of violence, since then hostility towards African foreign nationals has continued (Everatt 2010).

The Southern African Migration Programme (SAMP) (2013) documented and reported xenophobic events and provided a thorough timeline that occurred between 2008 and 2013. SAMP documented 500 incidents in 2011 with 100 foreign migrants killed, and 300 foreign migrants killed between late 2011 and 2012 (Crush et al. 2013). Furthermore, April 2015 is seen as a second xenophobic wave because of its impact on the migrant community. The attacks on foreign nationals over the years is an indication that discrimination and violence are like a

tumour in South Africa. The government has failed to deal with xenophobia from the onset and as a results it has become a reoccurring problem that is denied but termed criminality (Charman and Piper 2012).

Research has shown that there are a number of causes for xenophobic violence ranging from economic, political, and bio-cultural (Harris 2001, Nyamnjoh 2006, Nyambuya 2016). Morris (1998) for example, argues that physical appearance, distinctive dress, and inability to speak local languages make foreign nationals vulnerable to the attacks in South Africa. Violent attacks on foreign nationals in May 2008 and April 2015 occurred in townships and informal settlements, that are marginalised areas marked by poor living conditions, high unemployment rates, crime and violence which bolster economic explanations to xenophobia (Nyambuya 2016). Moreover, government officials have been accused of fuelling discrimination and perpetuating violence by making xenophobic statements that encourages locals to attack foreign nationals (Neocosmos 2010, Harris 2001, Solomon and Kosaka 2013).

Government responses to xenophobia have been criticised over the years because the legal interventions that have been implemented have been ineffective in curbing the phenomenon (Muchiri 2016). Furthermore, Naidu, Dippenaar and Kariuki (2015) argue that the government has failed to develop a concrete response to xenophobia such as establishing mechanisms for integrating migrant communities into local economies. Civil society has had a vital role in ensuring that the government becomes accountable to those affected by xenophobia and has also highlighted their rights (Everatt 2010). Civil society organisations such as ASONET advocate for human rights and are a voice for foreign nationals living in South Africa. The work of ASONET is critical as Solomon and Kosaka (2013: 6) believe "the manifestation of xenophobia undermines social cohesion, peaceful co-existence, good governance and constitutes a violation of human rights".

1.2 Research problem

The May 2008 violent attacks on migrants are known as the starting point of violence in South Africa although the country has a history of hostility. The May 2008 attacks resulted in the deaths of 62 people, 700 injured, and the displacement of hundreds of thousands. While xenophobic attacks have been reported and documented over the years, the 2008 attacks have been seen as the worst year yet. The 2015 xenophobic attacks left migrants dispersed and a record of 10 people dead. Civil society organisations played a critical role in responding during and after the violence but eventually lost momentum. The absence of organisations on a day-

to-day basis in the lives of at-risk individuals does not assist in reducing the xenophobic attacks in the country and increases the intolerance and inequality experienced by foreign nationals.

The hostility towards African foreign nationals has become a common reality, it is worth noting that when this research was conducted Nigerians were attacked in September 2019, they were accused of being involved in illegal activities that perpetuate crime in the country. There have been responses by the government over the years, but no sustainable solutions have been made by the government to ensure the safety of foreigners. There is a surplus of knowledge available on xenophobia, its causes and impacts therefore, this research was aimed at adding to the scarce research on the involvement of civil society organisations in dealing with xenophobia. This study is inspired by the quest to understand the strategies employed by civil society organisations such as ASONET in combating xenophobia.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to explore the role of civil society organisations in combating xenophobia, focusing on ASONET as a case study. The focus was on understanding how the organisation uses community dialogue and policy advocacy to achieve social cohesion and integration.

1.4 Significance of the study

Xenophobia is a human rights issue that is an on-going and evolving phenomenon in South Africa that indicates continuation in the foreseeable future. Most African countries continue to face poverty, unemployment and wars as a result people flee from their countries to seek economic and political stability in South Africa hence, the influx of African foreign nationals. Explanations about the causes of xenophobia include historic factors from the countries racist apartheid past, ongoing poverty, structural inequality, economic and political instability and deep-rooted xenophobic attitudes. Disadvantaged South Africans should be informed about the cause of issues such as poverty, unemployment and crime so they cannot blame the 'Others'. This is to avoid the attacks on foreign nationals when they move into communities, they must be integrated to achieve social cohesion. Therefore, this study suggests social cohesion as a method that could stitch together a fracturing society.

In addition, this study adds to the existing literature on civil society organisations and xenophobia, with a focus on the role played by ASONET as an anti-xenophobic organisation in combating xenophobia. Understanding the organisations role in responding to the hostility

and violence towards African foreign nationals, provides an understanding of the methods they employed to achieve their desired goals. In addition, the study highlights the organisations strategies used to tackle xenophobia and achieve social cohesion, looking closely at their successes and challenges. This thesis is intended to add future knowledge to stakeholders such as civil society organisations, structures of government, DHA, and Department of Arts and Culture, which will assist them on strategies to employ in order to integrate the locals and foreigners.

1.5 Research objectives

Objectives

1. To understand what sort of an entity ASONET is.
2. To understand ASONET's role in combating xenophobia.
3. To examine how the organisation tries to achieve community integration, participation and social cohesion within communities.

Questions

1. What kind of organisation is ASONET?
2. What are ASONET's main strategies and/or programmes?
3. What have been some of ASONET's successes and failures?

1.6 Theoretical framework

This study uses two theories namely, the Othering theory and the political opportunities theory. The Othering theory is used to understand how discrimination and being labelled as *makwerekwere* has affected ASONET's aim of achieving social cohesion through community dialogue, and advocacy work. The political opportunity theory is used to understand the response of the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) to xenophobia, and how the change in leadership affected ASONET's advocacy work.

1.7 Structure of the study

Chapter one of the dissertation serves as an introduction to the research problem, then provides the aim of the study, research problem, research questions and objectives, significance of the study and the structure of the thesis.

Chapter two reviews the literature available on xenophobia, civil society organisations, government legislation and provides the theoretical framework used to critically analyse the role of civil society organisations in combating xenophobia.

Chapter three describes the methodology applied for this research by looking at the research design, study population, the sampling method used, methods of data collection, data analysis, validity and trustworthiness, ethical considerations and limitations of the study.

Chapter four presents the findings from the focus group interviews, observations and field notes, and document analysis. Findings are presented using thematic analysis. Chapter five presents a discussion, recommendations and the dissertation conclusion.

Chapter Two: Literature review and theoretical framework

2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a background on xenophobia focusing on the definition, the history of the two major waves of xenophobia in South Africa (2008 and 2015), the state of xenophobia over the years as well as the causes of xenophobia, it briefly looks at social cohesion, xenophobia and legislation. It further examines the involvement of the government and civil society in dealing with xenophobia, and lastly, othering and political opportunities theories are unpacked.

2.1 Defining xenophobia

The literature shows that the concept of xenophobia has been used and defined by many scholars, and for the purpose of this study the term will be broadly defined. Mogekwu (2005: 7) defines the term as "…the fear or hatred of foreigners or strangers; it is embodied in discriminatory attitudes and behaviour, and often culminates in violence, abuses of all types and exhibitions of hatred". Nyambuya (2016) further describes xenophobia as an irrational or unreasonable fear of that which is perceived to be foreign or strange, it also denotes opposition to immigration and migration. It is observable that even though xenophobia is on the rise in South Africa, it is mostly African foreigners that are discriminated against and not foreigners like Chinese, Europeans, or African Americans. Nyambuya (2016: 14) mentions that not all foreigners are victimised, therefore the definition suitable for xenophobia in South Africa should be "fear or hatred of black foreigners since these are the target of victimisation, and not all foreigners". There is a negative social perception of African immigrants, refugees and migrants, that can be observed in South Africa which leads to the violence directed at them (Muchiri 2016).

Discrimination in South Africa is based on nationality and race, and South Africa History Online (2015) states that xenophobia is a manifestation of racism because it operates on the basis of profiling people and making negative assumptions about them. According to Ngcamu and Mantzaris (2019), the assumptions created perpetuates the violence towards foreign nationals in communities making them vulnerable to attacks. Further, Neocosmos (2010) comments that discrimination in the country is related to racism inherited from the apartheid era, such that anyone or any group that is considered non-indigenous is greeted with hostility. The negative attitudes and name-calling directed to African foreign nationals resulting in xenophobia cannot be separated from physical abuse and violence. Kollapen (1999) in support

of this argues that xenophobia is not just an attitude but also the practice resulting in violence which in turn leads to harm and damage. The explanations of xenophobia found by Nyambuya (2016: 15) in her paper suggests that "xenophobia is a natural dislike or hate for that which is foreign" however, the dislike or hate is also associated with competition for scarce resources, which for the author eliminates the 'naturalness' from the 'dislike'.

In the paper by Nyambuya (2016) various definitions are provided by people from other African countries who have experienced xenophobia over the years while residing in South Africa. One person describes xenophobia as segregation and discrimination that they experience from the moment they migrate into the country when people learn of their nationality, it is not only about the violence and attacks they experience. Also, the participants in Nyambuya's study believed that xenophobia was triggering a war between South Africa and neighbouring African countries since South Africans do identify themselves with the rest of Africa. While for another person in the study, xenophobia is defined as robbery of the other person's hard-earned investments, for him it is about the locals taking advantage of foreigners and hiding behind the dislike of foreigners. There is a need to explore the perspectives of victims of xenophobia in research and not just their experiences.

2.1.1 Afrophobia in South Africa

While xenophobia is seen as the fear of other, Afrophobia is the fear of a specific other. Dube (2018) believes Afrophobia implies fear of the African, but it has come to mean hatred of the other, and it is increasingly used in literature and popular media to describe the negative attitudes of black South Africans towards African immigrants. Authors like Harris (2002) and Neocosmos (2010) argue that colonialism, racial segregation and apartheid of centuries had a negative consequence in South Africa, its people had learnt hatred of fellow Africans who came into the country to work in the mines and factories. Koenane and Maphunye (2015) believe this black-on-black conflict and violence directed at other Africans result from the apartheid system's restrictive policies which caused very few South Africans to venture beyond the borders of the republic in search of work. As a result of such policies the majority of South Africans never accepted and learned other African cultures and languages. According to the authors they failed to understand the economic and political situations of other countries, hence their hostility towards others who are seen as a threat to them.

2.2 History of two xenophobic waves in South Africa (May 2008 and April 2015)

It is essential to understand the nature of xenophobia in South Africa which Hagensen (2014) believes refers to its basic features or characteristics. Research has shown xenophobia in South Africa is a continuous problem that has been reoccurring over the years since the 2008 attacks. Although Crush (2008: 6) can be quoted stating that "an overview of xenophobia in South Africa since the democratic elections in 1994 shows that the 'perfect storm' of May 2008 did not spring out of nowhere". He believes the 2008 attacks cannot be separated from the countries apartheid past of racism, discrimination and exclusionary policies. Similarly, Muchiri (2016) writes about the history of xenophobic violence and indicates it began in the 1990s, however, the attacks escalated in 2006 and 2007 when over 100 Somalis were killed across the country, and their businesses were burnt and looted.

In May 2008 xenophobic violence broke out in South Africa leaving more than sixty people dead and more than one hundred thousand homeless (Crush 2008). Furthermore, Muchiri (2016: 36) adds that "refugees, asylum seekers, migrant workers and other categories of foreign nationals were attacked, killed, deprived of their property through looting and arson, sexually assaulted and many were uprooted from their communities and displaced". Nyambuya (2016) citing The Times (2008) narrates the May 2008 attacks stating that it began in Alexandra Township when locals attacked foreigners. Weeks after the attacks the violence spread to the other settlements in the Gauteng province and other provinces and cities such as Cape Town and Durban. Dodson (2010) adds that the images of the violent attacks on foreigners including the man burnt alive were seen around the world, which shocked the international community and many South Africans, such that South Africans of all races shamed by these barbaric incidents took to the streets in protest marches reminiscent of the antiapartheid struggles.

The 2015 xenophobic attacks were reported by Sunday Live (2015) cited by Nyambuya (2016), exposed that the January 2015 attacks were triggered by the death of a 14-year-old boy from Soweto who was allegedly shot and killed by a foreign shop owner for trying to rob the store. The death of the boy was followed by violent looting of foreigner's shops in Soweto, Kagiso, Alexandra, Tembelihle, Langlaagte and other settlements. When the violence spread to settlements in Cape Town at least six people died including a baby. While in April 2015 (Sunday Live 2015 cited by Nyambuya 2016) reported similar incidents that occurred in Durban when two Ethiopians were petrol bombed in Umlazi which resulted in the spread of violence in KwaMashu, Pinetown and Dalton hostel. The author saw the April 2015 wave as

most significant since the 2008 attacks, these attacks spread to Johannesburg during this time and more than 2000 people were displaced, refugee camps were set up to provide shelter for the people who became homeless because of the violence. Nyambuya (2016) argues that foreigners from neighbouring countries especially Zimbabweans fled back to their countries to seek refuge until things settled down.

2.3 Xenophobia in South Africa

Misago, Freemantle and Landau (2015) argue that there has been variety of campaigns to address xenophobia beginning in the 1990s, but few have had a broad-based impact in the country. The country harbours a high number of African migrants, according to Black et al. (2006) the overall number of 'visitors' in the country coming from other regions in Africa rose after apartheid, from around 500 000 in 1990 to 5 million per annum at present. However, Diko's (2019) article warns against the exaggerated reports of the number of foreigners in the country by international media because it causes unrest in citizens. Furthermore, the reporter adds that reliable statistics are provided by Census 2011 and puts the number to 2,2 million foreign nationals excluding the undocumented people. With the influx of African migrants and South Africans facing an increase in unemployment, crime and poor service delivery, negative attitudes towards foreigners are increasing. According to Hagensen (2014) xenophobic behaviours are not only carried out by members of the public but state officials also carry out attacks on foreign nationals. South Africa is known to be violent and hostile because of the history of apartheid, furthermore, the country has one of the highest rates of protest by citizens demanding service delivery or equal wages (Khumalo 2018). Hagensen (2014) adds that people have accepted violence as means to an end and since they see foreigners as a problem, they resort to violence in their reactions to them which explains the violent nature of xenophobia in South Africa.

According to Mogekwu (2005) attitudes of hostility are on the rise globally, but they have not resulted in the levels of violence as they have been in South Africa over the years. The concept of xenophobia was unpacked earlier and Nyambuya (2016: 14) was quoted stating that a new definition for xenophobia in the country should be "fear or hatred of black foreigners since these are the target of victimisation, and not all foreigners". Literature has shown that this is because African migrants are competing with citizens for limited resources. Valji (2003) adds that foreigners come from their countries after fleeing or in search of a better life, and the problem is they take residence in less well-off areas, predominantly black townships which

then leads to competition with local people who are themselves struggling economically and as a result view the newcomers as competition in terms of resources and services. Although there has been an influx of African foreign nationals in South Africa, Landau et. al (2016) warns about the exaggeration made by the media about the number of foreigners in the country. This exaggeration according to the authors creates the panic in an economically struggling society.

2.4 The causes of xenophobia

Dodson (2010) argues that the causes of xenophobia lie in a complex of economic, political, social and cultural factors and that the experiences of xenophobia are part of African immigrants' everyday lives in South Africa. However, for the purpose of this research existing literature on economic, political and cultural explanations to xenophobia will be reviewed.

2.4.1 Economic explanations for xenophobia

Literature reveals that the most prevalent cause of xenophobia is drawn from economics. Solomon and Kosaka (2013: 10) believe that "the psychology behind xenophobia is much less complex, and the principle factor is economic". Mujawamariya (2013) further states that foreign nationals are portrayed as primarily an economic threat, they are accused of taking citizen's jobs and social services. The high levels of youth unemployment and inequality that exist in South Africa has resulted in discontent and anger, immigrants from other African countries become a target because they live in townships where the problem of unemployment is prominent (Nyambuya 2016). Furthermore, Nyamnjoh (2006) argues that South Africans see foreign nationals as competing with them when it comes to jobs, housing, service delivery and other resources that they believe they are entitled to. Harris (2002) shares similar views as the other authors however, supports Tshitereke's (1999) argument that foreigners are blamed for ongoing deprivation and poverty. The author claims that foreigners become scapegoats for poor black South Africans who are deprived services as a result their anger and frustrations are directed to non-national minorities.

Moreover, Valji (2003) claims that the deteriorating economic conditions are in direct contrast with the expectations of the masses that were fostered throughout the liberation struggle. The realities of post-apartheid South Africa, that include unemployment and poor service delivery as already mentioned has brought anger and frustration to citizens hence the need to blame non-nationals for the limited resources. In the study done by Everett (2010) there was a belief that South Africans are lazy and do not want to work. In communities more foreigners' own

shops than citizens, this impacts negatively in communities resulting in intolerance of foreigners by locals, this was said by Minister in the Presidency Jeff Radebe in 2015 (Gqirana 2015). However, Chidester, Dexter and James (2003) argue that foreigners are not necessarily harder workers than South Africans, it is just their circumstances demand greater sacrifice and discipline.

According to Charman and Piper (2012), immigrant Somalis shopkeepers have mostly been affected by the violent attacks against immigrant shopkeepers in the townships. The authors argue that the violence against shopkeepers is linked to economic competition in the informal economy and should be understood against a background of criminality including forms of 'violent entrepreneurship' which is defined by the authors as "the link between business and crime, and the use of violence against economic opponents in emerging capitalist economies where state power is limited" (2012: 86). Ngcamu and Mantzaris (2019) add that in local townships the difference in prices between local shop owners and Somalis has brought conflict in the communities. Furthermore, Charman and Piper's (2012) study on Delft revealed that the local shop owners whose businesses have suffered because of foreign shop owners become hostile and bitter however this is not linked to the killings in Delft, instead the killings should be understood as criminality and violent entrepreneurship.

2.4.2 Political explanations for xenophobia

Muchiri (2016) argues that many behaviours were inherent from the apartheid era, South African people were isolated from the rest of the world such that when the borders opened in 1994 and migrants entered South Africa in large numbers it created hostility and xenophobia. Furthermore, foreigners were the 'unknown' to citizens, South Africans had just moved to a democracy and the influx of foreigners created suspicion. Since the transition to democracy there has been a growing obsession with belonging and redefinition of the boundaries of citizenship which has resulted in the creation of the 'other' Nyamnjoh (2006). Neocosmos (2010) sees xenophobia as shocking because of the international support that South Africa received during apartheid in the 1980s. According to Nyambuya (2016) violence is easily sparked in this country and the 2008 and 2015 waves were a result of inflammatory statements from influential leaders. The statements made by elites in the media has proven to be influential to people's behaviours and triggering the hostility that South Africans have towards foreigners.

As noted, xenophobia in South Africa is mostly towards black African foreigners that are seen as not belonging. Solomon and Kosaka (2013) argue that explanations for the reasons that make

xenophobia racially selective in South Africa are needed. Failure by the government to provide services promised to its citizens adds to the hostility towards foreigners, Valji (2003) argues that it is the poor and struggling that become violent. However, Neocosmos (2010) is of the opinion that state institutions are at the heart of the causes of the xenophobic attacks in South Africa. Although the government over the years has realised the magnitude of the problem of xenophobia, politicians have expressed xenophobic views and presented them in the media as the views of their department and the government (Solomon and Kosaka 2013). Neocosmos (2010) states that former Minister Mangosuthu Buthelezi has been quoted in the past claiming that the influx of 'illegal immigrants' hamper economic growth, also labelling them as 'aliens'. He further adds that the 2008 attacks originate from the highest-level of the African National Congress and not the poor unemployed people that are blamed and the 2015 wave was caused by the inflammatory statements which came from influential leaders such as the Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini and President Zuma's son Edward Zuma.

2.4.2.1 Institutional discrimination of foreigners

According to Misago et al. (2015), the idea of 'alien' or 'foreigner' was used by state institutions during apartheid times to exclude South Africans and other African foreigners from political participation and rights to city dwellings. In contemporary South Africa, exclusionary conditions have improved for citizens but not much change is seen for foreign nationals. Authors like Harris (2001), Neocosmos (2010) and Nyamnjoh (2006), have accused government institutions of discrimination towards foreigners, from the DHA which is responsible for alien control and admissions and refugees/asylum affairs, and the South African Police Service (SAPS) which serves various functions in enforcement of immigration law. According to Crush (2008), it is worrying that politicians and government officials acted surprised when xenophobic attacks broke out in 2008 because the view they portray in the media suggests that African nationals are responsible for issues facing South Africa. Harris (2001) suggests that the SAPS does not treat foreigners in a dignified way because they rarely allow them the opportunity to collect any valid documents they might have when arrested, this act has been seen as a new form of apartheid which forces foreigners to always carry proof of their legal status. Solomon and Kosaka (2013) argue that African foreign nationals are stereotyped in the media, they are branded as potential criminals, murderers, and drug smugglers by politicians and unreliable figures are bandied around Parliament.

2.4.3 Bio-cultural explanations for xenophobia

Increased immigration of African nationals into South Africa has brought South African citizens into direct contact with other Africans to a greater extent than during the apartheid era when black immigration was prohibited except for temporary migration of mine labour (Dodson 2010). Harris (2002) writes about the bio-cultural hypothesis which locates xenophobia at the level of visible difference or "otherness", with Nigerians and Congolese foreigners scapegoated as a result of their physical appearance and their inability to speak indigenous languages. The same author questions the reasons for certain biological and cultural features taking on xenophobic importance and why Africans are targeted as victims while their white counterparts also have visible differences. Morris (1998) suggests that the mutual stereotype that exists between foreigners and South Africans exaggerates perceived cultural differences and gives rise to prejudice and hostility. The police are also stereotypical when identifying whether the suspect is illegal or not by using the suspect traits, language and clothes to establish nationality (Harris 2001). Furthermore, Harris (2002) believes the biological markers are crucial in generating xenophobia because they point to whom to target. Literature reveals that migrant women experience the same hostility as their male counterparts but in addition deal with gender discrimination in the workplace, domestic violence and patriarchal oppression (Dodson 1998, Hiralal 2017).

2.5 Achieving social cohesion

The social cohesion strategy was introduced by the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) in 2012 when they hosted a social cohesion summit and adopted social cohesion and nation-building strategy. The DAC (2012: 31) defines social cohesion as "the degree of social integration and inclusion in communities and society at large, and the extent to which mutual solidarity finds expression among individuals and communities". The department sees social cohesion as part of nation-building because a society must be cohesive to the extent that inequalities, exclusions based on gender, nationality and ethnicity are eliminated, and a society with diverse origins, histories, languages, religions and cultures come together to achieve unity and equality. However, Naidu at el. (2015) argue that the government has not established mechanisms for integrating migrant communities into their local communities. The hate crimes and hostility that exist towards African nationals in South African societies affect community cohesion and social stability. Gouws (2003) notes that there is a question of how society would look if a socially coherent society is achieved and what the requirements are for creating social cohesion.

2.6 Xenophobia and legislation: The South African Constitution and Migration Act

South Africa is a democratic country that has been committed to protecting the wellbeing of citizens, with a focus on those who are socially, economically and financially marginalised. Mullard and Spicker (1998) argue that the right to welfare was closely linked to democracy, rights are an outcome of a democratic process and allows people to participate in society. The South African Constitution (1996) states that it is applicable to everyone although some rights are reserved for citizens, Section 27 (a) states that everyone has the right to health care services and in 29 (1) (a) it is stated everyone has the right to basic education including adult education. Similarly, the Refugee Act 27 (g) (1998) states that a refugee is entitled to the same basic health services and basic primary education which the inhabitants of the Republic receive from time to time. Ramjathan-Keogh (2017) believes South Africa has a progressive refugee policy that includes the basic principles of refugee protection including freedom of movement, access to basic social services and the right to work although according to the author there are barriers in accessing these rights.

Cohen (2013: 60) argues that "despite rights being applicable to everyone in terms of the law, in practice this is not the case for non-nationals, many of whom remain invisible, vulnerable and open to abuse from local communities and criminals". Muchiri (2016) adds that after the apartheid era the Constitution was created to correct the injustices of the past, it had to heal racial divisions, exclusions, human rights abuse and establish a society with democratic values, social justice and respect for human rights. However, the Constitution has failed to protect foreigners against the discrimination that they experience, because some foreigners enter the country illegally, they cannot report the hate crimes they experience since they might be arrested themselves (Cohen 2013). Muchiri (2016) argues that the country has failed to create laws to prosecute xenophobia and other prejudice motivated crimes, also acts of xenophobic violence and discrimination must be distinguished from other acts of violence.

Furthermore, the Immigration Act that was created to protect foreigners is seen as being exclusionary by some scholars. According to the Immigration Act (2002) 2(1)(c) it is the objective of the Departments to detect and deport illegal foreigners, regulate the influx of foreigners and in order to achieve these objectives the Department shall educate the communities and organs of civil society on the rights of foreigners, illegal foreigners and refugees, and conduct other activities to prevent xenophobia. The Immigration Act is therefore more focused on controlling and excluding migrants than protecting their rights. Muchiri

(2016) adds that the Act exacerbates rather than curbs xenophobia in the country because it is anti-migration, it is focused on 'controlling' and excluding migrants.

Peberdy (2010) states that the post-apartheid government inherited the Aliens Control Act of 1991, which was an exclusionary Act that regulated immigration and migration to the country until 2002. He adds that amendments were made to the Act such that there was a decline in applications for permanent residence between 1994 and 2000, then a rapid increase in approved applications since 2002 which is an indication of a change in policy and legislation. The amended Act of 2005 is in line with the Constitution (Peberdy 2010), it has commendable aspects such as "South Africa's insistence on local integration and protection programs rather than building specific camps for refugees" (Landau et al. 2016: 6). Neocosmos (2010) questions how xenophobia will be overcome if distinctions are made between citizens and 'others' in the state discourse.

2.7 South African government responses to xenophobia

According to Muchiri (2016) the South African government denies the existence of xenophobia and sees it just as 'crime', this perpetuates the problem. Solomon and Kosaka (2013) argue that although the government did not acknowledge xenophobia, they have in recent years began to recognise the magnitude of the problem of xenophobia. Government officials have been accused of perpetuating the problem of xenophobia, by making public statements labelling African foreigners as 'aliens' and calling them criminals who are involved in prostitution, fraud and drug dealing (Solomon and Kosaka 2013). Politicians have publicly referred to the influx of illegal migrants as hindering development in South Africa, which is the reason various scholars see government officials as xenophobic themselves (Neocosmos 2010, Solomon and Kosaka 2013). In the study done by Everatt (2010) engaging with African foreigners, participants revealed that they are at times attacked and discriminated by the police in the communities when they are supposed to be protecting them. Furthermore, Solomon and Kosaka (2013) add that the Immigration Act 2002 gave police and immigration officers powers to request people to verify their immigration status. Furthermore, the Parliamentary Monitoring Group (2019) reported the following discussed in a committee meeting about the Immigration Amendment Bill;

> The Constitutional Court had declared Section 34(1)(b) and (d) of the Immigration Act unconstitutional. It had ordered that any illegal foreigner detained by SAPS be brought before

a court in person within 48 hours of arrest unless the 48 hours' period had expired outside of an ordinary court day, in which case it had to be at the soonest possible point after this deadline.

Neocosmos (2010) states that ANC politicians have been quoted saying that immigration cannot be avoided in South Africa because foreigners are attracted to its booming economy, so there must be migration control and legislation. It has been evident from the literature that government departments such as the DHA which mostly deal with African foreigners have delivered poor services to them. Neocosmos (2010) mentions an example that occurred in the late 2000s of Zandspruit, an informal settlement near Johannesburg where Zimbabweans were attacked, their homes burnt and stores were looted with people accusing them of crime, stealing their jobs and killing residents. The foreign nationals were instructed to leave the area in 10 days when they refused their belongings and houses were burned but the important aspect of the story for Neocosmos is that state officials from two government departments had been directly involved in these xenophobic raids aided by the community. According to Adjai (2010) no arrests were made by the SAPS and there are no records of the ANC and other government responses following the attacks that occurred between 1994 and 2000. The ANC did not take a leadership role on the matter of xenophobia and their concern was foreign policy and their international reputation which might be damaged by the attacks.

2.8 Defining civil society organisations

Researchers like Buyse (2018) prefer the use of civil society organisations instead of civil society actors or non-governmental organisation, because the wording best reflect these networks and the potential for the collective action they represent. Civil society facilitates exchanges among citizens, promotes civic action, enables communication channels between citizens and the state, and advances common interests based on civility (Buyse 2018). Civil society plays a vital role in being the voice for the poor and marginalised, and ensuring justice and accountability of the state (Everatt 2010). VanDyck (2017) provides a more relevant and fitting definition of civil society for this study, by defining it as the wide array of non-governmental and non-profit organisations that have a presence in public life, express the interests and values of their members and others, based on cultural, religious, philanthropic, ethical, or political considerations.

2.9 Involvement of civil society organisations in combating xenophobia globally

Discrimination and hatred of foreign people exist globally therefore it is essential to first explore the problem of xenophobia and the involvement of civil society internationally.

According to Mogekwu (2005) xenophobia is not only a problem on the African continent but a global problem experienced by both the industrialised democracies of the north and the developing countries of the south. Similarly, Wose Kinge (2016: 12) notes that "historically, xenophobia did not start in South Africa; Australia, North America, Europe, United Kingdom, Japan and others have had long histories of xenophobia". With wars, economic and political problems increasing globally, migration is on the rise with people seeking better opportunities and sanctuary in foreign countries. According to UN DESA (2017) 258 million people were estimated to be living in a foreign countries and high-income countries hosted nearly 165 million of the total number of international migrants worldwide. Globalisation has also contributed to the movement of people across countries and people move to countries with economies growing rapidly but offering higher wages for relatively low skills (ILO, IOM & OHCHR 2001).

In Australia for example, there is evidence of racism in the "workplace, schools, the media, sport, employment, accommodation, the provision of goods and services, policing and the criminal justice process" (Human Rights Commission 2001: 2). What is evident from the global news is the intolerance of cultural differences and diversity by societies. Human Rights Commission (2001) adds that there is greater antagonism towards groups who are visibly different, xenophobia manifests against particular ethnic or racial groups. Like all countries that are faced with incidents of xenophobia, in Australian society, racism is about maintenance in social, cultural, political and economic spheres. The influx of foreigners is common globally the instability in one country results in people taking refuge in neighbouring countries. Saideman and Ayres (2008: 155-160) state that xenophobic tendencies in Rome were manifested towards immigrants from other neighbouring countries such as Russia and Hungary. While in France immigrants were used as scapegoats for issues such as unemployment and crime, the French feared that foreigners were going to contaminate their culture, so immigration laws were imposed (Wose Kinge 2016). In the United States of America (USA) discrimination and racism is an ongoing issue that is constantly reported in the news. Wose Kinge (2016) reports that xenophobia in the USA started in the 19th century when White Americans assaulted Chinese residents, today the attitude towards Mexicans, Italians and Asians show immigrants remain unwelcome.

Civil society organisations such as the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) are involved and they recognise the struggles for immigrants and refugees in the USA and work towards providing security and human rights. The Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim and South

Asian (AMEMSA) communities are targeted and stereotyped as being terrorist in the USA especially after 9/11, Deepa Iyers is referenced by Haidar (2016) stating that AMEMSA is an organisation that was formed to deal with discrimination. The author further states that minorities from these countries required social movement organising to deal with the issues of racism, social justice and discriminatory government policies. Additionally, there are non-profit AMEMSA organisations such as South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT) and the National Network for Arab American Communities (NNAAC) which engage in different activities such as media advocacy, policy, civic and political empowerment, leadership development, alliance building with other communities (Haidar 2016). The writer further notes the crucial work done by AMEMSA organisations to combat hate violence and unite communities but also to address issues such as socioeconomic differences, educational barriers and lack of accessible health care.

2.10 Civil society organisations: Responses to xenophobia in South Africa

According to Nyar (2010), although South Africa is a xenophobic country, it has tried to resist xenophobia due to an active and vibrant civil society sector. During the two xenophobic waves, different stakeholders responded in a variety of ways. Amisi et al. (2010) state that during the 2008 attacks in Durban the short-term solutions were to provide food, shelter and clothes, while the long-term strategy was to deal with the root causes of the attacks in different but complementary ways. According to Everatt (2010: 25), the 2008 response included "NGO's, social movements, community-based organisation, civics, schools, women's groups, peace and justice organisations, academics, students, Christian, Jewish and Muslim faith-based organisations, refugee and migrant organisations, school governing bodies, community policing forums, professional associations and trade unions". Furthermore, the Treatment Action Campaign had a vital role in responding to the violence, the organisation established an enduring civil society coalition with the Social Justice Coalition (SJC) (Everatt 2010). The author argues that since its establishment it held community meetings, established branches and formulated demands around the Constitution, however, SJC lost momentum over the years and lost its initial impetus.

The churches have also had an important role in responding to xenophobia and assisting the foreigners that were affected. Literature shows that there was an interaction between churches and civil society organisations who liaised with SAPS. According to Phakathi (2010), the churches provided shelter, food and distributed goods to the affected people while the police

provided protection. When the violence broke out in Cape Town six camps for those displaced were eventually set up at Harmony Park, Soetwater, Strand, Silverstroom, Youngsfield Military Base and Blue Waters and people were moved to them (Mazibuko and Peberdy 2010). However, the authors findings indicate that no lasting partnerships were developed between faith-based organisations, civil society organisations and the government to further deal with the social and economic challenges that face the country.

Following the xenophobic attacks, the Centre for Human Rights (2017) reported that in 2015 more than 100 civil society organisations and concerned members of the public addressed a letter to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights pleading for the government to take action. In response to the letter, the African Commission issued a resolution calling upon the government of South Africa to protect the rights of foreigners and stop the xenophobic attacks against non-nationals. Furthermore, for Naidu et al. (2015) the Democracy Development Program (DDP) through its involvement with the KwaZulu-Natal Civil Society Organisation Coalition (KZNCSOC) provided a sustainable response to the violence by sending an open letter to the President stating their dissatisfaction with the violence against African nationals and calling for action against the perpetrators. The authors further state that the DDP also had an organisational response through its partnership with ASONET since they represented the interests of foreign nationals living in South Africa, they already knew about on-the-ground needs, violent hotspots and how to connect the people to the City of Durban.

2.11 Theoretical framework

According to Lesinska (2019), a theoretical framework must demonstrate an understanding of theories and concepts that are relevant to the topic of research and can be related to broader areas of knowledge. Vosloo (2014) believes a theory is best described as an attempt to develop a general explanation for some phenomenon, in addition, theory is concerned with providing an explanation that is focused on determining cause-and-effect relationships. For the purpose of this research 'othering' and the social movement theory of political opportunities were the two theories applied to the study findings to understand how xenophobia is understood and the ways civil society organisations have responded to the challenges of xenophobia.

2.11.1 Othering ('*makwerekwere*')

Brons (2015: 70) sees Othering "as a simultaneous construction of the self or in-group and the other or out-group in mutual and unequal opposition through the identification of some desirable characteristic that the self/in-group has and the other/out-group lacks and/or some

undesirable characteristic that the other/out-group has and the self/in-group lacks". In addition, Staszak (2018: 1) defines 'other' as "a member of a dominated out-group, whose identity is considered lacking and who may be subject to discrimination by the in-group". Discrimination is shown in many acts and that includes the terms used to refer to others, which can diminish their confidence and existence. The belief of belonging and national citizenship has caused the epidemic of xenophobia globally. Mangezvo (2015: 44) adds that "…citizenship requires the production of the category of the 'other' of the nation, those who are foreign, alien and do not belong". Nyamnjoh (2006) states that in South Africa and Botswana where the economies are more prosperous than elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa xenophobia is rife against migrants from other African countries. The writer adds that in Botswana the term '*makwerekwere*' is used to refer to black African immigrants and they are denied a name just like in South Africa.

The 'other' is not just the one who does not belong to the national territory, it has become one who is not from the local territory (Tadjo 2008). Examples can be made of how the 'other*'* has been defined in different countries, *Negro* was used in the USA to refer to black people and they were discriminated against by white people and segregated and treated as slaves. Although this type of discrimination was not classified as xenophobia the 'other' was created and termed *Negro* by white people to make black people feel inferior. For Fanon (1952) the 'other' was created on the basis of race, Negroes were inferior, they were manipulated psychologically into believing their inferiority and weakness. Additionally, the colonized had to be socially alienated, one could argue that this is a similar pattern that can be observed in South Africa where citizens make the 'other' (*makwerekwere*) feel inferior while making them believe they have no power as migrants/immigrants. In the Ivory Coast, the concept of Ivoirité was constructed by President Henri Konan Bédié to differentiate between true Ivorians and foreigners, people who were of Ivorian origin had access to the country's resources and opportunities because of their nationality (Tadjo 2008). Furthermore, Akindès (2004) adds that a person who identifies as an 'Ivoirité' must have Côte d'Ivoire origin, his/her parents must be of that origin and belong to one of the ethnic group's native to the country. The author adds that there are many examples to be learned by South Africans in the Ivorian example, one being the issue of ethnicity which can become a threat to social stability.

To categorize the 'other' in South Africa the term '*makwerekwere*' is used to construct African foreign nationals living in South Africa (Janks 2014). This term used to define the '*other'* has caused disputes over the years because it is a form of discrimination against black foreigners and this is observed in everyday lives in communities. Nyamnjoh (2016) states that

makwerekwere is any outsider or stranger who crosses borders nimble-footedly, uninvited and does not seek consent from those who believe to be native to the soil. Furthermore, Nyamnjoh (2016: 31) adds that the people known as *makwerekwere* "come in as long-distance traders, asylum-seekers, students, professionals, entrepreneurs, traditional healers and pastors". It is evident from the literature on the issue of xenophobia that South Africans are not accepting of outsiders, this observation calls for a stronger and effective social cohesion effort. Since ASONET represents the interests of foreign nationals and the members of the organisation are from different African countries. This study uses the Othering theory to understand how stereotype and discrimination has affected ASONET, with regards to achieving social cohesion through community dialogue and their advocacy work.

2.11.2 Political opportunities

Political opportunities are defined as "consistent but not necessarily formal, permanent, or national signals to social or political actors which either encourage or discourage them to use their internal resources to form social movements" (Giugni 2009: 361). While it can refer to the importance of the broader political system in structuring the opportunities for collective action (McAdam, McCarthy & Zald 1996: 2). Civil society has played a vital role in mobilising people in South Africa in order to achieve desired outcomes, it is therefore crucial to understand how political opportunities impact on movements and campaigns for change. Meyer and Minkoff (2004) argue that political opportunity presumes that social mobilisation can sometimes effect changes in public policy. Suh (2001: 439) further notes that it affects "…movement strength, strategy, form and outcome".

This study uses the theory of political opportunities to understand ASONET's challenges and successes. Political opportunities refer to the importance of the broader political system in structuring the opportunities for collective action (McAdam et al. 1996: 2). With regards to ASONET this study will be limited to considering how different Home Affairs administrations understood and reacted to the problem of xenophobia and how this and the change in the departments leadership affected ASONET's activities in terms of its abilities to mobilise, organise and engage with affiliates and local provincial and national government. The study will consider the relative openness or closure of the political system with regards to reactions to xenophobia, the presence of allies in governing structures and the state's propensity for repression as indicators of political opportunities (McAdam et al. 1996: 10).

2.12 Conclusion

Previous studies on xenophobia have mainly focused on xenophobic causals, experiences and the perpetrators. The literature on the field of xenophobia is mostly focused on the 2008 attacks, while the phenomenon is a reoccurring issue that haunts this country. Everatt (2011) focused on civil society organisations and xenophobia, particularly its responses to the violence in 2008, which included providing shelter, clothes, donations, protection, and counselling. Civil society was focused on responding to the humanitarian crisis and lacked activist political focus such that decisions regarding politicised actions like advocacy, integration, demonstrations and legal action were often disputed. Everatt's (2011) study came to the conclusion that civil society did indeed play a critical role during and after the violence, but lost ground and returned to the *status quo ante*.

In light of the above mentioned, the study attempted to draw an understanding of xenophobia and the role played by ASONET in combating xenophobia, through the different organisation strategies meant to achieve social cohesion. In summary, this chapter provided background on the topic being studied. It takes the reader through definitions of xenophobia, its causes, and the nature of the phenomenon in South Africa. The study then focused on civil society and its responses to the violence, then unpacked the theoretical framework. The researcher comes to the conclusion that the nature of xenophobia in South Africa is changing, although the attacks have been occurring at a small scale after the 2015 wave, people can be triggered anytime and become violent. To discriminate black African foreigners, the term *makwerekwere* is used by locals to make foreigners feel inferior. Civil society organisations thus, have a responsibility to fight for, and represent the marginalised, but also hold government accountable because of its failure to deal with xenophobia.

Chapter Three: Research methodology

3.0 Introduction

Research methodology is the specific techniques or procedures used to select, identify, process and analyse information about a topic (Wilkinson & Birmingham 2003). This chapter describes the methodology applied for this research by looking at the research design, study population, the sampling method used, data collection, data analysis, validity and trustworthiness, ethical considerations and limitations of the study.

3.1 Research design

According to Vosloo (2014) research design is a functional plan where certain research methods and procedures are linked together to acquire a reliable and valid body of data. While Durrheim (1999: 34-35) believes that "a research design should provide a plan that specifies how the research is going to be executed in such a way that it answers the research questions". The qualitative method was favoured for this study because it explores people's lives, interactions, histories and everyday behaviour. Qualitative research depicts the fullness of experience in a meaningful and comprehensive way (Mujawamariya 2013). Since the focus of this research is understanding the role of ASONET in combating xenophobia, a qualitative approach enabled me to assess how the organisation works and interacts with South Africans, foreign nationals and different government departments. An understanding of the experiences and realities of the participants in working with other people to combat xenophobia was achieved through this approach.

3.1.1 Case study research design

For the purpose of this study, ASONET was chosen as a single-case design. A single-case design is used when one focuses on one individual or group, and focusing on ASONET in this study allowed for a systematic way of observing, collecting, analysing, and reporting the results over time. According to Yin (1984: 23), a case study is "an empirical inquiry that investigates and focuses on a single phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used". Using a case study design enables researchers to examine data at a micro level, and for the examination of the data to be conducted within the context of its use, that is within the situation in which the activity takes place (Yin 1984). Moreover, there are drawbacks to the case study method identified by the writer, he criticizes its lack of rigour

and the tendency of the researcher to be biased in interpreting data, as well as its inability to provide a generalising conclusion.

3.2 Research population

According to Babbie (2015) a study population is that group about whom we want to draw conclusions. A population to study is selected because researchers are unable to study all members of the population, with this in mind ASONET was selected as the organisation to study and its members as the participants. Babbie (2015: 99) argues that in social research there is no limit to what or whom can be studied, then defines unit of analysis as the "what or whom being studied". For this research as specified above ASONET is being studied as an organisation, the information will be provided by a sample of members of the organisation.

3.3 Sampling method

Durrheim (1999) states that sampling is the process of selecting cases to observe. For the purpose of this study purposive sampling was used because it was more convenient to achieve the objectives of the study. Babbie (2015: 196) defines purposive sampling as "a type of nonprobability sampling in which the units to be observed are selected on the basis of the researcher's judgement about which one will be the most useful or representative". Palys (2008) adds that purposive sampling produces a sample that can represent the population. ASONET was chosen because of its relevance to the study as a civil society organisation, committed to combating xenophobia and achieving social cohesion. This type of sampling allowed the researcher to choose an organisation that has been able to involve themselves in the issue of xenophobia and assess their success or failure in combating it while achieving social cohesion.

Six members of the organisation were selected to be interviewed, this sample aimed for a gender balanced study but amongst the participants was only one woman, this was however, representative of ASONET which is a male dominated campaign. The Secretary General of the organisation was approached and six members were selected under his guidance depending on how active they were in the organisation. Whether or not these members would be available for interviews was also a factor taken into consideration for selection. In qualitative research the sample size needs to be small enough to allow the researcher to capture individual intricacies in the analysis but also the sample must not be small as to reduce variety (Majawamariya 2013). Xenophobia is a sensitive issue and it is not the intention of this research to ask sensitive questions but rather understand the operation of the organisation that deals with

the issue of xenophobia and the participants selected were capable of providing the relevant information.

3.4 Data collection

Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring data on variables of interest, in an established systematic way that enables researcher to answer stated research questions, test hypothesis, and evaluate outcomes (de Vos 2002). For the purpose of this study three methods of data collections were used namely; focus group interviews, observation and field notes, and document analysis (past reports).

3.4.1 Focus group interviews

This research used focus group interviews as a method of data collection which is defined by Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003: 90) as "a form of qualitative method used to gather, rich, descriptive data in a small group format from participants who have agreed to focus on a topic of mutual interest". Focus group interviews with six members of ASONET were conducted, where the focus was the organisation and its role in combating xenophobia. It must be noted that semi-structured interviews were chosen for this research but due to circumstances the data was collected using focus group interviews. This was due to the unavailability of the members because they are activists who always travel, they preferred doing the interview together because this was the only time they were available. Although this was the outcome, all the members had an opportunity to engage with the interviewer and answer according to their understanding, experiences and attitudes. Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003: 90) state that the purpose of a focus group is to "address a specific topic, in depth, in a comfortable environment to elicit a wide range of opinions, attitudes, feelings or perceptions from a group of individuals who share some common experience relative to the dimension under study". With this in mind, I did not limit the participants in discussing what they thought to be necessary but did however, guide the interview towards the research questions. Using the focus group interviews allowed me to delve into understanding the role of each member and it allowed them to engage with one another.

The purpose of the focus group interviews was to explore the views, experiences, beliefs or motivation of the ASONET organisation and its members, in their involvement in the social issue of xenophobia. Gill, Stewart, Treasure and Chadwick (2008) believe that this qualitative method of research allows and provides a deeper understanding of social phenomenon than would be obtained from quantitative research. The focus group interviews were recorded with

a voice recorder because according to Harrell and Braley (2009), interview collects information that is somewhat conversational. Therefore, a focus on note taking would have resulted in failure to listen attentively and the participants being uncomfortable. According to Gill et al. (2008) interviews should be conducted in areas free from distractions and times and locations that are most suitable for participants, for this reason the focus group interviews were carried out at the Centre for Civil Society (CCS) as ASONET has a working relationship with CCS.

3.4.2 Observation and field notes

Data collection also involved attending two ASONET community dialogues which were focused on achieving social cohesion in communities. The community social cohesion dialogues and events were attended with the permission of the Secretary General of ASONET, to enable me to observe the process of the dialogues. In a paper by Kawulich (2005: 2) participant observation is defined as "the process of learning through exposure to or involvement in the day-to-day or routine activities of participants in the researcher setting". Observation allowed me an opportunity to glean the views of the communities that ASONET works with as well as an understanding of how the organisation operates. The purpose of observation in this study was to verify the information given by the members during the focus group interviews, such as verifying the attendance of (ASONET members, locals and foreign nationals), language used during community dialogue, topics discussed and conclusions reached.

Additionally, field notes were taken during the dialogues so to note what is important and ensure validity of the study. Mujawamariya (2013) sees field notes as written account of the things the researcher hears, sees, experiences and thinks about in the course of interviewing.

3.4.3 Document analysis (Past reports)

Lastly, data was collected using the organisations past reports to gather more information on ASONET. Past reports which were made available by ASONET, were used to determine how the organisation strategies were implemented in the past. Bowen (2009: 27) defines document analysis as "a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents both printed and electronic material". During data collection different methods were used in this research and by examining information collected through various methods "the researcher can corroborate findings across data sets and thus reduce the impact of potential biases that can exist in a single method" (Bowen 2009: 28). The reports in this research were vital because they served as

additional knowledge of the organisation, they added more questions that need to be asked, and they provided a means of tracking change and development of the organisation.

3.5 Data analysis

Once the data has been collected it has to be analysed by the researcher to bring about meaning to the people who will read the paper. De Vos (2002) describes data analysis as the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. This research aims to analyse and interpret data by drawing on methods used while collecting data and to draw meaning from what the participants said during interviews. Vosloo (2014) adds that the purpose of a study is to produce findings and in order to do so data should be analysed to transform data into findings. I followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) recommendations for thematic analysis. It is seen by the authors as a qualitative research method for identifying, analysing, organising, describing and reporting themes found within a data set. In addition, Maguire and Delahunt (2017) add that thematic analysis identifies themes such as patterns in the data that are interesting and important and uses them to address the research and touch on an issue. In order to correctly use the thematic analysis six phases provided by Braun and Clarke (2006: 15) were followed:

Familiarization with data: According to Braun and Clarke (2006) it is vital for the researcher to immerse him/herself in the data to the extent that they are familiar with the breadth and depth of the content. Immersion for the writers involve repeatedly reading the data to search for meaning and patterns. During the proposal stage I was able to explore the data on xenophobia and civil society organisations, the literature review allowed me to familiarize myself with the topic from a theoretical view and assisted in formulating the interview schedule. Conducting the interviews, myself allowed for a simpler process when I transcribed and translated the interviews. Furthermore, because the interviews were recorded I was able to re-visit the interview and find any unintended or deeper meaning that the participants might have attached to the information they provided (Mujawamariya 2013).

Coding: After I had read and familiarised myself with the data, I moved to the second phase provided by Braun and Clarke (2006) which involves the production of initial codes from the data. Selective coding was used which enabled for material of interest to be coded, this assisted in identifying aspects of the data that related to the research questions that were formulated during the proposal stage.

Searching for themes: According to the authors a theme is a meaningful and coherent pattern in the data that has to be relevant to the research questions. As a result of the small data set used in this research, Maguire and Delahunt (2017) caution against the overlap between the coding stage and this stage of identifying preliminary themes. The themes formed were explored in order to find meaning in the data, and compare it to the existing data.

Reviewing themes: The themes identified in the previous phase were then reviewed in order to identify the relevant themes, identify data within the themes which have meaning and ensure they cohere together. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that the researcher must consider the validity of individual themes in relation to the data set and whether they accurately reflect the meanings evident in whole data set. Thereafter, the next phase of defining and naming themes involves identifying the essence of each theme and what it is about. When an analysis of the data was conducted it was organised coherently because the authors believe the data extracted from the themes must fit into the broader 'story' being told by the research.

Producing the report: The final phase involved the write-up and final analysis of the report which had the task of telling the story and interpreting the data in a way that convinces the reader of the validity and merit of my analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) advice that the write-up is an important stage that must provide sufficient evidence themes within the data, and that the analytical narrative must go beyond description of the data and make an argument in relation to the research question.

3.6 Validity and trustworthiness

Validity is the core of any form of assessment that is trustworthy and accurate, it is vital to any research, although, Vosloo (2014) reveals that it has been suggested that the terminology such as credibility, dependability, confirmability, trustworthiness, verification and transferability be used instead of validity. According to Kumar (2014) validity is the ability of an instrument to measure what it is designed to measure, it can also be seen as the degree to which the researcher has measured what he/she has set out to measure. According to Thomas (2010) trustworthiness is the corresponding term used as a measure of the quality of research, it is also focused on the extent to which the data and data analysis are believable in qualitative research.

In order to increase the credibility, confirmability, transferability and dependability in this study I used triangulation, which involves the use of different methods to collect data, and this study used focus group interview, observation and document analysis (as per above, Section 3.5). An interview schedule was provided for the interviews, and data gathered was transcribed

to ensure participants' narratives were reported correctly and nothing was altered. Furthermore, no generalisation was made because the study only focused on ASONET. Throughout the research process, there was frequent consultation with my research supervisor.

3.7 Ethical considerations

According to Louw (2014) ethics in research is crucial because it potentially affects all stakeholders (participants, broader public, the institution, funding body, the community and researcher) because they have vested interest in the research. Wassenaar (1999) mentions that research ethics must protect the welfare of the research participants, which has led to ethical review becoming increasingly mandatory, so that universities have their researchers research proposals reviewed by an independent research ethics committee before data collection. To follow all ethical considerations when collecting and analysing data, I requested a gatekeeper's letter from the Secretary General of ASONET who gave permission for me to use the organisation as a case study, then submitted a research proposal to the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal Ethics Committee. After the review, the Ethics Committee provided ethical approval for the research to be conducted. Prior to the interviews each participant signed an informed consent form after the details of the study and its role had been explained to the participants. The social cohesion dialogues were attended with the permission of the organisation and the past reports used as a method of data collection were also provided by the organisation upon request.

3.8 Limitations/Problems of the study

Limitations can be described as limits in a research study that are out of the researcher's control (Enslin 2014). Despite the fact that there are abundant scholarly writings on the issue of xenophobia, there is however, limited material available of the role played by civil society organisations in battling xenophobia, although the nature of xenophobia is evolving in South Africa and globally (Muchiri 2016). Furthermore, the limited papers available are focused on the 2008 attacks although I needed updated research of the involvement of civil society organisations in battling xenophobia. I was further challenged by the limited data available on ASONET, the organisation is small therefore, gaining access to members as well as relevant information about the organisation was challenging.

Collecting data through attending social cohesion dialogues proved to be a challenge because it depended on whether the organisation had any community dialogues planed. Hence, I did not attend enough community dialogues as anticipated for observing if the objectives of the

dialogues were achieved. Moreover, with the nature of xenophobic violence occurring, ASONET members were not easily accessible because they had to attend to their duties hence, the interviews depended on their schedules and availability.

Additionally, some of the members interviewed during the focus group interview did not participate as anticipated. The interview was dominated by the leader (ASONET's Secretary General), he was more knowledgeable about the organisation and its work, and the other members passed most questions to him. For this reason, I had to request additional documents from the organisation which were then used to verify the information given. Moreover, it was discovered that ASONET works with different stakeholders such as DHA, local authorities, and civil society organisations amongst others but they were not interviewed for this study to verify the role played by ASONET.

Chapter Four: Results

4.0 Introduction

This chapter employs qualitative research methods in analyzing data, it uses a thematic analysis approach therefore, from the collected data themes were formulated in order to present the data. The chapter presents the study findings from the analysis of data that was collected using three methods namely; interviews that were conducted with six ASONET members – the interviews took the form of a focus group as members all attended at the same time and this was more convenient than scheduling one on one interviews which was originally planned, observation and field notes collected at ASONET community dialogues at Umlazi, and analyzing past reports of the community dialogues made available by ASONET.

Each participant was given an opportunity to respond to the interview questions. Since ASONET is for Africans across the continent the participants included members from Zimbabwe, Congo and Rwanda. The study is descriptive so no generalisations were made. Thus, the focus was on understanding ASONET and its role in combating xenophobia. This includes looking at the strategies employed by the organisation to achieve social cohesion in communities. Also, the relationship that the organisation has with government departments such as the DHA and local government.

4.1 Background information of the study population

Focus group interviews were conducted with six members of ASONET who all are founding members of the organisation and are currently board members. The first set of questions were about the background of the organisation and its formation. Based on the information provided by the members ASONET is a Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) that was formed in 2014 by various African nationals who saw foreign nationals underrepresented in South Africa and wanted to fight for their human rights especially in the light of the xenophobic-related violence in South Africa. ASONET does not have a high number of member composition, their database shows fifteen active members who are involved in the day-to-day processes of the organisation but they are able to draw numbers in support of their activities and have alliances with various civil society organisations.

4.1.1 Africa Solidarity Network as an organisation

According to an ASONET leaflet:

"The ASONET is a strong network movement that amplifies the voices of communities and links them to policy makers at different levels through a focus on; human and people's rights, capacity building, lobbying and advocacy, people to people solidarity, development, grassroots mobilisation, building organisation and movements, facilitating dialogue, training and initiating innovative forms of organising" (ASONET Leaflet: 23 August 2019).

According to members interviewed the organisation was formed in 2014 but became operative in 2015 because of the second wave of xenophobic attacks, it was able to gain confidence from the government, international organisations, campaigns and non-governmental organisations which it partners with. It became the voice of migrants in South Africa especially refugees and asylum seekers, the organisation also became well known in all spheres of government for its work.

One of the study objectives was understanding what kind of entity ASONET is therefore, before examining the role of the organisation in combating xenophobia the questions posed to the participants were aimed at understanding the members and the organisation. The participants were asked how the organisation is structured and they stated they have a board that is elected and must have a representative from all the corners of Africa, they also have a management team that is not elected but volunteer to serve. A main organisational challenge highlighted by the Secretary General is the fact that they are limited as an organisation because of lack of funding. This limitation reduces the amount of paid staff for the organisation. As such ASONET consists of mainly volunteers this was gathered from a participant stating:

"...when we started up to date, we never had a sustainable funding which we say we hire people for five years, we can only have funding for a project. So, we never receive funding that we can say no ASONET can hire people fulltime in the office and that is a challenge for the managing team, people are becoming volunteers and remember an African is a volunteer but got very little interest to volunteer..." (Participant 1, Focus group interview, 23 August 2019).

Members are from different African countries including South Africans, who are dedicated to advocating for the rights of other Africans. When asked if they had an equal number of males and females in the organisation a participant responded:

"It is a challenge and I think I need to respond very honestly. In our election when we elect a board, that is among the things we check the 'gender' but also, we also check this issue of gender because we as the Africa Solidarity Network we deal with the issue of Africans. So, we have even if you read our Constitution we have to have representation from different region the North and South but sometimes it is very challenging to get women sitting and accepting

positions and the reason is that most of migrant women they are not available to serve in a civil society organisation because remember when you serve at the board it is free. You are a volunteer and most of the people are not willing to serve as volunteers but we have women on board but I am not sure (laughing) maybe my colleagues can answer (pointing at them). Do we have a gender balance?" (Participant 1, Focus group interview, 23 August 2019).

Another member responded:

"But also, I think it is because women, most women you see because of the patriarchal society a woman would need permission probably from her husband (all agreeing and nodding heads). Then these husbands usually refuse, they don't say it in the meeting but you can see this is what has happened after some time so we understand that but we try as much as possible to include women in most of our activities" (Participant 3, Focus Group Interview, 23 August 2019).

Despite a lack of gender balance in membership the findings revealed that the organisation not only deals with xenophobia, discrimination and advocating for human rights for all Africans but also gender equality. The responses from the participants were validated with past reports of the organisation that showed ASONET conducts women community dialogues that are focused on integrating women of all African countries so they can support one another. In the community dialogues women support each other emotionally and exchange ideas on how to better their lives. The following quote supports this:

"The Africa Solidarity Network (ASONET) had the pleasure of hosting a women's dialogue which focused on conversations about our diversity as African women while celebrating our collective strength as African women. Women from Congo, Burundi, Nigeria and South Africa came together and the session was opened with an introduction of each woman. We walk around every day responding to the question "How are you" with a simple "I'm okay" yet at most times we are not okay" (ASONET Women Dialogue report, 18 March 2016).

ASONET membership is free and anyone is allowed to join according to the members and since its formation they had a membership form that they gave new people who wanted to be part of the organisation. However, since the organisation represents migrants, asylum seekers and refugees from all African countries they refused to sign membership forms because ASONET is an African organisation, so they are part of it regardless. One member revealed that even the old members of the organisation refused to sign membership forms and people are welcomed as long as they are African, he stated *"we could not resolve it because there were people that were part of ASONET but refused to sign membership forms so you end up saying everyone is welcome whether they are old members or new long as they are African"*

(Participant 3, Focus Group Interview, 23 August 2019). Furthermore, the organisation does not have a fixed method of mobilisation, it depends on the challenge they are faced with if its xenophobia then all migrants are a call away, one member can be quoted stating that "*our method of mobilisation, depends with the challenge we are faced with, see like xenophobia every migrant is just a call away, everyone will be in the room because we are affected, if there is a seminar or a workshop or a dialogue, we say we are having it in Inanda we have our members there*" (Participant 1, Focus Group Interview, 23 August 2019). If the organisation is having a workshop or dialogue at any community they contact the local gatekeepers "*…because remember we don't all know all the refugees but the local leaders know all the people in the area*" (Participant 1, Focus group interview, 23 August 2019). The members also revealed that within the organisation each African country has its own leader, so the leaders are the starting point of mobilisation when they attend to the issues facing African nationals.

4.2 Defining xenophobia

As one of ASONET's main functions is to combat xenophobia it was important to understand how members define xenophobia and their specific experiences of it as foreign nationals. The participants defined the concept of xenophobia as the discrimination and hatred that South Africans have towards them although they are all African, this was gathered from a participant stating "*you know the idea of xenophobia is the hatred and exclusion that Africans have towards each other although we are all Africans*" (Participant 2, Focus Group Interview, 23 August 2019). It was clear from all the participants that they have experienced some form of discrimination personally, with one participant stating "*you know they call you names such as makwerekwere which is painful but what can you say*" (Participant 4, Focus group interview, 2019). Furthermore, another participant believed that the hate between Africans is astonishing because to him the idea that he is a foreigner in Africa is absurd. He further argued that the dislike between African people is of the result of the borders that separate African people, the participant argued "I *am an African therefore as long as I am in Africa, I can't be a foreigner. We eventually have to do away with boarders because they have divided us…*" (Participant 2, Focus Group Interview, 23 August 2019). African foreigners migrate to South Africa because of different reasons but one member believes people are not aware of the reasons that lead them to relocate to this country because he would rather be at home than experience the discrimination. Another participant highlighted that South Africans dislike and hate foreigners because they believe they want to steal their jobs and girlfriends, he stated "*…some just accuse*

us of stealing their jobs and girlfriends but we have run away from wars" (Participant 5, Focus Group Interview, 23 August 2019).

4.3 ASONET member's experiences of xenophobia

When responding to xenophobic attacks in communities, ASONET members have experienced xenophobia while trying to calm the situation, with one member reflecting on how the community members are sometimes so angry that they refuse to hear anything said by a '*kwerekwere*'. One participant stated that "*we have to get the gatekeepers and stakeholders because the community is angry and if I go there bazongishaya nami (they will beat me) and say heyi kwerekwere (hey foreigner) and all of us might be beaten*" (Participant 1, Focus group interview, 23 August 2019), therefore, responding to xenophobic attacks directly is challenging for the organisation because they might get attacked by the community members. ASONET members therefore, advocate the need to work together with the government and police in order to engage the community. One participant explained this in his response:

> "*I remember I went to Chatsworth I was facilitating a dialogue people are walking I was wearing this kind of thing (showing his shirt) when I walked in the first thing the community said is 'ubani lona ubani lona?' (who is this) you bring another kwerekwere here, so am saying that before you go and attend those kind of things you need to have a by-in from the gatekeepers, you call a stakeholders meeting, discuss the issue and then together with them we go to the community…*" (Participant 1, Focus group interview, 23 August 2019).

The participants revealed that the SAPS is sometimes required to contain the situation because of the xenophobic attacks. One member added that it is never an easy task dealing with the issue of xenophobia because "*when there is a problem we meet all of us, ASONET, the police and gatekeepers to address the community but they are sometimes so angry they chase us out*" (Participant 1, Focus group interview, 23 August 2019). One member further explained how they have had to deal with some discrimination from government officials as well as SAPS. The secretary general can be quoted during the organisations seminar stating "…*sometimes you know we rush to communities to assist but when we arrive you find the SAPS or a government official referring to the people he has been called to assist kwerekwere*" (Participant 1, ASONET & Centre for Civil Society Seminar, 12 June 2019).

4.4 ASONET activities

ASONET is involved in numerous activities that they focus on in order to achieve their vision of a sustainable peaceful and united African society through building social cohesion. These

activities include community dialogues, lobbying and advocacy, human and people's rights, research, capacity building, people to people solidarity, training, diversity and transformation and gender education and leadership training. However, this research focused on two of their activities namely; community dialogues and advocacy because during the period of research these were the two that were most active (also impacted on by current funding). From the collected data the community dialogue results will be presented first. Then the results for advocacy will follow.

4.4.1 Community dialogues

In order for the organisation to combat xenophobia and other issues affecting migrants they hold community dialogues in the communities around Durban on social cohesion and bridging the gap between the local South African and the migrant community. One participant added "*we do community dialogues and workshops in the communities but we also do advocacy work with the provincial government and local government on migrant laws*" (Participant 3, Focus group interview, 23 August 2019). As a result of the small number of member composition, members do not attend activities at the same time, this was gathered in a community dialogue held in uMlazi attended by the researcher in September 2019 where two members of the organisation were present and the others could not attend. The meeting was attended by people who are invested in building unity between fellow South Africans and foreigners. The focus of the dialogue was for community members to discuss the causes of crime and violence in their area. They discussed the causes of hate crimes between South Africans and foreigners, and the reasons for the increasing crime and violence levels in South Africa, the Department of Community Safety and Liaison was present at the discussions.

It is vital to note that the ASONET skills and strategies for change are planned by the members carefully because xenophobia is a sensitive issue they do not request a community dialogue and highlight xenophobia as the only issue to discuss. However, to have a community dialogue they meet with the gatekeepers such as ward councilors who mobilise the people and tell them about the community meeting. When people are mobilised and are at the venue then they are told about the purpose of the dialogue which can include xenophobia, crime, violence, drug abuse, social cohesion, skills exchange or problems affecting women. ASONET also liaises with government department representatives to attend the dialogues.

4.4.1.1 Understanding perceptions about foreign nationals

During the community dialogue held on the 20th of September 2019 the community noted that many young people around their area are unemployed and that causes them to resort to crime. They argued that South Africans are losing jobs because foreign nationals are providing cheap labour, a 2017 report from the organisation revealed that this was one of the main community concerns *"Participants raised the issue that most companies are employing foreign nationals at the expense of locals because foreign nationals accept very low wages or salaries which locals will not accept"* (Community dialogue report, 14 April 2017). Unemployment has led to people believing that the increase in unemployment and their poverty is a result of the increase of foreigners in the country who rob them of the few opportunities that exist. Furthermore, a community dialogue that was held at KwaMashu K Hall in April 2017 revealed that community members believe that crime and drugs are increased by foreigners because they are the suppliers who are allegedly selling drugs to the youth. Such accusations can result in increased tension between locals and foreigners which cause the discrimination and attacks on African foreign nationals. One of the solutions raised in the community dialogue in KwaMashu is the need for foreigners to comply with the law of the country and stop any criminal activities.

4.4.1.2 Breaking down misperceptions

It seems that foreigners become scapegoats for South Africans who believe that the influx of migrants have created the problems facing the country. Community dialogues are vital because they connect migrants and South Africans and allow the organisation to provide suggestions and solutions on how they can tackle the problems they all face in the community. In the dialogues citizens raise concerns of foreigners taking their jobs and opening shops that sell products at a cheaper price than local shops which results in their shops losing customers. The following quote is taken from the ASONET report of a dialogue held at Kwamashu K Hall *"Competition on business- Participants raised that foreign nationals open a lot of shops around the area, and they take the locals business opportunities. They buy stock in bulks and sell it cheaper than the price of the locals"* (Community dialogue report, 24 April 2017). Furthermore, the solution to this concern discussed during this dialogue with input from community members and ASONET members indicates that locals wish for a skill transfer from migrants and to share businesses together. Similarly, with the community dialogue held at Malukazi 2017 where one of the topics discussed was centered on creating sustainable businesses for everyone. Local shops known as 'Spaza' shops have a crucial role because they use them every day and shops provide people with local jobs. The report reveals that the

organisation tries to integrate migrants with local people to give them platforms to interact and communicate how they can assist each other through building small local businesses "*locals and foreign nationals must share ideas because foreign nationals are willing to help locals with business skills*" (Community dialogue report, 24 April 2017). According to the members this enables locals to understand migrants and vise-versa and breaks down the belief that foreigners steal jobs and business of local South Africans.

As indicated the issue of migrants being blamed and targeted for the problems facing South Africans can be supported by the past reports of community dialogues provided by the organisation. The following is a quote from the report that is evidence of a group discussion in Umlazi held by the organisation:

> "*It is here that the community expressed themselves explicitly. They accused migrants of lowering wages by agreeing to be paid poor wages. Crime was blamed on migrants as the community felt that even though they previously had problems with drugs, the influx of migrant had made the problem worse. New forms of drugs and concoctions had suddenly appeared in their community. Instances of fraud had increased with the coming of migrants. They also blamed migrants for human trafficking, prostitution of underage girls*" (Community dialogue report, 14 March 2019).

The ASONET reports from the community dialogues reveal that it is challenging to break down misperceptions when locals share deep negative sentiments about migrants. Some suggestions made by the people during the community dialogues suggest for the government to be more involved in imposing laws and controlling the influx of migrants in their area. Findings from the reports show how the organisation then uses the community dialogues to give migrants an opportunity to defend themselves and educate the locals about the reasons that make them come to South Africa. According to the members it becomes the responsibility of the facilitator of the dialogue to shift the focus when locals' express negative views of African foreigners. The findings further reveal that not only citizens blame African foreigners for unemployment, crime and violence but the government and politicians also share the same sentiments. According to ASONET members "*politicians and the government are still using migration as a scapegoat*" to explain unemployment, crime, violence and to defend the failures of their departments (Participant 1, Focus group interview, 23 August 2019). The government and politicians have failed to significantly work and cooperate with non-governmental organisations including ASONET in order to assist African foreigners to receive fair treatment.

4.4.2 Advocacy

The second of ASONET's activities researched for this study was advocacy on migration laws. According to the organisations constitution, they have an objective "*to advocate for the protection of all African immigrants in their perceived categories e.g., political, economic refugees, asylum seekers, temporary and permanent residents and citizens in South Africa and outside its borders to ensure that they are received with dignity and respect*" (ASONET Constitution, 23 August 2019). Advocating for the government to change migrant policies that are seen as anti-migration to the organisation has been a focus for ASONET. The members further explained that their aim is for an inclusive South Africa for all, where African foreign nationals are treated fairly and their rights are protected "*it is important that every African is protected, which is why advocacy is important so we can ensure we fight for our fellow brothers and sisters*" (Participant 2, Focus group interview, 23 August 2019). Through the organisations effort to influence policy change there has been challenges when dealing with political leadership. Therefore, these challenges and the organisations role in influencing policy change and advocating for the protection of African foreign nationals will be explored further in 4.6.

4.5 Building social cohesion

The findings reveal that achieving social cohesion is one of the organisations main aims, to have both South Africans and foreign nationals in society willing to cooperate with one another in order to live in solidarity. The members emphasized the importance of the community dialogues on social cohesion which they use to bridge the gap between the local South Africans and the migrant community. The organisation believes that integration should begin at the initial stage when people migrate to South Africa in order for social cohesion to be achieved. Reflecting on the integration process, one participant stated:

> "*Although I think one part that we probably haven't explored much is the issue of integration because we tend to be a bit reactive when these things happen and we come in and help with reintegration into communities. I think integration has to start from the initial stage when someone arrives and I think it is something going forward we need to sort of explore because I think the biggest problem we facing is proper integration into South African communities*" (Participant 3, Focus group interview, 23 August 2019).

Furthermore, integration is seen as a lengthy process by the members that cannot be achieved by one organisation alone or just by dialogues but requires the input of government departments. When asked how they plan to achieve social cohesion and integration the

members made it clear that they lack funding which has hindered most of their plans. However, integration requires the DHA because they are the first responders when migrants come into the country to apply for an asylum seeker permit. According to the DHA (Act No, 130, 1998: 14-16) of the Refugees Act Section 21(1), the application for asylum must be made in person to a Refugee Reception Officer (RRO) at any Refugee Reception Office, then Section 22 further states that the RRO "…must pending the outcome of an application in terms of section 21(1), issue to the applicant an asylum seeker permit in the prescribed form allowing the applicant to sojourn in the Republic temporarily…". The responses by the members revealed that they believe the DHA should have part of the responsibility of teaching foreigners about laws and the culture of the country from the initial stage when they arrive. The reason for this is for them to be familiar with the laws and culture which might be different to what they are used to in their countries.

According to the members, local leadership which includes councilors, and traditional leaders need to know about any African migrant that will live in the community before they stay there, so they can introduce them to the community. This was gathered from what was said by one-member stating that "*the local leaders will call a community meeting to introduce the person and say the person will be living with us*" (Participant 1, Focus group interview, 23 August 2019), according to the members this act of introducing foreigners in the community allows for the community members to see them as part of the community. One member elaborated further by suggesting that in order for xenophobia to decrease and social cohesion to be achieved African foreigners must be seen as being no different to the locals, this according to him could be achieved once the first step of introduction into the community has been done then the migrant has the sole responsibility of learning about the community. ASONET members also argued that migrants need to do their bit by understanding local culture for example by attending local funerals, weddings and any other functions done by his/her neighbours in order to be seen as a member of the community.

4.6 ASONET's relationship with the state
4.6.1 National Department of Home Affairs

The findings reveal that ASONET is not satisfied with how government departments and politicians have responded to African foreigners and xenophobia. ASONET members explained their relationship with different government departments and how they are able to work with them when advocating for the rights of migrants. During the interviews the members expressed the difficulty that they have experienced and are still experiencing when dealing with

both the national and provincial DHA, although the provincial government has less decision-making power. The change in Ministers has proved to be challenging for the organisation because according to the members the change in leadership usually results in change of policy, it was stated by a member that "*we always have big challenge when DHA changes political leadership (Ministers). This changes also come with policy change and at the moment we are faced with a white paper on international migration which is anti - migration. But because of the instability at DHA it is very hard to engage constructively*" (Participant 1, Focus group interview, 23 August 2019). The members further argued that the change in leadership means they have to start building a new relationship with the person in power which has affected their work, they believe the instability in the DHA results in them working backwards, a statement from a member can support this:

> "*It happens that we start the process of engaging the minister and in a few months we have new minister and we need to start building a new relationship with the new minister. It has been very difficult, we also had problems when they change Director general and other senior officials, the instability at the DHA is affecting us very negatively*" (Participant 1, Focus group interview, 23 August 2019).

When asked about their expectation from the DHA with dealing with xenophobia one member emphasized that the department has to be willing to work with them and do a community outreach programme that will allow them to teach locals in the communities about migration and to facilitate integration of migrants. The members believe the DHA must teach both the locals who must be able to differentiate between asylum seekers, refugees and migrants, and also the foreigners about the documents that they require when they arrive. One member can be quoted explaining what they expect the department to do:

> "*facilitate the process of people getting documents, we are having a serious problem in South Africa at the moment we have a high number of migrants coming in and when they go to Home Affairs they say we are fully booked come next year June. Now they are telling people to come in June so if you are telling people to come to Home Affairs in June that means you are having a full year of illegal migrants in the country and then tomorrow you go on TV and say there are illegal migrants in the country. So, our challenge with them is that they don't want to come on board and process people so that they can be legal and so far, Home Affairs is one of the tools that make people illegal in the country*" (Participant 1, Focus group interview, 23 August 2019).

Following the above statement, the members stated that they have not achieved any positive outcomes when dealing with the DHA. One member recalled when they flew to Pretoria to meet with the DHA people and it was not successful since they had to wait nine hours before engaging with them and none of their points and suggestions were accepted. They further explained that the DHA sometimes organises events such as dances, football matches or music festivals promoting multi-culturalism, thereafter the department says social cohesion is achieved. According to the members of ASONET it is observable that the DHA does not know the requirements to achieve social cohesion, one member can be quoted stating "…*you know you can see they don't know how to achieve social cohesion…the DHA is the custodian of the integration because the law gives them the mandate to integrate migrants and they have money they spend and say they are achieving cohesion*" (Participant 1, Focus group interview, 23 August 2019).

4.6.2 Provincial and local authorities

Despite the challenges that the organisation faces with the DHA they reported a positive working relationship with the Provincial DAC, Safer Cities and the Provincial Department of Community Safety and Liaison. Their efforts have been more focused on dealing with xenophobia at the local level by encouraging social cohesion and integration at communities therefore, they have a good working relationship with local authorities. The local authorities serve as the gatekeepers for the organisation because they must get permission for conducting the community dialogues and the councilors are generally very co-operative in calling and attending the meetings, it is evident from a community dialogue report of the organisation reporting that "*The dialogue was preceded by a leadership briefing which was held at Kwamakhutha. This pre-dialogue meeting was attended by local leaders. The purpose of this briefing was sourcing a buy in from local leadership*" (Kwamakhutha community dialogue report, 18 February 2017). The local authorities are more aware of the African foreigners that live in the community therefore, they are the bridge between the organisation and the migrants, the members stated that it is impossible for them to know all the migrants one member can be quoted saying "*...when we want to have a workshop or dialogue we talk to the local leaders because we can't know every migrant so they assist when mobilising...*" (Participant 1, Focus group interview, 23 August 2019).

The gatekeepers are crucial to the social cohesion process because they don't only assist in mobilising but they become responsible for community participation since they are the leaders

of the community, this can be supported by a report stating "*The day started with an opening session by Mr Langa (ward committee member) introducing the day's activities and participants, and assessing expectations of those present*" (KwaMashu community dialogue report, 24 April 2017). The members explained that "*...the councilor will sometimes do the greetings and introduce everyone*" (Participant 1, Focus group interview, 23 August 2019). Furthermore, his statement can be supported by the following quote from a community dialogue "*Councilor Bheki Mungwengwe kicked off the event by giving a background to the reasons what had necessitated the holding of the dialogue. He mentioned the attacks that had occurred in 2015 and those that had taken place in Tshwane*" (Umlazi community dialogue report, 14 March 2017).

The findings revealed that it has not been smooth sailing dealing with the provincial and local authorities. The organisation has had a satisfactory relationship but reported that dealing with government officials can be tricky, because government officials often get involved in issues that will benefit them. It often must be a benefit to their image in the community, or during elections. This was gathered from the comment made by another member stating "*yes, we have a good relationship with local government but when elections are near we get sabotaged by them*" (Participant 1, Focus group interview, 23 August 2019). When probed about this statement the participant explained that "*everyone wants to hear about social cohesion and integration when it suits them, but when it is time for elections they don't want to hear about no social cohesion dialogue*". This results in a negative impact for the organisation when they have to conduct their community dialogues, since the input of local authority is essential as noted above.

4.7 ASONET successes and challenges

The findings revealed that ASONET members do not believe they have achieved a recipe to ensure social cohesion, one member can be quoted stating that "*...the programmes which we are running are not really successful...we can't measure the success of community dialogue same day...although we have the tools for social change but it is not enough because it does not guarantee social cohesion*" (Participant 1, Focus group interview, 23 August 2019). While the community dialogues have been an important platform for understanding varying perceptions and breaking down misperceptions – full cohesion has some way to go and this can only be achieved through collaborations with local partners and greater, more sustainable efforts. The quotes below were answers provided by the members regarding organisation

challenges and successes. ASONET is most proud of being able to represent foreign nationals who are refugees and asylum seekers and who have no other voice or platform:

> *"One of the success that I can say is maybe the skill of being able to attract foreigners let's say migrants, the fact that migrants have been able to trust the organisation has not been very easy today most of the migrants are able to associate or to see ASONET as a body which represents them even though sometimes they never even attend one meeting but they feel very confident when they know that when there is a problem they know where to run. I think that is something that ASONET has been able to achieve not only in Durban or the province but around South Africa because we have been able to engage with other migrants in other parts of South Africa, to think we have been able to build that confidence and trust with our self and other communities of migrants I think that has been one of the success for me"* (Participant 1, Focus group interview, 23 August 2019).

From the responses of the participants it was also clear that just being able to bring together foreign nationals and locals to fight against the discrimination of migrants is an achievement:

> *"We've been able to work on the so-called reintegration of people after xenophobia in different communities which was not an easy work umm even for the government it was not easy for them"* (Participant 1, Focus group interview, 23 August 2019).

The members added that being able to negotiate on behalf of migrants so that they can be able to get their documents from the DHA is another achievement for them. This is because some of the migrants are victims of xenophobia and their documents are lost or they were not able to access them:

> *"We have very recognized organisation in the state at the national level and the provincial level so even if there is something which touches migrants in Pretoria, in the Presidency office we'll be invited there, at the local government if they have something to be discussed about migrants we'll be invited so I think that is one of the success. So say that we are part now of especially this province of everything that concerns migrants if there is xenophobia the first people to be called is ASONET"* (Participant 1, Focus group interview, 23 August 2019).

The organisation has been involved in many issues since its formation in 2014 involving migrants and xenophobia. The members were proud of their involvement in resolving migrant issues and advocating for equal rights but also being called on by communities when there are disputes between migrants and the local people.

"We are able to resolve quite a lot of issues involving migrants especially in terms of xenophobia and social integration, we have been part of when people are chased out in many areas we go and work with local community and put people back and we call that success" (Participant 3, Focus group interview, 23 August 2019).

4.8 Conclusion

The data presented in this chapter are findings from the focus group interview, community dialogues attended and past reports of the organisation provided by the organisation. The key themes found in this chapter indicate that the role of ASONET as a civil society organisation involves more than just dealing with xenophobia. From the findings, it was evident that creating unity between locals and foreigners is the focus of the organisation. The community dialogues are used as a knowledge and learning space where stereotypes and discrimination can be eliminated. Through the community dialogues, the social cohesion process can begin. Advocacy is another main aspect of ASONET where they advocate for the protection of immigrants, they face issues affecting African nationals involving their legal stay and inclusive immigration policies, therefore, they partner with DHA and other government departments to solve such issues. Some of the main achievements of the organisation have been building confidence and trust with different communities of migrants that believe and know ASONET represents them. Also committing to social cohesion and integration by building a relationship with the national and provincial government that has allowed the organisation to be recognized for solving issues concerning migrants. While the challenges of ASONET include finding a method that will allow for revisiting communities to check the progress of the community dialogues and dealing with the DHA on resolving issues affecting migrants. The next chapter will present a discussion of the main findings.

Chapter Five: Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

5.0 Introduction

This chapter provides the discussion, conclusion and recommendations of the main findings from the study, it also links the literature to the research outcomes where relevant. It is through the discussion and interpretation of findings that the researcher can draw inferences from the collected data. The main objective of this study was to examine the role of civil society organisations in combating xenophobia and ASONET was chosen as a case study. There are two theories used in the study the first one being the othering theory which looks at the labelling of African foreign nationals as *makwerekwere,* and the second one is the political opportunities theory which looks at how the DHA reacted to the xenophobic attacks and how the change in leadership affects ASONET. Therefore, the study sought to address the following research questions using thematic analysis:

1. What kind of organisation is ASONET?
2. What are ASONET's main strategies and/or programmes?
3. What have been some of ASONET's successes and failures?

The participants of the study were all members of ASONET from various African countries namely; Rwanda, Congo and Zimbabwe. The data collected from the focus group interviews, observation and note-taking from community dialogues and past community dialogue reports, revealed that ASONET is a small organisation but has a significant impact on African migrants in South Africa. The members are hopeful the organisation will grow further and have a wider impact in the future. The members are dedicated to their cause and do not profit from the organisation and emphasized their wish for every migrant to be treated fairly and for South Africans and migrants to live peacefully together. The organisation deals with integrating African migrants into South African societies using community dialogues as a method of achieving social cohesion. Furthermore, findings revealed that ASONET does advocacy work which enables them to fight for the rights of migrants by influencing policy change.

5.1 ASONET as an organisation

The first research question and objective of the study was to understand ASONET as an organisation this included how it operates and how it is structured. Findings show that ASONET is a Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) that falls under the Voluntary Association, the

members do not profit from the organisation since they do voluntary work. Although members do voluntary work in the organisation it was evident from the findings that they are committed to their course and expect a change in society and government policies. In the literature, the definition of NPO is taken from the Department of Social Development (2019) which highlighted that NPOs or Civil Society Organisations are established for a public purpose and the members do not receive an income but might get reasonable compensation for services rendered.

The findings show the organisation does not have a high number of member composition estimating fifteen members that are formally registered, while it was said the other members refused to sign forms because they believe ASONET is for Africans, therefore, they belong without having to formally sign up. However, having a database could also benefit the organisation in knowing whether they are growing in numbers and could assist in finding donors. During the interviews, the members stated that they have a representative for each country because there are many African migrants.

It is evident from the findings that the organisation encourages positive relationships between women through membership that allows them to be part of the organisation and having community dialogues that women can facilitate themselves. The data provided in the results chapter highlighted that South African women and women from other African countries come together during ASONET's community dialogues to build and support one another. The organisation does not have sufficient women membership however and the responses from members indicated migrant women are dependent on men and have yet to build a voice for themselves. Dodson (2001) argued that discrimination against migrant women is culturally ingrained and they are denied opportunities and rights granted to men. The patriarchal communities that women live in have allowed for them to feel inferior to men, it can be concluded that migrant women experience gender discrimination from their partners and locals adding to the discrimination associated with being a foreigner.

5.2 ASONET's strategies

The second research question addressed the main strategies used by ASONET to combat xenophobia namely; community dialogues and advocacy. The former is used to achieve social cohesion and integrate African foreigners to South African communities, while the latter involves promoting the rights of foreign nationals and interacting with policy makers such as the DHA. It is because of discrimination and stereotyping that exists in society and in

government structures that led ASONET to use these two strategies to break down misperceptions and tackle the othering problem that exists which leads to hostility towards migrants.

5.2.1 Explanations of xenophobia

It was evident from the research findings that there has not been a change in mentality concerning African migrants, locals still hold misperceptions about foreign Africans in South Africa. From the community dialogues facilitated by ASONET, locals believe other African nationals are causing the high rate of unemployment, failure of local small businesses and crime. Such perceptions result in hostility towards African foreign nationals, this is in line with Dodson (2010) when she argues that the roots of the conflict are 'local' and 'foreigners' competing for scarce employment, services, housing, facilities and simple physical space. Furthermore, Charman and Piper (2012) cite studies that agree that the competition between South Africans and foreign national (Somalis in their case study) storekeepers is a contributing factor in the escalation of xenophobic tensions and reasons for the violence towards immigrant groups. Although South Africans have these beliefs about foreigners, the findings show that ASONET attempts to break down these misperceptions through the community dialogues by suggesting foreigners that own businesses assist locals with their businesses by providing business knowledge, in this way local businesses are built together and not on the basis of nationality.

5.2.2 Othering (makwerekwere)

South Africans are not accepting of outsiders and this has been evident with the increasing hostility towards foreigners (Nyamnjoh 2006). Xenophobic incidents have reoccurred over the years with the most recent attacks on Nigerians in 2019 that injured and forced Nigerians to leave the country because of fear (BBC News 2019). This is an indication that South African xenophobia is an ongoing epidemic that requires new approaches to becurbed. Literature provided in this research revealed that African foreign nationals are referred to as *makwerekwere* by locals, this term represents African foreign nationals as the "other" (Janks 2014). The participants reported that they have been called *makwerekwere* by South Africans and it was clear this is a hurtful term for them. *Makwerekwere* is a common name that locals use to refer to African nationals who have visible physical attributes that are different to the 'normal' South African. Furthermore, dressing attires are used to identify *makwerekwere* in South Africa because of the difference in appearance and dressing styles. Nigerians, Congolese,

Rwandans, Zimbabweans amongst others are easily identifiable to South Africans because of their darker skin, and their difficulty / accented speaking of local languages (Nyamnjoh 2006, Harris 2001, Janks 2014).

During the interviews, one member reflected on his experience while facilitating a community dialogue in Chatsworth. He recalled the community identifying him by his appearance and dress code thus calling him a *kwerekwere*. Being labelled and stereotyped by the community before the community dialogue is held becomes problematic for the organisation because it affects their goal of achieving social cohesion. Dealing with the issue of othering has been challenging for the organisation because its members are mostly foreign nationals, they are easily identifiable during any outbreaks of violence. It is evident from the literature that language is a crucial indicator of nationality in South Africa, foreigners who are not identifiable by a shade of skin colour are identified by their failure to speak and understand local languages. Harris (2001) believes language and accent are signifiers of imagined nativity and strangeness in South Africa if one fails to communicate in the Nguni or Sotho language they are immediately treated and labelled a *kwerekwere*. It is evident from the literature that South Africans are not accepting of outsiders, this observation calls for stronger and effective social cohesion efforts from government departments, civil society organisations and foreign and local communities.

Findings revealed othering of African foreign nationals does not only exist in communities but it can be found at government level. One participant shared how they often respond to violence in communities but encounter government officials such as the police discriminating against foreign nationals while they are responsible for responding to any acts of violence or criminality to control the situation. However, it creates mistrust between the authorities, foreign nationals and ASONET or any organisation dealing with xenophobia to witness the authorities being xenophobic. Similarly, Harris (2001) and Neocosmos (2010) reported significant levels of discrimination and stereotyping that African nationals experience from the authorities whilst they are meant to assist and protect them. Similarly, African nationals have received public and private discrimination from the DHA officials (Nyamnjoh 2006). According to the ASONET when the DHA officials invite them to negotiate policy change, their suggestions are placed into the agenda but they are never accepted. The DHA officials at the national and provincial level share their objection of anti-migration sentiments and actions yet on the ground there is little change in attitudes from the officials (Erwin 2017).

5.3 ASONET's relationship with the state
5.3.1 National Department of Home Affairs

Political opportunities refer to the importance of the broader political system in structuring the opportunities for collective action (McAdam et al. 1996:2). During the xenophobic attacks, the DHA publicly acknowledged their incapability to carry out their mandate and deal with the issues surrounding African foreigners, but through their budget, they would seek support from other stakeholders. Although the DHA has repeatedly stated that they cannot tackle xenophobia alone but required everyone in South Africa to work with them to combat this issue, they have, however, failed to work with organisations such as ASONET who are dedicated to this cause. In this sense there was a stated political 'opening' but ASONET has not been able to completely utilise it given that there was no real effort by the DHA to incorporate ASONET into its social cohesion drive. The findings showed that ASONET has not had funding from the DHA but have been supported by the DAC. The DHA actions can, therefore, be seen as contradictory to their statements of aiming to educate South Africans about immigrants/migrants and achieving integration. So, whilst there were spaces for ASONET to collectively mobilise around issues of social cohesion these were restricted by its mobilisation base struggling for rights such as residency and recognition of asylum / refugee status.

The study findings revealed that the relationship between ASONET and DHA has been problematic over the years. With DHA reporting on the status of undocumented African foreign nationals, each time violence occurs but refusing to provide migrants legal documentation in order for them to have a normal life in the country. The findings revealed when the organisation assist migrants they discover some have been told they will receive documentation after months or a year. One member indicated the outcomes of refusing migrants' documentation, results in their stay stay in the country without any documentation, while DHA reports on the news of the increase of illegal foreigners. Authors like Harris (2001), Neocosmos (2010) and Nyamnjoh (2006) have also argued that the DHA has been accused of infringing the rights of foreign nationals by denying them legal documentation. The organisation ensures that the rights of foreign nationals are not infringed but the resilience of the department to work with them represses their goal.

Furthermore, the instability at the DHA is a threat to the organisation and their policy advocacy work. The findings revealed the setbacks that the organisation encounters when advocating for policy change is the change in leadership which often means the closure of opportunity if there was progress with the former leader. The members explained that this usually means they must

start their negotiations afresh, setting meetings in order to convince the new person about their suggestions. The organisation has been involved in the discussions but have been unsuccessful in ensuring the anti-immigration policies are changed. At the time of the interview, it was discovered that ASONET was advocating for a change in the White Paper which they saw as anti-immigration. It is clear that advocating for change in legislation requires stability, which is not controlled by any leader or ASONET but affects their broader aim as an organisation. It can be said that DHA needs to be coordinated such that when there is a change in leadership, the new authority is informed about the discussions that were ongoing.

5.3.2 Provincial and local authorities

The findings show that the organisation has however been successful in building a relationship with local government. This is critical as ASONET members believe alliances with officials are key to achieving social cohesion and that partnerships will bring about meaningful change in the sense that ASONET may struggle to find a support base amongst local South Africans as well as migrants. The local councillors and traditional leaders (*Izinduna*) are the gatekeepers that ASONET communicates with when they hold a community dialogue. It is clear from the findings that local authorities have a crucial role in assisting the organisation combat stereotypes towards African foreigners in society. Migrants must inform the local authorities when they require to stay in a particular community so that the local authority is aware of the foreign nationals in his/her area. Having this relationship with gatekeepers according to the members assists in mobilisation. The members highlighted the responsibility of migrants to ensure that they firstly communicate with the local authority so they can be properly introduced into society, although it was not clear whether migrants are informed about this before-hand or if it is a suggestion. However, the xenophobic incidents prove that the process of integration has not been achieved because locals continue to attack African foreigners even after years of having them in their communities.

One member highlighted that their relationship with the provincial and local authorities has been successful, but they have faced some challenges when dealing with them. Particularly when local elections are approaching they have no interest in social cohesion discussions, this is seen as sabotage by the members because this affects their mobilisation. As indicated above, the role played by the local authority is vital to the aim of the organisations of achieving social cohesion through community dialogue.

5.4 ASONET's successes and challenges
5.4.1 ASONET's successes

The third research question addressed in this study was focused on ASONET's outcomes. The findings showed that ASONET has been successful in connecting migrants and locals while ensuring they have a platform to voice their grievances. The reports from the women's dialogues reported that the organisation connected migrant and local women during the dialogues and there were able to interact freely and discuss issues that affect them as women without men being present. During the dialogue, women were able to reflect on their lives and became emotional while discussing the challenges they face as mothers, wives, sisters and friends (ASONET Women Dialogue report, 18 March 2016). It is evident from the findings that the community dialogues serve various purposes for the organisation and can be used for creating a platform for all African people to interact and create sustainable connections. Furthermore, community dialogues have been used by the organisation to resolve the issue of local business ownership. According to Charman and Piper (2012), the competitive strain between foreigner-run *spaza* shops and local shopkeepers results in xenophobic attitudes and violence. It is evident from the findings that ASONET uses the dialogues to avoid such conflicts by allowing both foreign and local business owners to consider and dialogue about a skills transfer (Community dialogue report, 24 April 2017).

Due to the unfair treatment that African foreign nationals experience from the government, the organisation is dedicated to influencing policy change. The members spoke on their efforts to challenge the White Paper on international migration, which they believe is anti-migration. Although there has not been a change in the policy, being involved in the process of advocating for the rights of foreign nationals has been seen as a success for the members of ASONET. This is in line with the literature where Naidu et al. (2015) state that ASONET has had a vital role in finding strategies to connect African foreigners to the government for engagement. The findings revealed that migrant communities trust ASONET and know during the xenophobic attacks they will fight for their rights and in the case of attacks the organisation is the first civil society organisation to be called on when people are chased out of communities, they can resolve the issues, connect with networks and place migrants back into the communities. During the April 2015 xenophobic attacks in Isipingo, Durban the DDP, ASONET and KZNCSOC were involved in the response of the violence (Naidu et al. 2015). According to the authors the organisations communicated with the state such that they provided support to the displaced communities and assisted in reintegrating them into local communities. Furthermore,

findings show that although DHA has been difficult to work with, ASONET members still regard the opportunity to negotiate on behalf of migrants a success, the members pride themselves on being able to engage with the state at the national and provincial level for the rights of African foreign nationals.

5.4.2 ASONET's challenges

Although the organisation has been successful in achieving the above-mentioned they have faced challenges in their vision of being a catalyst for change. The members explained the contradictory actions of the DHA, of denying African nationals documentation then reporting that there is a high number of illegal foreigners without documentation in the news. The foreign nationals are told to come back after months or years for their documentation, this is problematic because they cannot go back to their countries and are forced to reside without documentation. Harris (2001) argued that the DHA is not efficient at times in providing proper documentation for African foreigners which leads to some being undocumented.

The members expressed the challenge of dealing with the instability at the DHA, the change in leadership affecting policies has an impact on African nationals who come into South Africa as asylum seekers and refugees. Therefore, ASONET should be allowed to be part of the decision-making process when policies are changed because they understand the challenges faced by African foreign nationals from the grassroots level. Makamunana and Brynard (2005) argue that civil society organisations try to influence policy reforms through advocacy, dialogue and persuasion, furthermore, they play a significant role in promoting social justice and contribute to better governance.

Another challenge mentioned by ASONET members is achieving a set response to xenophobia and a sustainable model for social cohesion. This challenge is reflected in the literature Naidu et al. (2015) for example argued that civil society has not found a sustainable long-term plan to achieving social cohesion. ASONET recognizes that sustainability could be strengthened for example its members do not revisit communities following social cohesion dialogues to assess progress. Furthermore, there is no formula to assess the strength of social fabric following the dialogues. ASONET is keen to strengthen these aspects but members are constrained by a lack of funding or funding that is fairly prescriptive.

5.5 Conclusion

Civil society organisations have had a vital role in responding to the discrimination and violence directed at African foreign nations since the May 2008 and 2015 xenophobic waves. Although the violence has occurred on a smaller scale over the years, the attitudes which lead to the xenophobic conflict remain. It was, therefore, the aim of this study to fathom the part played by civil society organisations such as ASONET in the process of eradicating xenophobia through different strategies meant to integrate citizens and foreign nationals, and bring about cohesion in communities.

ASONET consist of members that are mostly from other African countries, and have experienced hatred and discrimination in different ways, this explains their dedication in representing the marginalised. The study findings show that economic and bio-cultural factors remain the major reasons for hatred towards foreign nationals. This is evident from the community dialogues conducted by the organisation that show that it is embedded in the minds of locals that foreigners must be blamed for unemployment and crime. Through the community dialogues, ASONET tries to understand the perceptions about foreign nationals and use the discussions to break down misperceptions existing in communities. The word *kwerekwere* is used by South Africans to refer derogatorily to black foreigners because of the difference in languages, cultures, and skin tone. The organisation believes in order for locals and foreigners to co-exist in communities it is crucial for them to understand one another and eliminate othering.

Representing the migrant community does not only suggest that they must be integrated into society, but they must also be integrated into policies, this leads to the role played by ASONET in advocating for the rights of foreign nationals. The government has been accused of failing to address the inequality and respond to the issue of violence against African foreigners. This includes failure by the DHA to provide migrants with relevant temporary or permanent documentation necessary for their stay in the country, which results in migrants being classified as illegal in the country. ASONET advocates for change in policies to protect the rights of migrants but the findings revealed they have not been successful in dealing with the Provincial DHA due to the instability and change in leadership. Furthermore, the DHA is said to be the custodian of integration but they fail to integrate migrants and find solutions on how to achieve cohesion.

In addition, the DHA has funds to carry out its mandate and integrate migrants but they are failing, because they do not know how to achieve social cohesion. Whereas, ASONET, has the tools for social change but lack funding, this calls for the different stakeholders to work together in order to find solutions to xenophobia.

5.6 Recommendations

The following recommendations can be made for further research, for the organisation and for government departments such as the DHA.

- It was evident from the findings that ASONET lacks a method that is unique to them that can be used to achieve and measure social cohesion. Perhaps having a planned method could attract funding for the organisation so they can expand and deepen their activities.

- The findings revealed the unhealthy relationship that the organisation has with the DHA, therefore, the government needs to involve civil society in the process of making and changing policies that affect not just foreign nationals but the people, because this would ensure accountability and transparency by the government.

- Furthermore, the organisation lacks modern-day advertisement, for instance, it does not have a social media profile that will assist in mobilization. This is because the majority of people especially the youth use social networks, this could help grow their membership numbers, while attracting volunteers, and advertise ASONET activities and its message.

- A surplus of research is available on xenophobia which looks at the experiences, effect and causes of xenophobia but the role played by civil society has not been explored enough in research. Therefore, a suggestion could be made for further research to explore the involvement of different civil society organisations in eradicating xenophobia and how they have influenced different government departments to change their policies so they can be inclusive.

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APPENDIX A: Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Information sheet

Date: ………………………………

Dear ASONET member

My name is Zinhle Ndebele from the Department of Built Environment and Development Studies. I am studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Howard College), I can be contacted at 0837306281 or 215017062@stu.ukzn.ac.za or nhlemavananda@gmail.com.

You are being invited to consider participating in a study that involves research on the involvement of civil society organisations in combating xenophobia. ASONET was chosen as a case study because of its involvement in combating xenophobia by working with communities to bring about social cohesion and community integration and dealing with this social issue in South Africa. The aim and purpose of this research is to examine and understand the involvement of civil society such as ASONET in combating xenophobia and bringing about social cohesion. The study is expected to enroll six ASONET participants who will be interviewed at Howard College. It will involve the following procedures, firstly one-on-one interview with participant members of ASONET at Howard College or at a location of their choice. Thereafter the researcher will attend ASONET community dialogues to validate the data gathered from the participants. The duration of your participation if you choose to enroll and remain in the study will be thirty minutes for the interview.

The study will not provide direct benefit to the participant but we hope it will benefit the whole organisation. We hope the study will provide exposure of the organisation and that more people will learn about the organisations involvement in xenophobia and want to be involved. Furthermore, we hope this study will bring about awareness of the social issue of xenophobia and the contribution that civil society has had in trying to reduce it.

This research does not involve any danger and does not put the participants in risk, it does not involve sensitive issues that will traumatize participants during the interviews.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number: HSS/0300/019M).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at 083 7306 281 or 215017062@stu.ukzn.ac.za alternatively nhlemavananda@gmail.com or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION
Research Office, Westville Campus
Govan Mbeki Building
Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000
KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA
Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609
Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Participation in this research is voluntary and participants may withdraw participation at any point if they require to, and in the event of refusal/withdrawal of participation the participants will not incur penalty and there will not be any consequences of any kind. In case of withdrawal, participant must inform the researcher about his/her decision. Participant may be terminated from the study if they deliberately provide false information because integrity of the data must be maintained.

The participant will not benefit directly from this research, but he/she is required to provide accurate information about the organisation. The participants will not receive any incentives or reimbursements for participating in the study.

The information provided by participants in this study will be treated confidentially. Identity of participants will remain anonymous (unless participant chooses not to remain anonymous). The data will be kept in a locked cabinet in the supervisor's office and shredded after 5 years. Electronic versions of the data will be kept on a password protected computer and deleted after 5 years.

CONSENT

I ………………………………………………... have been informed about the study entitled "The role of civil society organisations in combating xenophobia: A case study of the Africa Solidarity Network (ASONET) by Zinhle Ndebele.

I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.

I understand that this study is about the organisation and it involves an interview that will be audio recorded.

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study, I understand that I may contact the researcher.

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researcher then I may contact the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION
Research Office, Westville Campus
Govan Mbeki Building
Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000
KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA
Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609
Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Additional consent, where applicable

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion YES / NO

Video-record my interview / focus group discussion YES / NO

Use of my photographs for research purposes   YES / NO

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   Date

_____   _____

Signature of Witness   Date

(Where applicable)

_____   _____

Signature of Translator   Date

(Where applicable)

APPENDIX B: Qualitative Interview schedule

Topic: The role of civil society organisations in combating xenophobia: A case study of the Africa Solidarity Network (ASONET)

The following questions included in this interview schedule will be asked in order to find out more about ASONET, and its role as a civil society organisation. These questions will be asked during the interview and will be recorded with a voice recorder to ensure that the correct version of your interview is transcribed.

Section A- Organisation

1.   How would you describe ASONET?

2.   How long have you been with ASONET?

3.   What is your current role in the organisation?

4.   How is the organisation structured?

         Probe - Do you elect leadership? do you have branches? Do you exist in other provinces / countries?

5.   How has the organisation evolved from the time it was established?

         Probe - Explore why the evolution took place.

6.   How does one become a member of ASONET?

         Probe - Is membership free?

7.   How do you mobilise interest in membership?

8.   How many members do you have?

9.   What is your membership composition?

         Probes: How many non-South African members do you have? How many members are female?

Section B - Activities

1.   What are the main activities of ASONET?

2.   What activities of ASONET are you involved in?

3.   The organisation deals with various issues, what was the reason behind its involvement in the issue of xenophobia?

4.   How do you define 'xenophobia'?

5.   Please elaborate on the role that ASONET has in trying to combat xenophobia (touching on the initiatives that you have – please give examples).

6. What outcomes have resulted from the initiatives around xenophobia taken by the organisation?

7. What have been some of your successes in addressing xenophobia? (please give examples)

8. What have been some of your challenges in addressing xenophobia? (please give examples)

9. Who do you partner with in your work on xenophobia?

> Probe – other civil society organisations, government etc?

10. Civil society organisations/movements are believed to serve their interest as well as those of their donors, what do you think about this statement? How do you define 'othering'?

> Probe – During the community dialogues do you encounter conflict?

11. What do you understand by term 'social cohesion'?

12. How does ASONET hope to achieve social cohesion?

13. What specific activities do you think would make this a reality?

14. How do you see that social cohesion has been achieved?

15. For your dialogue sessions, how do you reach the wider public? (Probe - How do people know about the meetings?)

16. What is the attendance composition of South African citizens and other African nationals during your community dialogues?

Section C: Relationship with DHA

1. What is your relationship like with the Department of Home Affairs?

    And at provincial and local level?

2. Have the changes in Home Affairs leadership and staffing impacted on your work?

3. Do you face challenges from authorities when you go about your campaigns / dialogues etc e.g. from Home Affairs officials or police or ward councillors?

4. Do you have any positive relationships with state representatives? Please give examples of when you feel your activities were aided by state officials or challenged by them.

5. Lastly what (future) plans does the organisation hope to achieve with its involvement in fighting against xenophobia?