



The pain of migrants in a strange land

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This article analyses the different assumptions about migrants in South Africa, coupled with levels of abuses and marginalisation of black African immigrants, which seem to be a source of depression and emotional pain for them in their strange land. Previous studies did reveal that African migrants face rejection, xenophobic attacks, abuses, marginalisation and socio-economic exclusion through rowdy practices of public officials and perceived institutionalised prejudice in South Africa. However, White Western and Indian-origin migrants are perceived to be better treated with dignity and respect in the same host country. This article investigates the argument that emotional pain suffered by the abused and traumatised Nigerian and other African immigrants could be responsible for the deviant behaviour of some of them in South Africa. Moreover, this article also scrutinises the notion people have that xenophobia in South Africa is Afrophobia. Most South African citizens are of the perception that all African immigrants are criminals, harbingers of disease and drug dealers, whose presence in their country is responsible for all their woes. On the other hand, Nigerian migrants are of the notion that they are the most hated at community and individual levels in South Africa. However, if appropriate social coalition policies are formulated and adopted by the government and all stakeholders, it can be of assistance in tackling the issues concerning citizens' suspicions, migrant abuses, marginalisation and social exclusion, which seem to be hampering the co-existence of citizens and African migrants in South Africa. We should bear in mind that almost all of us in South Africa are from somewhere or the other, as clearly explained in sahistory.org.za. The whites and Indian migrants, whom I call 'earlier alien settlers', are from Europe and Asia, respectively. I call black Bantus from Great lakes in Central Africa, 'earlier alien settlers', whereas the Khoikhoi who originated in the northern area of Botswana as the 'earlier dwellers', while Nigerians and Ghanaians from West Africa, Zimbabweans, Malawians, etc., are called the 'new alien settlers'. Do the 'earlier alien settlers' have the right to deprive the 'earlier dwellers' and the other 'new alien settlers' the right to have their space and settle in a democratic South Africa? Finally, an instructive pastoral care methodology is proposed in this article for traumatised migrants to be appropriately cared for and provided with wholesome wellness.

Keywords: Emotional pain; Nigerian migrants; Abuse; Trauma; Deviant behaviour; Xenophobia; Afrophobia; Pastoral care; Wholesome wellness; Neglect; Disability African Church.

Introduction

This article seeks to propose an analytical framework to investigate the assumptions of some South Africans who view all Nigerians as criminals and, therefore, should not be allowed to stay in South Africa. However, Nigerians and other African migrants, on the other hand, are of the assumption that all South Africans are xenophobic, and that xenophobia in South Africa is Afrophobia. Moreover, this article endeavours to understand whether the level of rejection and marginalisation suffered by African migrants could be the source of the trauma that causes emotional pain for Nigerian and other African migrants in South Africa, as well as to clarify if abuses, marginalisation and devaluation of black migrants' identity narrow the existing structure of opportunity, which might have led them to numerous options for survival, some of which are deviant. In addition, what could be responsible for instances where Nigerian migrants also participate in the abuse of their own folks, and the culture of killing each other because of greed for money in their business pursuits? Most migrants from the south-eastern part of Nigeria, who happen to be the majority of Nigerian migrants in South Africa, claim to have migrated because of the oppression and marginalisation they were subjected to in Nigeria. As a result, most of them no longer see themselves as being Nigerians but claim to be Biafrans who are still using the Nigerian green passport – this in my view is another big issue. To the best of my knowledge, Biafra is not yet an official republic, although some Nigerians are trying to use the Biafran issue to apply for asylum, because getting a legal permit to settle down in South Africa as a Nigerian is becoming increasingly impossible of late. Could not this be the reason why some of them indulge

Note: The collection entitled 'Christina Landman Festschrift', sub-edited by Wessel Bentley (University of South Africa) and Victor S. Molobi (University of South Africa).

in illicit businesses disassociating themselves from other Nigerians of different ethnicity? I view their life of isolation from fellow Nigerians of different ethnicity to be self-alienating.

Wimberly in his book, *Relational Refugees*, stated in clear terms the suffering and pain of those who alienated themselves because of unsatisfying encounters, which often increases their self-loathing and shame. These are those who 'felt completely unloved and despaired over the prospect of ever finding someone who could really care for them' (Wimberly 2000:20).

Previous studies have revealed that African migrants' assumption of Afrophobic treatment, which causes them emotional pain, seems to be responsible for the negative effect of hardening of African immigrants, which has driven some of them to self-alienation and shame, which in turn has driven them further underground where they may even engage in criminal behaviour to survive.

It was the above scenarios that necessitated the drafting of this article from an empirical research, titled 'Pastoral care for Nigerian Migrants in South Africa', conducted by the author for his doctoral degree in 2018 in Eastern Cape, Buffalo City Municipality, where Nigerian men and women, both legal and illegal immigrants were interviewed. All the migrants who became 'new alien settlers' claimed to have experienced one form of abuse or the other with the shame and pain associated with such abuses and marginalisation in the hands of 'earlier alien settlers' in South Africa. The contributors were selected from different ethnic regions in Nigeria and had different religious beliefs as well. The total number of contributors were 30 migrants, 12 indigenes, six clergies and five officials of different organisations in their personal capacities. Moral and pragmatic views were proposed through this study to understand the pain caused by abuses, marginalisation and socio-economic exclusion of migrants from a multicultural perspective where migrants are citizens of a global village. Pastoral care and counselling models were proposed to assist migrants who suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder and severe emotional pain. The qualitative genre was grounded by the findings that emerge in answering the question about the treatment and condition of Nigerians and also the emotional pain they are burdened with, which could be responsible for the deviant behaviour of some of them in South Africa.

Understanding the emotional pain of migrants

In recent times, the growing study on pain and emotions has been prompted by a change in theory. Customarily, academicians usually view most emotional pain as less-matured pain and negative emotional pain as extremes that need sensible control. However, Nesse and Ellsworth came up with a theory that states, 'Effective science has espoused a functional or evolutionary model, which views emotion as having the potential to facilitate awareness which guides and

motivates adaptive behaviour' (Nesse & Ellsworth 2009). In reality, I view the pain of migrants in a strange land to be more of emotional and mental pain, which is psychological. Pain of this nature is an unpleasant feeling because of the abuses meted out to new alien settlers by earlier alien settlers, which often led to the former's suffering, hurt and shock. Victims are left with feelings associated with sadness, unexpressed anger, anxiety, suicidal thoughts and shame. This made Galyn Burke to assert that, 'Emotional pain has to do with the feelings of a person who hurts emotionally' (Burke 2016). I tend to agree with his assertion because of the general observation of how the majority of African migrants in South Africa sadly expressed their pain through social media reports, at a personal level, and how unsafe they felt in the democratic South Africa of today. Some alluded to the fact that it was safer for African migrants who were staying in South Africa before 1994, during the apartheid regime, than now since the country has democratised. Fear for new alien migrants' lives, coupled with the uncertain immigration policy, social exclusion and xenophobia, which is Afrophobia in South Africa, seems to be responsible for the emotional pain most new alien black migrants are suffering in the hands of earlier alien migrants in South Africa. Lumley articulated a view on 'Emotions as subsuming of two distinguishable types – emotional state and emotional processes' (Lumley 2010). The emotional states and emotional processes of migrants can be described as follows.

Migrants' emotional states

Emotional states of new alien migrants in pain in a strange land include numerous transient moods or anxiety disorders, some of which can also have longer duration effects on victims of abuse. Because of the bitter experiences, most new alien black migrants often complained about difficulty in getting a legal permit to settle down and do a legitimate business in South Africa. The challenge of paying human traffickers or smugglers who brought them to the strange land, and pressure for money from family members back home in Nigeria or other African countries where they migrated from, is responsible for most migrants' emotional state of pain. Most of the time, these migrants suffer anxiety disorders, which often leave them sad, moody and sorrowful.

Migrants' emotional processes

Emotional processes refer to the mechanism by which emotions are generated, experienced and utilised, which comprises emotional consciousness, labelling, expression, processing and integration. Lumley articulated that (Lumley 2010):

Emotional processes strongly influences emotional states as well as mental, behavioural, and physical health more generally ... Emotional processes is more recent than that of emotional states and its pain is newer yet. (pp. 48, 68, 219-221)

The application of this concept to the painful situation, which new alien black migrants find themselves in their strange land, will help us understand the different graduating

processes of their pain and seek ways of helping them find inner healing as caregivers. Lack of emotional awareness of migrants and those who relate with them or handle them as caregivers is a very big issue that needs to be tackled urgently. The derogatory name-calling, abuses, marginalisation in government institutions, institutionalised xenophobia and attacks against black migrants, which is Afrophobia, are viewed as revised apartheid that often provoke emotional pain and sorrow in African migrants' lives. From interviews that were conducted in the Buffalo City Municipality, Eastern Cape, it was discovered that the main stressor for the majority of new alien settlers who happened to be Nigerian immigrants is the refusal of Home Affairs to renew their residence permits, which prevents their integration into South African society and denies them a space to engage in a legitimate business. Finding themselves in a state of uncertainty, because of the lack of legal permit, makes them feel excluded from every system of governance, which often leaves new alien black African immigrants in severe pain and sorrow. It has been observed that abusive treatment meted out to new alien black Africans in South Africa often generate emotions that influence bad behavioural pattern, mental disorderliness, suicidal thoughts and physical health-related issues.

Causes of emotional pain and remedy

There can be numerous causes for the pain suffered by new alien black African migrant, which can be tackled through the application of different remedial processes of healing articulated by different authors as indicated below:

Guilt and condemnation

'Guilt and condemnation' is a wasted emotion, which often leaves a person with the inner feeling that he or she has done something wrong to someone, as articulated by Rortvert et al. (2010). Most Nigerian migrants in South Africa complained of being troubled with guilt and self-condemnation for not being able to remit enough money to their family members who are suffering back home. Some others also have guilt and self-condemnation for doing illicit businesses such as dealing in drugs, credit card fraud, robbery, brothels, human trafficking, Internet fraud, because of desperation for a means of survival. They are of the assumption that doing illicit businesses is the only means of survival in a strange land, which does not make sense to me, because there is no justification for committing crimes. Because of horrendous crimes that are perpetrated by some African immigrants in South Africa, most citizens tend to view all African immigrants as the reason for all nuisance in South Africa, even though some South Africans are also indulging in crimes as well. Therefore, not all African migrants should be classified as unwanted entities; credible and resourceful new alien black African migrants should be given an opportunity to contribute meaningfully towards the building of the country and Africa in general.

To my amazement, a Nigerian drug hawker honestly told that, 'We are really abusing South African children by selling

drugs to them, it is wickedness, but how can I survive if I stop'. In my view, just regretting and continuing in the same crime does not make sense, but repentance of sin and restoration of one's soul are necessary. Some others are regretting leaving their schools, jobs and businesses in Nigeria and migrating to South Africa hoping for a better life, but to their great disappointment they are faced with a life of uncertainty. The remedy is that migrants who are feeling guilty and condemned should tender an apology to the state and the people they wronged and should self-correct where necessary. They should stop persecuting themselves but rather discipline themselves and abide by the laws of their host country.

Rejection

A minor rejection can be snub by a friend or a partner not picking up or returning his or her calls, whereas a major rejection is like a relationship break-up. The detrimental effect of rejection on an individual is that it can question his or her self-worth. One should know that anyone can experience rejection, but it will not continue forever. Nigerians and other African migrants are feeling rejected in a fellow African country as one listens to their complaints of xenophobia, which they suffer in every front: at Home Affairs, police stations, hospitals, schools, office communities, residences, etc. Pastoral caregivers should help them know that they will not be rejected forever; it will surely pass away someday, depending on the victims' attitude. The remedy is that the new alien black migrants who feel rejected should not focus on the rejection; instead, they should enhance their self-worth by focussing on their strengths.

They should spend time with people who appreciate them because there are some very good South Africans even though there are some bad ones as well, which is true about all other countries of the world.

Grief

Grief is an emotion of pain of losing a relative, loved one or valuables. Migrants with or without legal permits decried the torment and pain they were going through while watching their fellow migrants being murdered in cold blood by criminals, hired assassins, hired by fellow Nigerians who are fighting over business territories, and others killed by law enforcement agents. Another source of grief for some migrants is the pain of not being able to travel to Nigeria to bury their dead parents or close relatives, because of the lack of a valid permit. They feared that if they did travel to bury their dead without a renewed permit, they might not be allowed back into South Africa where they have been for many years now. They wanted a desk to be created where grieving legal or illegal migrants could safely go for care and counselling.

Loneliness

Loneliness occurs when one alienates oneself from others, retired to a solitary life because of abuse, rejection, social

exclusion, personality or identity crisis. Others may feel lonely when they lose their loved ones and decide to withdraw from nurturing relationships and solely rely on the self-created habitat, which creates a form of homelessness, which Wimberly identified as 'relational refugeeism' (Wimberly 2000:21). For fear of imprisonment or deportation if caught by law enforcement agents, most Nigerian migrants who do not have a valid residence permit in South Africa often hide in solitary places where they cannot do any meaningful business for a living. They are always on their toes, ready to run to their hiding places whenever law enforcement agents raid their hangouts. These raiders often comprise police, soldiers, customs officials, immigration officers, etc., in an operation called 'Operation Fiela' and they move through every nook and corner looking for perceived defaulters. The South African government and indigenes should be made to understand that new alien black migrants and refugees who do not have valid permits are not all criminals; therefore, I do not think they should all be treated as if they are all criminals. Such treatment is causing them so much pain and leading to self-alienation, which has hardens some of them to such an extent that they indulge in substance abuse.

Gloominess

Rinsloo views gloom as a depressed, low-spirited and miserable condition of a worrying and unhappy individual (Rinsloo 2013). This seems to describe the miserable condition of most Nigerian and other African migrants and refugees in South Africa as one can observe from their narratives. Frustrated and depressed migrants often waste their precious time thinking and mulling over past ugly events, which made them feel bad, but such negative line of thought does not get anyone to a place of destiny. Much time spent thinking about past mistakes or failures by going over them repeatedly in your mind is not a positive sign. African migrants who are unhappy with the situation they find themselves in South Africa should learn from their past mistakes and from the mistakes of others to avoid repeating them. Care providers should guide them on how to strengthen themselves to move on in life. It would be better if they positively reflect on their bad experiences of the past to motivate themselves to succeed in other aspects of their lives in the future. By doing so, migrants will experience the kind of happiness experienced by the Greek philosopher Aristotle whose most powerful proverb is cited by Rinsloo (2013:43–60) in his article, 'Happiness is the meaning and purpose of life...'. The instances of hurt and anger among migrants were found to be considerably higher among new alien black African immigrants who bitterly complained of rejection, which I feel could be the consequence of the pain suffered in the hands of some xenophobic government officials and indigenes.

Failures and frustrations

Obviously, life cannot always be a series of successes and accomplishments; as we all know, everyone is bound to experience failure at something now and then. However,

Nigerian or other African migrants' frustration as expressed by some contributors is related to policy uncertainty. The South African government often rolls out new policies to tactically exclude both legal and illegal Nigerian immigrants from the country's system of governance. Although the South African government officials and citizens deny these claims, the living reality of African immigrants in South Africa seems to validate the claims of most new alien black African migrants. In trying to exclude professional African immigrants who are already in South Africa from contributing towards the socio-economic development of the country, most migrants are hindered from reaching their life aspirations and goals. Most African migrants now see themselves as failures in life, which has negatively impacted their self-esteem as a result of marginalisation on all fronts. Coupled with hurts similar to when one has been victimised. Hurting migrants need to be cared for by skilful caregivers who should listen to them and counsel them appropriately.

Although there is exhaustive literature on the causes of emotional pain in human lives, not much has been written on the causes of the trauma and the emotional pain of Nigerian migrants in South Africa. This article is aimed at highlighting the root causes of the trauma and emotional pain suffered by new alien settlers, some of whom are Nigerian migrants in South Africa. The article will as well argue that rejection and social exclusion of Nigerian migrants in South Africa are the major causes of trauma and emotional pain suffered by Nigerian migrants, which could be responsible for the deviant behaviour of some of them in South Africa.

Effects of psychological stress or trauma among abused migrants

According to Myers' behavioural perspective view, 'Psychology is the science of behaviour and mental processes by which observable responses are acquired in particular environments' (Myers 1989:6). Different migrants often respond or react differently to the stressful or traumatic incidents that happen in their environments, especially while in a strange land. Stressful life events coupled with trauma and pain suffered by new alien black migrants present increasing evidence of psychological stress or trauma that can be evidently associated with persistent pain in most African migrants' lives in South Africa. Sumanen et al. (2007) shared the sentiment that 'Childhood adversities (e.g., divorce, family conflict, sexual abuse, and physical abuse) and adulthood conflict, victimisation are elevated in people with various pain conditions'. On a similar note, the author tends to share the same sentiment by pointing out that stressors before pain can trigger or exacerbate pain in migrants' lives, which leads some of them substance abuse. The abuses, marginalisation, derogatory name-calling, xenophobia, rejection, harassment, arrest for permit by law enforcement agents and fear of deportation, coupled with socio-economic exclusion, insecurity, problems in romantic relationships and marriage with locals usually come with challenges, which often leave victims psychologically

traumatised. All these do affect immigrants negatively and are the common sources of pain in new alien black African migrants' lives in South Africa.

Findings

Most accusations against Nigerians and other African immigrants who happened to be new alien settlers in South Africa are based on assumptions. Assumption is something that one considers likely to be true even though no one told the assumer directly or even though there is no proof or facts. Ronnie (1989) asserted that:

The psychological aftermath of traumatic events suggested that people don't ordinarily operate on the basis of challenging and questioning the assumptions about themselves, but are only concerned in doing so about others. (p. 133)

One can make sense of Ronnie's view, considering what has become a norm for new alien settlers who are black African migrants and earlier alien settlers who are South African citizens to base their allegations about themselves on assumptions, which in most cases are not based on facts.

Indigenes assumptions about Nigerian migrants

Kalitanyi and Visser made a mention of these assumptions whereby 'South African citizens often blame new alien black African immigrants as people who are grabbing their space, women and opportunities and doing crime' (Kalitanyi & Visser 2010:13).

South Africans are of the perception that all Nigerians deal in drugs and are criminals. Their assumption is that every crime committed in South Africa is provoked by the activities of Nigerians, which in my view is false. These allegations leave credible Nigerians aggrieved because such a generalisation would group them with criminals from Nigeria, and also convey a sense that immigrants from other countries do not deal in drugs or commit crimes in South Africa. The assumption that the high level of violence and crime happening in South Africa is because of Nigerians' involvement in drug business cannot be authenticated, especially because even South African citizens, Chinese, Ethiopians, Indians, Somalis, Pakistanis, Tunisians and other nationals also deal in drugs in South Africa. However, it is only Nigerian immigrants' names that are doing the rounds, as it is they who foolishly hawk drugs in the streets of South Africa. The main importers and dealers of drugs in South Africa are doing it secretly under well-established cover-up businesses in shops and companies, but the law enforcement agents seem to be turning a blind eye to these main dealers, and their focus seems to be only on the Nigerians in the streets. To tackle the issue of drugs and crime in South Africa, there is a need for all criminals to be arrested and legal action taken against them, irrespective of their nationality.

African migrants' assumptions about Indigenes

The frustration level of xenophobia, which is generally believed to be Afrophobia and abuse suffered by most

Nigerians and other African immigrants within South Africa as expressed by various authors, can as well be viewed as sources of pain for them (Adepoju 2006:25–26; Crush & Tawodzera 2011). From the authors' observations, all black African immigrants are of the assumption that all South Africans are xenophobic and that their xenophobia is Afrophobia, which means that their hatred is only towards African immigrants. The fact of the matter is that not all South Africans are Afrophobic; however, the authors' concern is that Afrophobia adversely affects all African immigrants regardless of whether they are undocumented or documented. New alien black African immigrants in South Africa are exposed to the threat of human rights violations. Generally, they exist in uncertainty and a situation that is so fragile to the point that migration in South Africa seems to be associated with black migrants' physical integrity and dignity being violated in all fronts in recent years.

This seems to validate African immigrants' Afrophobia accusations, whereas white and Indian migrants are highly respected and treated with dignity in South Africa.

There are different types of emotional pain caused by psychological distress and traumatic incidents. A case in point was about the marginalisation of a 17-year-old girl born of a South African mother and a Nigerian Father who became a South African citizen. When the girl applied for a South African ID, Home Affairs officials refused to issue her a smart ID card, instead she was issued an old ID booklet simply because she had her Nigerian father's surname. Some of her schoolmates born of whites and Indians who became a South African citizen the same way as the Nigerian father were all issued smart ID cards. Such an act of discrimination traumatised the young girl badly to the point that she was stressing and getting depressed, because she started seeing herself as not being South African enough to qualify for a smart ID like her other schoolmates. Her parents took the matter to the Home Affairs officials, but one of the officials took her mother aside and told her that if her daughter was bearing her mother's South African surname, they would have given her a smart ID but not with her Nigerian fathers' surname. She queried them to know why the same policy does not apply to the children of the whites and Indians who are not of African origin; they had no answer to her question. Previously, the mother of this child did not accept migrating to the United Kingdom with her husband when he made the move for them to migrate in 2006. Most South Africans do not like migrating to other countries, which is very good in my view, but after this incident, she agreed with her husband and they all migrated to Canada in 2018. They are happy in Canada with their four children; they said there is no discrimination against them there, and their 17-year-old daughter is perfectly healed of her depression. It is obvious that there are such incidents where abuses, xenophobia and social exclusions are based on mere assumptions; however, in real-life situations where new alien black migrants suffer abuses and are in pain, skilful caregivers are required to help in assisting those in dire situations and are suicidal to find wholeness again.

Morden-day slavery still thrives among Nigerian migrants

There is this new trend in the migration of Nigerians to South Africa, where young men and women are trafficked or smuggled into South Africa to be used for drugs or other illicit businesses. Those that were sponsored under apprenticeship arrangement to work as drug mulls and hawkers usually serve their masters as slaves. These masters pay their bills, thereafter subject them to involuntary servitude, by endangering their lives as they use them to deliver drugs to customers. Their slave masters all through the period they are supposed to serve withhold their passports and other immigration documents. Some of them end up having criminal records after serving jail terms or even are killed. On the contrary, these masters of slaves move about freely spending and enjoying the proceeds of crime under the protection of some top corrupt police officers who are on their pay role. The period these slave boys normally serve can be up to 2 or 3 years, depending on the arrangement with the young enslaved migrant's family. On the other hand, those who were smuggled are people imported into South Africa in ways that involve the deliberate evasion of immigration laws. This offense includes falsification of travelling documents, bringing illegal aliens into the country. Nigerians or other Africans who are victims of human trafficking or smuggling are in a dire situation and are subjected to severe pain in South Africa; they desperately need to be set free from the bondage of those criminals who enslaved them and are enjoying the protection of some corrupt government officials.

The aiding and abetting of drug dealers by top corrupt police officers and politicians

Some greedy drug dealers who contributed to my PhD research on 'Pastoral care for Nigerian migrants in South Africa' did disclose how their collaboration with corrupt police officers and other government officials who are on their pay roles could orchestrate drug arrests and cases that appear in South African courts. There are incidents where perceived rivals in drug businesses can be set up for murder by other drug lords. Such bandits also use police officers in their network to arrest and imprison their opponents. There are high-profile officials in politics, South African Police Service (SAPS) and top business gurus of different nationalities in drug cartels and networks in South Africa. The shocking narratives of some key drug lords was that some South African senior officials in authority that have tasted drug money cannot stop drug trafficking into this country. Nigerian drug dealers alluded to the fact that they are not the architects of drug businesses in South Africa; some stated that Nigerians in drugs business are only selling drugs for these top-ranking leaders in politics, SAPS, business gurus and customs port officials in collaboration with local and foreign nationals who are part of the mafia in drug dealing. These shocking and frightening disclosures tend to discredit the good work done by dedicated policemen and policewomen that are putting their lives on the line to secure this great nation – South Africa.

Killing of migrants orchestrated by fellow migrants

According to the report of Adetola Olubajo, the president of the Nigerian union in South Africa, about 122 Nigerians were killed in the apartheid era in South Africa within 30 months (Olubajo 2018). Criminals and mobs during xenophobic attacks or police officers, who also perpetrate some of the killings, killed those victims. The most pathetic aspect of those killings of Nigerians in South Africa is when such killings are masterminded by greedy, aggrieved or threatening fellow Nigerians, who can go as far as hiring hitmen to eliminate their perceived rivals or set them up for arrest and imprisonment. One drug lord vowed that he is going to kill a fellow Nigerian who doped him and other dealers who gave him drugs worth about R500 000 to sell and return the money through his connection but chose to elope to an unknown destination with their money. One could see that there are people who are in pain for the wrong reasons, who get pacified only after they have killed another criminal. Drug dealers' cartel comprising drug lords, dubious political leaders and corrupt police officers is rife but hidden in modern-day South Africa. This is obviously making it very difficult to win the fight against drug business on which most horrendous crimes hinge on in South Africa. Also, Nigerians who once had a legal permit have become illegal citizens as they are not able to pay the exorbitant fee for a permit being unwanted new alien settlers.

Nigerian migrants exploited for legal permits

About 86% of the migrants who contributed to my PhD study made their application at the Home Affairs or the visa facilitation services (VFS). The rest applied through agents because they could afford the outrageous fee charged by those illegal agents.

Payments made for these applications range from R0 to R80 000; some were made legally or illegally.

A woman migrant in tears complained that she tried using agents for her permit and stated that she had spent about R250 000 on her permit, but to no avail. Such is the case of a Nigerian male migrant who has been living in South Africa for more than 10 years now and has two children with his South African wife. He once had legal status along with spouse permit, but later he was reduced to illegal status even though he is still married to his beautiful wife and has children.

He complained bitterly that the Home Affairs officials expect migrants to pay R25 000 through their secret agents for the renewal of their permits. There are clear indications that Nigerian migrants want to do the right thing with regard to obtaining their permits legally and directly from the Home Affairs. However, as things are presently, illegal agents in collaboration with corrupt Home Affairs officials are hampering the official process for illicit money through extortion from migrants who are desperate for a legal permit.

The cost of obtaining a permit through unofficial agents who front for different corrupt Home Affairs officials is ridiculous. About R30 000 is charged for new permits, which is supposed to cost a migrant just R3000 at the VFS, including the Home Affairs fees. Asylum papers are supposed to be issued free of charge to qualified applicants, but Nigerian agents who front for Home Affairs officials often charge between R3000 and R4000, depending on the agent the migrants meet. Poor Nigerian migrants who use asylum papers need about R2500 every 3 months to renew them from Eastern Cape to Pretoria. Those who can afford to go through agents who are Nigerian do get their permits approved and delivered within 6 weeks, whereas Nigerians who have applied for a temporary permit through the official route wait up to 3–5 years without any feedback. The biggest problem causing emotional pain to Nigerian migrants is that law enforcement agents are hunting down the new alien black African immigrants without a valid permit so that they can be arrested and deported; if the arrested migrant does not have the money to bribe law enforcement agents, they often end up in jail before deportation. Nigerians who admitted to dealing in drugs or engaging in other illicit businesses claimed that they are doing so because of the difficulty in getting a resident permit to work or establish a legitimate business. They find it easier venturing into the drug business in South Africa, because they see it as the only means of survival and for paying the exorbitant fees for a permit. One can see reasons as to why the Biafran agitators are advocating for indigenous people of Biafra to be granted refugee status like migrants from Congo and Somalia. I do not think that this kind of permit is good for the Nigerians; however, the type of permit arrangement made for Zimbabweans can be good for Nigerians in South Africa.

Treatment and general conditions of Nigerian migrants in South Africa

The response to the interviews about the treatment and conditions of Nigerian migrants in South Africa as revealed by the majority of the participants in my PhD research on 'Pastoral care for Nigerian migrants in South Africa' indicated that their condition was deplorable and could cause emotional pain in their lives. The total participants were 53, of which there were 30 migrants, 12 Indigenes, six clergymen and women, while there were five officials of different organisations in their personal capacity. Not having a legal permit to stay in South Africa is the major predicament most Nigerian migrants are confronted with in South Africa. Such a situation often creates uncertainty that provokes deviant behaviour among most migrants. They see the stringent immigration policies as anti-Nigerian immigrants, which some South Africans feel is the best way to protect the integrity of their borders, but such measures tend to marginalise Nigerian immigrants from other African migrants, for example, permit arrangements for the Zimbabweans. Although, as generally observed, the way Nigerians are hanging around in the streets and hawking drugs is very bad, but many contributors blamed the situation on not having a permit and jobs in South Africa. Some said

that they know that South Africans do not want them here any longer, but they have been long here for as long as 15–20 years. They claimed that they cannot go back to Nigeria empty handed; if they can get enough money through any means, they are willing to leave today, but if no money, some prefer to die here than to face the shame of going back empty handed after many years abroad. It is scary, but this is the reality about most Nigerians and other new alien black African migrants in South Africa

Migrants' responses

Approximately 97% of the migrants, who are new alien settlers, believed that Nigerian migrants and other African immigrants have been inhumanly treated in South Africa by ways of discrimination, rejection, xenophobia and suspicion for crimes. Around 50% of migrants interviewed in my research study confirmed that they have suffered various abuses. Some of these abuses include wrongful arrest, deportation and marginalisation. They were asked of their views on the treatment meted out to them in South Africa; different people have different narratives, but some are hopeless to a great extent and in dire need of psychological and spiritual attention.

Indigenes responses

On the views of indigenes who participated about the treatment and condition of Nigerians in South Africa, 67% of the respondents believed that the treatment and conditions of these African migrants are despicable, and their situation needs to be looked into because many of them are stressing badly because of how they are treated during xenophobic attacks, which only affect black African migrants, not white or Indian migrants. Others did not know much about them; all that they knew about Nigerians and other African migrants is from the negative media reports. The author is of the opinion that the positive side of the Nigerians and other African migrants should as well be reported in the media, not just the negatives all the time.

Clergy responses

In the view of all the Clergy who contributed, 'Their treatment and condition is not nice at all'; they described how black migrants they know are 'neglected and discriminated against'. Some Clergy revealed that:

Christian foreign nationals are prayer warriors with good work ethics and strong business minded people. However, I do pick up from the media about others who embark on criminal activities. I remain opposed to all habitual criminals. (Clergy, varied ages, date unknown)

Furthermore, some views were that 'most African migrants suffer a lot in terms of issuance of permits to legalise their stay' (Pastors, ages unknown, date unknown). All the clergies that responded to the interviews agreed that the treatment meted out to Nigerians and other African migrants are not good in terms of immigration laws and issuance of permits. On the treatment of Nigerian migrants in South Africa, some admitted that '...not giving them permits to stay in S/A is

frustrating to the foreigners'. They identified that 'some government officials are corrupt and they extort and make demands (financial) from foreign nationals'. A clergy gave an exposition when he wrote, '...South African indigenes have a misconception about Nigerians and crime in as much as every black foreigner that commits crime is taken to be a Nigerian but that is not true'; blacks that commit crime in South Africa are not all Nigerians. One clergy mentioned that he was thinking same way before he travelled to Nigeria where he was treated well, which he least expected from the Nigerians.

Responses from officials of some organisations

The views of some officials on the treatment and conditions of Nigerians and other African Migrants follows: A participant from the South African Human Rights Commission responded that, 'African migrants are welcome to stay in the country provided that they refrain from engaging in the social ills that are currently experienced'. Participants from the Department of Labour declared their hatred for Xenophobia and stated, 'We suppose to treat them as our sisters and brothers'. Participant from the Department of Labour revealed, '...Nigerians are the most educated immigrants' community'. The other participants were of the view 'that we all are Africans, whether Nigerians or other nationals, we just need to address our own justice and immigration system in South Africa'. A participant from the South African Police Service was of the view that, 'Good governance in African countries will help reduce the suffering of Africans in general because most citizens and migrants who are ill-treated are in dire conditions'. One of the respondents from the South African Human Right Co-operation responded angrily to the following question: Do you think these migrants are treated well by the government and Indigenes? His response was, 'The question should be whether the Nigerians are treating the members of the society well or not'.

An indigene who knew the plight of Nigerian and other African migrants stated that, 'they are treated unfairly because they think that they only come to South Africa for illegal reasons like selling of drugs'. The authorities have no proper plan or solution to both legal and illegal immigration... 'An officer who participated believed that it would not be 'Proper for Nigerian migrants or other nationals to be singled out for a particular way of treatment. As human beings we all deserve to be treated nicely'. The officer put the blame on the repetition of crime in the society at the door of the South African Judicial system.

Magistrates and Judges grant bails and paroles to some criminals who go back to commit crime repeatedly within communities.

In South Africa, 'earlier alien settlers' who happened to be whites, Indians and black South African policy-makers and citizens do not seem to be willing to give the 'new alien settlers' space in the South African systems of governance and nation building. My argument is that 'Khoisan earlier dwellers' and 'credible new alien settlers' should not be

denied the right to settle in a democratic South Africa as enshrined in the constitution. By doing so, the assertion of Nelson Mandela that, 'South Africa belongs to all who live in it' will become a reality.

Pastoral care methodology

Theological reflection based on the mentoring relationship model is required to assist migrants who share the common characteristics of 'being uprooted, homeless, and landless, seeking shelter in another place, and losing the protection of one's rights, imprisonment, and deportation' (Archie Smith cited by Wimberly who calls these persons refugees; Wimberly 2000: 22). About 60% of around 30 000 Nigerians residing in South Africa presently are using an asylum document called 'aduro' by Nigerians (Meaning, 'to wait' in Yoruba-Nigerian language). Many of them have become what Edward P. Wimberly calls "relational refugees" that need positive relationships with one or more individuals whose attitudes they can internalise to help them become full participants in life and to achieve liberated selfhood'. (Wimberly 2000:23). These views tend to depict the plight of the Nigerian migrants that are in pain, who often worry about life situations, fear about the present or the future, and experience anxieties that are likened to desperation that often develop when all surviving mechanisms and inner strength seem to be failing or insufficient. There is an urgent need to therapeutically tackle the unfavourable and deplorable conditions of vulnerable Nigerian migrants because of the unfair treatment meted out to them. Pastoral caregivers and counsellors should be able to mentor and educate victims of migrant abuse and marginalisation on how to apply the principles outlined in Daniel Louw's work, in which he recommended a theological design for a basic theory, anthropology, method and therapy (Louw 2005). Skilful caregivers can tackle the feeling of insufficiency and helplessness that lead to breaking-point situations that are often accompanied by increasing trauma and emotional injury, which usually lead to uncertainty, anger, worry, tension, stress, anxiety, fear, dejection, depression, despair, loneliness, grief, terminal condition and death. Therapeutically, depressed migrants in a hopeless condition can be counselled and mentored to return to the Lord, for the salvation and deliverance of their soul and spirit by faith.

Evoking faith and hope in God

Wimberly Anne E. Streaty in her work tried to educate us on the essence of true worship and the awesome feeling true worshipers enjoy when they connect with God through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. A happening in worship that evokes or enkindles the kind of heart and head that knows what impacts positively on a person's life is through the unfolding of the order of worship. The symbol of the altar and the language sermons, songs and prayers are among the intrinsic aspects of the 'happening' that give food for the mind and our imagination of God's nature. In this way, 'worship nurtures our conscious knowing of God'; the same sentiment was shared by Nwamaka Rhoda Olisa in

her recommendation for Christians, 'to seek authentic knowledge, because it is only true knowledge that builds up humans' (Olisa 2016:52; Wimberly 2004:4). I share the same sentiments as both the authors whose opinions depict genuine confidence in the creator and the giver of life and hope. Because of the abuses and marginalisation meted out to Nigerian migrants, which do affect them negatively, they are often left emotionally assaulted, bruised and traumatised. Those who are affected and left with the feeling of helplessness in churches and communities in South Africa should, through mentoring, be encouraged to know that one's Christian faith is best built in a school behind the seen.

African approach

The application of the Ubuntu concept represents the African wisdom necessary for addressing the psychological and mental problems, which usually cause emotional pain among African immigrants who are often found hurting and are in pain in a strange land. According to the sentiment shared by Msila (2015):

Ubuntu is an old African concept, a way of life that was like a religion in African societies – long before the days of colonisation. Ubuntu means to sacrifice for others selflessly, caring and protecting your fellow human beings.

Msila's sentiment on the Ubuntu concept is a reiteration of Christ's instructions in Mark (12:30–31), 'Thou shall Love the Lord with all thy heart and with all thy soulThou shall love thy neighbor as thyself'. The authors' perspective is that one who truly has the love of God in his or her heart will definitely have true love for vulnerable migrants and be willing to apply the practical Ubuntu aspect of compassion while attending to them in public service centres. Also, by caring and sharing in mentoring those who are vulnerable and in severe pain to have the understanding of African theological perspectives, which believes that 'I am because you are', despite all odds. Such a resolve will be a source of inspiration for care providers to aggressively help discouraged, traumatised and hopeless African migrants who are new alien settlers to recover their personhood and human dignity again. The spirit of Ubuntu in Africans influences their way of life and promotes love and unity among Africans in their communities.

Conclusions

It is obvious that the disregarding and devaluation of African migrants' identity, coupled with abuses and marginalisation they are subjected to in South Africa, are responsible for the traumatic condition and the emotional pain suffered by most new alien settlers. The reality is that some Nigerians and other African migrants who were of good behaviour resort to crime as a means of survival in South Africa, because of deliberate socio-economic exclusion of black new alien migrants, unlike the respectful and dignified way whites and Indian new alien migrants are treated in South Africa. White and Indian migrants are viewed as expatriates and investors who came to Africa with lots of dollars even when they are not, unlike how African migrants are viewed to be all criminals, harbingers of disease and drug dealers. The

available evidence through observations and interactions tends to reveal the reality of the emotional pain suffered by most Nigerians and other African immigrants in South Africa, which is the result of abuses, marginalisation and social exclusion, which is in turn responsible for most instances of deviant behaviour of migrants who otherwise were of good behaviour.

It becomes painful when one gets to know that all the dwellers and settlers in South Africa are from somewhere or the other, but few of the most privileged 'earlier alien settlers' in position of leadership decide to legislate into law, policies, which tend to undermine the rights, privileges and dignity of 'earlier dwellers' and 'new alien settlers'. These crucial issues should be addressed urgently through mentoring and empowering emotionally bruised victims, for there to be peaceful co-existence among all people living in South Africa.

The methodology of mentoring the emotionally bruised and self-alienated migrants, who are in pain and of deviant behaviour, is critical. Appropriate social coalition policies will go a long way in tackling what usually hinder African immigrants and citizens' co-existence in South Africa. For wounded African migrants in pain to experience inner healing, the application of the Ubuntu concept is key. These discoveries about the conditions of the Nigerian migrants, the kind of treatment they are subjected to in South Africa, coupled with adopted social coalition policies should not only be regarded as a Nigerian migration phenomenon. Similar occurrences and remedial measures can as well apply to immigrants from other African countries in strange lands.

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Competing interests

The author declares that they have no financial or personal relationships which may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

Authors' contributions

Prof. M.J. Masango supervised and shared insightful information in the process of writing this article. Dr J.U. Olisa wrote the article out of his PhD thesis on pain of migrants in a strange land and focussed on the condition of Nigerian and other African migrants in South Africa.

Ethical considerations

Informed consent was obtained from participants by first providing them with an information sheet to explain the research. It was also explained verbally, and participants

were given the opportunity to clarify discrepancies, if any. The research participants were made aware of the information that is anticipated from them, where voluntary participation was encouraged without pressure of any kind, and it was clearly stated that the information gathered will be shared for educational purposes only. All the steps were explained to the research participants, and they were provided with a consent form to sign, which stated that they have agreed to voluntarily participate in the research. They were afforded the right to withdraw any time.

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Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

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