



UCLA | SCHOOL OF LAW

Call for Workshop Papers

Destabilizing Demons? Reflecting on Xenophobia, Categories & Cohesion

23 July 2015

Two weeks of violence in May 2008 left scores dead and tens of thousands displaced. Many were from beyond South Africa's borders, others South Africans citizens. Since then, hundreds more have been killed, attacked, extorted, or expelled based on where they are from or the work they do. In April 2015, performative violence again spilled on to city streets eliciting fear, anger and solidarity among defenders of tolerance and advocates of social closure. Yet in the violence's shadows, people from diverse backgrounds live side by side in relative peace if not prosperity.

This closed door workshop asks participants to reflect on what these dual demons – the scapegoated outsiders and the spectre of popular violence – say about the nature of citizenship, race, politics and law in South African society. The workshop is particularly concerned with how conflict and patterns of coexistence speak to the conceptual categories, teleologies, etiologies, and normative biases embedded within South African academic, popular and political discourse.

Workshop organisers welcome critical reflections from scholars, practitioners and observers of South Africa's dynamic socio-political landscapes. Along with those in law and the social science, we encourage contributions from philosophy, history, comparative literature, urban planning, visual art, media or performance studies.

Ten to twelve will be selected from the abstracts received and their authors asked to submit a five page draft paper a week before the workshop. These will be circulated to other participants in advance to guide workshop discussions. Limited funding is available to sponsor travel and accommodation for participants from outside of Gauteng Province. Selected conference papers will be assembled into a popularly accessible text and made available free via an online publication. Longer versions of the papers may then be submitted elsewhere for publication.

Papers are welcome on these or other conceptual or epistemological themes:

- Rethinking conceptions of blackness, community, and the public;
- Political potentialities projects of democratic consolidation and social cohesion created or foreclosed;
- The rhetorical and substantive transformation of 'human rights' by state actors, private citizens, victims and activists;
- Law's role in framing responses to the violence and its role in structuring responses to perpetrators and victims;
- The role of traditional, electronic and social media in constructing categories, shaping violence, and eliciting response.
- Relationships between South Africa's revolutionary historiography and the production of accounts of violence and difference;
- Questions of analytical scale in understanding the determinants of conviviality and conflict;

Abstracts are due on 10 June 2015

Direct inquiries and submissions to xeno2015@migration.org.za

Final papers to be circulated by 17 July 2015

Convened by:

- The South African Research Chair on Mobility and the Politics of Difference
- The African Centre for Migration & Society, University of the Witwatersrand
- The UCLA School of Law International Human Rights Clinic, University of California, Los Angeles, School of Law