Studies on Xenophobia in South Africa: A Meta-Analysis
Elzinga, Jasper

Studies on Xenophobia in South Africa: A Meta-Anlysis

Jasper Elzinga

S1531956

Bachelor Thesis

Universiteit Leiden

BSc Political Science
Faculty of Social and Behavioural Science

Thesis Seminar: Global Migration
Supervisor: Dr. Katharina Natter

Introduction

South Africa has been known as a country of divides. On the one hand South Africa is a country of beating racism. The country is famous in the field of political studies for the Apartheid era. Apartheid was an era of extreme segregation between the black and white citizens of South Africa (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2021a,). Everything was divided along the lines of 'Separate but equal'. This dividing of society was a gradual process whose first steps were put into law as early as 1913, the beginning of a group of laws that became known as the 'Land Acts'. This group of laws finally developed into an unbalanced distribution of South Africa's land in favor of white South Africans. The name of apartheid was officially adopted in 1948, after the National party extended racial segregation laws from the 1910's. The National party continued by consolidating their power by inputting more racial dividing laws, such as the prohibition of interracial marriages in 1950 (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2021b,). Apartheid was officially abolished in 1990-91 when the term was dropped, and the government tried overhaul the situation with social changes in response to mounting international pressure (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2021a,). These social changes were not enough according to the South African people; they voted in a new constitution made by Nelson Mandela and F.W. De Klerk which was signed in 1994. Apartheid and social racism officially came to an end. De Klerk and Mandela won the Nobel Peace prize for their efforts to stop racism.

When we look at South Africa's era of Apartheid, we see prejudice based on race. South Africa was a country that was ruled by a small white minority, and which large black African population had to make do with less job opportunities, bad social and political resources and laws that legalized the deportation to reserve areas of the black African population to benefit the white population's property rights. One would expect that when the African National Congress, the party that rewrote the constitution in 1994 and from whose ranks South Africa's first black president Nelson Mandela emerged, finally got its hand on power in South Africa, exclusionist views would not hold sway in South Africa any longer. This does not seem to be the case, however. Prejudice has stayed a part of the South African nation, but not only in terms of race but also in terms of xenophobia.

Racism seems to be a lingering issue in South African society. One of the social constructs that is still ingrained in the South African way of thinking is the four-way devide of the population in 4 racial groups: Whites, Coloured, Black and Indian. These groups are used by the South African government to gather data (Government of South Africa, 2019, & BBC, 2021). Inequality between these groups has remained high even after the abolishment of Apartheid. The usage of racial divides as measurement tool by the government seems to point to a racial perspective affected by the past. If even the official sources look at a problem like inequality through a racial colored lens, it seems that racism is still very much alive in South African Society (BBC, 2021). Contrary its perspective on racism, which recognizes the phenomenon very obviously, the South African government does not recognize xenophobia on the same level as they do racism. Equal treatment of both phenomena should have entailed a perspective from the racial side of things and one from the xenophobic side, which lacks in national action plan from 2019 that seeks to address both issues and more besides. The South African government has blatantly denied recognizing xenophobia as a cause for attacks focused on people with a non-South African nationality (Madsihne, 2011, p.15).

Although xenophobia is so close to racism as a phenomenon it seems not to receive the same level of recognition from the South African government. The South African government keeps police records on crime relative to the four-way divide of racism from the apartheid era (Silber & Geffen, 2016). It doesn't put xenophobic violence in the same perspective, by putting crime from South African's next to immigrants in South Africa without a passport. Seven percent of the South African population was an international migrant in 2019 (McAuliffe et al., 2019, p. 58). This means there were around 4 million international immigrants in South Africa in 2019. To put crime towards this group of 4 million in perspective Xenowatch was founded. Xenowatch is a tool that is developed by a research group, the African Centre for Migration & Society at the University of Witwatersrand. It lets people report xenophobic crimes. Its goal is to bring Xenophobia in the public eye. It is also a resource for many researchers since the government doesn't acknowledge xenophobic crimes and thus does not record them. In its dataset Xenowatch puts the total number of incidents of Xenophobia in 2019 at 78 incidents, with a total of 1.629 displacements, 1.080 looted shops and 28 deaths (2021).

What are the main academic narratives around xenophobia in South Africa? This question is split up into two questions. The first is: what constitutes xenophobia in the case of South

Africa? The second question is, what are the root causes of xenophobia in South Africa according to the current literature? The method used to research these questions was a meta analysis on thirty-nine different sources. The main finding of the research was xenophobia is not nearly as well defined as one often expects in an academic debate. The debate on xenophobia is often left aside in research on the phenomenon in South Africa, in favor of empirical understanding of the problem. The main narrative found in contemporary studies of xenophobia in South Africa is the narrative of scapegoating of migrants. Relative deprivation leads South Africans to dislike and hatred towards immigrants, mainly from other African countries. Often this hatred explodes into deadly violence.

Theoretical Framework

Xenophobia is a phenomenon that is difficult to define and measure. The phenomenon is defined in its most basic form by using its etymological heritage. Soyombo (2008) xenophobia as: The concept [xenophobia] is believed to have originated from two Greek words: xenos (meaning foreigner or stranger) and phobos (meaning fear). This makes the definition 'fear of foreigners'. This definition is considered lacking by many authors, however. Xenophobia as a phenomenon can be found across the world, differs from case to case and depends on historical and cultural context (Mogekwu,2005). Pedahzur & Yishai (1999) show that a state as young and as diverse in heritage as Israel is no exception to hatred towards strangers. That means that even people who have been subject to hatred themselves are not immune to the effects of xenophobia, which illustrates that xenophobia can occur anywhere in the world. Xenophobia is seen as a breach of human rights (UNHCR, 2020), which means that the phenomenon often falls in the realm of international law. Strangely enough there is no definition in international law of xenophobia (UNHCR, 2020). The UNCHR, the UN refugee agency, uses a definition in their guidance on Racism and Xenophobia, by UN Special Rapporteurs on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance given in a report to the Human Rights Council in 2016: "[Xenophobia] denotes behavior specifically based on the perception that the other is foreign to or originates from outside the community or nation" and, later in the report, xenophobia exsist when: "individuals are denied equal rights on account of real or perceived geographic origins of the said individuals or groups, or the values, beliefs and/or

practices associated with such individuals or groups that make them appear as foreigners or outsiders." (UN special Rapporteurs quoted from A/HRC/32/50, 13 May 2016, in UNHCR, 2020). These two parts define one of the two key issues in xenophobia: What constitutes a foreigner in the definition of xenophobia? Here, the Special Rapporteurs of the UN together make the case that someone is foreign, when that someone is or is perceived to be from a certain geographic origin. This ties xenophobia to 'foreignness' on basis of geography.

The fear portion of the definition remains loosely defined, however. What exactly constitutes to 'fear' in the definition of xenophobia? An explanation is offered by Solomon & Kosaka (2013) who use Harris (2001) to illustrate that the fear of foreigners turns into dislike or hatred. This is because the foreigners are perceived as a threat to the economic success and the national identity of the group committing the xenophobia. This, argue Solomon & Kosaka further along the lines of Mogekwu (2005), is because the members of the group committing xenophobia are often ignorant of the ways of the group they perceive as 'foreign' and start hating them as a result of this ignorance.

Another problem with the defining xenophobia is that it often difficult to distinguish from racism. Oxford languages (2021) defines Xenophobia as: 'dislike of or prejudice against people from other countries' Racism is defined by the same source as: 'prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism by an individual, community, or institution against a person or people based on their membership of a particular racial or ethnic group, typically one that is a minority or marginalized.' Taking into consideration the UN's definition of xenophobia the main difference between the two definitions is the reason someone is being disliked. Looking at these two definitions xenophobia occurs when someone is treated differently because they are perceived to be from a different geographical area, and racism occurs when someone is being treated differently because they are perceived to belong to a specific racial or ethnic group. Sometimes telling the difference between these two motivations can be difficult. There is an example that illustrates this point very well from the Covid-19 crisis. People of Asian descent are being threatened and discriminated against across the world because of the Covid-19 crisis (Human Rights Watch, 2020a). It can be argued that these acts of discrimination are racism because these attacks are based on the perception of looking and seeming Asian, which is an argument based on the phenotype of a racial group, which makes it a racist argument (Sundstorm & Kim, 2014). If the discrimination is done from the perspective that the victim is from China the argument changes in theory, to a xenophobic argument. The truth is however that the difference between xenophobia and racism is a small one and theoretical at that.

Researchers such as Soyombo (2008) use the terms according to their own insight. But researchers such as Kim & Sundstorm (2014) maintain that there are significant differences between the two terms. I will touch upon the theory of xenophobia and the discussion of xenophobia vs. racism in my analysis.

The case of xenophobia in South Africa

As mentioned in the introduction, South Africa has had a history of racism until the apartheid was abolished and a new constitution was accepted by the South African government in 1994 (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2021). It has also been noted by Misago, et al. (2016) and Dodson (2010) that extensive research has been done on the subject of xenophobia in South Africa since the 1990s(Crush, 2010; Nyamnjoh, 2006; Neocosmo, 2006; Danso and McDonald 2001; Dodson and Oelofse 2000; Harris, 2001; Morris 1998), and that many of the new studies repeat many of these preexsisting works on the subject. South Africa was and still is the schoolbook example of a racially segregated society. When in 1994 the country voted its first black president into office along with a new constitution that banned racial segregation, it seemed like South Africa participate in segregation and discrimination no longer. But would instead become a country for all people, especially for other Africans. One of the things that changed when the new constitution came into effect, is that the borders were finally open for African immigrants (Matsinhe, 2011; Crush, 2000). Crush (2000) even gives an example of a case where white South African police officers set the dogs on defensless black men. In the media circus that followed remarks and promises were made against racism, abuse and unjust treatment (See Crush, 2000; ANC 2000). The three men were from Mozambique however, and the police officers were part of a large scale government program set up to deport illigal immigrants. Crush states that from 1995 to 2000 over 600.000 illigal immigrants were deported back to their homelands (See Crush 2000; Crush 1999), in many cases suffering from abuse and brutality by the South African police (Human Rights Watch, 1998 ; South African Human Rights Commission, 1999, 2000). Xenophobic attacks have mounted Xenowatch has reported 615 deaths 4.831 looted shops and 122316 displacements over a total of 875 incidents of xenophobic violence from 1994 to 2021. The worst bout of xenophobic attacks took place in May in 2008. In a few weeks at least 62 people were killed, hundreds were injured and around 30.000 people became internally displaced (Steenkamp, 2009). Crush (2000) argues that South Africa was not totally prepared for what the end of the apartheid era entailed, especially in the realm of migration and migration policy. After

keeping the door shut to the immigrants from the African continent for such a long time, South Africa now had a progressive constitution and a working court system. It even passed its first refugee act in 1998. The rights of migrants from neighboring countries have remained low, however. Just like its people's tolerance for foreigners. In 2010 the Southern African Migration Project repeated survey research they had also done in 1997, 1999 and 2006 (2008, 2013). Compared to their earlier numbers even less South African's welcomed foreigners than in 1997 and 1999. For example, in 1999 25 % of those surveyed wanted a total ban on immigration, in 2006 that became 35% (SAMP, 2008, 2013). From 2006 to 2010 South African views on immigrants seem to have improved. In 2006 almost 50% wanted to deport all migrants living in South Africa, irrespective of status. In 2010 this fell to 25%.

In its article the SAMP is even cautiously optimistic that something as atrocious as the 2008 xenophobic attacks might never happen again. In those attacks, and xenophobic violence has gone on however with large instances happening in 2015 and 2019 (Beethar, 2019). Xenowatch has showed a decrease in xenophobic attacks from 2008 to 2009, but the number of attacks has remained more or less steady since 2009 (Xenowatch, 2021). Xenowatch has reported twenty-eight deaths, 130 looted shops and 359 displacements over a total of seventy-nine incidents of xenophobic violence in 2021. It has reported twenty-eight deaths, 130 looted shops and 359 displacements over a total of seventy-nine incidents of xenophobic violence in 2021.

Against this backdrop of continuous xenophobia over the years, it is curious to see that the number of immigrants that have been coming to South Africa has been ever increasing. According to the International Organization for migration, the number of international migrants that had moved to South Africa on a yearly basis from inside Africa, has risen from 2.5% of the total population of South Africa in 2005 to 7.2 % of the total population in 2019 (McAuliffe, 2019). This means that there were four million African immigrants in South Africa in total in 2019 according to IOM's estimate. This made South Africa the African state that received the most immigrants in 2019.

This ever-rising percentage of immigrants seems stark in contrast with South African xenophobia and has given rise to the myth that irregular immigrants are overrunning the country (Moyo, 2021). Before 1994 the countries migration corridors were lined out in bilateral work agreements between the South African government and its neighboring countries to fuel its labor demand for its mining and farming industry (Moyo, 2021; Crush & Dodson (2006). Until 1991 an immigrant was someone who should be able to assimilate

within the white population of South Africa (Crush, 2008). This meant that African workers were not immigrants. African laborers were temporary workers that stayed in South Africa as long as their contract lasted. When the new constitution was adopted in 1994 the apartheid era Alien control act was scheduled for reform too but was slow in coming. The new immigration act was finally the table in 2002 and came into effect in 2005. It made migration law more migration friendly and stipulated that the South African government should work on decreasing xenophobia (Crush, 2008). The ANC also signed bilateral open border agreements during this time with its neighbors in the Southern African Development Community, which increased licensed and irregular migration both.

Research Design

In the following section the design of this study will be outlined. First, the case selection of the study will be discussed along with the make-up of the analysis.

In the previous section an attempt was made to sketch out the situations concerning xenophobia and the South African case of xenophobia. The reason that I opted for an analysis on the term xenophobia as well as on the case of xenophobia in South Africa will make more sense after the case selection on South Africa is explained.

The main reason for the choice of South Africa as a case study of xenophobia is because of the case's infamy within the field. South Africa's xenophobia feels paradoxical because of its historical past. South Africa was perhaps the most racially segregated country in the world. The name for this South African era is still well known and often used in discussions about racism around the world: the Apartheid. As discussed in the theoretical scope section, it seems strange that a people who have suffered so much because of bias, would inflict that suffering on others, although it might also be part of the answer of why xenophobia has taken such deep root within the South African society (see Pedahzur & Yishai, 1999). South Africa xenophobic incidents have kept happening over a time span of 27 years, the year in which the new South African constitution was adopted. Before 1994 South Africa was xenophobic as well (Crush, 2008), but that fell by the wayside because of the in comparison much larger racial problem South Africa had at the time. The country's migration policy allowed for less and a more controlled kind of migration. With these factors combined it might not be strange

that when racial segregation was abolished, migration increased and xenophobia became better visible, that South Africa instantly became one of the largest cases of xenophobia worldwide and has been for the last 27 years. The case sees regular incidents of xenophobic violence and denial of its existence by South African government until recently (Misago, et al., 2015). As mentioned in the previous section, South Africa has become the largest immigrant country in Africa, which does not help its fight against xenophobia. All these factors help in contributing to the attractiveness of this case to researchers of the field of xenophobia, South Africa, migration studies and Africa studies.

The first part of my analysis will be a meta-analysis on the discussion of what constitutes xenophobia in the South African case. I will put twenty different sources on the subject next to each other and reflect on what different kinds of definitions there are, why they are chosen by the author and how they further the discussion on the definition of xenophobia. The twenty articles I have selected for this purpose are (Harris, 2001; Mogekwu 2005; Morris, 1998; Solomon & Kosaka, 2013; Soyombo, 2008; Reilly, 2011; Everatt, 2011; McAulliffe et al., 2019; Misago, et al., 2015; Government SA, 2019; Fayomi, 2015; Choane, et al., 2011; Mamabolo, 2015; Masikane, 2020; Kalkin, et al., 2021; Mlilo & Misago, 2019; Kim & Sundstorm, 2014; Matsinhe, 2011) and are hereafter referred to as group 1.

fifteen of these pieces are research pieces on xenophobia but take more interest in the discussion of what xenophobia is than the research pieces that do not give a definition of xenophobia at all. The other 5 sources (McAulliffe et al., 2019; Misago, et al., 2015; Government SA, 2019; Kalkin, et al., 2021; Kim & Sundstorm, 2014) are sources on specific definitions of xenophobia or pieces on the sociology of xenophobia.

Xenophobia in South Africa is a case that has a long history time as Dodson (2010) has pointed out. This, the history of the case and the fact that it is research on such an elusive concept as xenophobia, have all contributed to the fact that research on xenophobia on South Africa takes a certain shape. Usually this takes the form of an anecdotal opening about a certain aspect of the case of xenophobia in South Africa, where the author often skips over the discussion about what technically constitutes xenophobia in their research altogether and jump to the argument they want to make.

These pieces are grouped together as group 2 (Dodson, 2010; Crush, 2000, 2008; Danso & McDonald, 2001; McDonald & Jacobs, 2005; Steenkamp, 2009; Akinola, 2014; Crush & Penddleton, 2004; Crush & Ramachandra, 2008, 2013; Klotz, 2012; Crush & Dodson, 2007; Steinhardt, 2018; Human Rights watch, 2020a; BBC, 2019; Moyo, 2021; Mavhinga, 2019; BBC, 2021; Tella, 2016).

These nineteen pieces of research focus on the root causes of xenophobia as explained by Harris (2001). Together with the fifteen pieces of research on xenophobia in South Africa from the first part of the analysis these pieces will be put next to each other in a meta-analysis with the goal to gain more insight in how narratives of xenophobia are used to explain the phenomenon in the South African case. Harris (2001) uses three main theories of root causes of xenophobia in South Africa: the isolation theory, the scapegoat theory, and the biocultural theory. The second part of analysis will use these theories as a structure to make the meta-analysis insightful.

Data collection

The sources I am using for the meta-analysis are a result of reading a couple of articles to get interested in the subject of xenophobia. After reading several articles I noticed that most of them were about the South African case. After diving into the case, itself I found out that xenophobia was difficult to define, within this case and outside of it. Trying to find a definition led me to the UN and the definition question. The question on root causes and narratives came mainly from the research of Tella (2016) who demonstrated beautifully that the xenophobia is not actually a case of hard arguments and numbers but far more of how researchers are trying to use these numbers and arguments to create narratives. The influential works of Crush, Harris and Morris are a main line through almost all of the articles I have read on the subject and are rarely left out. I will use a range of articles from the start of the phenomenon in 1994 until current day articles in 2021. I would argue that the main weakness of my research is that it might lose its significance outside of this main line.

Analysis

Defining Xenophobia in the South African Case

As mentioned in the theoretical framework, defining xenophobia is a difficult task. In the theoretical framework the definition from the UN was used to define a that the 'xenos' means foreigner. And a foreigner is someone perceived as being from a certain geographical origin (UN special Rapporteurs quoted from A/HRC/32/50, 13 May 2016, in UNHCR, 2020). The explanation of 'phobia' given in the theoretical framework is that fear of the unknown foreigners turns to dislike or even hatred (See Solomon & Kosaka, 2013; Harris, 2001). This etymological definition lacks specificity in particular cases of xenophobia. 'Dislike' as an attitude is not easily quantifiable. A questionnaire done on a large enough scale as done by Crush & Penddleton (2004) and Crush & Ramachandra (2008, 2013) yield results, but it is still questionable if xenophobia is measured or just the authors perception of xenophobia. Especially since this series of survey's were done without a specific definition of xenophobia (Crush & Penddleton, 2004; Crush & Ramachandra, 2008, 2013). Questions of internal validity seem inevitable when a clear operationalization of the main variable is missing in the research, let alone the definition itself.

This seems not to matter to the bulk of research on xenophobia in South Africa, however. From the thirty-five sources on the subject nineteen did not offer any definition on xenophobia. The aim of the study seems not to be affected by the lack of the definition. In these nineteen articles form group two in the methodology section, the subject is not even broached. Xenophobia is referred to in all these articles but defined in none. There seems to be a understanding between scientists that study the root causes of xenophobia in South Africa, defining xenophobia is not needed. The phenomenon is simply referred to as xenophobia and researched. More than half of these pieces use empirical research methods to research xenophobia in South Africa. The research is apparently taken seriously since its observations are cited by other authors, such as the UNCHR (Misago, et al., 2015). In all these pieces of research the authors seem to view xenophobia along the lines of the definition 'a dislike or prejudice against people from other countries' Oxford languages (2021).

From this observation the question soon rises if a definition of xenophobia is needed in the case of South Africa. Other authors seem to think so. From the twenty pieces of group 1 that do touch upon the definition of xenophobia six refer to the etymological definition in their piece (Solomon & Kosaka, 2013; Soyombo, 2008; Mamabolo, 2015; Masikane, 2020; Harris, 2001, Mogekwu, 2010). This is the starting point of the discussion about xenophobia in South Africa for these pieces of research. Harris (2001) argues for example that in order to define xenophobia in South Africa, not only attitudes need to be fear or hatred, but there also needs to be behavior that is violent and hateful. Mamabolo (2015) agrees with Harris (2001) that South African xenophobia cannot be seen without the brutal violence South Africans wreak on perceived immigrants. Mogekwu (2005) and Solomon & Kosaka (2013) are less extreme, stating that xenophobia doesn't have to include violence but often gives way to it. Soyombo (2008) uses the simple etymological definition as a springboard to launch into an intricate

discussion of sociology theory on how groups are formed that exhibit xenophobic tendencies. The sociological discussion of xenophobia will be addressed later in this section.

The six authors in the previous section try to influence the definition of xenophobia in South Africa and make a case that it should be more than just the vague statement of 'dislike for foreigners'. The official definitions from South African government bodies and the government itself remains vague, and fairly underdeveloped. Human rights watch (2020) reports that the South African Human Rights commission defines xenophobia as: "an irrational deep dislike of non-nationals." (SAHRC, 2000) and the South African government defined it in its action plan as: "Xenophobia: Means an attitudinal orientation of hostility against non-nationals in a given population." (Government SA, 2019). If this definition of xenophobia is put next to the definition of racism in the same National Action plan: "Racism: Means prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against someone of a different race based on the belief that one's own race is superior." (Government SA, 2019), it can be remarked that: 'prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism' is a far more active attitude towards violence, than 'an attitudinal orientation of hostility'. Harris' (2001) case that violence is part of South African xenophobia when the xenophobic attacks in South Africa in 2008 are added to the case for example. The dead of sixty-two people and the forced migration of thousands (Beethar 2019) is more than just 'an attitudinal orientation of hostility'.

Racism vs. Xenophobia

According to the definition of the South African government the xenophobic attacks might of 2008 might as well have been racist attacks, if people were only attacked because of their skin color. The argument runs almost the same: South African citizens attack people they see as different from themselves. People cannot see who is from South Africa and who is not in these attacks, they go by phenotype. Indigenous South Africans were attacked by other South Africans in these xenophobic attacks because they were perceived as foreigners at the time (Mamabolo, 2015). This shows arguably that xenophobic and racist attacks are carried out by appearance in practice and not a theoretical check if someone belongs to a certain community or hails from a certain geographical area. Five of the authors of group 1 seem to agree (Choane, et al., 2011; Morris, 1998; Masikane, et al, 2020; Everatt, 2011; Nyamnjoh, 2010). These authors see xenophobia as a part of racism or racism as a part of xenophobia. The main difference, as discussed in the theoretical framework lies in the eyes of the person that is being xenophobic or racist.

There are authors that maintain that there is a large difference between xenophobia and racism. Kim & Sundstorm (2014) and Somboyo (2008) both use sociological arguments to state that xenophobia is a more institutionalized phenomenon. The argument runs thus: racism makes people feel superior to others, but they can tolerate the people they feel are inferior to them, as long as the people they feel are inferior have a lower place than themselves in society. With xenophobia this does not work. If a group is xenophobic and has more power than the group, they are xenophobic towards, the xenophobes will expel the group they feel xenophobic towards from society by ostracizing them through institutions. After a while the rift between the xenophobes and their victims can be seen better and better. The victims of xenophobia are denied the social goods they have a right to by being part of society.

It is remarkable that, even though many authors think that the difference between xenophobia and racism is almost negligible and mostly based in semantics, every article refers to xenophobia in South Africa and not to racism. This might be because Kim & Sundstorm (2014) and Somboyo (2008) make a convincing case with the South African state as tool of civic ostracism, or the explanation that racism as a name for the phenomenon was too confusing because of the Apartheid era. Or the word was tied to the case by the media and stuck.

Root causes of Xenophobia in South Africa

In the previous section it was noted that of the nineteen articles that are in group two not a single one gives a hard definition on xenophobia. But what they all seem to do is demonstrate is the violence of the xenophobic attacks in South Africa from 2008, 2015 and 2019. These xenophobic attacks form the backdrop of the South African case of xenophobia. It can however not be understated that xenophobia is an everyday phenomenon in South Africa with threats, blackmail, destruction of property and violence at its center (Human rights watch 2020b). The mentions of xenophobic violence seem to give the articles without a definition a bassline in what is seen as xenophobia: violence against people from another country. Harris' (2001) definition of xenophobia included acts of violence against the perceived foreigners. In his theory on the root causes of xenophobia he touches upon what makes people liable for xenophobia. He remarks that these theories are not mutually exclusive but support each other. Tella (2016) uses these theories beautifully to categorize the many pieces written about xenophobia in South Africa.

In the assessment below I have used twenty-five articles on xenophobia of South Africa which had a clear position on the root causes of xenophobia, to analyze how root causes of xenophobia are perceived within the field of xenophobia in South Africa. I have taken quotes

or notes on the position of the authors and put them under the respective theory of root causes by Harris.

The scapegoating theory

Harris (2001) uses Tshitereke (1999) to explain the scapegoating theory. According to this theory xenophobia is a product of social and economic factors. Tshitereke (1999) conceptualizes xenophobia as the result of relative deprivation. All in all, xenophobia comes about according to this theory because of frustration of perceived economic threat the 'foreigner' brings. Especially after the democratization of South Africa and the increase in migration numbers, a rise in unemployment and rising income inequality, it is not difficult to see that South Africans suffer from frustration and are looking for a scapegoat.

From the twenty- five articles I have analyzed thirteen had earmarks of the scapegoat theory. It can be as straightforward as the Human rights watch (2020b). They stated at the beginning of their research that 'migrants are often scapegoated for economic insecurity and government failures in delivering basicservices to its citizens,' Their other article on xenophobic violence after the implementation of the South African action plan goes even further: Foreigners are scapegoated and blamed for economic insecurity, crimes, and government failures to deliver services and have been targets of nationwide protests and shutdowns characterized by mob violence, looting, and torching of their businesses (Human rights watch, 2020a).

The most logical historical explanation is by Morris (1998): 'transition to democracy has not yielded economic profits, foreigners are to blame.' This is the short version of an often made argument. Akinola (2014) agrees with Morris in the sense that he found that 'African migrants are seen as freeloaders freely benefiting from resources and giving little in return.' And Misago et al. (2015) address South African narratives of the opportunistic asylum seeker in their article. They also mention the reaction from the South African government on these narratives: ' In 2010, the South African government amended the Act of 2002, rendering it even more narrowly protectionist and restrictive in terms of labour market access and asylum than it had already been.' Migration streams from India and Pakistan are sources of opportunistic narratives as well according Masikane, et al. (2015). Solomon and Kosaka (2013) argue along the line of the fortune seeking immigrant as well and state that: 'The most important reasons behind the prevalence of xenophobia in South Africa are economic and the tendency to criminalise foreigners.'

This criminalizing of foreigners is also found in the political sphere according to Dodson(2010) and Crush and Ramachandra(2014). They state that statements by politicians blaming immigrants are often accompanied by police brutality. Making a connection between the influence of the political sphere and xenophobia in South Africa. Crush(2000) mentions in his article on migration flows to South Africa that 'legal migration decline and difficulty in obtaining temporary permits show a dislike of foreigners from other African countries.' Showing that xenophobia has a connection to politics. Danso & McDonald (2001) & McDonald & Jacobs (2005) show in their piece in turn, that xenophobia has a connection to portrayal of foreigners in the mass media of South Africa: 'The South African mass media, especially the print media, often portrays foreigners in a negative light. Derogatory labels such as illegal immigrants, job stealers, criminals, and drug traffickers are common in the pages of South African newspapers.'

Economic arguments for the scapegoating theory of xenophobia in South Africa are given by Moyo (2021), Mamabolo (2015) and Fayomi (2015).

Moyo (2021): 'Since apartheid, South Africa has struggled with high levels of economic and social inequality. This stratification continues to take on a racialized dimension, with Black residents comprising the majority of those who live below the poverty line.'

Mamabolo (2015): 'This paper argues that attacks of foreign nationals in most local communities were sparked by desperation precipitated by high rates of poverty and unemployment in South Africa.'

Fayomi (2015): 'Unemployment and mounting poverty among South Africans at the bottom of the economic ladder have provoked fears of the competition that better educated and experienced migrants can represent.'

The scapegoat theory presents a narrative of xenophobia on the basis of fear, envy and superiority. Democracy did not bring prosperity for many South Africans, but it did bring migrants. They are the changing factor that won't allow the South Africans their promised wealth. These frustrations give way to hate and violence in the from of xenophobia.

Isolationist theory

Harris explains the isolationist theory of xenophobia in South Africa from the historical perspective of the apartheid era. In this era migrants that remained in South Africa were almost exclusively white. Black migrants were sent back after their contract ended (Crush & Dodson, 2007). After the apartheid era ended, more black migrants came to South Africa. The isolation hypothesis suggests that suspicion and hostility towards strangers in South Africa due to its long international isolation. The theory also allows for internal isolation. Because of the apartheid, people from different social backgrounds did not often mingle in society. This has softened the skin of South Africans for tolerance (Morris, 1998). This theory helps to explain why South African's are more liable to xenophobia but is less helpful when seeking specific targets for xenophobia or explaining which are groups are more liable to xenophobia than others.

Tella states the absolute bassline for the isolationist theory in her article: 'Prior to the democratic dispensation, South Africa was isolated'. Morris (1998) as one of the contributors to the isolation theory further lays out groundwork on which the theory was founded. In his article he mentions how the unexpected South Africans saw the new migration stream: 'legal and illegal immigrants swarmed to the new democratic South Africa.' Dodson (2010) follows on this observation by remarking that, considering the circumstances it was 'understandable that South Africans would be hardline about migrants since the apartheid era.' Matsinhe (2011) goes even further in his historical review of the isolation of South Africa and remarks that: 'under colonial and apartheid rule, South Africa distanced itself from Africa and likened itself to european nations.' Following up on Matsinhe's narrative on South Africa seeing itself as European Steenkamps article (2009) states that: Afrophobia has risen during the apartheid era, isolation made sure that a disconnect with the continent occurred and South Africans don't see themselves as African which makes it easy to hate African refugees. Crush (2008) remarks on the South African migration policies that they are draconian and made to keep African migrants out of South Africa. Crush and Pandleton (2008) build further on this case of migration policy as a shield by remarking that: 'In South Africa, however, the 2006 - Xenophobia Survey shows that negative opinions on immigration policy go hand in-hand with hostile attitudes towards foreignnationals.' Misago, et al. (2015) remark that anyone that has come in through migration channels can be subject to xenophobia by stating that: 'since it is not only Africans but also Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and Chinese who have been subject to hostility and xenophobic violence.'. Likewise, Choane, et al., (2011) argue in their article

that. 'This influx of migrants has been accompanied by Xenophobic sentiments and hatred, not only practiced by the public, but also by government officials.'

The isolationist theory of xenophobia in South Africa creates a narrative of root causes of xenophobia that is largely rooted in migration policy. Large migration numbers and loss of control really lie at the base of the arguments made in favor of this narrative. Nine of the twenty-five articles used for the analysis show attitudes towards isolation as one of the root causes of xenophobia in South Africa.

The Biocultural hypothesis

With the biocultural hypothesis, Harris (2001) argues that differences in culture make it easy to separate us from them. Things like hairstyles, language and habbits make some groups seem more conspicuous than others. 'Foreignness' might be seen in this way, and therefore expressed more easily. This theory helps in explaining why some groups get targeted while others don't.

Mogekwu (2005) argues a very simple, but influential point when it comes to the perception of 'foreignness': 'It can be argued that xenophobia – the fear and therefore dislike of foreigners- is a result of poor intercultural communication in which members of one national culture do not understand, appreciate and accommodate members of another national culture among them.' If the gap of intercultural communication is not bridged, distinctions between cultures can be a negative in the discussion of xenophobia. Morris (1998) explains in his text why xenophobia is targeted more easily on Nigerians and Congoles: 'Nigerian and Congoles immigrants small in number and easily distinguished because of the sector they work in.' In combination with the isolation theory and the scapegoat theory, the targets of the fears, frustrations and hatred discussed in those section are much more easily recognized and acted against. Steenkamp (2009) argues likewise that in South Africa: 'Foreigners are easily distinguished from other South Africans.' And are not treated equally according to Crush and Ramachandra (2014). Reilly (2001) and Nyamnjoh (2010) both offer the observation in their research that the police use certain behaviors and outside appearance to identify foreigners. Klotz (2012) and Everatt (2011) add to this that in their research they found that language is a door or a barrier in South Africa. The same can be said for language in the media. Danso and

Mcdonald (2001) argue that 'Sensational and criminalizing language should be dropped completely; different categories of migrants should be recognized as such.' In their view identification of migrants could help the case of xenophobia as well. If groups of immigrants were recognized for who they were instead of being lumped together and stereotyped as criminals. McDonald & Jacobs (2005) give an example of that this perception of migrants as distinct groups is indeed possible: 'Most of this negativity in official circles is directed towards migrants from other African countries, while migrants from Europe and North America are treated much more positively.'

The narrative of the root cause of the biocultural hypothesis is supported by nine authors of the twenty-five articles. It creates a narrative where people that look and act like they are from another African country are treated lesser than South Africans. The narrative shows that this is because people differentiate or choose not to differentiate on particular occasions. Not to differentiate on the view on all foreigners, choosing to see them as criminals and fortune seekers, and to differentiate when discriminating.

Conclusion

The aim of this research was to explore the question what are the main academic narratives around xenophobia in South Africa? This question is split up into two questions. The first is: what constitutes xenophobia in the case of South Africa? This question seemed necessary to answer since, as is stated in the analysis, a internationally reconized definition of the term xenophobia is lacking in the current literature. Many researchers instead choose not to define xenophobia at all but imply refer to the phenomenon and the case and carry out their research. There are scholars that try to define xenophobia in the case of South Africa. They do this along the lines of the case study. As a consequence the lines between the case and the definition becomes blurred. The definition is hardly usable outside the case as a result. The difference between xenophobia and racism was briefly discussed as well. The results of this discussion remain inconclusive since there are no internationally reconized definitions, and both phenomenon can be based in attitudes of perpertrators of the phenomenon.

The second question is, what are the root causes of xenophobia in South Africa according to the current literature? This question was approached with the three theories of root causes of xenophobia in South Africa from Harris' 2001 article. The most supported root cause in the

meta analysis was the scapegoat theory. The analysis offers a narrative of a South African people that have not benefitted from democratization in 1994 in economic terms. Unemployment remains high in South Africa and it is one of the most economically unequal countries in the world. Relative deprivation seems to be a fitting narrative for xenophobia in South Africa. It also looks the most like the main narrative. The isolation narrative supports that migration policy is strict and people are distrustfull of foreigners and the biocultural narrative explains how groups of 'foreigners' are identified. Both of these explanations don't explain xenophobic violence in South Africa in the least. A larger meta-analysis about the acedemic narratives of xenophobia in South Africa is far stronger than the meta- analyis conducted in this thesis. More in depth research into the meaning of Xenophobia and into the root causes of xenophobia is required. Xenophobia shouldn't be a stranger to the academic world.

Bibliography

Akinola, A. (2014*). South Africa and the two faces of xenophobia: A critical reflection.*

Africa Peace and Conflict Journal, 7(1), 56–67

Apartheid | South Africa, Definition, Facts, Beginning, & End. (n.d.). Encyclopedia Britannica. Retrieved

November 10, 2021, from https://www.britannica.com/topic/apartheid

Beetar, M. (2019). A contextualisation of the 2008 and 2015 xenophobic attacks: Tracing South African

necropolitics. *Current Sociology*, *67*(1), 122–140. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392118807528

Choane, M., Shulika, L. S., & Mthombeni, M. (2011). An Analysis of the Causes, Effects and Ramifications of

Xenophobia in South Africa. *Insight on Africa*, *3*(2), 129–142.

https://doi.org/10.1177/0975087814411138

Claassen, C. (2017). Explaining South African Xenophobia. *SSRN Electronic Journal*.

https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2974065

Covid-19 Fueling Anti-Asian Racism and Xenophobia Worldwide. (2020, May 12). *Human Rights Watch*.

    https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/05/12/covid-19-fueling-anti-asian-racism-and-xenophobia-

    worldwide

Crush and Ramachandran—2013—Soft targets xenophobia, public violence and chang.pdf. (n.d.).

    Retrieved December 23, 2021, from https://samponline.org/wp-

    content/uploads/2016/10/Acrobat64.pdf

Crush, J. (2000). The Dark Side of Democracy: Migration, Xenophobia and Human Rights in South Africa.

    International Migration, *38*(6), 103–133. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2435.00145

Crush, J. (2008, July 28). *South Africa: Policy in the Face of Xenophobia*. Migrationpolicy.Org.

    https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/south-africa-policy-face-xenophobia

Crush, J., & Dodson, B. (2007). Another Lost Decade: The Failures of South Africa's Post-Apartheid

    Migration Policy. *Tijdschrift Voor Economische En Sociale Geografie*, *98*(4), 436–454.

    https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9663.2007.00413.x

Crush, J., & Pendleton, W. (2008). *The perfect storm: The realities of xenophobia in contemporary South

    Africa* (Queen's University (Kingston, Ont.), Ed.). Idasa ; Southern African Research Centre, Queen's

    University.

Crush, J., & Ramachandran, S., Pendleton, Wade, Southern African Migration Project. (2013). *Soft targets

    xenophobia, public violence and changing attitudes to migrants in South Africa after may 2008*.

    Southern African Migrantion Project : Idasa : Southern African Research Centre, Queen's University.

Danso, R., & McDonald, D. A. (2001). Writing Xenophobia: Immigration and the Print Media in Post-

    Apartheid South Africa. *Africa Today*, *48*(3), 115–137.

Dodson. (2010). Locating Xenophobia: Debate, Discourse, and Everyday Experience in Cape Town, South

    Africa. *Africa Today*, *56*(3), 2. https://doi.org/10.2979/aft.2010.56.3.2

Everatt, D. (2011). *Full article: Xenophobia, State and Society in South Africa, 2008–2010*.

   https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02589346.2011.548662

Fayomi, O., Chidozie, F., & Ayo, C. (2015). *A Retrospective Study of the effects of Xenophobia on South*

   Africa-Nigeria Relations. https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/32225837.pdf

Government of South Africa. (2019). *National Action Plan to combat racism, racial discrimination,*

   xenophobia and related intolerance.

   https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201903/national-action-plan.pdf

Harris, B. (2001). *Xenophobia: A new pathology for a new South Africa?*

   https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/100580/xenophobia.pdf

Human Rights Watch (2019, March 25) South Africa Launches Plan to Combat Xenophobia and Racism.

   Human Rights Watch. https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/03/25/south-africa-launches-plan-combat-

   xenophobia-and-racism

Human Rights Watch (2020, September 17) South Africa: Widespread Xenophobic Violence. *Human Rights*

   Watch. https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/09/17/south-africa-widespread-xenophobic-violence

How many immigrants live in South Africa? (n.d.). Retrieved November 8, 2021, from

   https://africasacountry.com/2018/10/how-many-immigrants-live-in-south-africa

Kalkın, G., Arun, K., & Erdurmazlı, E. (2021). *COVID-19 Pandemic and Xenophobia: Case Studies Based on*

   Social Theories. https://doi.org/10.51709/19951272/spring2021/15-3

Klotz, A. (2012). South Africa as an Immigration State. *Politikon*, *39*(2), 189–208.

   https://doi.org/10.1080/02589346.2012.683939

Mamabolo, M. (2015). Drivers of community xenophobic attacks in South Africa: Poverty and

unemployment. *The Journal for Transdisciplinary Research in Southern Africa*, *11*(4).

https://doi.org/10.4102/td.v11i4.49

Masikane, C. M., Hewitt, M. L., & Toendepi, J. (2020). Dynamics informing xenophobia and leadership

response in South Africa. *Acta Commercii*, *20*(1), 1–11. https://doi.org/10.4102/ac.v20i1.704

Matsinhe, D. (2011). Africa's Fear of Itself: The ideology of Makwerekwere in South Africa. *Third World

Quarterly*, *32*, 295–313. https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2011.560470

McAuliffe, M., Khadria, B., & Bauloz, C. (2019). *World migration report 2020*. IOM.

McDonald, D. A., & Jacobs, S. (2005). (Re)writing xenophobia: Understanding press coverage of cross-

border migration in Southern Africa. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, *23*(3), 295–325.

https://doi.org/10.1080/02589000500274050

Misago, J. P., Freemantle, I., & Landau, L. B. (n.d.). *PROTECTION FROM XENOPHOBIA*. 108.

Mlilo, P. S., & Misago, J. P. (n.d.). *Xenophobic Violence in South Africa: 1994-2018 An Overview*. 7.

Mngomezulu, B. R., & Dube, M. (2019). Lost in translation: A critical analysis of xenophobia in Africa.

Journal of African Union Studies, *8*(2), 67–81.

Mogekwu, M. (n.d.). *African Union: Xenophobia as poor intercultural communication*. 17.

Morris, A. (1998). 'Our fellow Africans make our lives hell': The lives of Congolese and Nigerians living in

Johannesburg. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *21*(6), 1116–1136.

https://doi.org/10.1080/01419879808565655

Moyo, K. (2021, November 18). *South Africa Reckons with Its Status as a Top Immigration Destination,

Apartheid History, and Economic Challenges*. Migrationpolicy.Org.

https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/south-africa-immigration-destination-history

Nation Building and the Construction of Identity: Xenophobia in South Africa | Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees. (2020). https://refuge.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/refuge/article/view/21234

Neocosmos, M. (2010). *From "foreign natives" to "native foreigners": Explaining xenophobia in post-apartheid South Africa: citizenship and nationalism, identity and politics* (2nd ed.). CODESRIA.

Nyamnjoh, F. B. (2010). Racism, Ethnicity and the Media in Africa: Reflections Inspired by Studies of Xenophobia in Cameroon and South Africa. *Africa Spectrum*, *45*(1), 57–93. https://doi.org/10.1177/000203971004500103

Pedahzur, A., & Yishai, Y. (1999). Hatred by Hated People: Xenophobia in Israel. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, *22*(2), 101–117. https://doi.org/10.1080/105761099265784

Race in South Africa: "We haven't learnt we are human beings first." (2021, January 21). *BBC News*. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-55333625

ResearchGate Link. (n.d.). Retrieved November 8, 2021, from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233071374_Africa's_Fear_of_Itself_the_ideology_of_Makwerekwere_in_South_Africa

SAGE PDF Full Text. (n.d.). Retrieved November 9, 2021, from https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0975087816655014

Snapshot. (n.d.). Retrieved December 22, 2021, from https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01419879808565655

Solomon, H., & Kosaka, H. (2013). Xenophobia in South Africa: Reflections, Narratives and Recommendations. *Xenophobia in South Africa*, 26.

South Africa: How common are xenophobic attacks? (2019, October 2). *BBC News*. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-47800718

South Africa—Segregation | Britannica. (n.d.). Retrieved November 16, 2021, from

https://www.britannica.com/place/South-Africa/Segregation

Soyombo, O. (2008). Xenophobia in contemporary society: A sociological analysis. *IFE PsychologIA : An International Journal*, *16*(2), 85–104. https://doi.org/10.10520/EJC38741

Steenkamp, C. (2009). Xenophobia in South Africa: What Does it Say about Trust? *The Round Table*, *98*(403), 439–447. https://doi.org/10.1080/00358530903017949

Steinhardt, M. F. (2018). *The Impact of Xenophobic Violence on the Integration of Immigrants*. 45.

Sundstrom, R. R., & Kim, D. H. (2014). Xenophobia and Racism. *Critical Philosophy of Race*, *2*(1), 20–45. https://doi.org/10.5325/critphilrace.2.1.0020

Tella, O. (2016). Understanding Xenophobia in South Africa: The Individual, the State and the International System. *Insight on Africa*, *8*(2), 142–158. https://doi.org/10.1177/0975087816655014

"They Have Robbed Me of My Life": Xenophobic Violence Against Non-Nationals in South Africa. (2020). Human Rights Watch. https://www.hrw.org/report/2020/09/17/they-have-robbed-me-my-life/xenophobic-violence-against-non-nationals-south

UN General Assembly. (2016). *Pdf.pdf*. https://undocs.org/pdf?symbol=en/A/HRC/32/50

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2020). *UNHCR Guidance on Racism and Xenophobia*. UNHCR. https://www.unhcr.org/protection/operations/5f7c860f4/unhcr-guidance-on-racism-and-xenophobia.html