Exploring the Discursive Nuances of the South African Xenophobic Experience: Exclusionary Tactics and Tensions

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ABSTRACT

The recent spate of xenophobic attacks in South Africa – killings, burnings, widespread rioting and looting, and displacement of tens of thousands of foreign Africans – took many by surprise. The events of May 2008 raise crucial questions about the attitudinal state of the nation. Theories of xenophobia over the last few years have included: a focus on South Africa's divisive and exclusionary apartheid past; economic and resource strain; poor service delivery and the "failure" of the post-apartheid project; and poor immigration policy and strategy. This research explores discourses of xenophobic experience in seeking to paint a closer picture of the content and form of xenophobic attitudes, drawing understanding from the meaning-systems and frames-of-reference of those recently affected by this violence. Ten foreign Africans displaced by the events of May were interviewed using a semi-structured interview protocol. The participants came from Zimbabwe, Burundi, Malawi and the Democratic Republic of Congo, and were approached using purposive and snowball sampling. The research explores the discursive nuances of xenophobia and foreigners' identity within an autochthonous South Africa. It considers the use of the "other" to build the new nation post-apartheid, the fluidity of migrant identity, and whether a pan-African consciousness and black essentialism is a mythology. It explores what alternative discourse has replaced 'race' as the content of South African identity.

Key Words: Xenophobia, violence, discourse, SAMP, pan-Africanism, autochtony

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When we consider the recent spate of attacks on foreign Africans within South Africa we wonder whether the Constitution, which affords basic human rights to *all* living within the country, is anything but the utopian ideal of an imagined community. The events of May, 2008 – killings, burnings, widespread rioting and looting, and displacement of tens of thousands of foreign Africans ("Finally, the SA govt", 2008) – took many by surprise. Safety and Security Minister Charles Nqakula reported on May 26 that 1,384 suspects had been arrested, 342 foreign-owned shops looted and 213 burnt down ("Minister: Xenophobic violence", 2008). As of May 31, 2008, the death toll from anti-immigrant violence had risen to 62, with a further 670 wounded, and reports that up to 100,000 people displaced ("Toll from Xenophobic Violence", 2008c). This widespread xenophobic action raises crucial questions about the attitudinal state of the nation towards foreigners.

Background

Defining Xenophobia

In 1998, the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) released a formal statement on xenophobia, the Braamfontein Statement, which defined the phenomenon as "the deep dislike of non-nationals by the nationals of a recipient state" (Appendix A). This definition is restrictively vague in that it does not qualify its core terms or whether xenophobia is merely attitudinal and prejudicial or concomitant with a specific set of behaviours and violent practices (Cejas, 2007). McDonald and Jacobs (2001, p. 5) informally define xenophobia as "a discreet set of beliefs that can manifest themselves in the behaviours of governments, the general public and the media." Combining these two produces an adequate working definition of xenophobia as:

> *"the hatred or fear of foreigners or strangers based on a discreet set of beliefs that may be expressed verbally or manifest in the behaviours of governments, the media and the general public."*

The State of the Nation

Incidents of violent xenophobic action have periodically resurfaced in the media over the last few years, and have been described in various reports (Human Rights Watch, 1998; Minnaar

& Hough, 1996; SAMP, 2008). As the number of high-profile assaults on non-citizens has increased, so academics and non-governmental organisations have turned their attention to understanding South Africa's xenophobic landscape, focussing initially on anecdotal evidence and studies of particular communities (Crush, 2001). In 1994, the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) included several questions related to immigration as part of a general survey of 2,200 South Africans. Follow-up surveys led the HSRC to declare a growth in anti-immigrant sentiments between 1994 and 1995 (Minnaar & Hough, 1996). Charney (1995), conducted focus groups with South African citizens exploring political attitudes towards immigration and immigrants, and identified a "latent hostility" amongst South Africans towards foreigners. A few years later, Human Rights Watch (1998) conducted a field investigation in South Africa, concluding that:

> *South Africa has become increasingly xenophobic in recent years, with a large percentage of South Africans perceiving foreigners – especially, almost exclusively black foreigners – as a direct threat to their future economic wellbeing and as responsible for the troubling rise in violent crime in South Africa.*[1]*(p. 16).*

The same year the SAHRC's Braamfontein Statement concluded that "xenophobia is a blight on our democratic values and should be eradicated." Since 1994, several qualitative studies have documented the physical and verbal denigration of foreigners (Dodson & Oelofse, 2000; Dolan, 1995; Morris, 1998; Reitzes & Bam, 2000; Sinclair, 1999), and their lived experiences of xenophobia within South Africa.

The Content and Causes of Xenophobia

A limited number of qualitative studies have focussed on the xenophobic experience from its 'victims' and sought to understand foreigners'[2] perceptions and understandings of xenophobia and life in South Africa. Their findings have been broadly similar, focussing restrictively on resource strain, and national identity and processes of 'othering' as causes of xenophobia.

In 1998, Morris profiled the lives of 20 Congolese and Nigerian immigrants living in Johannesburg. The study investigates problems which the immigrants face in the country, and describes and analyses their interactions with South Africans. Morris suggests that the increase in illegal and legal migration and the influx of refugees into South Africa in the years following the end of apartheid, taken in a context of “limited infrastructural growth and fiscal resources” has increased intra-African xenophobia (1998:*abstract*). Government and the media have been responsible for distorting the reasons why foreigners are coming to the country, leading to virulent stereotypes and creating a fear of the threat posed by these immigrants, to South Africans personally as well as to their way of life.

Dodson and Oelofse (2000) conducted a series of interviews with foreign and citizen members of Mizamoyethu[3], an informal settlement in Hout Bay, Cape Town. This community saw violent conflict between ‘locals’ and foreigners in 1994 and 1996 (Dodson & Oelofse, 2000). Qualitative data gathered in 1998 and 1999 was supplemented by public opinion data from a 1997 SAMP survey of residents, to highlight the “sparking” and “fuelling” forces of xenophobic violence. The study showcases the differences and similarities between the two member-groups in the community, and suggests that while social and cultural differences are placing strain on community relations, the core conflicts are material.

Both Morris (1998) and Dodson and Oelofse (2000) found that competition for employment, housing, facilities, services and space are grounded in the wider national discourse on immigration, fuelling xenophobic sentiment and violence—findings supported by other studies (Maharaj & Rajkumar, 1997; McDonald, Mashike & Golden, 1999; Sinclair, 1999). A study by Reitzes and Bam (2000) on Mozambican residents in Winterveld, found that xenophobic violence was targeted even against foreigners who have lived in South Africa for many years and who are embedded in the culture. The authors note a dramatic shift in attitudes towards non-citizens around 1994. As a focal point for national identity immigration issues have increasingly been utilised to create a scapegoat for the ills of the new post-apartheid society. In the absence of a racialised ‘other’, foreigners have been blamed for the social, economic and political problems of the country (Murray, 2003). As politicians, media, government officials, public servants and the public itself have increasingly defined who is South African by defining who is *not*, foreigners have come to be seen as a threat to national security and, in the light of increased pressure on and competition for resources, violent ‘othering’ has escalated (Vale, 2002).

The growth in intolerance has been fuelled (or perhaps has been reflected by) a sensationalist media and an overtly exclusionary political discourse. Danso and McDonald (2001) and McDonald and Jacobs (2005) reviewed the South African English-speaking press from 1994 onwards, concluding that the media was largely anti-immigrant and uncritical in reporting on migration issues. Published material was predominantly sensationalist, reproducing statistics and assumptions unproblematically, and negatively stereotyping non-citizens—especially those from other African countries. These stereotypes include framing foreigners as job stealers, criminals, illegal, and "aliens", and using negative metaphors to describe in-migration (e.g. "floods", "hordes", "waves" and "droves") (Murray, 2003). Several high-profile politicians and public figures have added their xenophobic voices to the national discourse, as discussed by various authors (Croucher, 1998; McDonald, Zinyama, Gay, de Vletter, & Mattes, 2000; McDonald & Jacobs, 2005). This has created a sense of a "country under siege" from an "alien invasion" bringing "disease, destruction and death" (Croucher, 1998).

While the existence of xenophobia is evidenced by high-profile attacks reported in the media, xenophobic rhetoric from high-profile individuals, and qualitative case studies of specific communities (Dolan, 1995; Maharaj & Rajkumar, 1997; Morris, 1998; Sinclair, 1999; Reitzes & Bam, 2000; Dodson & Oelofse, 2000), the question begs: "how typical are these xenophobic acts?" (Crush, 2001, p. 1).

The Scope of Xenophobic Attitude

The growing evidence of xenophobic sentiment and the limited scope of previous research prompted the Southern African Migration Project (SAMP) to commission a national survey of South African attitudes toward immigration and immigrants (Mattes, Taylor, McDonald, Poore & Richmond, 1999). The SAMP has conducted public opinion surveys of South African immigration attitudes; national public opinions surveys in Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland and Zimbabwe; and surveys of non-citizens in South Africa. The results of these studies have been published in several reports (Crush, 2001; Crush & Pendleton, 2004; Mattes et. al., 1999; McDonald, Gay, Zinyama, Mattes & de Vletter, 1998; McDonald et al., 1999; McDonald et. al., 2000; Reitzes & Crawhill, 1997; SAMP, 2008).

The survey series, begun in 1997 and repeated periodically since (most recently published under SAMP, 2008) showed four key trends. Firstly, xenophobic sentiment is

“widespread and entrenched in South Africa and not the preserve of a small (criminal) minority” (SAMP, 2008, p.15). While attitudes which favour restricting immigration do not automatically imply a dislike of foreigners, in South Africa defensive and nationalistic attitudes go hand-in-hand with xenophobic sentiments. Secondly, South Africa shows greater hostility as compared to other countries for which data is available (Crush & Pendleton, 2004); this hostility is directly related to the nation-building project (Crush, 2001). Thirdly, intolerance has risen since 1994, supporting the claims made in qualitative studies (Reitzes & Bam, 2000). Lastly, there is no “xenophobic profile” and attitudes cut across age, race, income level, and gender (Crush, 2000; Mattes et al., 1999; SAMP, 2008).

Challenging Stereotypes

Looking at xenophobia from immigrants’ perspective the SAMP surveys challenge some of the myths propagated by the media and disseminated in the public sphere (McDonald et al., 1998). For example, results do not support the myth that conditions in southern Africa will worsen if South Africa does not tighten border control. The demographics of immigrants do not indicate the mass migration of a poor, unruly, uneducated, and criminal crowd. Mattes et al. (1999, p. 19) point out that “South Africans do not only hold negative attitudes towards foreigners, they also have a readily accessible set of stereotypes with which to justify or rationalise their negative attitudes.” McDonald et al. (1998) note that generally immigrants are established and family-oriented men, the majority of whom are married, have jobs, are heads of households, own a home or car in their country, and have at least a high-school education—a vastly different demographic profile compared to popular stereotypical images (McDonald et al., 1999).

Foreigners who have entered the country have done so predominantly because they are fleeing political repression, social disorganization, economic depression or environmental destruction in their home countries. Otherwise, they are attracted primarily by the economic and educational opportunities available within South Africa. However, the majority of foreigners in the country are here short-term and have no intention of becoming residents or citizens (McDonald et al., 1998; McDonald et al., 1999; McDonald et al., 2000).

These studies acknowledge that the volume of (in)migration has increased since 1994. A key shift in the immigration dynamic post-apartheid has been the rapid and substantial increase in the number of legal and illegal immigrants, migrant workers and refugees coming

into South Africa from neighbouring South African Democratic Community (SADC) states and from states further north (notably the DRC, Angola, and Namibia). However, numbers are nowhere near those grossly-inflated numbers reported in the media and some studies (estimates have fluctuated between 1.5 and 12 million! Croucher, 1998; Morris, 1998). More important than empirical reality is the popular *perception* of a nation over-run and overwhelmed by foreigners (McDonald et al., 1998).

Responsive Research

The events of May, 2008 prompted the SAMP and HSRC to conduct and publish independent response papers in the months following these actions. While the current research was being undertaken, the SAMP (2008) released a paper assessing the state of the nation immediately prior to the outbreak of xenophobic violence. Using data from the 2006 survey of South African attitudes, the study outlines the atmosphere which prevailed on the "eve of the perfect storm" (p. 14), and explains why South Africans were attitudinally primed for such violence, repeating the same factors mentioned previously.

Just weeks after the attacks the HSRC (2008) commissioned a rapid response survey of citizen attitudes and opinions towards foreigners and xenophobia. Using focus groups and interviews in affected communities, the research sought to understand the "shift from negative sentiment to violent action" (p. 20). However, the study merely reproduces with little critical engagement the same explanations given in previous studies, adding little depth to our overall understanding of xenophobia.

On July 23, 2008 the HSRC held a roundtable response to this study, with several key stakeholders. The proceedings of this meeting—held in partnership with the British High Commission of South Africa—are published in a report edited by Hadland (2008), which adds three precipitating factors to the literature. These are relative deprivation (feelings of deprivation emerging from a lack of what one feels entitled to); South African exceptionalism (a historic sense of superiority towards the rest of the continent and subsequent devaluing of other cultures, histories and lives); and exclusive nationalism. These themes are not expanded but are crucial first-steps in extending the analysis of xenophobia beyond material and social causes.

Identifying the Gaps

The dynamics of immigration in South Africa are complex, embedded and volatile. Theories of xenophobia over the last few years have included: economic and resource strain; poor service delivery and the "failure" of the post-apartheid project; and poor immigration policy and strategy (SAMP, 2008). Unfortunately, neither media commentary nor the academic theory outlined above adequately explains how South Africa has arrived at the point of such violent and insidious xenophobic behaviour. The SAMP surveys largely confirm the assessments and conclusions from local case studies with nationally representative and rigorous data (Crush, 2000). However, noticeably lacking in the literature on xenophobia in South Africa is a reflection on the frames-of-reference and worldviews of those affected by xenophobia. Even qualitative studies have taken a scientific and materialistic position, preferring to list a simple record of "causes" of xenophobia, without engaging with how foreigners *make sense* of their lives and how they *perceive* the dynamics of xenophobia. In so doing they have abstracted participants from "the world and each other, and from their customs, traditions and the social realm in general" (Mkhize, 2004, p. 27).

If xenophobia is a psychological construct (in the same way "racism" is, for example), and not merely a political construct, then all knowledge about it ought to be grounded not only in its social, cultural and historical context (Parker, 1999), but also in its indigenous worldview (Mkhize, 2004). To say that contemporary academics are guilty of the politics of exclusion is perhaps too harsh, and such a claim would be presumptuous and premature in light of the current study (and indeed, it is not my intention to so condemn previous work), but South African studies have tended to neglect metaphysical, philosophical and dialectical understandings of xenophobia.

Rationale for Research

The SAMP surveys and reports suggest that the current xenophobic violence is a result of all the factors suggested previously, but also of *xenophobia* itself (SAMP, 2008). Xenophobic sentiment has never exhibited as broadly and violently across South Africa as in May 2008. This suggests the need for renewed qualitative data to explore the apparent intensification and expansion of xenophobia. In addition, the lack of discursive data on how immigrants in South Africa perceive xenophobia is a substantial gap in the literature.

Specific Aims

This study explores discourses of xenophobic experience in seeking to paint a closer picture of the content and form of xenophobic attitudes, drawing understanding from the meaning-systems and frames-of-reference of those recently affected by this violence. Through semi-structured interviews the project focuses on how the individual *perceives* the xenophobic experience, what they *think* of xenophobia, and how they *understand* the dynamics and processes of xenophobia. Two questions are asked:

1. What are your experiences of xenophobia?
2. What do you think are the causes of xenophobia?

The discourses which emerge are analysed to begin to understand the non-materialist underpinnings of the xenophobic experience. I move away from a cursory focus on material and economic antecedents towards an understanding of how identity and 'othering' operate in xenophobia.

Design and Methodology

Design

The study used semi-structured interviews to explore the experience of xenophobia. The discourses in the interviews are approached from an interpretive paradigm, as first understood and outlined by Berger and Luckmann (1967), "[preferring] to let ideas emerge from the interviews, from the lives and examples of the interviewees, rather than to categorize answers initially according to preexisting categories from an academic literature" (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 38). Demographically the participants were broadly similar, although the intention is not to make sweeping generalizations from their homogeneity, but to explore similarities and differences in the discourses. As Potter and Wetherell (1987) have noted, in discourse analysis the interest is in the way language is used, not the people using it. Large variations in discourse patterning can emerge from a small number of people. Thus, a larger sample can make the analytic task unmanageable, without adding much depth to the analysis.

Participants

The data set consisted of ten interview transcripts. Participants were male foreign Africans displaced by xenophobia in May 2008. The mean age was 30 years old, ranged from 23 to 37. The demographic profile of the participants (detailed in Appendix B) matched that of the immigrants surveyed by the SAMP (McDonald et al., 1998; McDonald et al., 1999). Participants are referred to by P#.# where P stands for participant, the first number references the interview day, and the second number references the individual participant.

Participants were recruited through purposive and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling is ideal for qualitative studies of specific communities, accessing samples based on the researcher's knowledge of the population and the research aims of the project (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). I wished to interview specifically African foreigners displaced by the recent violence. The difficulty in accessing this population made it reasonable to use purposive sampling to locate participants. Ten individuals were approached who met the criteria for inclusion (Flick, 1998) – male foreign Africans, living in South Africa at the time of the study, displaced during May 2008 and able to converse in English. Nine agreed to participate. However, only five were able to make scheduled interviews (others withdrew from the study when they received job offers, were called in for extra shifts, had to move because of renewed outbreaks of violence, etc.)

Babbie and Mouton (2001) note snowball sampling is useful when targeted members of a population are difficult to contact. Initial members located using purposive sampling referred the researcher to other members whom they knew to fit the research criteria. A sixth participant was located in this manner, and he in turn referred several members of a refugee support group.

Materials

Interviews were conducted with a basic demographic questionnaire (Appendix C) and a full semi-structured interview schedule (Appendix D). The questionnaire and the interview schedule were developed from the Southern African Migration Project's public opinion survey protocols[4] (*reported in* McDonald et al., 1998; McDonald et al., 1999). The interview schedule acted as a rough guide and there was mobility within the interview to pursue narratives and themes as they emerged. Several questions were later dropped as the discourses emerging further refined the research topic.

All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim. The core researcher manually marked moments of interest during the interview, including facial expressions, and non-verbal communication. The core researcher reviewed the draft transcription manually and marked interruption, hesitation, barely audible sounds, sarcasm, reluctance, and emphasis (Parker, 2005).

Procedure

The research aim and specifics of the research proposal were made visible at the outset to facilitate open discussion, supported by specific examples and opinions, and interviews were conducted off-campus to encourage freedom of expression and the expression of non-academic accounts and fronts (Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

The demographic questionnaire eased the participants into the interview. Participants read a series of short excerpts of violence (Appendix C), and were asked to respond in writing to these texts. This was a free-association exercise and these vignettes were not analysed as part of the final data set, but were intended to launch and stimulate discussion on the topic. In many cases the vignettes were exchanged for a general launch question—"*Please tell me about your experience of xenophobia*". Participants responded better to this focused, although not directed question, since it adhered more closely to the stated purpose of the study and primed experience over opinion (which emerged later in the interviews).

The semi-structured interview protocol loosely guided the direction and content of the interview. Semi-structured interviews are useful in providing in-depth information about the nature of the participant's experience (Crossley, 2003). Data is related freely and with more texture and depth than structured interviews or closed-ended surveys, both of which can overlook important responses and insights (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Several participants engaged directly with me in the interview, turning questions back on me or pursuing and challenging certain themes–asking my opinion or experience directly, asking me to clarify my own assertions and to justify my position in the interview. These interruptions allowed me to make visible and question my own assumptions about the topic, and allowed the participants to elaborate other vantage points as they pursued and asked questions they deemed relevant, further illuminating the research topic (Parker, 2005).

In total 9 hours of interviews were done; the average length was 53 minutes. The transcripts of the interviews were used for analysis.

Data Analysis

Discourse analysis, as detailed by Parker (1992), was used to analyse the data. A useful summary of this approach is provided in Parker (2005), and I followed broadly his 10 steps of discourse analysis. Regarding the central research aim, the broad themes and interpretative repertoires drawn on in the interview were identified (Potter & Wetherell, 1995) including the following: identity and humanness, sanctity of life, autochthony and entitlement, and African unity. "Interpretative repertoires" refers to the recurrently used systems of meaning constructed from a restricted range of terms (Edwards & Potter, 1992). In this, I was exploring the individual's responses to the xenophobic experience, exploring narratives, fronts and accounts, and examining how the concepts articulated by the interviewees—such as African unity and sanctity of life—could be utilized in understanding these discourses.

To begin, the content of the transcripts was broken down and colour coded, themes identified and grouped together, tropes identified and named, moments of self-awareness marked, and intertextuality identified (e.g. referring to other or other's discourses). A second sifting of the data mapped the patterns of sameness and difference within the individual interviews and across the interview set. Points of contradiction especially were analysed in trying to understand the function of these themes within the interview and as part of the larger discourse on xenophobia. The identified components were used to search for other instances in the text, ensuring that the dynamic aspects of the text were taken as a whole, and whether anything was missed in the text by using them as a frame.

In analyzing interpretative repertoires, I looked for patterns of sameness and variability in the data, and interpreted the effects and functions of these patterns (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). During the interview, common-sense use of words and assumptions were questioned (e.g. sanctity of life, blood, and xenophobia) and specific word-usage was explored (e.g. "Makwerekwere"). I then critically analysed the functions of these discourses, meaning-systems and ways of speaking, applying these to broader world processes and locating them within ideological frameworks (Parker, 1992).

Ethical Considerations

Parker (2005) describes some ethical problems inherent in the qualitative research enterprise. Full permission was obtained and the participants were free to exit the study at any point or

not answer questions with which they were uncomfortable, a privilege several took advantage of in the interview. Confidentiality was dealt with using a confidentiality agreement (Appendix E) and referring to participants in the report by number. However, during the interviews several participants drew attention to confidentiality concerns and this preoccupation, I believe, stifled some opinion and honesty. For example:

> *There is a hand pushing these people to do it… [R: One person?] [Laughter] I can't say that it is one person on…I think you're understanding what I'm saying. (P1.01)*

> *So if I tell you that and these informations and then they go and say that this guy has criticized the government and stuff like that, you know, converting again, adding or removing some of the information I give, that's all the thing don't want. (P6.08)*

This concern with confidentiality occurred especially when talking about the role of government and political officials in xenophobia. It is perhaps not that the parameters of confidentiality were inadequately set in the study, but that political censorship is high and freedom of speech low in the countries represented, as evidenced by numerous statements along these lines. This led to self-censorship within the interviews at junctures of opinion, challenge and resistance. For example:

> *But in our country there is nothing like that. You won't speak anything bad about president in public. You will be tortured and you will be taken care of. Ya, I think you know what I mean. (P2.02)*

Secondly, the matter of maintaining fidelity to the interview event and to the participants' expectations of the research, proved difficult at times. It was tempting to reduce the personal and experiential information in the interviews to academic rhetoric and theoretical abstraction. This would not have satisfied the stated intentions of the research project. Reflection feedback (Parker, 2005) and assessment of the final draft before publication was not possible, thus the researcher took responsibility for making the analysis visible and hopefully this is evident in the discussion of results. For example, there was sufficient

material to complete an entire research thesis on African humanism and xenophobia. This would have excluded substantial other themes and focal points and would not have been faithful to the interviews in their entirety or to the expectations of interviewees and their emotive and significant lived-experience of xenophobia. To do so would have been to relate cursorily with the material at hand instead of engaging meaningfully and in a liberatory manner with the social issues at stake in this area (Foster, 2004).

Analysis and Discussion

The ten interviews transcriptions provided rich and diverse data for discursive analysis. Although several distinguishable themes were identified and labelled, I choose rather to present the analysis in a more unified and argumentative manner, treating the data set and the interviewees as a whole rather than breaking them up into their constitutive parts and losing meaning and context in so doing. As noted in the discussion of the literature, there are no clear-cut distinct "causes" of xenophobia. Likewise, the nuances of the xenophobic experience cannot be neatly identified and labelled. Doing so loses a great deal of sense and essentially divorces the interview data from the social, economic, and political milieu from which it emerged. However, the analysis has revealed the existence of patterns of similarity and difference within the participants' narratives and discourse. These themes build on each other, weaving the whole together for a more comprehensive picture of the xenophobic experience.

I asked the participants two core questions which shaped the form and flow of the interviews, and the analysis is ordered according to these: *What are your experiences of xenophobia?* and *What do you think are the causes of xenophobia?* The first acted as a general orienting question to the interview. Participants responded well to this focused (although not directed) question; it adhered closely to the stated purpose of the study and primed experience. It did not merely serve as a launch pad, though, and several key points emerged during analysis.

What Are Your Experiences of Xenophobia?

Across the data set, replies to this question followed a strict and detailed linear narrative and factual account. In telling their stories of discrimination and displacement, the participants moved purposefully through time and space, detailing the time they spent in each place and the specifics of their movements through different areas. A typical narrative runs like this:

> *Well, from Durban I came here like there was no one I knew around this place, around Cape Town… I stayed with [this guy] in Khayelitsha for about a week or so. Then when we were staying there we heard that some foreigners were being attacked there… So I decided, no, to move out before it happens to me… I left the place and went to Cape Town just to be around until maybe it calms down... I was in the Foreshore there – I slept there for about maybe a week [on the street]… That's when I met Brian, organizing some people there and taking them on a bus. That's when we came here in MBC. (P5.07)*

The narratives are filled with seemingly insignificant details, and included connections or relationships that were formed on the journey, detailing specifics of conversations.

> *It was on the Thursday when this thing started... We came to town by the train station... Some other we found a policewoman and other security guard, women. They say, "Oh, you people, where are you coming from?" I told them we are coming from Du Noon. They said, "Eh, you see those people with machete? They are now coming to you. They wanted to hack people here." ... And we had to load our bags out of the taxi very fast and went down by the basement. (P3.05)*

The participants repeat parts of conversations they have had with fellow South Africans telling them to leave, or with people offering to help, but most often they are conversations with other immigrants, refugees, and displaced people whom they met as they moved from one location to another.

> *I was with a Congolese woman. She was pregnant and she didn't have anything… And I told her, "If you remain here it's impossible. You better come with me and then we can take this truck and will see where we are being taken to."… And those guys whom I had been living*

> *with, they say, “We are going to Zimbabwe.” I said, “Okay, guys, farewell. Me, I am not back to Zimbabwe.” (P3.05)*

What emerges from this purposeful and constant movement is a picture of people in transit, moving continuously from one place to another, staying for days before moving on, and carrying their possessions with them. The experiences of xenophobia–both being victimized and in some cases attacked, and the upheaval and dislocation–appears to have bred unity within the foreign community, and the connections made during the time, in being repeated, are flagged as important.

> *Ya, before this xenophobic attacks there was no, I mean, there wasn’t a relation between people from Zimbabwe, Malawi, Congo... But because of this xenophobic attacks we came to terms that we are same people. So I mean from this xenophobic experience we learnt that we are brothers. (P2.02)*

Perpetual Limbo?

As the interviews unfold, it becomes clear that this transient way of being defines many of the participant’s lives prior to their arrival in South Africa and subsequent to it. Their descriptions of upheaval, movement, dislocation, and repeated loss of property and relationships, suggest that they are the “travelers in permanent transit”, which Nyamnjoh describes (2007, p. 74). There is a strong sense among the participants that they are in a state of limbo, straddling borders, repeatedly disenfranchised and dislocated.

> *Why I came to South Africa was war. In my country [Burundi] they were fighting and my family they were killed... So I decided to come here. As I am saying, I had been in other countries, so I just decided and say, “Okay, let me go far down from Central Africa.” So I came through Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique, and I came through Jo’burg... It’s a long story with difficulties. Sleeping hunger, sleeping in the bush, walking long distances until I came here. Begging people for transport and food when I was coming here, because I didn’t have anything. (P6.08)*

But what happened in my homeland [Zimbabwe], it happened again here. Straight again for the second time. You see how it is, you are trying to stand up but you are being chopped. The time you when you are trying to stand up you are being chopped. You see what I mean? It's bad. (P3.05)

Bauman (2007) says that refugees and asylum seekers embody "human waste" – they are the surplus from saturated labour markets, or driven by war and political persecution to a "no-man's land" of "non-humanity". They are what Bauman terms "stateless, placeless, functionless and papers-less" (p. 40) and this is evident in the interviews.

It's hard because you know maybe I don't have like papers. That's the hardest part of it because if you haven't got an ID that's when things don't work the way you think they're going to work. Like getting a job, accommodation… They need to take someone who's a South African or someone who has identities. (P5.07)

If I don't have that one I am nothing. I can have a doctorate, I can be having Masters, having Honours or whatever that thing might be in education, but if I don't have documentation all those things have nothing… because without documentation you are not, you are not a person. You are not a human being. You need to have a documentation that you become a person. (P6.08)

Going back is often not an option, yet they do not intend or realistically expect to be assimilated into the new society or social body. Several participants noted that they did not intend staying in South Africa, and that their time here is temporary, but they refer to an often idealized notion of "home" and a place they will go back to which, in light of their reasons for leaving, may not exist. Thus, they "hover above the surface" (Landau, 2008, p. 52), remaining loyal to their home countries and expressing a desire to return (Bauman, 2000).

Zimbabwe is lovely; I don't want to lie – we work hard. We've got everything. All the qualifications and the money and power. We don't want to be here. (P3.05)

We stay here because we have no other option... these other South Africans they must not think that we are liking be here. We not, we don't like to be here. We come to be here because different reasons, not because we all like to be here. Most of us we like also to be home... (P6.08)

The reason is in Zimbabwe there is actually, there's I would say famine. People are starving there… They will go back. Even now people want to go back. Even I, too, I want to go back. I would not stay here for a long time, you see. I would go back. I've just come, enough now, I go back. (P7.09)

Bauman (2007) suggests that refugees and asylum seekers are caught in a cross-fire, the push from their home countries is forceful —even for "economic migrants" who seek, by choice, to leave a place where there is no work, for one where there are options for livelihood—yet there is nowhere for them to go. He says, "They do not *change* places; they *lose* their place on earth" (p. 45). Although they know that assimilation is unrealistic, they nevertheless continue to try to disguise their differentness so as not to draw attention amongst the public.

Ya, even when these things happened we just made this precaution of not speaking Shona in public for safety. So that's how we managed to live there. (P2.02)

You know sometimes me, like, I didn't usually like – ah – identify myself as a Zimbabwean sometimes. Just for my safety. (P5.07)

The participants tell stories of a day-to-day existence of perpetual transience—living spaces and places change, jobs are found and lost on an often-daily basis, relationships are short-lived. There is a sense of becoming, of their own accord, more invisible to afford their survival in a world where to be unrecognized allows them to continue to exist in a vacuum of non-being.

What Are the Causes of Xenophobia?

The first question provided a useful move towards understanding the transient lives of foreigners and exploring how they make sense of this dislocation. The second question was answered indirectly. Some participants quoted a list of the popularly disseminated reasons for xenophobia, often reproducing the perspectives and causes given by South Africans. For example: *They think you are a thief, you want to sell drugs, or you want to take their women, you want to take their jobs (P2.03)*; *So they said we are taking their wives, we are taking their jobs. (P2.04); They think we are taking their jobs. (P3.05).* However, after repeating these claims and discounting them as *"flimsy claims"* or *"banal"* and a *"bit of nonsense",* the participants began to expound more complex reasons and nuances of identity and humanness, autochthony and entitlement, and African unity.

Identity and Humanness

Firstly, participants explored notions of belonging and identity in South Africa. It is naive to think that there is any single African metaphysics or a unifying worldview encompassing "African" meaning and being (Mkhize, 2004). The ruptures, differences and paradoxes within individual interviews and across the interview set bear this out. What does become clear across the interviews is a sense that South Africans have taken "humanity" from foreigners. Occasionally this de-humanisation is overtly stated as in the following two excerpts:

> *What South African think, they think if you are a foreigner you are not a human. But we are all blacks. (P2.03)*

> *Ah, eventually they don't see any refugee like a person. They don't consider us like a people. They consider us like a people who came to take their things. (P6.08)*

More often, though, it is camouflaged and comes through in the participants' descriptions of the way South African's think of them and define them.

> *R: Why are you not human?*

P: They think you will come from, if you come from other countries maybe you're coming from the bush or whatever. Ya. (P2.03)

Vale (2002) thought that something other than race would come as the replacement content of South African national identity, and it appears that a new category for difference has arisen, but perhaps it is not too removed from race. "Makwerekwere" is a derogatory word used to describe black foreigners who are unable to speak local South African languages, and who come from countries perceived to be economically and culturally backwards. The term implies a sort of cultural rudimentalism or deficiency. As one interviewee tells it:

Okay, to be honest makwerekwere is just a Xhosa term. I do not know exactly what it means, but it just means maybe people of no origin or something like that. Like we had to quit our own culture to come to South Africa. So I mean I think that word makwerekwere applied to those senses of quitting your own culture and coming to steal or to take other people's rightful things. (P2.02)

The significance of this statement, and others like it across the interviews, become clear when considering Murray's (2003) assertion that pejorative terms (such as Makwerekwere) incorporate the unwanted other into a discourse of apocalypse and doom. This is a kind of naming and shaming. Positioning immigrants and refugees as rootless, identity-less, culture-less, and therefore non-people without context or civilization further strengthens the (illusory) feelings of national identity and belonging. The very presence of the metaphorical foreigner "asserts the birthright of belonging South Africans, whilst "denying entitlements to those 'outsiders' who 'do not belong'" (Murray, 2003, p. 448). As noted in the literature, these stereotypes and caricatures are reproduced in media and political commentary and amongst the public (McDonald et al, 2000; Danso & McDonald, 2000).

Nyamnjoh (2007, p. 75) suggests that resentment and violence towards foreigners:

permits black South Africans to ward off the feeling that the long struggle for democracy has not improved their economic and cultural lives, and that the nation-state they fought to claim

> *might at the very least have the instrumental value of making a crucial difference between them and backward others.*

The overwhelming sense across the data set is that xenophobia allows for a fundamental distinction to be drawn between South Africans and the rest of the continent. Africa is homogenized through "chaotic" stereotypes of war, famine, chaos, corruption, genocide, AIDS, coups and backwardness (Cejas, 2007; Robins, 2002). These stereotypes do not stem only from the public, but from media and scholarly representations which "revel in these cultural and political pathologies" (Robins, 2002, p. 668), which portray Africa as a "basket case" and "fundamentally dysfunctional and ungovernable". The SAMP surveys bear out it this assertion, and Crush and Pendleton (2004, p. 4) note that immigrants' home countries are stereotyped as being in chaos, while South Africa remains "a haven of peace, calm and opportunity."

Positive Identification

In response to this negative stereotyping, the participants in this study, as in the SAMP survey work (Crush, 2001; Crush & Pendleton, 2004; McDonald et al., 1998), cast their home countries in a remarkably positive light, subjectively rating them better than South Africa in terms of safety, crime, democracy and freedom:

> *But crime in Zimbabwe, ay, the police they do their job. In Zimbabwe you can walk any time free. No one can rob you. Here in South Africa most of the people have got guns but in Zimbabwe no one has got a gun. (P2.03)*

> *In crime, in Zimbabwe it's safe. As far as I look at it, it's safe... you know me I've been here in South Africa a long time but I, I don't feel free. I can go around to wherever but I don't feel free… I mean at home I can do whatever... It's a free country. Ya, Zimbabwe is – you can even walk around with your cell phone or whatever. There's no violence like here in South Africa. (P5.07)*

The participant from Burundi described that country's decades-long war, the lack of democracy, presidential assassinations, and lack of job opportunities, concluding that it is a "small and poor country in Africa", and yet went on to describe an ordered and satisfactory way of life:

> *Definitely sanctity it's there because, as I said, everyone got farm, everyone got his house and he farms and he eats his food and basically people they try to live like ordinary lives. There is no, the majority there is no like high living style but the majority they are living ordinary life and they are happy with that and everyone is quite good with how he lives in that way, in that condition. (P6.08)*

The Democratic Republic of Congo, another one of Africa's "chaotic" countries, was also portrayed in a positive light:

> *And in Congo – people are saying that Congo is not a good country, I know, because there is no food and whatever – but people they are so scared to kill somebody. (P1.01)*

Landau (2008) has proposed a speculative argument on new systems of belonging in African cities, which addresses the historical mobility and marginalisation of these cities of "shifting sand" (Bauman, 2000). Landau describes how a growing diversity, new and shifting social formations, and increased geographic mobility within African cities opens up possibilities for new belongings which transcend ethnic and nationalist boundaries. She terms this "tactical cosmopolitanism" and the argument draws on a diversity of discourses and value-systems to describe how foreigners negotiate partial inclusion without the obligations of belonging.

According to Landau (2008), in response to opposition and exclusion from 'locals', foreigners draw on a language of belonging that embraces un-rootedness as a form of superiority over those bound by and to local social and political obligations. They are in the city, but not of it; can claim the benefits of inclusion (e.g. the right to jobs and housing and human rights) while not having to assimilate to it.

As Landau found, the participants in this study drew on a rhetoric of self-exclusion to mitigate the effects of xenophobia. Self-exclusion—a "counter-idiom of transience and

superiority" (2008, pg. 54)—draws on discourses of non-belonging to position the foreigner always as the "permanent outsider" and uses the same flaws which South African's levy against them to reify difference. Participants overwhelmingly cast South Africans in a negative light. Out of the ten interviews, nine cast South Africans as lazy, eight as poor, six as closed-minded, six as dependent on government, five as poor, four as jealous, and three each as bad hearted or heartless, child-like, and lacking a future. There is a strong sense that South Africans are uneducated and unappreciative of the opportunities afforded them.

> *Like I said, the better way of fighting xenophobia is trying to destroy this spirit of [unclear]. And try to push our community to show them the real reason why they are still as they are now. The real reason is that they are uneducated. (P1.01)*

> *Ya the main – people, black people, they are not educated here in South Africa. Ya, they are not educated and they are lazy to work for themselves. So they end up robbing people as a way of getting money, because they want to drink too much every day. Ya. (P2.03)*

> *So that alone shows that they take most things for granted. Even education, they take it for granted also. (P2.02)*

> *They just need quick things, easy things. They don't want to work hard for their future life, as compared to some of us. We are focussing on the future. (P4.06)*

This negative typecasting serves to justify foreigners' rights to partake in the benefits of South African society, and creates a sense of superiority which mitigates the negative effects of xenophobia.

Fluid Identity

Landau (2008) has also suggested that as part of tactical cosmopolitanism, foreigners cling to multiple identities, which allows them to shift within networks and across loyalties. The aim of this is the achievement of specific practical goals. Within the interviews, participants shift

between ethnic, national, "foreign", African and human identities, drawing in turn on each to achieve specific goals.

As a typical example, one participant (P2.02) draws on "foreign" identity to justify the right to jobs (*"Because there's a fact here, maybe people will come from outside, maybe they are learned than the locals. I don't know. So employers they tend to prefer to employ people from outside than people from South Africa").* He then draws on Zimbabwean identity, which is instrumental in finding work and housing ("*My friend, how are you? Where are you staying? Zimbabwe. Just talk. I'm looking for a job. . . so people they get jobs like that. If I hear of a job I can think of my brothers and then we are just uplifting others.").* Later he draws on African identity (*"I think according to what happened it has just come clear that they think that they are just separate because they just chasing people from Malawi, Zimbabwe, Congo. So I think that alone shows that, how can you chase your own brother?");* and human identity (*"People must just have love in their hearts to love a human being, love other human being. . . To love someone who is in trouble. To love someone who have got a problem."*) He even talks of how he has tried to assimilate to South African identity, but has been hindered by their lack of love (*"So I have to think, I mean I have to take like they are my own people and try to socialize with them so that I can be in them. . . But as of them since they have this sense of hatred they won't find it working to call me a brother.")*

This demonstrates, as Landau (2008) suggests, the ease with which multiple identities are engaged, without being bound or under the obligations of any. By drawing on distinct identities at different times, participants gain access to the country and instrumental inclusion in the form of jobs or housing—but they are not bound to any locale or single identity which could become restrictive *("You know sometimes me like I didn't usually like, ah, identify myself as a Zimbabwean sometimes. Just for my safety." P5.07*). Even the relationships or associations formed with other displaced foreigners appear instrumental in nature and short-lived, and do not resurface in later discussion. Participants shift quickly and easily within the interviews between these multiple identities, avoiding "capture" by any single affiliation and responsibility or commitment—a perpetual non-belonging to survive. This shifting also allows participants to skirt the paradoxes and contradictions within their understandings of certain identities, such as pan-Africanism (below).

Sanctity of Life

Linked to the previous discussion on the perceived tendency to de-humanise and de-legitimate foreigners, there is a strong opinion that South Africans disregard the value of life generally—an accusation which enhances foreigners' sense of superiority and "civilization" in their own eyes, while undermining South Africans. The participants use several metaphors to describe South African's attitudes towards human life, accusing them of *"killing each other like they are killing chickens" (P2.02)*; treating a human being's life *"just like a fly" (P3.05)*; and lamenting to see *"a human-being being killed, you see, slaughtering like a goat" (P7.08).* One participant tells it thus:

> *Blood. You know when I am saying they're spilling blood it's just like, you know, taking someone's soul out. It's just like spilling water. You just, [demonstrates throwing glass of water offhand.] You see what I mean? You see what I mean. That's how they take life. It's just haaaaaghhh [demonstrates throwing glass of water.] Don't give a damn about life. It's just nothing. It's easier to spill water and it's easier to take someone's life and to spill blood. (P305)*

These ideas have been linked to a "culture of violence" idea. Several participants make the point that South Africans are embedded in violent ways of being, passed on from generation to generation, and endemic to cultures. For example:

> *Okay, um... I think it can mean, um, the culture, in this particular culture violent is dominant whereby looking at the line of heritage or the origin of a certain people, if you are studying that line of heritage it was all about violence. I mean the kingdom was all about violence. So that culture can be passed onto the next and the next, something like that… When people can just burn someone alive I would just say that violence is really in them. It's their culture. Killing is their culture. Something like that. So I would think that South Africa is, I mean the culture of violence is existing in South Africa. (P2.02)*

Future research should explore in greater detail the general notion of sanctity of life in South Africa, and the link between a "culture of violence"— the violent nature of society more generally—and xenophobia.

Autochthony and Entitlement

The illusion of fixed and bounded spaces of belonging is not available to immigrants, and more so within South Africa, where the discursive boundaries of belonging mean that foreign nationals have no autochthonous right to social or political belonging. Comaroff and Comaroff (2001) suggest autochthony has come to replace racialised national identity in South Africa. Material and moral benefits and entitlements flow from "rootedness" or "place of birth" and are a sufficient claim against any assertion aliens may make to the benefits of the nation—including basic human rights. The national sphere which naturalises space and people into groups links to a "discourse of entitlements, rights, legitimation for citizens and…powers to exclude others" (Foster, 2000, p. 64.)

These theoretical assertions are borne out by the interviews. The notions of "privilege" and "entitlement" are referred to in nearly every interview in explaining South African's resentment of foreigners:

> *Ya, they do get jealous to see a foreigner having something. Like what I know, foreigners they do hard, man.... But South Africans, I don't know, maybe they think that South Africa is rich or "We are South Africans" so they don't care. Like, "We are South Africans." (P5.07)*

> *They take them (people from Zimbabwe) as people who come here to cause, I mean, like economic instability or like to steal their jobs, to take their rightful belongings...So in the long run they think that we are actually destroying the country. So they take us as destructors. (P2.02)*

Habermas (1996) terms this phenomenon the "chauvinism of affluence", whereby new citizens guard selfishly "their newly acquired status, and the accompanying rights or benefits, against encroachment by foreigners" (p. 508). Future research would do well to consider a culture of entitlement, as suggested by Foster, Haupt, and De Beer (2005), and whether this entitlement is being protected by continual appropriation of space, resources, and rights (*see* Senechal de la Roche, 1996). The analysis seems to support this kind of theoretical notion. There is a strong perception that South African's feel entitled to jobs, women and resources by virtue alone of their belonging to the imagined group "South African", and that these

"flimsy claims" (P2.02) that foreigners are stealing their jobs and women are sufficient cause for xenophobic outbreak and appropriation.

African Unity: Mythical, Conditional or Impossible?

Alterity in the formation of a South African has undermined the premise of a shared humanity, and has contested the notion of a black essentialism and a pan-African consciousness. Landau (2008) writes that foreigners often evoke pan-Africanism to seek to erode the barriers that South Africa has set up and undermine the legitimacy of South African identity. This links to the previously discussed counter-idiom of self-alienation which foreigners draw on.

> *About this question, I will just say this kind of behaviour from the South African people is just unacceptable, the way they treated the foreign brothers and sisters from other countries. It's not even fair and that's [unclear] as Africans. (P2.03)*

This is perhaps the strongest theme produced across the interview set and the hardest to analyse. The participants vacillate between idealising a unity based on African identity, expressing a belief in a current African unity or a conditional unity, and disallowing the possibility of any kind of shared identity[5].

> *Ah... It's very, very bad because I think especially for African people this time should be for African people, and especially blacks to stand up and to realise the conditions of life they are living, instead of fighting. (P1.01)*

> *…but I just take them as my relatives because we are from the same country. That applies maybe in the same, we are from the same continent. That is what I think we – that comes to saying that I think we are brothers... So you just think we are just, must have the spirit of oneness as people from the same continent. (P2.02)*

> *Ya, we can unite as Africans, but you know people are different. Some people they see things in their own way. (P5.07)*

From the complexity of the interviews it would appear that black essentialism and pan-Africanism is not simply a mythology but is just contested and more complex than it is popularly portrayed (Morris, 1998). The following quote provides a useful piece for analysing the paradoxes of the understanding of African unity.

> *P: Because as I am saying it's racism it's when sometime you might be sitting somewhere and the person you are sitting next to is trying to see you like not a human being. So if the person is not seeing you as a human being and you have been created by only one Heavenly Father... but the person sitting there is seeing you like not a person like him. So that is not a tribalism; it's racism...*
>
> *R: So what's the difference?*
>
> *P: The difference is...What they grow up in and their cultures from their fathers or fathers they taught them that we are these people from this tribe and we all grow up in this culture and things and this and they're doing that... They grow up into that thing from a long time ago. So they've always been in that thing.*
>
> *R: And in tribalism the other person is still a person?*
>
> *P: They're still a person. Yes, the same. Yes. (P6.08)*

The participant draws a crucial distinction between tribalism – which is normalised and naturalised as inherent differences in culture, passed on from generation to generation – and racism – which underlies xenophobia, and degrades or confiscates *humanity* from the individual and his tribal or cultural group. Interestingly, he refers to tribalism as the difference between Tutsi and Hutu in Rwanda and Burundi and earlier in the interview he described the inter-tribal warfare and ethnic cleansing which has gone on between the two groups. Six other participants referred extensively (ie. more than a passing mention) to inter-tribal conflict within their home countries and within South Africa – between the Zulus and the Xhosas, Shona and Ndebele, Hutu and Tutsis in Rwanda, tribes in Malawi, two tribes in the Congo, and whites and blacks in South Africa. While it is premature to conclude that these instances of tribalism and "xenophobia" are normalised amongst the participants, there is a sense of fatalism and resignation when referring to them – that is, there were few expressions of condemnation for this tribalism, rather the incidents were referred to matter-

of-factly, devoid of emotion and opinion. Only two of the participants condemned this violent tribalism outright.

> *Ya, it's like with the Shonas and the Ndebeles... So ya they lost their beloved a lot...it's always pain for them. The pain will never end. (P2.04)*

> *You can't carry things from the past and bring it to the present day of our lives to massacre people then you excuse yourself from that. (P3.05)*

Reflections on xenophobia that do not adhere to traditional political views which claim the phenomenon is morally wrong are typically ignored in the literature. For many, it may seem reprehensible and even immoral in as much as it shatters Western humanist, rights-based, liberal universalist sensibilities to consider a normalised view of xenophobia. Every participant referenced historical, political and social conflict in their home countries, drawing direct correlations to the xenophobia exhibited in South Africa, suggesting that only when the 'enemy' is de-humanised is this type of conflict condemned.

Conclusion

The South African paradox is between an internal identification based on liberal universalism and the ambiguous social boundary of autochthony, which is diametrically opposed to African humanism or a human rights culture. Internal difference has been embraced in South Africa (e.g. "the melting pot", the "rainbow nation") and the passport to citizenship and entitlement is the indigene label which excludes everyone not rooted in South Africa. Foreigners are marked by skin colour, culture, language and other forms of embodiment. Anti-foreign sentiments as the content of South African identity has replaced "race" and "class" with a remarkably similar discourse of otherness – in fact, "place" has merely replaced "race" (Croucher, 2000).

This thesis has only begun to explore inconsistencies and nuances of African foreigners' identity within an autochthonous South Africa. Admittedly, the study is limited by its scope and future research should consider expanding the size of the study. Theoretical saturation

was not, I believe, met, but the strength and consistency of discourses which emerged certainly give this study legitimacy. In analysing the discourses, several themes were consciously dropped from inclusion due to space constraints. Themes such as the located-ness of certain perspectives and insularity; the metaphor of family in describing state-public relationships; the significance of the bloodstream; brotherhood; and the complexity of African unity are all topics which future research should pursue.

Concerning across the interviews were the answers given to the last question: *"What do you think the future is going to be in South Africa with regards to xenophobia?"* Each of the six participants who were asked this question expected a re-emergence of xenophobic violence in the months to come, suggesting this violence would be more intense and extensive. Two participants predicted that foreigners would fight back, and warn Government to take heed of the potential for full-scale ethnic war.

> *I don't know in what way they [Government] will, but they have to make sure because if this happens I think the foreigners will fight back. That's how I see it. They won't leave it anymore. They have to fight back. And if they fight back it's not going to be good...The innocent will really get hurt if these things keeps on happening. People can't keep losing whatever they have worked hard for. (P5.07)*

Academics, government and the public alike ought to heed these warnings and devote concerted time, energy, and money towards understanding xenophobia and working towards adequate solutions.

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Appendix A

Braamfontein Statement on Xenophobia

South African Human Rights Commission, 15 October 1998

1. The movement of people within and across boundaries of states and communities has become a feature of modern societies. In the global society, states can no longer live in isolation from one another. The movement of people across boundaries has caused and continues to cause problems between nationals of recipient states and non-nationals because of competition for scarce resources, ignorance and prejudice. For states, migration raises questions of security, economic management and sovereignty.
2. Xenophobia is the deep dislike of non-nationals by nationals of a recipient state. Its manifestation is a violation of human rights. South Africa needs to send out a strong message that an irrational prejudice and hostility towards non-nationals is not acceptable under any circumstances. Criminal behaviour towards foreigners cannot be tolerated in a democratic society.
3. Our Constitution states that we seek to construct a society where "human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms" are abiding values. The Bill of Rights confers certain rights to "everyone". These are the rights to equality, human dignity, the right to life, freedom and security of the person, and the right not to be subject to slavery, servitude or forced labour.
4. Our international obligations have both a legal and a moral force. South Africa is party to international human rights and humanitarian treaties, especially on refugees and asylum-seekers.
5. No one, whether in this country legally or not, can be deprived of his or her basic or fundamental rights and cannot be treated as less than human. The mere fact of being an alien or being without legal status does not mean that one is fair game to all manner of exploitation or violence or to criminal, arbitrary or inhuman treatment. Foreigners in our midst are entitled to the support and defence of our law and constitution.
6. Despite the above provisions, in practice there is an increasing level of Xenophobia in our country. Xenophobia is thus a blight on our democratic values and should be eradicated. In this regard, the South African Human Rights Commission and other stakeholders from

government and non-governmental sectors held a one day consultative conference to discuss the increasing rate of Xenophobia as a violation of human rights and our constitutional values. The Conference was held at the Johannesburg Metropolitan Civil Centre, Braamfontein on Thursday, 15 October 1998.

7. The Consultative Conference adopted the following Programme of Action:
8. There should be a co-ordinated approach between various government departments to address Xenophobia and the manifestations thereof.
9. Migration and refugee policies should be clear, coherent, implementable and reflect South Africa's constitutional and international obligations.
10. South Africa should take steps to sign the International Convention on the Protection of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families and other relevant treaties. This should be done in order to signal South Africa's commitment to abide by international standards in her treatment of resident non-nationals.
11. Factors that encourage the manifestation of Xenophobia such as poverty, unemployment, crime, corruption in the immigration and police services and ignorance about the role and significance of non-nationals in our country should be addressed. The rights and responsibilities of non-nationals should also be taken into account.
12. As part of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region, South Africa should play her part in the development of the economic policies in the region in order to enhance peace and prosperity in the neighbouring states and ensure opportunities for betterment of life for its citizens.
13. A nation-wide public awareness and information campaign on racism and Xenophobia and its effects should be organised.
14. Public service officials should undergo training on racism and Xenophobia, on the theory and practice of migration and refugee policies and on the understanding of international human rights and humanitarian instruments as well as develop an awareness of the social and political situation in the countries responsible for the influx of migrants to South Africa.
15. South African are urged to practice African cultural values like ubuntu ("hospitality and solidarity") in their relations with others in their midst.
16. The South African Human Rights Commission, assisted by a steering group drawn from the departments of Home Affairs, Justice and provincial Safety and Security, are mandated to monitor the implementation of these proposals.

Johannesburg 15 October 1998

Appendix B

Demographic Profile of Participants

Participant Number	Country	Age	Marital Status	Educational Level	Legal Status	Employment
P1.01	DRC - Congo	30	Married	High School	Asylum Seeker	No/ Painter
P2.02	Zimbabwe	25	Married	High School	Refugee Permit	No/Forklift Driver
P2.03	Zimbabwe	23	Single	O-Level	Asylum	Yes/Waiter
P2.04	Zimbabwe	29	Married	O-Level	Asylum	Yes/Driver
P3.05	Zimbabwe	37	Single	O-Level	Asylum Seeker	No/Book Binder
P4.06	Zimbabwe	27	Single	O-Level	Asylum Seeker	Yes/Handyman
P5.07	Zimbabwe	25	Single	O-Level	Not disclosed	Yes
P6.08	Burundi	27	Single	3 Years College	Asylum	No/Student
P7.09	Malawi	37	Married	Secondary	Not disclosed	Yes/Gardner
P8.10	DRC - Congo	36	Married	BSocSci	Refugee	Yes/Knitter of Blinds

Appendix C

Demographic Questionnaire

Approval Reference Number: 2008020

Exploring Xenophobia and Culture of Violence in South Africa

Part 1

*Participant Number:*_______________________

Gender: _________________________________

Age: ____________________________________

Nationality: _____________________________

Religion: ________________________________

Are you married/single/divorced/widowed/have a life partner? _______________________

What area do you currently live in? ____

What area were you living in *before* the May xenophobic attacks? ____________________

What area did you grow up in? ____

What level of education do you hold? ____

What is your legal status in South Africa? ____

Are there any other personal characteristics you feel are important to this study, before we go forward?____
____
____

Part 2

Are you currently employed in South Africa? ____________________________________

What is your present occupation? ____

If unemployed, what was your last job in South Africa? ____________________________

Part 3

Recently local daily newspapers ran a story about a young woman who was raped. She is one of hundreds of women who are sexually abused daily in South Africa. Please respond.

____
____
____
____
____
____
____
____

A few months ago, police responded to an emergency call in the Cape Town area. They arrived too late. A couple were shot and their cellphones and wallets taken. Please respond.

Recently, a foreigner’s house was burned down. The owner was beaten, and his wife and children physically threatened. Please respond.

Appendix D

Interview Schedule

Question	*Prompts*
Recently local daily newspapers ran a story about a young woman who was raped. She is one of hundreds of women who are sexually abused daily in South Africa. Please respond. A few months ago, police responded to an emergency call in the Cape Town area. They arrived too late. A couple were shot and their cellphones and wallets taken. Please respond. Recently, a foreigner's house was burned down. The owner was beaten, and his wife and children physically threatened. Please respond.	What are the first words that come to mind? How does this make you feel? What is your first response? Fill in the details of the story. In what area do you think this incident occurred? How do you feel you ought to respond to this story? Who is to blame for this incident?

What are your experiences of xenophobia?	During May? Before May? What

	happened to you? How did you feel?
Please tell me about how you came to South Africa. Did you visit S.A. before this trip? Did you have a place to stay in S.A. before you came? Did you have friends or family in S.A. before you came?	How long have you been here? What brought you to S.A?
How do you think South Africans view people from your home country?	What words do they use? Experiences?
Please talk a bit about the way people from your country treat you.	
Please talk a bit about the way people from other Southern African countries treat you.	
Please talk a bit about the way white/black South African's treat you.	
How does South Africa compare to your home country?	Jobs, democracy, freedom, violence, crime, safety?
How satisfied are you in S.A.?	

What do you think are the causes of xenophobia? Talk to me about African unity. What do you understand by the phrase “a culture of violence”? What do you think the future is going to be in South Africa with regards to xenophobia? **At the end of the interview** Have you personally experienced violence? Has anyone you know personally experienced violence? How does this influence your responses? Is there anything else you would like to add?	

Appendix E

Consent and Confidentiality Form

University of Cape Town

Department of Psychology

Exploring Xenophobia and a “Culture of Violence” in South Africa

1. **Invitation and Purpose**

   You are invited to take part in a research study about xenophobia and violence in South Africa. I am a researcher from the Psychology department at the University of Cape Town. This study is part of an Honours Research Thesis. Funding for this study comes from personal funds. The study will take one and a half hours. You may be requested to participate in a follow-up interview, but do not have to do so. The details of a follow-up interview will be discussed at a later stage, should it be required.

2. **Procedures**

   If you decide to take part in this study, we will ask you to fill in a questionnaire. The questions will be about your demographics, and your opinions on violence in South Africa. It will take about 30 minutes and you may skip any question you do not wish to answer.

   We will then ask you some further questions, and your answers will be recorded on an audio cassette and transcribed at a later stage. This will take about an hour and you may skip any question you do not wish to answer.

3. **Risks, Discomforts & Inconveniences**

   This study poses a low risk of harm to you. Some of the questions may make you feel uncomfortable or may be personal. If the questions cause you any psychological or emotional distress you may withdraw from the study.

All your identifying information will be kept safe, and your name will not be associated with any of the questionnaires or audio answers. You will be given a false name and this name will be used in the study to refer to your answers.

4. **Benefits**

This study is not designed to benefit you. The knowledge we will gain from it, however, will be used to help improve our understanding of violence and xenophobia in South Africa. It may be used to inform policy and legislation.

5. **Alternatives (Other Options)**

A draft copy of the research thesis will be sent to you. If you have any further questions about the research topic, feel free to contact the researchers on the number given below.

6. **Privacy and Confidentiality**

We will take strict precautions to safeguard your personal information throughout the study. Your information will be kept without your name or other personal identifiers, only a code, in a locked file cabinet.

Study data will be kept on a password-protected, secure server. Only the researchers and the internal UCT Ethics Board will be able to access your personal information.

7. **Money Matters**

You will not be paid anything to participate in this study, but we will provide drinks and snacks.

8. **Questions**

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints about the study or questions about a research-related injury, please contact Valerie Duffield: 0846081978, Valerie.duffield@gmail.com.

9. **<u>Use of Samples/Date for Future Research</u>**

With your permission, we would like to store the data gained in this study for use in future research. This is your choice entirely and you are free to say no and still be able to take part in the study. Please check the boxes that apply to your choice:

I do <u>not</u> want my data to be used for any future research. ___

You may use my data for any future research about violence. ___

You may use my samples for any research about any psychological topic at all. ____.

10. **<u>Signatures</u>**

___________________________________ has been informed of the nature and purpose of the procedures described above including any risks involved in its performance. He or she has been given time to ask any questions and these questions have been answered to the best of the investigator's ability. A signed copy of this consent form will be made available to the subject.

____

Investigator's Signature Date

I have been informed about this research study and understand its purpose, possible benefits, risks, and discomforts. I agree to take part in this research as a subject. I know that I am free to withdraw this consent and quit this project at any time.

____

Subject's Signature Date

Validated By
UCT, Department of Psychology
Internal Research Ethics Committee

Approved: 24 June 2008
Reference Number: 2008020

Appendix F

Additional Transcript Excerpts

Theme: African Unity: Mythical, Conditional or Impossible?

Extract 1 – P2.03

P: Here in South Africa there's no unity because other tribes and other tribes there's no unity. In our country there's no unity with Shona and Ndebele. There's no unity.

R: So can we say there's unity in Africa?

P: Ay, there's no unity in Africa. Because if you go to, if you come from Southern Africa and you go to Central Africa they don't treat you well. If you go to, for example, if you're from Zimbabwe and you go to Egypt, they don't treat you well like African brothers.

Extract 2 – P3.05

P: Yes, we are all Africans. That's true. But to, to clarify that, you know, an African or a European your deeds and your attitude that's the ones that clarify your being in front of a society. Your dignity, how you maintain it, and how you present yourself to your fellow country – to your fellow African brother or sister. You see what I mean. Your approach towards the problem of your fellow African brother, or your understanding, or how you see things. People sees things differently.

R: And if we remove the Europeans, like white people – just looking at black people in Africa, can they be unified?

P: Ah, they can be unified but now what really matters is our cultures and our beliefs. That is the other thing which what divides us here in South Africa. You see. It's just like in Burundi there are Hutus and Tutsis they are fighting.

Extract 3 – P4.06

P: [Hesitant] Ya. At the moment, I mean, there is no unity at the moment. I mean, maybe there's gonna be unity. It seems there's gonna be unity. People are learning from their own mistakes.

R: Can you talk some more about that? Can you explain?

P: Oh, okay. Because now people think, oh, okay, we are the same. We are black and we are the same people. It's only a matter of different languages but now we are the same people. People from all, we are all created by God and so we are one. So I think there's gonna be a unity there. Yes. We are all Africans.

Extract 4– P5.07

I think they have to do the same thing. Be strong and work hard. Work together as people, black people. You know, as Africans. If we work together we can learn different things. I can learn something from them and they can learn something from me. You know, so we don't have to like think of the foreigners, you are a foreigner, a Zimbabwean or whatever. We are people. We are African people.

Extract 5 – P6.08

P: Ya, basically there is no African unity because if there was African unity why in Africa they're still telling you, "You not from South Africa." But you're still in Africa. So there's no African unity. If there was African unity then let's say I'm from Zimbabwe and I'm here and I went to report to the immigration office or whatever who that is and they listened to me and they say, "Oh, you are fleeing this problem in Zimbabwe because of this," but they're still mistreating me and I'm in Africa. So why that happened? So that means there's no African union.

R: And if we exclude South Africa? Amongst the rest of Africa do you think there is unity?

P: No. There is no unity. Even if you exclude South Africa there is no unity because there also you appear and they will look at your face and say, "Oh, you're not from here." Because wherever you go, if you go to Zimbabwe or like me if I go to Zimbabwe they will see me I'm not from Zimbabwe. If a Zimbabwean come to Burundi I will see the Zimbabwean is not from there. If I go to Tanzania they will see I am not from there. So all the time they will say, "Aaah, you are not from here. Where are you from. Come." So that shows there is no African unity. They don't have African union. (P608)

Extract 6 – P8.10

In Africa. [Long pause] The unity is not totally because of those things. Unity [long pause] to make a unity, to make – before to get – I want to change the word. I want to change something. Before to get unity you have to be equal. All of you who make that unity you have be equal on one things. That one thing we can say we make unity is just to set up and to build up something, you make unity and then you talk about it, you discuss about it and then you try to live...[French] You just agree each other to live, to live to respect a lot. To respect each other. To accept this is my limit where I have to stop that limit where others start. So to respect each other.

Endnotes

[1] Crush (2000; 2001) has questioned the validity of the SAHRC study (Minnaar & Hough, 1996) *Who goes there? Perspectives on clandestine migration and legal aliens in South Afric*a and of the Human Rights Watch study (1998), *Prohibited persons: Abuse of undocumented migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees in South Africa.* According to him, the SAHRC study used leading questions and measured attitudes towards policy rather than people. The second study was based on individual and anecdotal evidence and its broad generalised claims were not founded on primary research. In the light of more recent research, some of the claims and findings made in the HSRC and Human Rights Watch bear up and are useful, retrospectively, in informing our understanding of xenophobia.

[2] The terms “immigrant”, “illegal immigrant”, “migrant”, “foreigner” and “refugee” are used interchangeably within this study, except where specific distinctions are made by individual authors or participants. For the most part, xenophobic attitudes do not discriminate between legal or illegal non-citizens, immigrants or migrants, refugees or asylum seekers (Crush, 2001). For clarity, and to avoid unnecessary convolution of terms and associated connotations, I use the term “foreigner” most frequently to refer to all non-citizens within South Africa.

[3] Also spelt “Imizamo Yethu”.

[4] Complete marked up copies of the survey questionnaires used by the SAMP were obtained directly from the core researchers. Many thanks to Professor Robert Mattes, who worked on the production of these questionnaires, for forwarding them on.

[5] The volume of references to African unity and the depth and complexity of contestation in the interviews around what African unity means is extensive. Length constraints in the current work preclude a deeper discussion of these issues here. However, future research would do well to explore the ideas of African unity, *ubuntu*, African Humanism and pan-Africanism which emerge in these interviews. Several more quotes are included in Appendix F to give the reader a more thorough immersion in the discourse and to show the extent and intricacy of this theme throughout the interviews.

Acknowledgments

My deepest thanks go to the individuals who participated in this study, taking time out of their busy schedules and going out of their way to share their stories. Their insights, opinions and experiences are invaluable as we seek a fuller understanding of the events of May 2008, and work towards preventing such human horrors from occurring again in our country. I have tried my best to be faithful to the interviewees’ stories and expectations, and to their emotive and significant lived-experience of xenophobia.

This research would not have been possible without the help of the following people. I sincerely thank: Professor Don Foster – for supervising this work, believing in its validity and importance, and for random acts of solidarity (e.g. throwing books across his office and pulling his hair out when I was despairing!). Professor Robert Mattes – for providing me with original copies of the SAMP survey questionnaires and for pointing me towards some valuable literature. Sue Fox and Meadowridge Baptist Church – for shuffling venues and the use of their premises. Lara and Stephen Aspeling – for helping to identify and locate participants. Shane Duffield – for changing all my possessives to plurals and for editing the final draft. Mariette Fourie – for putting up with my mood swings, and paper and books strewn across the apartment for many months! Mommy - for cooked meals and believing. Family and friends too numerous to count - for sour worms, cries, hugs, love, and intermittent partying. Brett “Fish” Anderson – for throwing copious amounts of coffee at this thesis and for loving consistently and truly.

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