

## **The Three Facets of Xenophobia in Post-Apartheid South Africa: The Migrant, the State, and the Local Citizen. A Reflection**

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**Abstract:** This article provides a nexus and scrutiny of xenophobia in South Africa by examining it through the lens of the migrant, the State, and the local citizen. After re-emerging from its pariah status in the 1990s, South Africa has made great strides in its hegemonic-driven ambitions in Southern Africa and Africa over the last two decades. In turn, this has made it a migrant-receiving state both from a documented and undocumented point of view. In recent years, this has brought severe repercussions in the relationship between local citizens and their foreign counterparts. Over the years, the government's failure to successfully produce solutions to xenophobia and its disastrous performance concerning curbing border corruption and creating strong migration policies have been on the lips of most policymakers. This article finds that better migrant-receiving and border policies are needed to eradicate xenophobia effectively. Notably, the onus is on the government to draw up, implement and monitor effective short and long-term plans to integrate foreign nationals into society, especially with local citizens.

**Keywords:** xenophobia, state, migrant, local citizen, South Africa.

For this article, we adopt a holistic definition of xenophobia as attitudes, prejudices, and behavior that discard, disregard, and often vilify persons based on the notion that they are outsiders or foreign to the community, society, or national identity. Over the last few decades, many scholars of International Relations (Steenkamp, 2009; Solomon & Kosaka, 2013; Tella, 2016) and other cognate disciplines have made vigorous Afrocentric attempts to critically examine the motives (both from a government viewpoint and other internal and external actors) for continuous xenophobic attacks in Africa and particularly in post-apartheid South Africa. This is drawn from the fact that attacks on other African nationals have continued to make numerous headlines in South Africa's 29-year democracy. While the country was still in a pariah state of mind during the tenure of the National Party (NP), xenophobia in South Africa was primarily driven by hostile

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immigration policies centering mainly on white settlers with little room or consideration for black individuals. This is even though during apartheid, some of the current African National Congress (ANC) cadres depended on foreign support from neighboring African states to topple the NP regime.

Nevertheless, Ogunnubi and Aja (2022) note that the democratic shift from apartheid to a democratic rule created a paradigm shift in South Africa's foreign policy and opportunities for other African individuals to settle in South Africa, whether through work or other activities. With South Africa gradually re-integrating into continental and international politics, Pretoria witnessed an influx of foreign nationals to its shores, creating a hostile relationship between locals and foreign nationals. It is worth noting that after 29 years of democratic rule and the ruling African National Congress (ANC) in power, South Africa continues to witness vast social ills, particularly among the majority Black population. Mlambo (2019) noted that in the democratic era, several social complexities have also emerged. Racial discrimination, the legacy of racial divisions, a culture of violence, and racial language issues are still significant concerns within South Africa's numerous and diverse communities. Xenophobic attacks have resulted in murders, arson, looting of foreign-owned businesses, and countless acts of aggression. Thus, the continuous and growing anti-foreign sentiment amongst South Africans poses a significant challenge for the South African government. The drivers of xenophobic attacks can be grouped into three elements:

1. Interaction factors related to the level of exposure inhabitants have to strangers;
2. Cultural factors that include identity and nationalism; and
3. Economic factors such as unemployment and resources.

Drawing from the above, we may confidently trace the origins of xenophobia in post-1994 South Africa to the post-apartheid government and the continuous failure of the government to robustly tackle the influx of African nationals coming to South Africa. This article aims to provide a nuanced appraisal of the link and scrutiny of xenophobia in post-1994 South Africa through the lens of the migrant, the state, and the local citizen. In South Africa's 29-year democratic history, South African citizens have mostly been blamed for enticing xenophobic attacks. However, this article argues that the migrant and the state also have their fair share of enticing xenophobic attacks. Nevertheless, the article argues that the onus is on the government to draw up better implemented and monitored short and long-term plans to integrate foreign citizens into society in South Africa, particularly with local citizens. From the preceding, this article offers a rigorous and nuanced assessment of the South African government's handling of xenophobia post-1994.

### **Triggers of Xenophobia in a Post-Apartheid State: A South African Outlook**

Given South Africa's violent past and christening as a "rainbow nation" that is pro-Pan Africanism, xenophobic violence has become worse over the years. The reputation of South Africa in Africa and the international community has been severely damaged by these violent acts directed at foreign people, mainly African foreign nationals. Following the highly publicized xenophobic incidents in 2008, 2015, and 2019, many foreign nationals were displaced, their businesses were looted, and several people died. In South Africa, xenophobia takes many forms and negatively impacts its victims at a local, regional, and institutional level, devastatingly affecting the victims. It may be argued that xenophobia is becoming a more pervasive component of life in South Africa. According to international media sources, discrimination towards foreign nationals, especially Africans, has increased over time because of the country's fast pace of immigration (Ibrahim et al.,

2019). Inclusion based on being ‘foreign’ existed in Africa before and was formalized during the colonial era (Crush and Williams, 2008, page number). Foreign nationals have increasingly been the targets of violent attacks in South Africa. Despite the absence of comparable data, it is believed that xenophobic sentiments have significantly increased since 1994. According to research done by the South African Migration Project (SAMP) in 2004, the South African population had unrealistic expectations of the African National Congress (ANC) government's ability to undo all the wrongs committed by the apartheid regime (Dlamini et al., 2020).

More than two decades have passed since apartheid ended in South Africa, governed by the majority under a constitution that lists the creation of a non-racial society as one of its guiding principles and objectives. The ANC administration began an aggressive and inclusive nation-building project to overcome historical divisions and create new forms of social cohesiveness. One of the unintended consequences of the initiative is intolerance toward foreigners. Despite the notion of everyone being equal and the overthrowing of the apartheid government, which focused on state-organized and institutionalized racism, the new South Africa proves that even after classifying people according to their race has supposedly been dead and buried, it is still clearly visible and remains operational (Trimikliniotis et al., 2008).

## Manifestations

Okolie & Joseph (2021) argue that xenophobia has taken many forms in the South African setting, ranging from regular street harassment to government discrimination and harassment, as well as recurrent episodes of widespread xenophobic violence of varying scale and intensity. Foreign people living and working in South Africa are subjected to discrimination by locals, the police, government employees, private companies hired to administer and deliver services, and individuals in charge of detention and deportation procedures (Crush & Williams, 2003).

Following the demise of the apartheid government, there have been evident signs of xenophobic violence. Since South Africa's democratization in 1994, thousands of foreigners have been attacked, threatened, and assassinated merely for being foreigners. According to Misago (2019), xenophobic violence has worsened in townships and informal communities. Dodson (2010) emphasizes that xenophobia in South Africa extends beyond simple hate and fear of outsiders. Studies have shown that the public and government authorities often harbor negative attitudes and hatred towards outsiders. According to a 2008 survey by Crush et al (2008), South Africans are often the least receptive to newcomers and favor the strictest immigration laws. Data on xenophobic violence in South Africa revealed that the 2015 xenophobic incidents in Durban and Johannesburg prompted the army's intervention to prevent additional attacks by the crowd against presumed foreign people (Okolie & Joseph, 2021). Though some explanations attempt to contextualize the entire xenophobic problem, they can still not explain why xenophobic attacks have occurred in some regions of the country but not in others. According to Misago (2019), when examining townships and informal settlements that have experienced violent attacks on non-natives, the causes are almost invariably found in the micropolitics of these locales. To assert their power or further their political agendas, local authorities frequently plan or coordinate violent attacks on foreign migrants. Additionally, local politicians often feel compelled to restrict foreigners from political engagement or shun them out of fear of losing their political positions since foreigners have become increasingly unpopular throughout South Africa.

Numerous xenophobic triggers have been derived from the extensive literature on xenophobic incidents from the well-publicized 2008 attacks up to the present (Akintola, 2014). According to the Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa (CORMSA, 2010),

localized competition for political (formal and informal) and economic power is the leading cause of xenophobia toward immigrant nationals in certain places. Leaders frequently organize locals to attack and drive out foreigners, increasing their political, economic, and personal dominance within the local community (Mlambo & Mlambo, 2021). Along with national authorities, municipal officials have also employed anti-immigration rhetoric in their election campaigns (Dlamini et al., 2020).

### **Mobilization and Competition over Limited Resources**

Steenkamp (2009) avows that mobilization facilitating collective violence targets potential participants and all group and community members to seek support for and solidarity with those who eventually perpetrate the violence. Widespread support and approval facilitate the mobilization for the identified violent collective action by rationalizing it as a loyal service to the community or group or as necessary collective self-protection against malicious others intent on destroying the community and its way of life. In South Africa, instigators frequently employ various mobilization strategies to incite xenophobic violence in their groups. These include stirring up crowds during large community gatherings, appealing to their camaraderie, spreading deliberately created rumors, exercising their right to self-defense, setting an example, encouraging others to follow, and even hiring youth groups to carry out attacks.

Another catalyst comes from historical reality. 29 years into post-apartheid South Africa, many citizens have placed too many demands and expectations on the democratic government to provide for their basic needs. When these demands are not met at the pace expected, the people become frustrated with the government and vent their frustrations on foreigners. According to Tarisayi and Manik (2020), while some could dismiss this notion as an inappropriate transfer of aggression, it does make sense that people would choose to deal with the “other” to release their frustrations. In a study conducted in 2018, one of the results found that competition over limited resources triggers xenophobic violence toward foreign nationals in South Africa. South Africans see foreign nationals as competition in the job market, housing, health, and other essential services they believe they are rightfully entitled. Another argument is that wealthy South Africans hate paying taxes to provide essential services for non-South Africans who have escaped from their native countries due to lousy leadership, economic mismanagement, and political incompetence.

### **Job Insecurity, Women, Border Corruption and Migration: A South African Perspective**

Triggers of xenophobic violence in South Africa can be linked to illegal migrants to South Africa who are ready to take up any job at any wage rate and without looking for additional benefits. This is especially in low-wage sectors of the economy, thus increasing the unemployment rate among South Africans (Dlamini et al., 2020). Generally, foreign nationals from countries desperate to alleviate unemployment and generate foreign currency are readily and cheaply available to work. The jobs perceived as complex and dangerous are racialized, as they are associated with foreign nationals to such a degree that nationals of host countries refuse to take them, despite high levels of unemployment and poverty. This seems true in South Africa, as immigrants are prepared to do any job regardless of their social status and relatively meager financial returns. Dlamini et al. (2020) also highlighted a sexual and gender dimension to interpersonal competition between South Africans and foreign nationals, in that foreign national men are inclined to flash money around, thereby 'stealing' the South Africans' women.

Border corruption can be defined as the illegal exchange of different resources between two or more actors—border officer(s) (bribe taker) and client(s) (bribe giver), who may be individuals, firms, or organized crime groups (Jancsics, 2019). In the most typical case of border corruption, a client bribes an agent in return for no enforcement of the law at a point of entry. The resource provided by the agent may also take other forms, such as sharing information about patrol routes, shift schedules, or vulnerabilities in border defense; producing permits for undocumented immigrants; giving warnings of investigative activity; or giving names of individuals who cooperate with the government.

Border corruption is a recurring issue in South Africa and around the world, which can either be collusive (voluntary and advantageous to both parties) or coercive (involuntary and beneficial only to the recipient of the bribe) (Sequeira & Djankov, 2014). South African borders are emerging as hotspots for a range of corruption activities. Still, three prominent and sometimes interrelated forms are theft from misreporting, theft from customs officers using poor or unclear information to overcharge traders and pocket the difference, and bribes for expediting or obtaining services or avoiding fines or procedures. Bribes can involve “speed money” or petty bribes traders pay to bureaucrats to get around hurdles and facilitate and speed up processes (James, 2002). They can also involve collusion in tax evasion; for example, when a border official takes a bribe to misreport goods traversing the border, a process that can lead to smuggling or more serious illegal trafficking.

The most common form of what would be considered border corruption involves bribes. However, as noted earlier, some of these payments may be understood by the traders somewhat differently depending on institutional context and norms that exist in practice. Other forms of corruption at the borders may include smuggling stolen vehicles, drugs, firearms, tobacco products, mineral oils, and alcohol (excise goods) or the trafficking of hazardous materials. It could also concern environmental crimes such as waste or wildlife trafficking.

## **Factors Increasing the Risks of Border Corruption**

### ***Salaries, Working Conditions, Pressure from Organized Crime and Migration Policies***

The combination of poor pay, difficult working conditions, and a slight probability of detection provides incentives and opportunities for corruption (Mlambo et al., 2019). Border officials may find it difficult to resist taking bribes to cope with their low pay levels and supplement their salaries. Border control authorities are also mandated to prevent importing illegal goods (drugs, weapons, alcohol, and cigarettes), persons, and wildlife. These lucrative activities often involve organized crime syndicates that do not hesitate to resort to bribery, intimidation, and violence to facilitate their illegal transactions. Given the high financial stakes, rent-seeking opportunities are challenging to staunch (Izcara Palacios, 2019).

While there were other methods of handling migrant flows in Africa before the 1990s, a practical approach was created by establishing the South African policy on international migration, which is set out in the White Paper on International Migration. Policy implementation was effected through the Immigration Act 13 of 2002 (Republic of South Africa, 2002; 2). The purpose of the Act is stated as “To provide for the regulation of admission of persons to, their residence in, and their departure from the Republic; and for matters connected in addition to that.” The Executive Summary provides an overview of its focus, contents, and recommendations: In this White Paper, administrative and policy emphasis is shifted from border control to community and workplace

inspection with the participation of communities and the cooperation of other branches and spheres of government.

Procedures related to the issuance of permits are simplified to shift resources toward enforcement. An Immigration Service would be established with monitoring and investigative capacity at the community level, and an Immigration Review Board would be drawn from different sectors. The White Paper also advocated establishing immigration services, and the Immigration Services (IMS) branch of the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) was duly established. However, it only receives a budget sufficient for routine administration, with limited funding for enforcing immigration legislation.

This is deliberately broad to cover a wide range of issues related to immigration. Following the country's Constitution, the Act's common thread is promoting a human rights culture. The Act is undeniably progressive and compares favorably with other legislation worldwide. It also emphasizes the country's continental and regional responsibilities concerning administrative justice and guaranteeing certain fundamental rights for all people affected by the South African State.

### ***Immigration Act No. 13 of 2002***

Several concepts were emphasized in the Preamble of the Act, including reference to The Alien's Control Act of 1991, the previous law governing foreign nationals' entry, residence, and exit from South Africa, which the new Act replaced as a matter of policy and law. Security and state control over immigration, interdepartmental coordination, recognition of globalization and the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), simplified requirements and procedures, and the expeditious issuance of residence permits were among the principles in the Act. Also listed were: improving border control and preventing illegal immigration; effectively managing and administering border posts; efficiently and effectively enforcing immigration law, "thereby reducing the pull factors of illegal immigration;" accessing scarce skills while protecting South African workers; maintaining a policy connection between foreign workers and the training of citizens; addressing migration issues with other states, and ensuring human rights protection in immigration (South African Government, 2022).

### ***South African Refugee Policy, Legislation, and Migration Policy Framework***

Following South Africa's ratification of the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, as well as the 1996 Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, a draft White Paper on Refugees was published in 1998 as a first step towards creating a system of protection for refugees and asylum seekers. A draft refugee bill was also included in the White Paper; after revisions, it was adopted and enacted into law as the Refugees Act (Act 130 of 1998) later that year. The Act establishes the requirements for qualifying for refugee status in South Africa and the requirements for exclusion from this status in recognition of the obligations imposed by international instruments. The White Paper also outlines several guiding principles for the treatment of refugees in South Africa, such as the international principle of non-refoulement<sup>4</sup>, non-prosecution for illegal entry into the nation, non-deportation, unless there is a threat to public order or national security, fundamental security rights, basic human dignity rights, and fundamental self-sufficiency rights, such as the right to work and education.

The immigration policy had remained the same, but the government issued a new White Paper (Republic of South Africa, 2017) on international migration in 2017, signaling a review of the country's immigration legislative regime. This culminated in the amendment of the Immigration Act. The Migration Policy Framework for Africa (2006) emphasizes that well-managed migration benefits origin and designated countries. Mismanaged migration, on the other hand, can lead to tensions between host communities and migrants and give rise to xenophobia, discrimination, and other social pathologies. The framework lists deteriorating political, socio-economic, and environmental conditions, armed conflicts, insecurity, environmental degradation, and poverty as significant root causes of mass migration and forced displacement in Africa. Adopted in 2006, the framework predicted that migration would be one of the major topics of the 21st century that would challenge African policymakers.

### *The State and the Challenge of Curbing Xenophobia*

The inflow of people commenced during the 1890s when South Africa hired many Malawi mine workers (Mitchell, 2013). As the years passed by, in 1994, South Africa constantly accommodated people from outside South Africa, like South Asian countries such as Pakistan and India (Oluwaseun & Ogunnubi, 2014). Still, xenophobia has triggered a conflict between African immigrants and indigenous black South Africans. The South African Human Rights Commission Report (2010) indicated conflicts, namely, the burning of houses, brutal murders, and looting of foreign-owned businesses by locals. According to Chimbga and Meier (2014), the movement of people is because of the availability of economic opportunities, mainly in the informal sector. This statement is supported by Gordon et al. (2015), who noted that KwaZulu-Natal, compared to other provinces, is far less welcoming to foreigners. Kaluba (2016) emphasizes racism as more behavioral, while xenophobia is attitudinal. According to Akinola (2017) and Masenya (2017), xenophobia is taken from the Greek words *Xeno*, denoting stranger, and *phobia*, meaning fear.

As a result, people react negatively as they fear migrants will harm them by taking their possessions, such as resources and jobs, and benefit more from government services in South Africa. Such fear generates hatred toward refugees, contributing to unnecessary violent acts of hostility (Field, 2017). In some instances, migrants are called 'strangers,' people who are not from the original inhabitants of a particular locality (Soyombo, 2008). McDonald and Jacobs (2005) assert that the media exacerbate the widespread phenomenon of xenophobia in South Africa. Migrants are blamed for all the calamities that encompass crime, high unemployment, and the spread of diseases. Therefore, violent attacks usually occur in societies where the citizens are deprived economically (Field, 2017).

According to Masenya (2017), xenophobia in South Africa arises from the locals claiming that migrants rob their job opportunities, markets, and social opportunities. In general, South African citizens have experienced unemployment for some time, and the issue of unregistered migrant workers seemingly deprives the locals of those work opportunities. Field (2017) contends that economic inequality is the leading cause of xenophobia in low-income areas such as South Africa. According to Gordon et al. (2015), the settlers are blamed because they are entrepreneurs threatening the livelihood of local communities as they are also business-minded, especially in Kwa-Zulu Natal (KZN). In 2008 R1.5 billion in foreign-owned businesses were damaged due to xenophobic acts. Such acts negatively impacted municipalities and governments and caused political instability since they were perceived to be slow in response to the violence (Bekker, 2010; Fabricius, 2017; Tshishonga, 2015).

## **Questioning the Leadership Response to Xenophobia in South Africa**

Fabricius' (2017) opinion is that government denies xenophobia in South Africa. As a result, there is a lack of practical initiatives to deal effectively with the fundamental causes of such a cruel act. Moreover, the government finds an excuse in that South Africa shares the same experience with the rest of the world regarding xenophobia cases and perpetrators. According to the World Economic Forum (2017), the increasing number of migrants is due to the unskilled labor force and South African individuals competing for limited opportunities with the migrants in South Africa. The immigrants are mindful of the scarce opportunities back home and do not hesitate to settle for less pay. However, most of the job markets are clear that refugees cannot be members of any union; therefore, migrants are easily exploited by such harsh circumstances. However, as Botha (2012) maintains, many South Africans experience poverty and equal distribution of wealth and resources, contributing to being violent and acting unlawfully towards migrants because of frustration.

Tella and Ogunnubi (2014) add that economic and political instability creates the ideal circumstances for xenophobia. Masenya (2017) states that South African leadership has reduced xenophobia to an act of criminality instead of addressing and resolving the issue as an act of discrimination. One may recall that in 2017 there was a considerable history of xenophobic attacks, which raised concerns over the safety of migrants in South Africa. Fabricius (2017) stressed the remarks that were made by the Head of the Crime and Justice program at the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) by stating that in some instances, some of our political leaders often make remarks that foreign nationals are the cause of some of the crimes in South Africa including running prostitution rings, human trafficking and supplying of drugs.

Ekambaram (2018) argued that South African citizens have merely focused on the number of spaza shops owned by foreigners, while their focus should be directed at empowering the local people and encouraging the beneficial building of sustainable township economies. According to Gordon (2015), government authorities failed to punish the perpetrators of anti-foreigner violence, making it seem like they were here to take South Africans' possessions. In 2015, the Ministers of Police, State Security, and the DHA were deployed by former president Jacob Zuma in KZN to work with the KZN Provincial Government to control the xenophobia surge. Additionally, the president delegated the Security Cluster to work closely on the xenophobia attacks with the Department of Small Business Development; the involvement of Trade and Industry was also significant. According to Government Communication Information Systems (2015), one of the central government objectives at that time was to avoid repeating these incidents by establishing cooperation between refugees and locals.

Landau (2010) and Ekambaram (2018) contended that the reaction of politicians and government comments was more provocative and encouraged xenophobic attacks. The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) (2011) states that the government's slow response has proven the lack of remorse after the attacks. Gordon (2015) added that most South African officials expressed denialism or xenophobia. The academic studies by Hayem (2013), Landau (2010), Neocosmos (2010), and Desai (2008) emphasized that South African government denialism on xenophobia had gone to another level, exposing refugees to the threat of becoming victims and being viciously killed by South African citizens. Gordon (2015) added to this argument by quoting Dodson (2010) concerning infuriating comments by former president Thabo Mbeki as his reaction was calm and collected while the situation was acute. As a result, his expression of denialism proved that South Africa was far from realizing the negative effect it had on refugees.



On the other hand, one may say that former president Mbeki was reluctant to accept the reality of xenophobia in South Africa and implement immediate and sound policies to protect refugees. On another note, Gqirana (2015) proclaims that in 2013 former president Zuma expressed some denialism about the whole incidence of xenophobia in South Africa during a debate in the National Assembly. His view was that the situation was exaggerated and opposed to people's opinion/perception of the extent of xenophobia in South Africa. For Zuma, the tragedy was not out of hand (Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2013). Government officials, such as the police, reacted to xenophobia by evaluating and revisiting all unregistered immigrants perceived as threatening South African locals.

The former Mayor of Johannesburg, Herman Mashaba, worsened the situation with his scapegoating proclamation in 2018 that undocumented foreigners are likely to occupy unoccupied buildings in the inner city where they commit all sorts of crimes and drugs dealership (Pather, 2016). Grosfoguel et al. (2015) maintained that immigrants are not the main issue. However, South Africans are still stuck in the apartheid boundaries, where they were ill-treated, isolated, and abused. As a result, they have built massive walls to protect what belongs to them, and they are quick to react whenever they do not feel safe. Landau et al. (2012) emphasize that the apartheid system inevitably turned Black South Africans into 'foreign natives' within their own country. As a result, they are more protective of their resources. This was created through the system of homelands, or Bantustans, that isolated black people. The xenophobia affected urban primary places, where most migrants reside and own countless businesses. South African citizens were threatened financially, politically, and socially after they healed the wounds of the apartheid era (Mlambo, 2019).

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **The Competition Theory of Xenophobia**

As with other social phenomena, numerous scholars have given various interpretations. However, the key to confronting xenophobia in the South African context is understanding the reasons behind its existence. The competition theory of xenophobia emphasizes economic factors; competing for scarce resources among the locals and immigrants is the root cause of frustrations, leading to xenophobic violence (Gordon, 2015). Resource scarcity is not the sole source of xenophobia but is a genuine concern. As with the distribution of wealth, the competition theory of xenophobia notes that conflict and competition increase because of increased economic deterioration. Competition over scarce resources results in tensions, violence, and intergroup conflict, a function of inter-group competition. Many scholars have used the competition theory to explain xenophobia, looking at government housing and jobs. Thus, the hypothesis states that competition for housing or employment with African foreigners increases xenophobia (Claasen et al, 2015).

According to Kingsbury (2015), scholars agree that xenophobia refers to the anti-immigrant sentiment exhibited by host societies towards immigrants from other countries with different socio-cultural and ethnic backgrounds. One of the prevalent elucidations of xenophobia in existing literature attributes hostility towards immigrants to the perceived competition for local social and economic resources. The existing literature calls it the competition hypothesis/theory (Kingsbury, 2015). Arguably, the fear of immigrants is most common among groups most vulnerable to the challenges of a globalized economy. The competitive threat from the influx of the immigrant labor force has significantly increased anti-immigrant sentiment in South Africa. Unskilled labor and

lower-middle class workers, uneducated, underemployed, and unemployed individuals are expected to express a more anti-immigrant sentiment (Kingsbury, 2015), which is the case in South Africa and, more precisely, the Isipingo community. Kingsbury (2015) extends the relevance of the competition hypothesis and argues that the negative attitude toward immigrants is substantially more robust in localities with low-income earners where it is possible for foreigners to quickly establish spaza shops as a foundation for a successful business endeavor.

### **Scapegoating Theory of Xenophobia**

Harris (2002) explains xenophobia in South Africa within social transition and change; foreign nationals are blamed for all social and economic ills and are used as scapegoats for personal frustrations in democratic South Africa. In 1994, Mangosuthu Buthelezi, the then minister of the DHA, blamed the competition for the already scarce resources on the “millions of aliens that are pouring into South Africa” and accused them of disrupting the RDP program that the government was implementing (Misago & Landau, 2022; 1615).

Tella and Ogunnubi (2014) argue that this theory has emerged through sociological theory. It locates xenophobia within the context of social transition and change. It is suggested that in the post-apartheid era. Hostility towards foreigners is explained by limited resources, such as housing, education, healthcare, and employment, coupled with high expectations during the transition, meaning that when South Africa became a democratic state in 1994, there were too many expectations from the government to deliver services. Before that, many foreigners from Zimbabwe and other African and non-African states were never attacked or seen as threats. However, after the government failed to deliver its mandate, people started seeing them as threats. At the same time, people’s expectations have been heightened, and realizing that delivery is not immediately meant resentment and discontent were at a peak. People became more and more conscious of their deprivation than ever before. This is the ideal situation for a phenomenon like xenophobia to take root and flourish as South Africa’s political transition to democracy has exposed the country’s unequal distribution of resources and wealth.

People often create a “frustration scapegoat;” they make a target to blame for ongoing deprivation and poverty. In South Africa, foreigners often become scapegoats (Bordeau, 2009). This is because they are perceived as threatening education, health care, jobs, and housing. Historical research indicates that if the majority is in a risky economic position, they are most likely to feel threatened by minorities, especially if those minorities are foreigners. Generally, scapegoating theory explains xenophobia in terms of broad social and economic factors. Xenophobia is hypothesized in terms of relative deprivation and frustration. Many foreigners in South Africa find shelter in informal urban settlements characterized by high housing shortages and poverty. The competition for already limited resources is extreme. This could partly explain the tendency of black foreign nationals to be used as a scapegoat for the increasing poverty and unemployment in South Africa. Immigrants are seen as opportunists only in South Africa for economic benefits (Hadland, 2008). Hadland further referred to this situation as relative deprivation, which would explain the relationship between xenophobic violence and socio-economic factors where inequality and poverty lead to feelings of deprivation.

## Recommendations

While South Africa is often viewed as a hegemonic state, recurring xenophobic attacks have also dented its image with its Southern African neighbors and other African states. Through the review of various literature, this chapter shows that after 29 years of democracy, South Africa seems to be still a country in transition, mainly driven by the legacy of apartheid and its current and increasing social ills. These include rising inequality, poverty, unemployment, crime, water and electricity issues, and sanitation. Thus, there is a need for government at the national, provincial, and local levels to pay much-needed attention to the current rising numbers and levels of social ills. This would not only assist in limiting xenophobic attacks but perhaps might help locals not blame foreign nationals regarding the many social ills currently at play in the country. For Hewitt, Masikane & Toendepi (2020), the current structural challenges are the need for both short and long-term objectives, and South Africa needs to grasp internal challenges while robustly pondering its migration policies. The impact of xenophobia on South Africa's domestic and foreign policy needs serious attention, especially from the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) and the DHA. While over the years, the concept of Ubuntu (an African philosophy that emphasizes the recognition of common humanity among the people of Africa and has its origins across Africa) has always been on the government's lips. However, through numerous policy documents, this philosophy has not received the respect it deserves. Some South Africans have failed to practice it with other foreign nationals. This is drawn from the fact that every individual residing in South Africa has the right to essential services like ordinary South Africans. Thus, it is up to the government (through its different directorates) to develop comprehensive migration policies that are well-monitored and evaluated.

From the preceding, one may deduce that much still needs to be done moving forward. For South Africa to protect its image and be deserving of continental respect, there is a need for the government to uplift its citizens and reduce competition (mainly through employment initiatives) between locals and foreigners. More robust and nuanced policies should tackle the immigration/migration challenges facing South Africa and many other African states. Some African states signed the free movement of person protocol in Addis Ababa in January 2018. Its goal is to stimulate the free movement of people and capital goods and services, thus promoting African integration and other benefits. This is a significant step in enabling the continent's blueprint agenda over the next two decades, considering that most African states are weak, lack needed resources, and are marginalized in global politics. While such protocols and policies would help steer the movement of people, like many African protocols before, the slow implementation process has always been a significant factor. Bringing this back to South Africa, the scope and magnitude of the problem in the country in recent years indicate a substantial challenge for African integration.

If this persists, it will undoubtedly undermine the efforts of the state to address the problem. It will further paint a dark image of South Africa's hegemonic posture on the continent. The issue of xenophobia will also derail much-needed progress in Africa's blueprints as, over the years, xenophobia has ruined relationships between South Africa and other African states such as Nigeria. To gradually work with other African states to spearhead its own and Africa's development blueprints, South Africa should realize that strength is driven by unity among African states through solidarity and integration. Similarly, the role of leadership shapes people's opinions and thinking, so if the leadership continues to deny that it exists, this gives the right citizens to think it is a normal and correct thing to do. While these recommendations are far from inclusive, nevertheless, they may assist in laying a foundation for continuing research on xenophobia in

Africa. Looking at it from an international perspective, xenophobia paints a dire picture for international observers regarding African integration, mainly from an ethnic point of view.

As a continent still facing numerous socio-economic ills post the 1960s (when some African states gained or were about to gain their independence from European colonizers), it paints a lousy picture regarding African unity from an international perspective. Thus, internationally, for states and observers alike, this does not contend with South Africa's renowned Constitution driven by human rights protocols. Further to this, as the only African (currently) member of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS), South Africa has a pivotal role to play and be the voice of Africa in international fora. Hence, attending to its internal xenophobia conundrum can (at least) further grant it the respect it commands as a hegemonic state not only in South Africa, Africa but to international observers.

## Conclusion

This chapter aimed to provide scrutiny of xenophobia in South Africa by examining it through the lens of the Migrant, the State, and the local Citizens. The article confirms that post the apartheid era and driven by its robust economy compared to other African states, South Africa has over the years become a migrant-receiving state, and this has driven the upsurge in xenophobic attacks because of the many social ills many South Africans still face 29 years into democracy. Xenophobia has several consequences for African integration and economic prosperity. The government has not only failed to control border corruption but also failed to tackle the country's numerous incidents of xenophobia. As many foreigners seem unequal before the law in most citizens' eyes in South Africa, the onus will lie with the government to eliminate the climate of impunity that makes foreign nationals feel hated and betrayed.

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