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Developing and validating a social model for xenophobic violence in South Africa

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management at the University of Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Management (in the field of Public and Development Management).

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Abstract

Widespread outbreaks of xenophobic violence within informal urban settlements is a recent feature of South African Society that has troubled politicians and challenged social analysts. While the number of "episodes" has been limited, such has been their ferocity that in 2008 they garnered huge media attention both at home and abroad.

The potential to shatter the image of the "rainbow nation" and to compromise the post apartheid nation-building project has not been lost on Government, who along with political scientists and sociologists are keen to build a better understanding of "what is going on"[1].

This study re-examines the dynamics surrounding xenophobic episodes in an attempt to make sense of the range of social theorem that have been put forward by analysts and commentators to explain the phenomenon. Drawing specifically upon Relative Deprivation Theory and looking closely at the dynamics of *social rank* and *access to opportunity* – the study explores a hypothetical framework that suggests the critical role of *opportunity shock* in transforming a volatile environment for xenophobia into a potentially explosive one.

The main body of the report sets out feedback and analyses of the model arising from interviews with recognised experts, while a discussion section of the report uses concepts and ideas that have emerged from conversation to set out a number of areas that would seem to warrant more investigation in the research of this troubling social phenomenon.

[1] This was the opening question posed to speakers at a high level round table discussion on xenophobia held by the Helen Suzman foundation in Johannesburg in August 2010

Declaration

I Kieron Crawley, declare that this report is my own unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Management (in the field of Public and Development Management) in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

Kieron Crawley

29th September 2011

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Contents

ABSTRACT I

DECLARATION II

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS III

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS 5

LIST OF TABLES 6

LIST OF FIGURES 6

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY 7

1.1 Rationale 7

1.2 Introduction 8

1.3 Context 9

1.4 Problem Statement 12

1.5 Purpose Statement 13

1.6 Research Questions 13

1.7 Significance of the research 14

1.8 The Model 15

1.9 Outline of Chapters 28

2 CURRENT UNDERSTANDING OF XENOPHOBIA 30

2.1 Introduction 30

2.2 Definitions 30

2.3 Rights of migrants 31

2.4 A social pathology 32

2.5 Listening to the people 32

2.6 Political discourse and definitions of citizenship 33

2.7 The 2008 thunderstorm 33

2.8 2008 Reports – theorising about factors that lead to xenophobia 35

2.9 The search for explanations and conceptual frameworks 37

2.10 The link between xenophobic sentiment and violence 38

2.11 Relative Deprivation Theory 39

2.12 International literature 40

2.13 Conclusion 44

3 DESIGNING THE RESEARCH 46

3.1 A qualitative approach 46

3.2 Research design and data collection 46

3.3 Data analysis 49

3.4 Validity, reliability and limitations of the study 49

3.5 Ethical considerations 51

4 PRESENTING THE FINDINGS 52

4.1 Introduction 52

4.2 Structure of the presentation 52

4.3 Theme A - Opportunity, social rank and transition from South Africa's distorted past 53

4.4 Theme B - Relative positions on the social Rank/Opportunity curve for South Africans and foreign nationals 60

4.5 Theme C - The impact of opportunity shocks 75

4.6 Overall plausibility 82

4.7 Analysis of the Key Informant Polls 85

5 DEVELOPING THE MODEL 92

5.1 The model and social theory 92

5.2 Explaining the attacks against Shangaans and Vendas 100

5.3 Examining the dynamics of violence 104

5.4 Accommodating alternative approaches 110

5.5 Linking sentiment to violence – the role of instigators 112

5.6 Foreign nationals and corruption 116

6 CONCLUSIONS 121

6.1 Introduction 121

6.2 Plausibility 121

6.3 Development 123

6.4 Shortcomings of the model 124

6.5 Areas for development 125

7 REFERENCES 128

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY 135

9 APPENDICES 136

APPENDIX A - LIST OF INTERVIEWEES 136

APPENDIX B - SCHEDULE OF INTERVIEWS 140

APPENDIX C - INTERVIEW TEMPLATE **141**

APPENDIX D - KEY INFORMANT POLL **144**

APPENDIX E - SUMMARY OF KEY INFORMANT POLL RESULTS **145**

List of Abbreviations

ANC	African National Congress
ACMS	African Centre for Migration and Society
CoRMSA	Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in Southern Africa
CSVR	Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation
DHA	Department for Home Affairs
FIFA	International Federation of Football Associations
FMSP	Forced Migration Study Project
GCRO	Gauteng City Region Observatory
GEAR	Growth Employment and Redistribution
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HBS	Heinrich Böll Stiftung
HRW	Human Rights Watch
HSF	Helen Suzman Foundation
HSRC	Human Science Research Council
ITT	Integrated Threat Theory
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
P&DM	Public and Development Management
SAHRC	South African Human Rights Council
SAMP	Southern Africa Migration Project
RCT	Rational Choice Theory
RD	Relative Deprivation
RDP	Rural Development Programme
RDT	Relative Deprivation Theory
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

List of Tables

Table 1 Concurrence of respondents with propositions **87**

Table 2 Consensus amongst respondents around propositions **90**

List of Figures

Figure 1 The Social Ladder **16**

Figure 2 The relationship between opportunity and social rank **17**

Figure 3 The Social Ladder in South Africa pre 1994 **19**

Figure 4 Social rank and opportunity in South Africa Pre - 1994 **20**

Figure 5 The transitional opportunity profile for South Africa **21**

Figure 6 The Social Ladder and Foreign Nationals **16**

Figure 7 The position of foreign nationals **24**

Figure 8 The impact of opportunity shock **25**

Figure 9 Realignment of perceived levels of opportunity with actual levels **26**

Figure 10 Cognitive and affective RD plotted on the SR/OP curve **97**

Figure 11 RD experienced by poor South Africans towards foreign nationals **99**

Figure 12 Relative deprivation experienced towards Shangaans and Vendas **103**

Figure 13 Xenophobic fatalities vs. time (26 April to 26th May 2008) **106**

Figure 14 Four phases of the xenophobic episode **108**

Figure 15 The exposure of local leaders during opportunity shock **115**

Figure 16 Plotting the path to corruption on the social rank/opportunity curve **119**

1 Introduction and background to the study

1.1 Rationale

The journey for South Africans from apartheid to democracy has been a challenging one, not least in the constructing of foundations to support a truly inclusive and tolerant society (Nord & Assubuji, 2008). While the country's visionary constitution promises a new order where equal rights are enjoyed by all, the spectre of xenophobia and its gruesome manifestation in mob violence promises to obscure and even destroy that vision. But in a country where the constitutionally enshrined commitment to diversity has helped craft a globally recognised brand: "the rainbow nation", where does this xenophobia spring from?

A rapid review of current literature reveals a spectrum of opinion and research offering explanations ranging from the existence of a mysterious third force, to deep-seated structural inequalities to the machinations of mischievous and callous local politicians. Acknowledging that each interpretation has its merit, there would appear to be a need for a framework that can tie the strands together and help answer some of the nagging but persistent questions that remain unanswered: why if the violence was primarily xenophobic were so many South Africans also numbered amongst the victims? And why if violence was so virile in certain locations did it fail to emerge in others where conditions were the same?

According to commentators such as Sibongile Mkhabela of the Black Sash, "the debate has only just started" (HSF, 2010). In this context, any study that encourages discussion and contributes to a deeper understanding as to *what is going on*, in the complex area of xenophobia can only benefit South African society and with it the dream of the worlds first truly rainbow nation.

1.2 Introduction

Social exclusion of minority ethnic groups and xenophobic attacks, are a growing phenomenon in many countries around the world (Muigai, 2010). The violence and forced evictions that often accompany such attacks, not only represent a threat to law and order and a violation of human rights, but at a deeper level, erode valuable social capital that in turn threatens the stability of society.

South Africa in particular has witnessed a significant number of xenophobic attacks in the recent past, with worldwide focus on the ethno-violence of 2008 in which 68 people lost their lives and over 100,000 foreign nationals where displaced (Misago, Monson, Polzer, & Landau, 2010). Hot spots in the townships of Khayalitsha, Cape Town and Alexandria in Johannesburg contrast with other areas, where despite a large number of immigrants and a degree of ethnic tension, violence did not emerge.

Civil society, although somewhat unprepared, was quick to respond with NGOs providing much needed humanitarian assistance for those displaced from their homes and in need of protection (Parsley & Everatt, 2010). The Government's response on the other hand, was widely criticized as being slow and uncoordinated (CSVR - CoRMSA - HBS, 2008; SAMP, 2008; Williams, 2008).

While the violence was brought under control, many were left wondering why it had manifested with such rapidity and intensity. Crush in his introduction to a study published by the Southern African Migration Project (SAMP, 2008, p. 6) pointed out that the *Perfect Storm* "did not spring out of nowhere", but was rather the manifestation of a trend in xenophobic sentiment that had been intensifying in South Africa since the 1990's.

Threats of renewed ethno-violence emerged towards the conclusion of the 2010 FIFA World Cup in what Polzer, described as a *viral campaign* (interview, 16th August 2010). The phenomenon garnered considerable media attention and the social tension it generated was sufficient to trigger the departure of a significant number of foreign nationals from informal settlements around Cape Town (Ntsaluba & Rawoot, 2008).

Despite some violence and a tense standoff between police and agitating xenophobic mobs at Kya Sands on the outskirts of Johannesburg, widespread violent xenophobic *episode* was effectively averted (Mail&Guardian, Cops monitor 'quiet' Kya Sands, 2010).

1.3 Context

The social context of South Africa is a complex one by any standards. A country deeply furrowed by both its colonial and traditional African history, it is home to a multi-ethnic population who trace their ancestry variously Africa, Europe and Asia. Emerging tentatively from a troubled and divisive past, the challenge for South Africa in the 21st century is to deliver to citizens the promise of benefits that are expected from the "powerhouse of Africa"[2] while grappling with social stresses and extremes of inequality that have earned it an additional designation as one of the most violent societies in the world[3](UNODC, 2011).

1.3.1 The legacy of Apartheid

All social research in South Africa is inevitably coloured by the shadow of apartheid. While commentators vary in the extent to which they pin the blame for current social ills at its door, there is little doubt that the apartheid system has left scars on the social fabric of the country which extend beyond its own institutional demise in the early 1990's. In the study of xenophobia, the legacy of apartheid is widely seen as a contributing factor, even if the direct nature of the link is not always laid bare. In David Everatt's words:

> *Given the massive psychological damage done by South Africans to each other… it is surely not surprising to find that people capable of enormous bravery in support of noble ideals are also capable of more base motives (Everatt, 2011, p. 8).*

Rather like a new city built on the foundations of the old, it is conceivable that the buried structures of apartheid continue to provide a foundation on which the violations

[2] The term that is frequently used to describe the South African economy is notably used on the official government website (The International Marketing Council of South Africa, 2011)

[3] The UN office on drugs and crime using statistics relating to the period 2003 and 2008, list South Africa amongst eight countries in world with levels of intentional homicide above 35 per 100,000 population per year.

of human rights sporadically emerge. However, we must examine other factors within a *post-apartheid* South Africa to fully understand the context from which the violence meted out against foreigners in May 2008 has surfaced.

1.3.2 Immigration policy, the media and political discourse

Despite the rolling back of apartheid, the new South Africa which emerged following the establishment of the first truly democratic government and the crafting of a visionary constitution - still carried with it, significant institutional and legislative baggage from the past. Immigration policy based on the apartheid era *Aliens Control Act* (No. 95 of 1991), was seen by some to foster the on-going abuse of migrants (HRW, 1998) while increasing xenophobic discourse by politicians and within the media built prejudice and suspicion towards those black Africans who were not native to South Africa (Neocosmos, 2010; Smith, 2010).

1.3.3 A hegemony of violence

It is clear that prior to 1994, violence or the *threat* of violence was a central tool that was used to impose and maintain an unjust social system in South Africa. It is also evident that violence was part and parcel of an armed struggle that was necessary to overcome that same system. However the level to which violence *remains* prevalent in South African society in lieu of other tools for resolving social dispute is a factor that has been highlighted as significant within numerous reports on xenophobia (du Plessis, et al., 2003; Harris, 2001; Misago, Landau, & Monson, 2009; Parsley & Everatt, 2010; Nyar, 2010; SAMP, 2008; Valji, 2003). Du Plessis is able to draw upon a *significant* body of literature when explaining, "violence is seen as the legitimate and normal way of solving problems in the Country" (2003, p. 6)

Although violent crime in South Africa is reported to have fallen significantly since 1994 (Mail&Guardian, Crime stats: Murders fall by 8,6%, 2010), its on-going rating as the one of the world's most violent countries[4] must be considered as significant within the context for violent attacks against foreigners.

[4] South Africa ranks 7th in a report on homicide published by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime.

1.3.4 The role of the media

Much criticism of the media has emerged subsequent to the xenophobic attacks in 2008 for their use of unsympathetic and even inflammatory language in relation to foreign nationals. Articles invoking imagery that alluded to *floods* of foreigners *invading* South Africa's borders were published amongst a number of widely read dailies, most notably the Daily Star (Harber, 2008) in the period preceding the violence.

While *post ante* research on the role of the print media in relation to violence falls short of identifying it as being *complicit* in the violence, it was nonetheless judged to be at very least, xenophobic in its simplistic and incomplete portrayal of foreigners (Smith, 2011).

1.3.5 Rising immigration and a hospitality strained

This focus on the unhelpful role of the media nonetheless overlies the fact that by 2008 the number of foreign nationals seeking refuge in South Africa as a result of social strife in Zimbabwe and Democratic Republic of Congo was estimated to have increased dramatically.

Despite the fact that leaders such as Thabo Mbeki espoused the principle of hospitality towards African visitors in recognition of the support and solidarity that ANC exiles had received abroad in the 1980s and 90s, the message had little sway with those who were living cheek by jowl with visitors who had "outstayed their welcome",[5] in some of the most over-crowded and under-served informal settlements dotted around South Africa's major urban centres.

1.3.6 A nation in transition

Finally and perhaps most significantly, the fact that South Africa is a nation undergoing a continuing social transition is recognised as a significant factor in contributing to a context for xenophobic violence. O'Donnell & Schmitter (as cited in Parsley & Everatt, 2010) define the *transitional process to democracy* as typically moving through

[5] This widespread sentiment was reported by David Everatt (Interview, 19/01/11 Johannesburg) who sat in on a series of focus groups between April and June 2008

liberalising, democratising and *socialising* phases - the last of which is held to deliver the goal of social and economic equality. While South Africa may indeed have been *liberalised* and *democratised*, many agree that *social* and *economic* equality is still a long way off (Bond, Ngwane, & Baruti, 2010; Desai, 2010; Harris, 2001; Jara & Peberdy, 2010; Misago, Landau, & Monson, 2009; Valji, 2003).

It is true that the historical division of wealth between white and black may have given way to a new "grey" area where an emerging middle class have managed to move into a *no man's land* of relative prosperity. However many of the informal social structures that kept the racial frontiers intact are still in place[6], and there would seem to be a consensus that there is an on-going (and even widening) inequality between *privileged* and *disadvantaged*. It is this widening gap which many commentators see as fuelling the disappointment, frustration and anger amongst South Africa's poor, and in the process creating an optimum environment from which the spectre of xenophobia can spring (Mamelang, 2008)(interviews, Thomas, 7th March 2011; Jahed, 14th March 2011).

1.3.7 The need for a deeper understanding

It is clear that South Africa's complex social context provides a convincing *backdrop* for the violent xenophobic attacks that took place in 2008. However, a backdrop alone cannot unravel the complexities of a *plot* nor the motives of the *characters* involved in the *action* - we need a much deeper understanding of "what is going on" to be able to untangle the dynamics surrounding the *where, who* and *when* of xenophobia, an understanding that explains the patterns of its emergence and most crucially will allow us to spot warning signs of outbreaks of violence in future.

1.4 Problem Statement

While poverty, unemployment and the concentration of migrants within poor communities are underlying factors that provide the space in which xenophobia can take root (Parsley & Everatt, 2010), debate continues around "what is actually going

[6] David Everatt most notably made this point with respect to professional networks (interview, 19/01/11 Johannesburg)

on".[7]

Widespread consensus on the threat that xenophobic violence poses to the fabric of South African Society[8] and the urgent need for measures to address it, sits uncomfortably with *absence of a widely accepted framework* that satisfactorily explains the manifestation, targeting and timing of the phenomenon within the South African context.

1.5 Purpose Statement

The purpose of this research project is to *outline, present* and critically *discuss* a hypothetical model for xenophobic violence in South Africa based on a consideration of public perceptions around *access to opportunity* and the *social ranking* of individuals and groups within impoverished communities where violence has taken place. The potential *plausibility* of the model will be explored through responses and insights gained from interviews with key informants, drawn from a recognised body of experts active within the field in South Africa as well as through a review of social theory.

1.6 Research Questions

1.6.1 Main question

To what extent is the *model*, as presented, plausible in describing the social dynamics that have lead to outbreaks of xenophobic violence in South Africa between 2008 and 2010?

1.6.2 Sub questions

a. What aspects of xenophobic violence in South Africa during the period, are *consistent* with the model?

b. What aspects of xenophobic violence in South Africa during the period *cannot* be explained by the model?

---

[7] The lack of consensus as to *what is going on* was made clear within the proceedings of the Helen Suzman Foundation (2010) Quarterly Round Table discussion - "On Strangers and Outsiders – Overcoming Xenophobia", held on 18th August 2010, which posed this question to a panel of experts.

[8] Amisi *et al.*(2010, p.15) refer to the xenophobic wave "as perhaps the worst case of the tearing South African social fabric"

c. In what ways might the model be improved or adapted to better describe *what is going on*?

d. What are potential areas for further research that consideration of the model suggests?

1.7 Significance of the research

As highlighted in the problem statement, at present there is on-going debate within South Africa concerning the factors that constitute root causes, contributors and triggers for xenophobic violence. While the "suspects" have been identified the mechanisms through which they interact, unite and lead to explosive outbreaks of violence remain clouded. Many of the recent reports into xenophobic violence have highlighted the urgent need to address the issue with recommendations for government, civil society and the security agencies, however the absence of a framework with sufficient explanatory power places limitations on the efficacy of measures to mitigate future outbreaks.

As Patrick Bond of the Centre for Civil Society puts it:

> *We should have a sense of the 'box' within which we are all operating. We should know whether the limits of actions by civil society are within the parameters of the causes, or instead inadequate to the task at hand (halting and reversing xenophobic tendencies) because they are far beyond civil society's abilities or even conceptions (Amisi, et al., 2010, p. 1).*

Annsilla Nyar also highlights the challenge for researchers:

> *It is important that understandings of the xenophobic violence do not remain at the external contextual level and that an attempt is made at interpreting how mass violence erupts at particular points in time and in particular communities, within the context of an ever-volatile external environment (Nyar, 2010, p. 25).*

A valid model that can explain xenophobic violence with particular regard to it's *timing* and *social context* promises to inform policy and provide valuable leads for those seeking to develop *early warning systems*.

1.8 The Model

The starting point of this research is a hypothetical model that attempts to describe the social dynamics that lie behind the outbreak of a major xenophobic episode.

1.8.1 Summary

The model proposes a *causal* relationship between *social rank* and *access to opportunity*. This relationship, it is hypothesised, is key to determining whether an individual's (or a group's) activity falls within acceptable norms that are prescribed by society. The model goes on to suggest that individuals or groups that fall outside these norms are subject to societal *disapproval* - and in extreme circumstances (when the aggregate level of *opportunity* is *perceived* to fall) societal *resentment* leaves them vulnerable as targets of violence.

1.8.2 Opportunity

Opportunity is a key commodity in all societies. It determines the ability of an individual or group to better themselves and increase their assets across human, natural, financial, physical and economic spheres[9] (Scoones, 1998).

1.8.3 Social Rank

The concept of *social rank* is closely related to that of *social class* – a central tenet of both *Marxist* and *Weberian* social theory that is used to explain the distribution of influence and power in society. *Social rank* for the purpose of this model is used to define an individual's (or a group's) position on a continuum between those who are at the bottom of the social ladder (the poorest and most socially marginalised) and those who occupy the upper echelons (super elite).

1.8.4 The relationship between social rank and access to opportunity

The *social-rank/opportunity* model assumes that opportunity is not allocated *equally* across society but that instead it is allocated in accordance with norms and values *within*

[9] These five dimensions form the foundations of the *sustainable livelihood framework* as outlined by Scoones (1998)

a given society. Those at the top of the social rank scale (elite) tend to have access to multiple opportunities (educational, intellectual, financial, social, recreational) while those at the bottom (socially marginalised) have access to far fewer. The "social ladder" - an analogy that is sometimes used to describe this type of social stratification, if drawn, might look something like the steps in Figure 1. Those who find themselves towards the upper end of the ladder have access to greater opportunity than those below them.



Figure 1 The Social Ladder

1.8.5 The opportunity line

In many societies the distribution of individuals along the social ladder follows that of a normal distribution i.e. most people occupy a position somewhere in the middle with many fewer at the extremes where they access either maximum opportunity, or little or no opportunity. If we were to plot this as a curve where the vertical and horizontal axes represent *Opportunity* and *Social Rank* respectively and individuals are represented as points, it may look something like that drawn in Figure 2

In each *social stratum* (on our graphic visualised as a vertical column) individuals are free to move *vertically* towards the *opportunity line*. This may be thought of as a line bounding the region in which individuals can acceptably maximise their access to opportunity and the region where access to opportunity is unacceptable for their given

social rank. The model assumes that social norms and practices define the position of this bounding line and prevent individuals from moving *above* it. To increase access to opportunity they must instead move *horizontally* (increasing social rank) before increasing their access to *opportunity*. Those who *do* move above the line (increasing their levels of access to opportunity without traversing social rank) do so with *disapproval* from society.

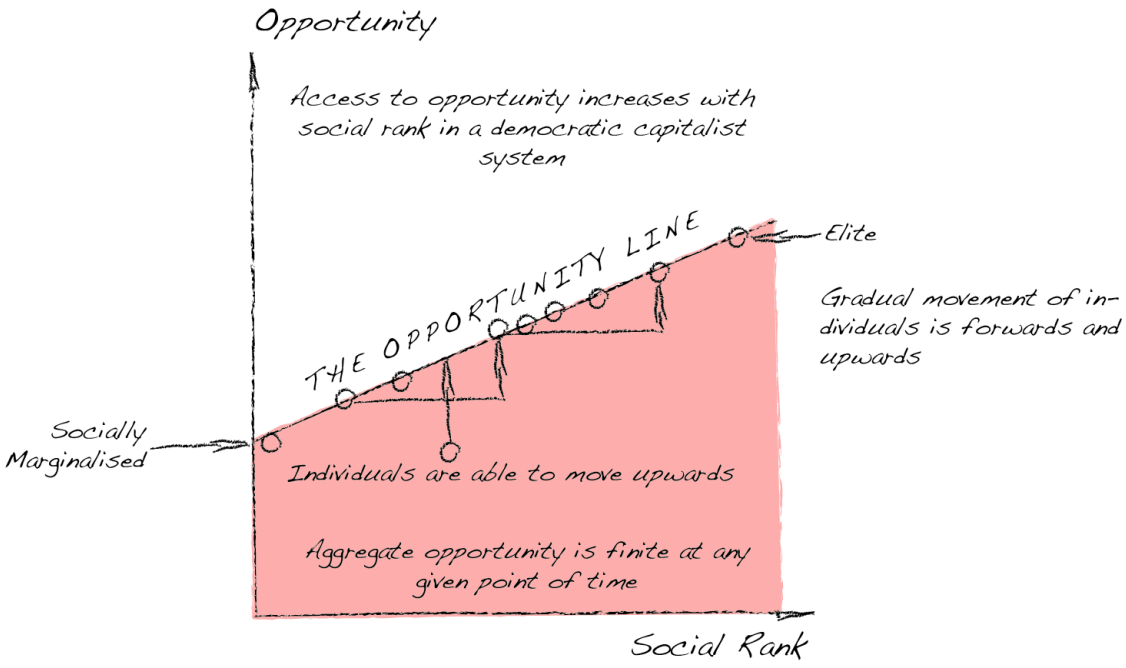


Figure 2 The relationship between opportunity and social rank

1.8.6 Gradual movement along the line

In a society where an individual's goal is long-term self-betterment, the tendency will be for individuals to move gradually *forwards* and *upwards* along the *social rank/opportunity* line. The model suggests that in order to achieve this an individual must be socially *empowered* (to progress horizontally along the scale of social rank)[10]and acquire *skills* (to move vertically and take advantage of growing access to opportunity).

[10] A young person from a working class background who chooses to study medicine illustrates this type of social movement. The training at Medical School to become a doctor builds his or her *capacity* in terms of technical skills and is in turn reflected by an increase in the *social rank* that the graduate enjoys once they become an established practitioner in the community.

At any point an individual or group may faces *barriers* to movement that present themselves on the social rank dimension (e.g. a class barrier), or the opportunity dimension (e.g. deficiency of appropriate skills).

If there is a net movement of large *sections* of the population forwards and upwards, this also implies that the aggregate amount of *opportunity* available must also increase at a rate that can accommodate their movement. If aggregate opportunity levels *fail* to keep pace then frustration may result within sections of the population who are unable to traverse the opportunity terrain and claim what they may regard as *entitlements*.

1.8.7 The aggregate amount of opportunity

The model assumes that the *aggregate amount* of opportunity available in a society is *finite* at any given point. This may change over time (in many countries it grows steadily in direct relation to economic growth). It is possible however that in some societies the aggregate amount of opportunity is *stagnant* in relation to population growth, or that it *decreases*. Decrease may be *gradual* (through gradual erosion of the economy) or *sudden* (in times of economic recession or conflict). Movement forwards and upwards and along the *social rank/opportunity* line in these circumstances is difficult or impossible with consequent strains on society.

1.8.8 Social Ranking in South Africa

Social ranking in South Africa has historically been a complex and deeply contentious issue. Essentially the mechanism of *apartheid* can be considered to have superimposed discrimination based on race onto the relationship between *social rank* and *access to opportunity*. The mechanisms to control this were not only enshrined in legislation and institutional infrastructure, but more importantly were impressed into attitudes and behaviours of the population – both amongst those who were *privileged* and those that were *disadvantaged* under the system.

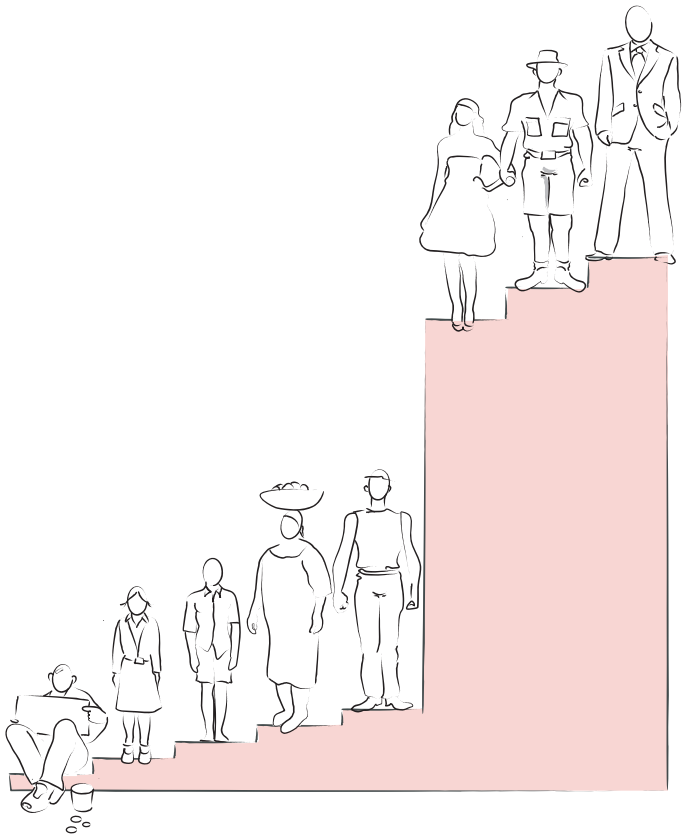


Figure 3 The Social Ladder in South Africa pre 1994

If we were to represent the *social ladder* South Africa pre 1994 it might look something like that shown in Figure 3**.**

The portion to the left of the "step" was occupied by the majority of South Africans that were classified as *black* while the portion to the right was occupied predominantly by those who were classified as *white*. The figure illustrates the significant disparity in terms of the distribution of opportunity across racial groups.

If we convert this figure into our *social rank/opportunity* curve then it might look like that shown in Figure 4. In this case the *apartheid opportunity line* has a step that corresponds with the racial divide.

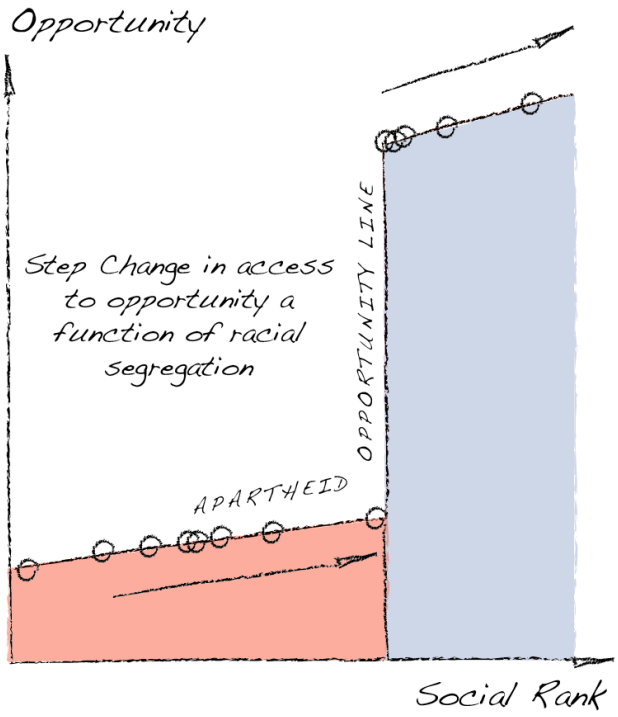


Figure 4 **Social rank and opportunity in South Africa Pre - 1994**

1.8.9 The period post 94, the Government of National Unity and the new constitution

Following the struggle for freedom and the establishing of a truly democratic system of government in South Africa, the new Constitution of 1996 put in place a framework that affords *equal* rights for all. Intrinsic within this is an *equal right to access opportunity*, although we must recognise that this is within the confines of democratic capitalist system (i.e. the opportunity line still has a *positive* gradient).

In this respect we might expect the opportunity line of the New South Africa to resemble that of a typical capitalist democracy such as that in Figure 2. However, at its most basic level, the opportunity line is manifested through *day-to-day* interactions and transactions between *individuals*. The forces that *shape* the line are therefore not only those that stem from *legislation* and *institutional frameworks*, but the *attitudes* and *behaviours* that society exhibits as a whole. These, we can assume, take much longer to change.

1.8.10 The nature of transition

In terms of our model, a major part of the process of *transition* in South Africa might

therefore be thought of as a gradual shifting of the opportunity line from that which was in place during the Apartheid era to a more *equitable* line that is itself a product of the new constitution. We might also expect a gradual movement and diffusion *horizontally* amongst racial groups along the social ranking scale.

1.8.11 The shape of the opportunity line at present

While we do not as yet have specific tools to measure the profile of the opportunity line in South Africa, we can speculate that it might fall somewhere between that shown in Figure 2 and Figure 4. In fact the actual profile might look like that presented in Figure 5. Those at the bottom of the social ladder are enjoying more access to opportunity than they previously had and there is a gradual movement of previously disadvantaged South Africans into the middle classes. At the upper portion of the social ladder, the unbridled access to opportunity that individuals once enjoyed has now become more constrained. This might be thought of as a *transitional profile* as the apartheid line (with the racial step) approaches the *constitutional* straight line.

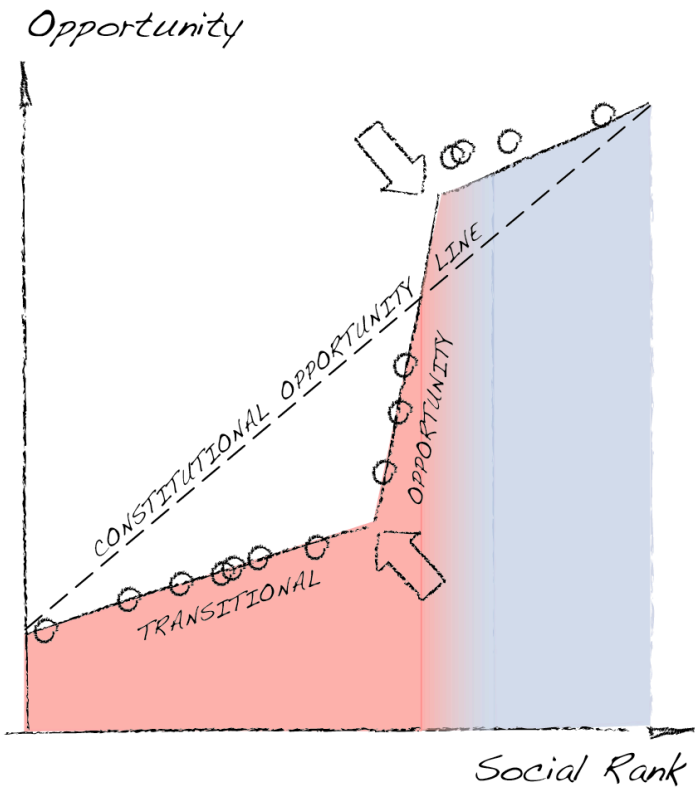


Figure 5 **The transitional opportunity profile for South Africa**

1.8.12 The position of foreign national entrepreneurs

South Africa has witnessed a significant inflow of foreign Nationals into the country since 1998. Many have come with skills and aptitudes that have allowed them to adapt quickly to their new environment and to establish small-scale income generating activities. For many, coming from environments where *opportunity* has been severely constrained, they have moved rapidly to *maximise* their access to opportunity within the legal and institutional framework that is part of their new environment.

It might be argued that the *nature* of migration (which obliges migrants to a certain extent to self-select) has endowed them with *aptitudes* that help them to *maximise opportunity*. Similarly, it might be argued that *unlike* their South African Counterparts, they are *not* constrained by a legacy of engrained attitudes and behaviours that *apartheid* has imprinted.

The social ladder in South Africa with foreign national entrepreneurs superimposed might look like that in Figure 6. While their South African counterparts find themselves situated on a *transitional ladder*, foreign nationals are in a perfect position to advance rapidly along the path of the *constitutional steps*. Interestingly the model suggests that while foreign nationals may find themselves with comparative *advantage* to local South Africans at the *lower* end of the ladder, they still find themselves at comparative *disadvantage* to historical elites at on the upper portion of the social hierarchy.

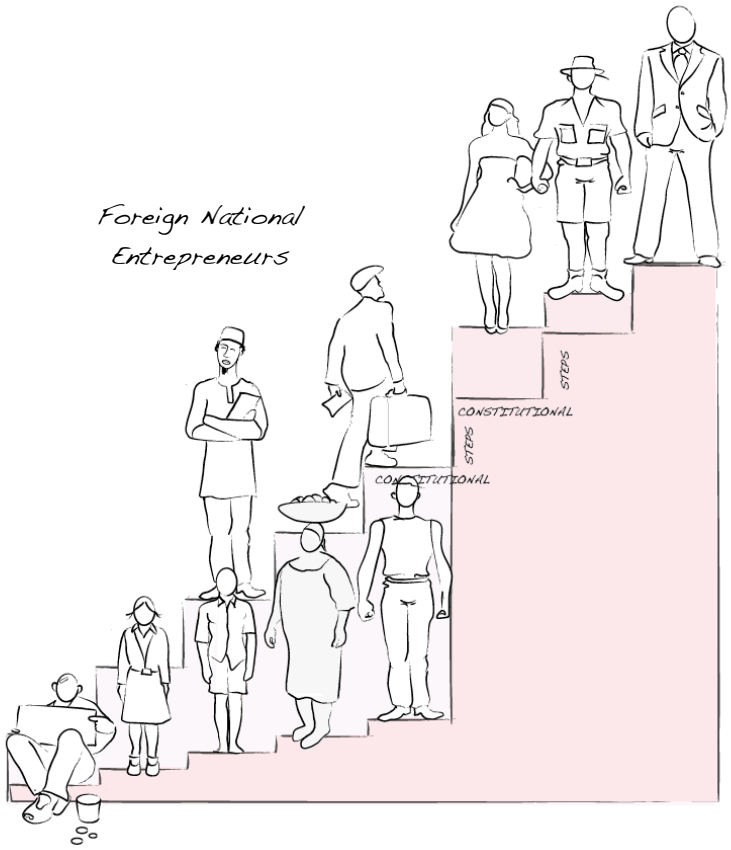


Figure 6 The Social Ladder and Foreign Nationals

If we were to plot the position of some of these foreign national entrepreneurs on the *social rank/opportunity* curve they might lie in positions such as those illustrated in Figure 7. They are *close to* or *on* the line that defines the amount of opportunity that is afforded *constitutionally* to individuals of their social rank, but *above* the *transitional* line which bounds the majority of South Africans. We might define this region as one that they occupy with *tolerance* but *dissatisfaction* by the rest of society.

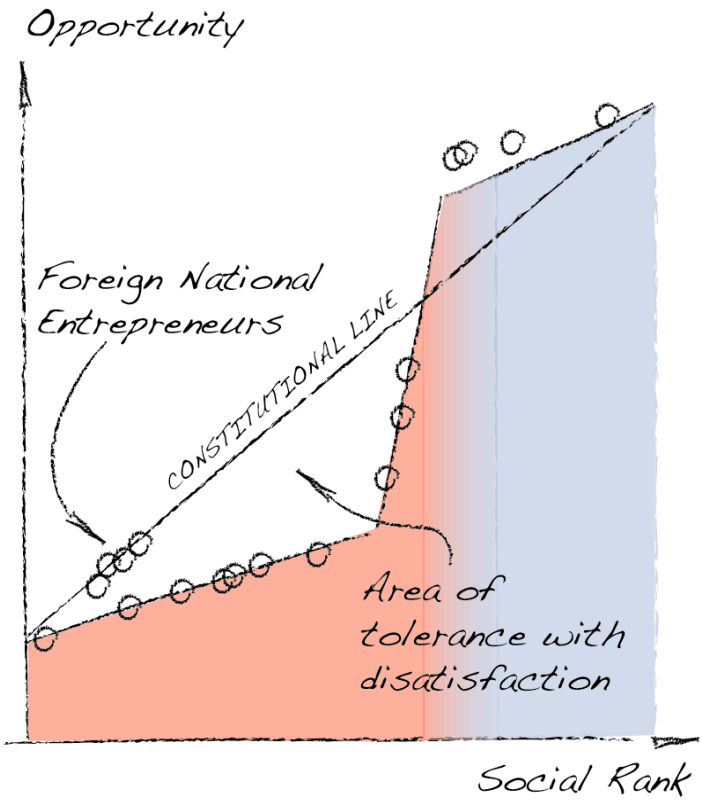


Figure 7 **The position of foreign nationals**

1.8.13 The impact of opportunity shocks

We have stated earlier that the aggregate amount of opportunity in a society is finite at any given point but that it may grow, remain constant or decline over time. For the purposes of the model, an *opportunity shock* is defined as an event that significantly reduces the amount of *perceived opportunity* in society in a manner that leads to a *step change*. It is important to recognise that the *perceived* level of opportunity will often drop before the *actual* level of opportunity itself feeds through to all levels of society. In the long run the two may, or may not be congruent (e.g. the actual impact of an economic recession may end up being greater or less than initially anticipated). It is the *perception* of aggregate opportunity however that might be considered as the initial factor that significantly influences public opinion and which therefore has relevance for the model.

If we were to amend the *social-rank/opportunity* curve to show the impact of an opportunity shock, we might illustrate it with a net shift downwards of the *constitutional*

opportunity line. As we have stated earlier, the change in *perception* of available opportunity will precede the change in *actual* opportunity - the factor that will ultimately shift the *transitional opportunity* line downwards, bringing individuals with it as the economic downturn impacts on the means by which they generate their income.

The net effect of the *opportunity shock* in our model is that those who occupy the region we have labelled *tolerance* with *dissatisfaction* (foreign national entrepreneurs) suddenly find themselves *above* the line which defines the boundary of what is considered acceptable in terms of social norms (see Figure 8).

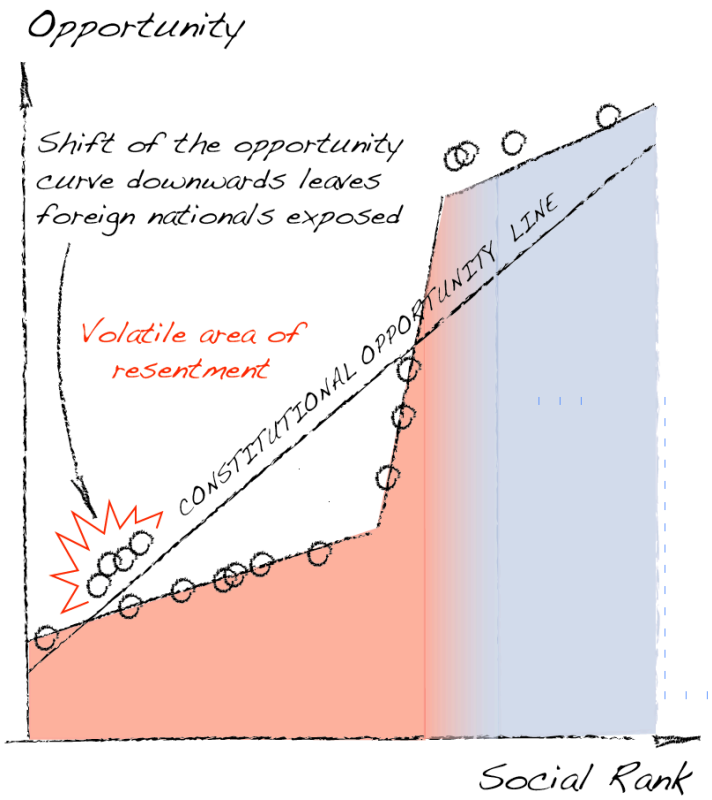


Figure 8 **The impact of opportunity shock**

I propose that this moves those individuals into a *dangerous* region where societal *resentment* replaces *dissatisfaction*, and foments a *volatile* environment in which a range of *triggers* can potentially spark *violence*.

The model suggests that this *volatile* environment will persist until the *transitional* line of

actual opportunity realigns itself with the *constitutional line* which represents *perceived opportunity* (a lead-time of several months) and individuals find themselves back within the regions on the *social-ranking/opportunity* lines that they occupied prior to the opportunity shock (see Figure 9).

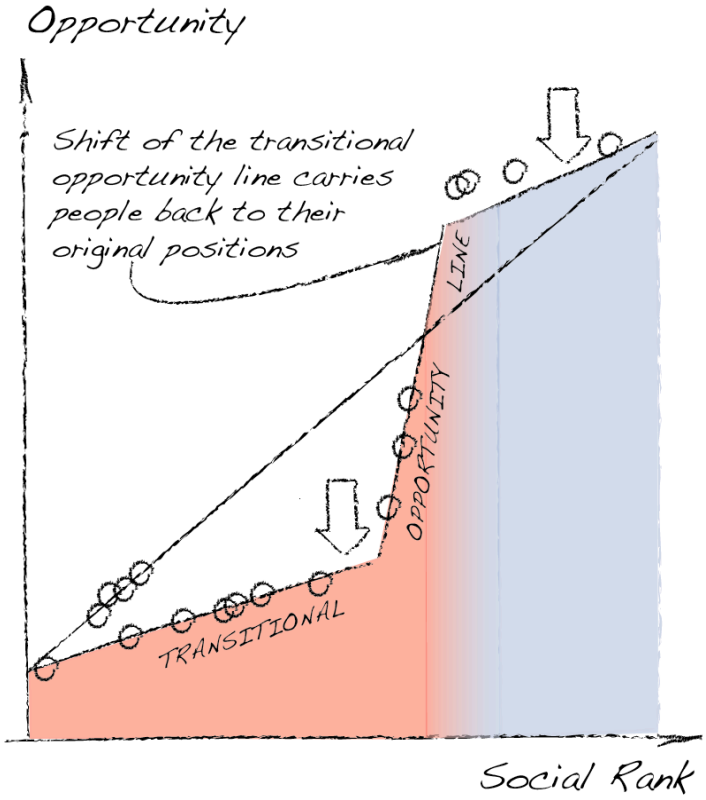


Figure 9 **Realignment of perceived levels of opportunity with actual levels**

1.8.14 Root causes, contributing factors, volatility and triggers

The model as we have described it, allows us to distinguish between *root causes*, *contributing factors*, *volatility* and *triggers* for xenophobic violence:

- Using the model, one might argue that the *root cause* of xenophobic sentiment in South Africa is the *structural* deficit between *constitutional* and *actual* access to opportunity - a product of the transition between one social system and another.

- *Contributing factors* such as migration and poverty may create an environment

where marked differences between those who are able to *maximise access to opportunity* and those who are *not* is *highlighted* (particularly in poor neighbourhoods) leading to societal dissatisfaction.

- *Opportunity shocks* such as the one that followed the global financial crisis in 2008 may create a *volatile* environment by moving certain groups and individuals into a *social space* outside the acceptable norms of the host community and turning *tolerance with dissatisfaction* into *resentment*.

- *Triggers* such as *criminality* or *roguish local politicking* may act as combustors that set light to a volatile environment, leading to xenophobic violence targeted at those perceived to be *above* the line.

1.8.15 Violence perpetrated against those on the upper portion of the curve

Figure 5 through Figure 8 illustrate a group of individuals that fall *above* the transitional curve along its *upper* portion. It might be argued that these represent formerly privileged groups whose *social ranking* and *access to opportunity* has not significantly changed, but who occupy a position that falls increasingly distant from that prescribed by the *transitional line*. While the position of these individuals becomes more *pronounced* during a period of economic shock, they are nonetheless *above* the line during *all* periods.

Farm attacks are a phenomenon that have increased steadily in incidence in the period following the move to democratic governance and around which, like xenophobia, there is little consensus as to root causes or motive.

The model suggests that outbreaks of *xenophobic attacks* against foreigners, and the more regular attacks against farmers, may in fact be symptoms of a common process of *social transition* and the *structural deficit* between *constitutional* and *actual* levels of opportunity.

1.9 Outline of Chapters

The research report is laid out in accordance with the following outline:

Ch.1 Introduction

Chapter one presents an introduction to the research topic and seeks to ground it within the current context of Xenophobia as a growing phenomenon worldwide and in particular within South Africa.

Ch.2 Current understanding of xenophobia

Chapter two reviews relevant published works that have been generated from within South Africa as well as from International sources. This section also reviews a range of theoretical frameworks that are relevant to the research.

Ch.3 Designing the Research

Chapter three deals with the research methods and how they have been implemented. It outlines the *qualitative* approach that has been undertaken and how this has been used to design interviews with *key informants* and the *interrogation* of literature.

Ch.4 Presentation of findings

In this chapter, data arising from interviews is presented under themes relating to propositions contained within the model. The *quantitative* results of the Key informant poll (see Appendix E) are used to open each section, followed by a broader *qualitative* discussion that arises from ideas and concepts generated during the interviews.

Ch.5 Developing the model

This Chapter contains an expanded discussion on key aspects of the model in relation to social theory. It also develops some concepts that emerged during the interviews that, while not directly related to research questions, are deemed to be of relevance to developing the model.

Ch. 6 Conclusion and recommendations

Chapter six contains the conclusions and recommendations of the research.

References

The *references* section includes a complete set of references to all work that has been used in the research project and includes, reports, extracts from academic journals,

books, proceedings from round table discussions and media sources. All references are presented using the convention set out by the American Psychological Association (APA). A *bibliography* contains references to work that is not cited but which has contributed to development of the research.

Appendices

An appendices section includes profiles of all key informant interviewees, copies of the interview schedule and summary results from the key informant poll.

2 Current understanding of xenophobia

2.1 Introduction

The impact of the xenophobic violence of 2008 on the fabric of South African society and the attention it commanded within the international media has prompted studies that have in turn generated significant literature covering the issue. However, even before the 2008 conflagration, there was a growing field of research that identified a worryingly prevalent xenophobic sentiment within South African Society and pointed to what was seen as a growing threat to social stability (Crush, 2000).

Much of the early literature in the period up to 2002 covers issues concerning the human rights of migrants while later literature (particularly that which follows the outbreak of violence in 2008) focuses more explicitly on a search for root causes of xenophobic violence. Literature from this period also contains comprehensive appraisals of government and civil society responses to the 2008 crisis, and makes recommendations to government, civil society, the police, political parties and the media on actions to mitigate further outbreaks of violence.

As the purpose of this research project is to appraise the potential validity of a model that explains the underlying causes of xenophobic violence, it will focus on those aspects literature that attempt hypothetical explanations and underlying causes. It will *not* dwell on aspects of literature that review humanitarian responses or make recommendations for future actions.

2.2 Definitions

Before embarking on a review it is important clarify and define terms and concepts that are used commonly within literature to with regard to foreigners, South Africans and xenophobia. In common usage are a range of terms used to describe those who are not native to (i.e. not born in) South Africa. While some of these such as *refugee* or *documented/undocumented migrant* have specific *technical* definitions when used by the state or Non Governmental Organisations, many are used indiscriminately (particularly by the media) and include designations such as (*illegal) immigrant, asylum*

seeker, and more loaded labels such as *alien* which hark back to highly discriminative legislation introduced during the apartheid era (Smith, 2010). For the purposes of this report, all those who are not native to South Africa are referred to as *foreign nationals* regardless of their legal status - in fact evidence suggests that xenophobic violence was targeted at individuals regardless of their status, legal or otherwise (Parsley & Everatt, 2010).

The term *xenophobia* is used in the report to describe any level of hostile *sentiment* towards foreign nationals while *xenophobic violence*[11] is used to describe any *physical* violence targeted at individuals or groups an/or their property.

2.3 Rights of migrants

Events in the late 90's including the release of video tape showing the violent abuse of Mozambican migrants at the hands of white South African police officers, sparked a number of studies including a well publicised report published by Human Rights Watch International (HRW, 1998) which highlighted human rights abuses against migrants in their dealings with the state. The report served to underline the fact that South Africa, despite having made a relatively smooth passage from Apartheid to a representative democratic government, still had issues with racism and xenophobia. Jonathon Crush's paper that followed (2000) noted the growth in *spread* and *intensity* of xenophobic sentiment that had been measured through public surveys carried out by the Southern Africa Migration Project (SAMP) and contained fore-warnings of future unrest if measures were not taken to tackle the "underside of democratic nationalism" (Crush, 2000, p. 118). A stagnating migration policy that relied on the Aliens Control Act of 1991 (a legacy of the former apartheid regime) was seen to contribute to measures that seriously eroded the rights of undocumented migrants.

Sporadic attacks on foreigners included the violent assault and throwing of victims from

[11] This term in itself is slightly problematic in that a significant proportion of those who were targeted during the May 2008 violence were not in fact foreign nationals but South Africans.

moving trains.[12] While the media was prompt to report and condemn such incidents it was also seen to present news on issues surrounding international immigration (often portrayed using emotive language) in a manner that was lacking in *critical analysis*, and to present *problematic statistics* and *misleading assumptions*. While there was no direct evidence of a *causal link* between media coverage and the growth of sporadic xenophobic violence, some commentators concluded that the two were at minimum, mutually reinforcing (Danso & McDonald, 2001; Smith, 2010).

2.4 A social pathology

Harris (2002) in an article that appeared in the book *Psychopathology and Social Prejudice,* and that has subsequently been widely cited, was among the first to explore the possibility of xenophobia as a *social pathology* and heralded a move by analysts to look for deeper root causes of xenophobic sentiment within the psyche of the new nation. Amongst popular explanations that Harris reviews are notions of *scape-goating*, *isolationism* and *bioculturalism*. Despite introducing the possibility of xenophobia as a social illness (and underlining the implications of presenting it as one) Harris concludes that the xenophobia may well be part and parcel of the "process of nation-building" (2002, p.11). In this respect her outlook resonates with that of Wimmer (1997) whose work is reviewed later in this section.

2.5 Listening to the people

Perceptions that foreigners were *flooding* into South Africa seeking employment, housing and social grants continued to fuel sporadic violence, particularly in informal settlements. The Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Foreign Affairs instigated an initiative in 2004 to hold public hearings on Xenophobia and problems related to it. The hearings were hosted by the South African Human Rights Council (SAHRC) and confirmed earlier findings that South Africans were exceedingly *xenophobic* (see also Crush, 2000). Underlying causes however were found to be *complex* and varied, encompassing South Africa's history of institutionalised *racial segregation* in combination

[12] Two Senegalese foreign nationals were viciously murdered while traveling in a crowded train from Johannesburg and Pretoria in 2008 (Ntsaluba, G., & Rawoot, I. 2008).

with high levels of *extreme poverty* (SAHRC, 2004).

2.6 Political discourse and definitions of citizenship

Neocosmos, in the book, "From 'foreign natives' to 'native foreigners' " (2010) [13]identifies an alternative stance in trying to unravel the root causes of xenophobic sentiment in South Africa. For Neocosmos, the fact that violence is targeted at *poor* foreign nationals rather than those who are *rich* or *white* necessarily discounts explanations grounded in the analyses of capitalism and socio-economic deficit. Branded 'the politics of fear' and drawing on thinking advanced by Franz Fanon in the 1960's he identifies a *discourse of xenophobia* emanating from government (see also Crush, 2008; Misago, Monson, Polzer, & Landau, 2010), *South African exceptionalism* (the reluctance of South Africans to see themselves as part of Africa), the concept of *indigeneity* (being black African as well as South African) as a pre-requisite to accessing resources, and *passive citizenship* (a high expectation by citizens of the state to provide services) as key factors in fuelling xenophobic sentiment.

2.7 The 2008 thunderstorm

The *thunderstorm of violence*[14], which erupted in May of 2008, took the nation and politicians by surprise. It was unprecedented on many levels, including its spread and its intensity. Government made a prompt call to "our law-abiding citizens to co-operate with the authorities to bring this shameful behaviour to an immediate end", while at the same time drawing attention to, "the disturbing fact that sinister forces appear to have a hand in the escalation and spread of this repulsive behaviour" (Pahad, 2008). The timing of the outbreak of violence which coincided with celebrations of *Africa Day* served to underline the social schism that was unfolding.

The media in its reactions to the violence identified the nation's history of *colonialism*

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[13] The original edition of this book containing Neocosmos' theory on the 'politics of fear' was published in 2006, a subsequent edition was released in 2010 with an additional chapter that dealt with the violence of May 2008.

[14] Bishop Paul Verryn, of the Central Methodist Church in Johannesburg referred to a *"thunderstorm of violence"* in describing the May 2008 attacks in the book "Go home or die here" (Worby, Hassim, & Kupe, 2008)

and *apartheid* as factors in contributing to the context for aggression, although the direct links between the two were not always obvious (Campbell, 2008). Poverty, and government's failure to deliver basic services were cited by others (McKenzie, 2008).

The failings of *immigration control* and *immigration policy* emerged as a theme amongst some early commentators at this time. The HSRC report (2008) (hastily put together in a matter of weeks) called for an immediate closing of borders and a period of *amnesty* for all *illegal immigrants*.[15] Crush in a subsequent SAMP report (SAMP, 2008, p. 14) argues that this standpoint is "missing the mark" given that immigration into South Africa from neighbouring states has been a reality since 1910. Neocosmos (2010) too is unreserved in his criticism of the HSRC report and questions the logic that leads to its conclusions. While both commentators have valid points, the critique serves to underline the point that in the immediate aftermath of the sudden outbreak of violence in 2008, there was not only a divergence of understanding as to *what was going on*, but also a range of reactions as to how the crisis should be tackled.

Government in the weeks that followed the violence floated the concept of a "third force" acting to destabilise South Africa's nascent democracy.[16] While the theory appeared plausible in the absence of a more compelling explanation, literature drawing on in-depth studies that followed discounted the theory, pointing instead to evidence that violence was locally organised by *groups* and *individuals* whose motive was to gain control over economic and political assets (Misago, Monson, Polzer, & Landau, 2010).

The situation was brought under control (albeit after the death of 62 people, and the arrest of more than 1300 people suspected of being perpetrators of violence). The renewed sense of urgency following the May 2008 attacks spawned a flourish of literature in a renewed attempt to understand the *root causes* of xenophobic violence, evaluate the response to the crisis of both government and civil society, and to make

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[15] The use of the term *illegal immigrant* to describe foreign nationals is itself contested by some commentators who point out that it assumes *illegality, guilt* and therefore *criminality*. *Undocumented migrant* is the preferred term used by UN agencies.

[16] Manala Manzini, head of the National Intelligence Agency, in a media interview on 27th May 2008 claimed that individuals with links to the former apartheid security forces were behind the violence.

recommendations to all sectors on how to mitigate further outbreaks.

2.8 2008 Reports – theorising about factors that lead to xenophobia

Within this group of literature, a number of reports were produced shortly after the events (the HSRC report was produced in just two weeks and is reviewed above), and the SAMP (2008) report published shortly afterwards in the same year). Other agencies such as the Forced Migration Studies Programme (FMSP later to become ACMS) (Misago, Monson, Polzer, & Landau, 2010) and a report commissioned by the Atlantic Philanthropies were afforded time and resources to collect *qualitative* and *quantitative* data from statistical records in wards where violence occurred, to run focus groups and generate case studies. The latter were published in 2010 and run to more than 230 pages each.

In the Atlantic Philanthropies report entitled *Structure and agency in social theory and South African History* (Bond, Galvin, Mazibuko, & Ngwane, 2010), Bond et al. identify high unemployment, a tight housing market, extreme retail business competition, world leading crime rates, corruption in the Home Affairs department, cultural conflicts and severe geo-political stresses as *root problems*. These issues, they argue, when combined with significant adverse macro-dynamics in GDP growth, household debt, international commodity prices and crashes in the manufacturing, mining and retail sectors, led to social unrest being "misdirected into xenophobia" (2010, p. 24).

In a development of this paper for the journal Politikon, Amisi, Bond, Cele, & Ngwane, (2011) introduce the Marxist construct of "uneven and combined development" (p. 61) to posit a framework where both *agency*[17] and structure[18] lead to violent xenophobic outcomes.

The Forced Migration Studies Program report which its authors emphasise has been based on empirical evidence as opposed to "untested general structural arguments or

[17] Here *agency* refers to the direct implication of individuals or groups in instigating violence

[18] *Structure* refers here to socio-economic conditions and policy environment within the South African environment

conjecture" (Misago, Monson, Polzer, & Landau, 2010, p. 9), takes a more socio-political stance by identifying "localised competition for political (formal and informal) and economic power" as the main drivers of violence, rooted in what they term the "micro politics of township informal settlement life".

Simple *criminality* as an explanation for violence, while entertained to a certain extent by the press and government,[19] is discounted by both the FMSP (Misago *et al.,* 2010) and Atlantic Philanthropies reports (Parsley & Everatt, 2010) as being a major contributing factor to violence. The FMSP report in particular holds that xenophobic violence "*cannot* be reduced to instances of organised crime" (2010, p. 10), despite the fact that theft and looting often accompanied attacks.

The implications for *gender* on xenophobic violence have been picked up by a number of studies (Fuller, 2008; HSRC, 2008; SAHRC, 2004; Sigsworth, Ngwane, & Pino, 2008). Interestingly the HSRC study (2008) revealed a significant *divergence* in attitudes and perceptions towards migrants between women and men interviewed in affected communities. While women generally had a perception of migrants as being *hard working* and *resourceful*, men tended to associate them more readily with *criminality* and *corrupt practices*. The perceived *threat* of migrant men as coveters of local women also emerged as a significant issue in this study.

Fuller (2008) argues that the *double plight* of women tends to be overlooked in studies into xenophobia and points to the fact that women and their children in informal townships symbolically represent *permanent settlement* while men are more often regarded as simply *passing through*. This, she argues, is a factor behind women and children being targeted in xenophobic attacks.

Drawing the threads of the explanations together they would seem to fall into three groups.

The first is that xenophobia stems primarily from factors centred on some form of *agency*

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[19] Police Minister, Nathi Mthethwa in a interview with journalists in Parliament in July 2010, claimed that intimidation towards the end of the world cup was in fact *"criminality disguised as xenophobia"* (Maclennan, 2010, p. 1)

whether at the local level (through the machinations of local leaders in impoverished communities) or at a much broader level where they form an integral part of the political discourse on citizenship, or are part and parcel of the process of nation building (Harris and Neocosmos).

The second group encompasses explanations that look to *structural* elements in South African society whether in the form of institutional legacies from its apartheid past, increases in the levels of immigration or an on-going process of unequal and combined development (Bond).

The third group looks for more immediate and obvious answers such as South Africa's on-going (but unexplained) high levels of residual xenophobic sentiment, simple criminality or even the existence of a mysterious third force.

A search for an explanation to xenophobic violence based on established social theory has been undertaken by a smaller number of analysts. A review of this work follows in the next section.

2.9 The search for explanations and conceptual frameworks

A cursory review of research within South Africa to identify root causes of xenophobic violence reveals references to a number of conceptual frameworks. Amongst theses, Integrated Threat Theory (ITT) has been used to explain prejudice towards out-groups leading to antagonism and violence.

Integrated Threat Theory developed by Stephan, Stephan and Gudykunst (1999) (and based on Gudykunst's Anxiety and Uncertainty Management theory), identifies factors that they propose can lead to an increase in anxiety and prejudice towards a group that is consider to be an *out-group*. This theory is in turn a development of the Social Identity Theory developed by Tajfel (1981), which deals with *communication* between groups and Uncertainty Reduction Theory developed by Berger & Calabrese (1975) that describes and predicts behaviour within groups to reduce *uncertainty*.

At least one research study has picked up on this family of theories and has used it to look at the source of prejudice amongst South Africans towards foreign Nationals.

Hawabibi Laher's report (2009) suggests that prejudice toward non-nationals in Johannesburg flows from:

- *Intergroup Anxiety*: an experience of discomfort that results from engaging with members of another group.
- *Negative Stereotypes*: Belief or assumption that an out-group will behave in a negative way
- *Realistic Threats*: refers to threats associated with political power and economic welfare[20].

Interestingly *Symbolic Threats* - an additional core component of Integrated Threat Theory that relates to perceptions that the out-group pose a threat to *beliefs and values*, were not seen to feature as a contributing factor to prejudice in Laher's study. This begins to point to an important difference in *context* in that within Europe and the US (where many of the conceptual frameworks relating to xenophobia have been developed) xenophobia generally occurs between groups that have significant cultural differences[21] (e.g. Asian, African or Latino culture as compared with European culture). In South Africa the manifestation of xenophobia is between groups who for the large part *share* broad cultural experiences - a point that would seem to be reflected in Laher's study.

2.10 The link between xenophobic sentiment and violence

While there is an abundance of literature to explain underlying factors that contribute to xenophobic *tension*, there is less work that explores why this tension is *transformed* under certain conditions into mob violence.

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[20] An example of *intergroup anxiety* might be the perception that strangers are unfriendly; a *negative stereotype* that all Nigerian nationals are engaged with drugs dealing and a perceived *Realistic Threat* that Somali entrepreneurs represent stiff business competition.

[21] A current example of perceived symbolic threat posed by an out-group is that of Muslim immigrants to certain countries in Europe. Governments in the Netherlands, France and Belgium, influenced by the emergence of radical right political parties, have introduced legislation to ban the wearing of the burka (full face veil) arguing that it does not fit with their national tradition of "open society".

Researchers Misago *et al*. with the Forced Migration Study Project point to the critical role of local leaders in inciting violence (2010), however even this falls a little short of providing an explanation grounded in social or political theory.

An on-going piece of research by Chris Claassen (2011) draws upon theories that seek to explain ethnic riots. The study intends to explore the interplay between *macro level structural factors*, with *micro level mechanisms* such as *group emotion* and *intergroup anger* to explain what causes ordinary individuals to engage in mob violence.

2.11 Relative Deprivation Theory

One conceptual framework that has been used in the past to explore possible causes of xenophobic sentiment in South Africa is that of Relative Deprivation. While interpretations of the theory by various commentators vary,[22] a rigorous application of the framework to the South African situation would seem to have a lot to offer.

Relative Deprivation Theory (RDT) explains social mobilization and participation in collective action such as strikes or protest as the result of perceptions around inequality (Walker & Smith, 2002). The theory has been used to some effect to explain the dynamics behind the widespread civil protest and urban riots that characterised the 1960's in the US, and the race riots that surfaced in impoverished black neighbourhoods in Britain in 1981.

Tshitereke (1999) has used RDT theory to explain xenophobic sentiment in South Africa and is in turn referred to by other South African commentators cited in this review (Harris, 2001, 2002; Laher, 2009; Misago, Landau, Polzer & Monson, 2009; Neocosmos, 2010). While Tshitereke holds that *absolute* deprivation does not inevitably lead to violence, he suggests that there is a 'causal link between *relative deprivation*,

[22] Neocosmos dismisses relative deprivation theory on the basis that it does not adequately explain the targeting of those who are less well off than perpetrators (interview, Pretoria 4/02/11) while Pillay (2008) uses a broad definition of Relative Deprivation to underpin what he terms a "socio economic system of market violence" (2008, p. 94)

xenophobia and *collective violence*' through the mechanism of *scapegoating*[23] (in Harris, 2001, p.171).

A more comprehensive review of Relative Deprivation theory in relation to the model under research is explored in Chapter 5.

2.12 International literature

While South African literature has grappled with the characteristically *violent* manifestations of xenophobia such as those witnessed in 2008, international literature deals with manifestations of xenophobia and racism which, although less explosive in nature are nonetheless pervasive in Europe and the USA.

2.12.1 Wimmer and a critical review of current international research approaches

Amongst international literature exploring explanations for xenophobia is an important paper by Andreas Wimmer (1997), which usefully reviews a range of current approaches to the subject and examines their plausibility in the light of evidence from a wide range of empirical studies.

In his paper, Wimmer argues that xenophobia stems from intrinsic social tensions that arise periodically as part of the "pact of solidarity" (1997, p. 17) between the state and society during periods when the state is *fragile*. Downwardly mobile groups (typically blue collar workers in Europe), he notes are particularly sensitive to the perceived fragility of the state. Xenophobic discourse, he argues, serve to re-establish national identity in times of social crisis and is part of a political tussle over "who has the right to be cared for by the state and society" (1997, p.17). Given the relevance of this paper to the research topic, it has been afforded an extended summary within this literature review.

[23] The Scapegoating mechanism was first propounded by French anthropologist Rene Girard, and is defined as the phenomenon where relatively powerless individuals or groups are blamed, punished, or stigmatised for wrongs that are not of their doing. A classic example of scapegoating was the demonisation of Jews, Freemasons, Marxists, and immigrants in Nazi Germany during the long depression of the 1930s (Brittanica, 2011).

2.12.2 Rationale Choice

Wimmer starts his review of current thinking on xenophobic theory by looking at Rational Choice Theory (RCT). Rational choice theory explains Xenophobia as a reaction to competition for scarce resources such as housing or jobs that can become intense in time of economic crisis. While the explanation has gained popular acceptance and even led European governments during the 70's to introduce legislation limiting immigration, Wimmer points out that there is little statistical evidence to support the premise that foreigners represent *legitimate* competition for either resource. He proposes that research rather shows that:

> *Intensity of conflict does not depend on real competition... but stems from perception of equality and difference, of legitimate and illegitimate competition*[24] *(Belanger and Pinard in Wimmer, 1997, p. 21).*

In a development of this argument Wimmer cites Linder and argues that the prospect of erosion of *social status* is in fact more powerful than that of job loss itself.

Despite these arguments Wimmer accepts that the *perception* that "foreigners are taking away our jobs" (1997, p.21) may still be very real driver of xenophobic sentiment. As such, the origins of the perception itself must therefore be explained.

2.12.3 Functionalism

A second popular approach, functionalism - holds that *cultural differences* between the foreigner and native born are responsible for xenophobic conflicts. Functionalists argue that immigrants are *structurally* different (uneducated and from rural communities) which renders them incapable of integration and leads to subsequent xenophobic rejection.

Wimmer argues that this has actually not shown to be true, pointing to case studies such as the Netherlands where after the independence of Indonesia, large numbers of immigrants were very successfully integrated into Dutch society. On the issue of low levels of immigrant education and citing Tribalat (1997, p.24), he argues that on the

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[24] This concept of *perceived equality* would seem to speak directly to aspects of the model under investigation as well as to the *subjectivities* central to Relative Deprivation theory

contrary, evidence has tended to show that the farther away from home the immigrant is, the higher her education rank tends to be.[25] *Cultural* distance and *structural* distance therefore do "not necessarily co vary" (1997, p.24) and the "dynamics of integration and segregation" are not determined by educational standing alone.

2.12.4 Discourse theory

At the heart of this theory (which Wimmer identifies as dominating current thinking on Xenophobia) is the concept of discursive constructions of "otherness" and related perceptions of menace that are linked with political vested interest. The *immigration problem* which is built on fears that include the *creolisation* of indigenous culture, is used as a tool to account for economic stress and even crisis in political legitimacy[26]

Citing Gerhard Wimmer highlights the role of the media in fostering xenophobic sentiment and prompting attacks against foreigners (see also Danso & McDonald, 2001 and Smith, 2010 for a South African perspective).

Despite its explanatory power, the question remains for Wimmer as to whether discourse is *created* and then *spread* within the population or whether it *arise*s as a *reflection* of publicly held views.

While falling short of presenting discourse theory as a definitive explanation of xenophobia, Wimmer suggests that exploration of the factors that determine the success of *discursive strategy* holds the key to understanding the cyclic growth of xenophobic movements.

2.12.5 Phenomenology

Phenomenology is a new approach to thinking on xenophobia. It attempts to explain the on-going recurrence of xenophobic sentiments within society as a product of "discontinuities in social change" (1997, p. 27). Xenophobia has therefore less to do

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[25] This observation would seem to borne out by anecdotal evidence that suggests the generally high levels of education amongst immigrants to South Africa from Zimbabwe (Interviews Francis Anthony; Christa Kuljian)

[26] This theory resonates strongly with Neocosmos's account of the discourse on citizenship and indigeneity in South Africa (2010)

with either the discourse of a political elite or a physical influx of foreigners than the impact of an "overall crisis of the entire society" (1997, p. 27). Such crisis according to Romano and Imhof (in Wimmer, 1997) are part and parcel of the intensive and on-going process of modernisation. The xenophobic *othering* of foreigners is part of a process to "reassure the national self and its boundaries" and is the population's way of "making sense of the world in a time of crisis" (1997, p. 27).

Wimmer goes further to link propensity for this type of acute xenophobia with particular groups in European society, and suggests that education is a factor that determines whether groups fall back on the use of stereotypes such as "we and them" to reduce complexity rather than categories of "class, region, profession sex, age and religion" (1997, p. 27).

2.12.6 Xenophobia emanating from a struggle for collective goods

Having reviewed (and discounted) the most popular explanations of xenophobia, Wimmer in the second part of his paper builds on the theory of *phenomenology* and suggests that an interplay between the "politics of identity and politics of interest" (1997, p. 28) (both integral components in the development of a nation state) fuel a struggle for collective goods during periodic social discontinuities.

Laying the foundations for his argument, Wimmer outlines the first component - national identity, as being forged through the creation of an "imagined" community with a common political destiny often underpinned by a "mythical self image"[27] (1997, p.28). Based on this, the community protects itself from external threat and dangers thereby creating the boundaries of the state.

Layered on top of this community of *identity* is a "real community of interests" (1997, p.28) which guarantees, political economic and social rights - the "collective goods of a nation" (1997, p.28), provided and guarded by the state in return for political loyalty of its citizens.

[27] This would seem to resonate strongly with a post apartheid South African national identify that draws heavily on a self image shaped by the *struggle*

The third component of Wimmer's model is an "ethnicised bureaucracy" populated by those within the "imagined community of solidarity" (1997, p.29).

With these three components in place, Wimmer argues that periodic social crisis emanating from economic and political change (and signalled by phenomenon such as rising suicide, criminality and the emergence of social movements) provokes a reaction amongst the populace to secure the "rights and privileges of the indigenous" (1997, p.30).

A form of "moral panic" (1997, p.30) exacerbates cultural distance between groups to the extent that foreigners are seen as traitors to the national project. Racist interpretations of this *crisis* appeal particularly to downwardly mobile groups who stand to lose out as a result of change.

Racism and Xenophobia, Wimmer argues therefore appeals to the "pact of solidarity into which the ethnicised bureaucracy and national community have entered" and represents a "political struggle about who deserves the right to be cared for by the state" (1997, p. 32).

2.13 Conclusion

South African literature is comprehensive and consistent in documenting *what happened* during the violence in 2008. It starts to diverge however when it comes to a robust analysis of *root causes* of xenophobia. There would appear to be an on-going debate as to the relative importance of structure and *agency* in contributing to violence with Bond *et al.* (2011) representing views on the former and Misago *et al.* (2010) representing views on the latter.

There would seem to be even less material that seeks to explain the crucial link between xenophobic *sentiment* and xenophobic *action* and relatively little research that explores xenophobic violence in relation to established conceptual frameworks. As Bond points out:

> *Oftentimes, answers to the question 'why' are not sufficiently probing. Blaming individual xenophobes, neighbourhoods and communities, reverting to national/ethnic*

> *generalisations, turning to cultural explanation, and simple denial – these are the kinds of problems that researchers encounter (sometimes falling victim to themselves) without a foregrounding of the deeper, root causes. (Bond, Ngwane, & Baruti, 2010, p. 2).*

Wimmer's work that has emerged from research from within the European context, while providing a credible explanation for xenophobia that emanates from downwardly mobile working classes, would not seem to offer a convincing explanation for xenophobia in South Africa where violence was meted out by those already on the lower rungs of the social ladder. Other aspects of his model resonate strongly however with the perception of a South African Nation that is passing through a period of *fragility* and is periodically caught up in a struggle over the "rights and privileges of the indigenous" (1997, p.30)

Conceptual frameworks such as *Integrated Threat Theory, Bioculturalism*, and *Exceptionalism*, offer some insight into inter-group tensions particularly where outgroups are involved. However they would not seem to explain the *sporadic* and *explosive* nature of widespread outbreaks of xenophobic violence witnessed in South Africa. If these factors are present on an *on-going basis* within the South African context, why are widespread outbreaks of xenophobic violence not present on an *on-going basis* also?

The question remains as to whether South Africa presents a unique *context* for xenophobia that can be explained using an *adaptation* of accepted theory, or whether it represents a unique *form* of xenophobia which is different in *nature* to that observed elsewhere. South Africa's transition from a society where discrimination based on skin colour was used to secure a racial hierarchy certainly adds weight to the former, while unanswered questions such as why South Africans were targeted amongst the victims support the latter. Finally it would seem that thinking on xenophobia and its root causes is still emerging and that an explanatory model that can effectively shed light on all aspects of xenophobic violence, both in South Africa and elsewhere, has yet to be developed.

The current research will attempt to explore the model under investigation with respect to some of these approaches outlined above as well as identify directions for possible future research.

3 Designing the research

3.1 A qualitative approach

The research centres on the *outlining, presentation* and *discussion* of a model that seeks to explain social behaviour in relation to violence and xenophobia. While optimal research would use a *quantitative* or *mixed methods* approach to test the model progressively against a sequence of scenarios drawn directly from real-life encounters, the scope of the P&DM course necessarily constrains the scale of the research to that which can be accomplished within a period of six months. In order to achieve a meaningful outcome in the time available, the plausibility of the model has therefore been appraised using interviews with recognised experts and a review of social theory.

The research approach has been essentially *qualitative* in nature, which despite its shortcomings has the advantage of soliciting *deeper* and *richer* information that could be potentially used to develop the model further feeding into a *quantitative* study at a later date.

3.2 Research design and data collection

3.2.1 Primary data

3.2.2 Key informant interviews

Primary data was gathered from interviews with *secondary sources* (key informants) representing a cross section of experts working within the field. The group of interviewees included both academics (researchers within academic institutions) who are familiar with current thinking in relation to the social analysis of xenophobia, and practitioners (such as programme and field staff within NGOs) that are working directly with migrant foreign nationals that have experienced violence, in order to solicit a broad response as to the plausibility of the model.

While the majority of the academic interviewees were from a social science background and specialists in xenophobia, one interviewee (Prof. Mohammed Jahed) is a *developmental economist* and was selected for his particular insights into socio-economic stratification in South Africa, a feature upon which the model is built.

A complete list of interviewees, their professional profiles are included in Appendix A. A schedule of interviews with details of the date and place of interview is included in Appendix B.

3.2.3 Sampling

The selection of key informants who are experts in the field of xenophobia was *purposive*.[28] An initial selection of interviewees was drawn up using a preliminary literature survey of reports and papers published in South Africa, and through attending a number of seminars on the topic.[29] *Snowball sampling*[30] was used subsequently to identify an additional key informant (Annsilla Nyar) who was deemed to have relevant insights around root causes of xenophobic violence through her first hand participation in a number of focus groups organised by the Gauteng City-Region Observatory.

3.2.4 Limitations

At the end of the day, the range and diversity of the group of interviewees was limited by the extent to which individuals were available. A shorter list of interviewees who were identified as potential key informants but were not available for interview, is also included in Appendix A. Due to the limited scope of the research exercise, victims and perpetrators of violence *were not* included amongst those interviewed. Further development of this research would obviously include sample representatives from this important group.

3.2.5 Interview structure

The interviews took the form of a *s*emi-structured discussions prompted by open-ended

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[28] Purposive sampling according to Neumann uses "the judgement of an expert in selecting cases", and is an appropriate method of identifying respondents that are likely to be particularly informative.

[29] Seminars attended during August 2010 include the Ruth First Memorial Lecture and Christa Kuljian's presentation of research on the "Central Methodist Refugee Crisis", The Helen Suzman Foundation's Quarterly Roundtable "On Strangers and Outsiders - Overcoming Xenophobia ", the Forced Migration Study Programme's Seminar "Policing Boundaries: Rights, Law and Pluralism in Contemporary South Africa" and a presentation by Phd. Student Chris Claassen "The Emotional Logic of Participation in Ethnic Violence".

[30] In *Snowball* sampling each *case* or "unit is connected with another through a direct or indirect linkage" (Neuman (2011), p. 222). The technique is regarded as appropriate for carrying out research amongst specialists who are active in the same field of study.

questions that were themselves based on the research questions. As a way of breaking down the process and gathering more nuanced views, interview questions were designed to explore interviewees' views on the plausibility of key propositions contained within the model as well as their feelings on the overall plausibility of the model itself. The Interview Schedule together with sample questions is attached as Appendix C.

While the designated research questions formed the basis for interviews, a flexible approach was adopted to allow *emergent* questions (Neuman, 2011) to develop. These were used to probe additional areas of interest as they arose. Some of these areas are identified and discussed in Chapter 5. Data generated within the discussions was collected through creating a sound recording of each discussion and augmenting it where appropriate with written notes.

At the conclusion of each interview, respondents were polled on their views as to the *plausibility* of the model using a short questionnaire incorporating a five point Likert scale (see appendix D). Although the sample numbers for the poll (8 persons) is too small to be statistically relevant, this *quantitative* information has been used to supplement the *qualitative* information gathered from the interview discussions and to generate a rudimentary indicator for the overall plausibility of the model. While the majority of interviewees completed the poll, two interviewees (Lance Thomas and Martin Mande of Damietta Trust) did not.

3.2.6 Secondary Data - Interrogation of literature

Secondary data in the form of literature was also *interrogated* as part of the process to explore the plausibility of the model. In order of weight: academic journals, books, and "grey literature" such as non-peer reviewed studies, periodicals, and reports were used. Key informants were approached as part of an *invisible college*[31] to help identify a selection of critical literature that reflects current thinking on the root causes for xenophobic violence in South Africa.

[31] Cooper (2010) identifies *invisible colleges* as a valuable channel through which to identify critical literature.

The original research project document proposed a *meta-analysis* of relevant literature to explore the model's potential validity through testing components of the model for congruence against themes identified in recognised academic journals. During the course of the research it became apparent that the extent of literature, which sets out a theoretical model for violent xenophobia in South Africa, is extremely limited (a large proportion is descriptive in the sense of documenting "what happened" while other work attempts to identify contributing factors and potential root causes - few studies set out a definitive "model"). The exercise as planned was deemed therefore to be of limited value in testing the plausibility of the model.

Instead, the review of literature has been used to augment the discussion of themes that emerged during interviews, and a section is included in Chapter 5 that looks (on a broader level) at the degree of congruence of the model with Relative Deprivation theory.

3.3 Data analysis

3.3.1 Interviews

Qualitative data generated from interviews and consisting of transcripts of discussions was analysed using the themes and propositions relating directly to the components of the model (see Chapter 4). Additional themes that emerged during the course of the interviews, and were deemed relevant to the study, were also coded (a number of these are included in the discussion section in Chapter 5).

A qualitative analysis software package (Hyper Research) was used to code interview transcripts and generate and collate basic reports across the range of themes. These were then used to develop a narrative report around each component of the model.

3.3.2 Overall Plausibility

Overall plausibility of the model was determined through combining the analysis of data from interviews and the key informant poll.

3.4 Validity, reliability and limitations of the study

The concepts of validity and reliability, which are central to establishing the legitimacy

of the results of *quantitative* surveys, are interpreted slightly differently with respect to *qualitative* studies (Neumann, 2011). Whereas in quantitative studies, the terms describe the degree to which measured indicators are representative of a conceptual construct (validity), and the extent to which results can be replicated in alternative locations (reliability), in *qualitative* research the terms are used more broadly to describe the degree to which the "researchers truth claims need to be plausible" (Neumann, 2011, p. 197) and the extent to which results are *dependable* and *consistent*.

In the current study where the purpose of the research itself is to explore the validity (plausibility) of a hypothetical model for xenophobia, it is important to differentiate between the reliability and validity of the model under discussion and the reliability and validity of the *research methodology* itself.

In terms of the validity and reliability of a technique for establishing the plausibility of a hypothetical model, the current research methodology has significant limitations.

The first is a *structural* constraint in that the study has essentially been qualitative in nature working only with secondary data collected both from literature, and secondary sources (key informants).

In addition the views expressed by key informants during interviews were essentially *opinions* as to the plausibility of the model based on their own experience and expertise. As experience and expertise in the field of xenophobia varies from one individual to another, there is no guarantee that similar opinions would be expressed by alternative "experts".

In terms of *sampling*, key informants were chosen from South Africa only. This necessarily limits the degree to which results can be extrapolated to xenophobic scenarios outside the South African context.

Likewise the discussions with key informants was informed by their personal opinions and viewpoints based on their experience and expertise at the *time* of interview. It is likely that this will change over time and that their viewpoints on the plausibility of the model will also change.

While the level to which results of the study may be considered valid and reliable is limited, the profile of key informants and their standing within the community of xenophobic research in South Africa, would nonetheless seem to constitute a reasonable basis on which to evaluate the research value of constructs contained within the model.

3.5 Ethical considerations

Neumann (2003, p.129), defines the ethical research challenge as: "[Striking] a balance between the pursuit of scientific knowledge and the rights of those being studied".

Given the sensitive nature of xenophobia, it is clear that potential exists within any research exercise on this issue, to compromise the dignity, confidentiality, and security of those involved.

The current study draws upon secondary data only, and samples the viewpoints of *analysts* and *commentators* rather than those directly impacted by xenophobic actions themselves. The potential for compromising ethical standards with respect to participants of the study is therefore considered to be minimal. Nonetheless all interviewees were asked if they were comfortable with having their identities and responses to interview questions published as part of the P&DM Masters research process. In addition, where reference is made to actual events of discrimination or violence (to illustrate ideas and concepts), care has been taken to remove any reference to identifiable individuals.

4 Presenting the findings

4.1 Introduction

Interview discussions were guided by a set of *propositions* relating to particular aspects of the model. Where additional themes arose during interview discussions and were considered to be of relevance to the research, these were pursued and explored. All interviews were recorded at the time and transcribed for analysis later.

Following the discussion, interviewees were asked to complete a short tick-box questionnaire (key informant poll), which indicated the degree to which they felt that propositions relating to each aspect of the model were *plausible*. The majority of the respondents chose to complete the questionnaire a few days after the interview, allowing them some time to digest the discussion and ideas that had been generated.

So while the *interview transcripts* provide a rich and nuanced array of information relating to interviewees reactions to the model and further insights that it provoked, the *key informant poll* gives a rudimentary indication as to the level to which each interviewee concurs with the concepts underlying the model.

Both sets of information are presented and discussed in the following section. A complete summary of data collected from interviewee *key informant poll* is shown in table form as Appendix E.

4.2 Structure of the presentation

Nine *propositions* relating to components of the model are grouped under three *themes* as shown below. The propositions were preceded by the question,

Q. To what extent do the models' components as presented, contribute to a plausible or implausible explanation of the social dynamics that lead to a widespread outbreak of xenophobic violence?

The interview discussions were then coded and analysed in accordance with these. The data is presented under the same headings. Where there is relevant input from literature then this is also woven into the narrative.

Additional ideas and observations that emerged through discussion and which are deemed to be relevant to the model and its development, are included in an *emerging ideas* section under each theme.

The structure of the section is therefore as follows:

Theme A - Opportunity, Social Rank and transition from South Africa's distorted Past.

P1 A causal link between *social rank* and *access to opportunity*

P2 The process and (slow) pace of social transition from levels of opportunity (pre 94) towards ideal levels of opportunity

P3 The gap between *expected* access to opportunity and *actual* access to opportunity by South African Nationals

Theme B - Relative positions on the Social Rank Opportunity Curve for South Africans and Foreign Nationals.

P4 The existence of empowerment and capacity barriers for South Africans in terms of access to opportunity that is constitutionally available to them

P5 Perceptions of unfair competition for access to opportunity

P6 Foreign nationals as occupants of a social space where they access opportunity beyond that which is available to nationals.

P7 Perceptions relating to the lower social rank of foreign nationals

Theme C - The impact of opportunity Shocks.

P8 Opportunity shock as a phenomenon, which transforms dissatisfaction into resentment

P9 The temporal nature of volatile environments for xenophobic violence

4.3 Theme A - Opportunity, social rank and transition from South Africa's distorted past

The first group of questions (1-3) relate to the concept and nature of an *opportunity/social rank* line for South Africans and how this has been shaped by South Africa's apartheid past and present transition.

4.3.1 Proposition A - A causal link between social rank and access to opportunity

4.3.1.1 Results of Poll



Social rank and its relationship with *opportunity* is a central component of established discourse on social hierarchy and social mobility from Marx to Weber (Farganis, 1996). The majority of interviewees readily accepted this component of the hypothesis and felt that the concept of a relationship between social rank and access to opportunity as a contributing factor to xenophobic violence was either highly plausible (4) or plausible (3) with one respondent remaining undecided.

4.3.1.2 Discussion

The model proposes that the social rank/opportunity profile in South Africa has historically been distorted along racial lines, turning it from a straight line with a modest positive gradient (that would be evident in other liberal capitalist democracies) to a line with a clear and discernible "step". The step it is argued was a consequence (and arguably the primary objective) of apartheid that cemented the well-documented socio-economic and political inequalities that served to favour a white minority and systematically disempower and exploit, the black majority.

A transition from the pre-apartheid to the post apartheid curve is featured as part of the model with the suggestion that rather than an overnight shift from *inequality* to *equality* (i.e. a step to a straight line), the process has necessarily been much more gradual with a slow *smoothing* out of the *apartheid opportunity line* (see Figure 5).

The *current* line it is postulated, lies somewhere between the two. The model proposes that it is the *dynamic* associated with this shift that is central to creating an *enabling*

environment for xenophobia.

Overall the majority of interviewees readily accepted this aspect of the hypothesis. A number made additional comments as to its origins and nature in South Africa.

Michael Neocosmos (interview, 4th February 2011) additionally drew attention to the debate amongst social and political scientists surrounding the mechanisms that determine where individuals are placed on the social ladder and that, as some believe, there are many at the bottom precisely because there *are* others at the top.

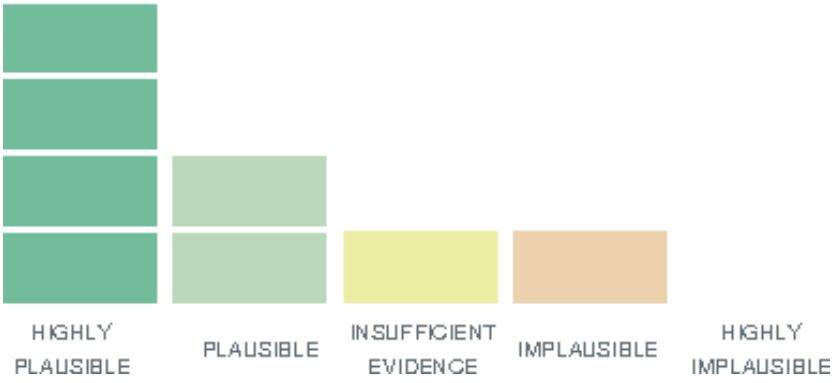
David Everatt (interview, 19th January 2011) made the point that both *race* and *class* are intertwined in South Africa to give the social rank opportunity profile its particular profile.

Mohamed Jahed underlined the significance of race in determining access to opportunity in Apartheid South Africa:

> *Opportunities were very limited - it was restricted actually so no matter if you were educated and you had a PhD the jobs were still for whites… …opportunity was created specifically for those groups and you had legislation …which makes us different to other countries in terms of social ranking (interview, 14th March 2011).*

4.3.2 Proposition B - The process and (slow) pace of social transition from levels of opportunity (pre 94) towards ideal levels of opportunity

4.3.2.1 Results of Poll



A slightly smaller majority of respondents (six out of eight) felt that the *slow* pace of social transition from the situation pre 1994 to 2008 was highly plausible or plausible as

a contributing factor to xenophobic violence. One respondent was inconclusive and one felt that this was implausible.

4.3.2.2 Discussion

Annsilla Nyar was most vocal during discussion on this topic highlighting that in her view South Africa between 94 and 2008 was:

> *On a collision course of cultures and lifestyles which lent itself to misunderstanding especially within the context of inequalities and resource scarcities … [xenophobia is] to be entirely expected given the **nature** of the South African transition [emphasis added] (interview, 8th March 2011).*

The *slow* pace of transition in her opinion was a major factor setting the background mood during the lead up to the outbreak of violence in May 2008:

> *Because it was 15 years after - we were judging ourselves - have we moved forward? How far has the transformation project gone? There was national soul searching coupled with expectation from the ground (interview, 8th March, 2011).*

David Everatt echoes this sense of a transition process that has not yet been completed. In his synthesis overview to the Atlantic Philanthropies (Parsley & Everatt, 2010, p.15) he highlights the fact that for too many South Africans (white privileged groups in particular) it is "business as usual". There is a pressing need he argues for an "RDP of the Soul" (2010, p.16) if this is to be rebalanced.

4.3.3 Proposition C - The importance of the gap between expected access to opportunity and actual access to opportunity by South African nationals

4.3.3.1 Results of poll



The majority of respondents (seven out of eight) felt that the *opportunity gap* was either highly plausible (3) or plausible (4) as a contributing factor to xenophobia, with one respondent remaining inconclusive.

4.3.3.2 Discussion

Nyar agrees with the concept of an *opportunity gap* and suggests that it is further highlighted by the steady flow of commercial images from capitalist democracies outside our borders:

> *In the globalized world there is more access to the media which leads to a sense that 'I am not getting what I should be getting' ... this accentuates the sense of deprivation and of course people were also concretely promised a better life for all as part of the election - this is a potent cocktail (interview, 8th March 2011).*

Taking this further, Everatt underlines not only the gap between *expected* and *actual* access to opportunity but alludes to the *frustration* at not being able to access what is *theoretically* available:

> *At least half the population remain officially below the poverty line and yet they know that formally opportunities exist for them to move up the ladder but they are unable to access those opportunities - at the same time they were being lectured [to by] the Mbeki regime for being lazy and wanting hand-outs (interview, 19th January 2011).*

And building on a sense of frustration, Everatt highlights the *exasperation* that results during a period of economic difficulty from the expectation placed upon previously disadvantaged South Africans by those observing from afar:

> *It's a terrible time and at the same time you're being told you are the miracle nation - the rainbow nation, everything is possible, it's all there for you! Whites are leaving in droves... all these opportunities are there for you and you have absolutely no idea how you are supposed to get hold of them! (interview, 19th January 2011).*

It is clear from interview discussion that the *expectation gap* in itself may be a starting

point upon which more complex and powerful *group emotion*[32] amongst disadvantaged South Africans can emerge - fuelled on the one hand by expectation and promise from self and others, and on the other by frustration and disillusion that results from failure to attain social goals.

4.3.4 Emerging ideas from theme A

4.3.4.1 The opportunity gap getting larger not smaller

While the model proposes a gradually narrowing gap between the social rank/opportunity line of pre 1994 and that defined by the new constitution, a number of respondents (Christa Kuljian, Lance Thomas, and Michael Neocosmos) during discussion proposed that the *stepped line* along its bottom rung (if one where able to plot it) has actually fallen rather than risen. In other words those on the lower rungs of the social ladder (predominantly black South Africans) are now *worse off* than they were before 1994. As Michael Neocosmos points out:

> *Opportunities have increased for some but on the contrary many are finding it more difficult. The increasing opportunities are not equally distributed (interview, 4th February 2011).*

But why should this be the case given the vision of South Africa's post-apartheid polity to be "an antithesis of and corrective to a discriminatory past" (Polzer & Segatti, 2011, p. 20)

Neocosmos puts the blame for this *counter-movement* of the opportunity line squarely at the door of post-apartheid neo-liberalist ideology embodied in initiatives such as GEAR[33]:

> *The historical legacy… together with that neo liberal thing that I was talking about earlier, tends to drive people down who were down anyway… In many ways these lines*

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[32] Group Emotion refers to "the fact that members of social groups have more similar concerns, make more similar appraisals, and therefore experience more similar emotions" (Smith in Lewis, M., Haviland-Jones, J. M., & Feldman Barrett, L., 2008, p. 461).

[33] The Growth Employment And Redistribution programme, a macroeconomic strategy to accelerate growth, was introduced by the Mbeki government in 2001.

[pointing to the graphic] have got worse than they were before (interview, 4th February 2011).

For others the failure of the education system has had a large part to play in removing the means through which citizens might have reached higher rungs on the social ladder. Christa Kuljian observes that:

Sadly South Africa's education system of the last 15 years has deteriorated and [at] that part of the ladder [pointing to the lower section on the social rank opportunity graphic] - the mechanism for smoothing out the distortion has not been there… In fact those conditions have worsened (interview, 18th January 2011).

Jahed additionally highlights the importance of *relevant* education and training in providing personal assets that facilitate movement to take advantage of the new social rank/opportunity line. The recent move in South Africa from an economy based on *mining* and *agriculture* to one based on *knowledge* and *services* has advantaged those with newly acquired managerial skills who have "walked into jobs" and *disadvantaged* those with more traditional technical skills he claims (interview, 14th March 2011).

Evidence that the opportunity line may have dropped for black South Africans is also reflected in literature. Amisi et al. in particular refer to Marx's concept of "uneven and combined development"(Amisi, Bond, Cele, & Ngwane, 2011, p. 61) noting that it is likely the cause of "extreme and worsening inequality leading to accumulation in some areas and rising poverty in others".

4.3.4.2 A creeping erosion of opportunity

Amisi et al. (2011) while falling short from asserting a casual link between lack of opportunity and xenophobic violence, nonetheless suggest that:

Strategies to fight xenophobia should address destitute locations' genuine needs. The most pressing needs consist of providing decent housing, water and electricity; sustainable job opportunities; skill empowerment in self-employment (2011, p.30).

In conclusion, evidence from interviews and literature suggests that in addition to the *slow pace* of transition there lies a creeping erosion of levels of opportunity being

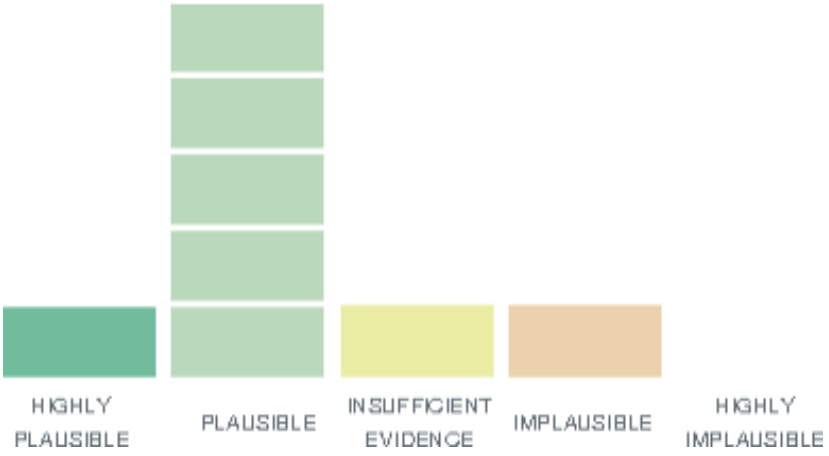
accessed by previously disadvantaged South Africans. Given that these levels were low at the outset we might conclude that the combined economic pressures of 2008 exacerbated what was already a fragile situation.

4.4 Theme B - Relative positions on the social Rank/Opportunity curve for South Africans and foreign nationals

The second group of propositions (4-7) relate to the relative position on the social rank/opportunity curve for South Africans and foreign nationals. In particular the extent to which the propositions constitute plausible factors in contributing to violence.

4.4.1 Proposition D - The existence of empowerment and capacity barriers for South Africans in terms of access opportunity that is constitutionally available to them

4.4.1.1 Results of Poll



The majority of respondents (6) felt that empowerment and capacity barriers were plausible or highly plausible as contributing factors to violent xenophobia.

One respondent felt that the evidence was insufficient to be conclusive and one felt it was implausible as a contributing factor to xenophobic violence.

4.4.1.2 Discussion

Nyar agrees with the concept of *capacity and empowerment barriers* and additionally suggests that their origins are rooted in factors that are structural as well as personal:

> *One of the complicating factors here is that **structurally** many people are not equipped to*

take advantage of those kinds of opportunities [emphasis added] (interview, 8th March 2011).

Clearly the apartheid system has had a role to play in terms of limiting the extent to which disadvantaged sections of the population were able to build their own technical capacity. However in post apartheid South Africa those limitations have theoretically been removed. Why then do empowerment barriers remain for previously disadvantaged blacks? Christa Kuljian speculates as to where these on-going capacity shortcomings originate:

Sadly South Africa's education system of the last 15 years has deteriorated and that part of the ladder [pointing to the step in the social rank/opportunity line] - the mechanism for smoothing out the distortion has not been there - just imagine if education had kicked into gear…. opportunities would be much greater because they are nowhere now (interview, 18th January 2011).

Amongst the respondents, capacity shortcomings were not only seen as limiting access to opportunity but potentially a source of growing discontent. Jahed hints at the frustration that the capacity gap generates amongst those struggling to reach what for foreign nationals would seem to be *low hanging fruit*:

Why don't you become a shopkeeper? - well the issue is we don't have access to the capital neither do we have the skills that these people [foreign nationals] have, so its a stupid question (interview, 14th March 2011).

4.4.1.3 Empowerment and the importance of networks

Aside from capacity shortcomings, being "plugged" into professional networks for those striving to move up the social ladder would seem to be particularly important. David Everatt highlighted the on-going racial bias of some of these networks:

I had a graduate yesterday, she graduated from the school of Architecture and Planning, Cum Laude, [A] Black woman [she] has been looking for a job [but] hasn't found a job in two years - a tiny little example - but there are hundreds of thousands of matriculants who can't find employment… you are denied the opportunity to step up …the upper end, its very much based on networks and links. You know to be able to penetrate that market

is unbelievably difficult if you are not this"[points to skin] (interview, 19th January 2011).

4.4.1.4 State institutions as barriers to social empowerment

In addition to capacity and empowerment barriers for black South Africans, state mechanisms themselves would seem to be providing barriers to accessing opportunity in many instances. Nyar cites as an example the South African Metro Police who while "technically" enforcing by-laws, nonetheless thwart attempts by informal entrepreneurs to uplift themselves:

> *Around the city centre you are very often likely to see metro police taking traders off the street and its not even 'you don't have a license' its - throw every bit of your goods across the street, beat you to a pulp and put you in a police van. So when people do try to engage in some sort of initiative to better themselves … they're still disempowered structurally (interview, 8th March 2011).*

And the experience of *structural* capacity and empowerment barriers is not limited to those enforced by the metro police. Respondents frequently cited the department of Home Affairs (DHA) as an example of institutionalised *social gate keeping*:

> *The reason why DHA has really pulled up its bootstraps is because of [public] perception - the public has been complaining that this is an institution that we cannot access, the service that we get is so sub-standard (Nyar, interview, 8th March 2011).*

Neocosmos (2010) also deals at length with the trials and tribulations that foreign nationals face at the hands of the DHA when they engage in the process of applying for registration documents.

Beyond the frustration that sub-standard service generates, the disempowerment that follows has had in some cases a tragic impact on those struggling to climb the opportunity ladder:

> *The bureaucratic obstacles that people face from organs of the state are incredibly powerful and play a role in disempowering people to the extent that there is a sense of absolute fatality … In 2009 a young man approached the DHA for an ID document and*

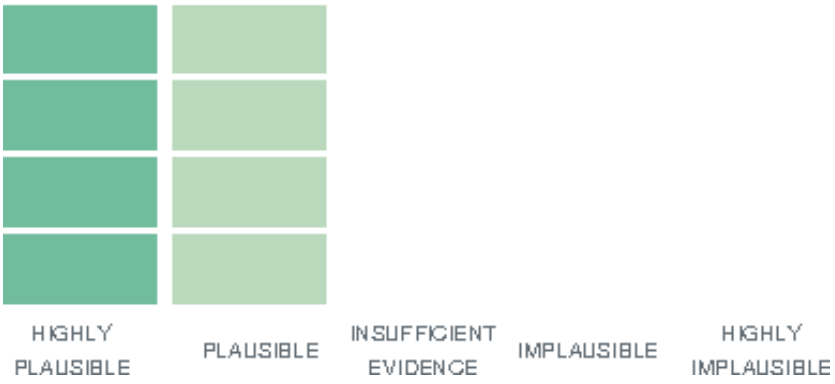
was told 'you don't look South African' and he killed himself (Nyar, interview, 8th March 2011).

The evidence for the existence of empowerment and capacity barriers in the struggle for access to opportunity for South Africans would seem to be significant, given the output from discussions.

An important question remains – Why is the frustration that South Africans experience directed towards foreign nationals?

4.4.2 Proposition E - Perceptions of unfair competition for access to opportunity

4.4.2.1 Results of Poll



All respondents felt that a sense of *unfair competition* was a contributing factor to xenophobic violence with 4 stating that this was highly plausible and four stating that it was plausible.

4.4.2.2 Discussion

While capacity and empowerment barriers are themselves important in determining the starting point for tension it is the sense of *unfair* access to opportunities by others that the model postulates, generates the potential for transformation of *frustration* into *resentment*.

For Polzer (interview, 27th March 2011), potential *resentment* stems from three important components - the objectively placing of oneself and competitors within *different groups*, the perception that that each group is objectively accessing a *different level* of opportunity, and thirdly that the minority group is accessing opportunity through a

different (and advantaged) opportunity structure.

This resonates closely with *group threat* and *relative deprivation theory*, (Walker & Smith, 2002) which is explored in greater depth in Chapter 5.

Neocosmos argues for a more simplistic approach and sums up what he sees as the "logic" of competition as follows

> *You have a view which is an easy one which says 'its a zero sum, there are 20 jobs available there are 18 foreigners - the bastards are stealing the jobs!'. So therefore we have a problem - if only we can get rid of them then there will be more jobs for us (interview, 4th February 2011).*

While the zero sum logic is an attractive one, it assumes that South Africans and foreign nationals are competing as *equals*. Reports that followed the 2008 violence suggest the situation is not so simple; there is quite clearly a perception that foreign nationals exert an *unfair advantage* over South Africans through being prepared to work for less pay (Amisi et al., 2010; Bond et al., 2008, HSRC, 2008) and that they are "able to be more economically resourceful and 'successful' than local citizens" (HSRC, 2008 p. 43).

Looking first for the sources of *competitive advantage*, Martin Mande (a community field worker with the Damietta Trust Peace Building project in Atteridgeville) feels that a difference in *aptitude* is a contributing factor:

> *Foreigners they don't give up, they just come and they make sure they get what they want - and us, we are a bit relaxing and when we relax they get that, and when they get they don't come back of course to tell us how - we need as well to get! So what can we do? (interview, 7th March 2011).*

But it's not just a difference of *aptitude*, Martin feels that there is also the issue of long term vs. short term aspiration:

> *Yes foreigners take opportunity from South Africans ... [Zimbabweans] know to do maybe gardening, they know how to do gardening with passion ... the local know how to do the gardening but he can't do it with passion the way a Zimbabwean will do it, 'cos the Zimbabwean want to do it so that more will call him again and get job - but him the*

local person will do it so that he just get money to spend for that time - he doesn't think about tomorrow (interview, 7th March 2011).

However *competitive disadvantage* in relation to foreign nationals in itself would seem to be insufficient to motivate people towards violence. Competition on the part of foreign nationals would also appear to be seen as intrinsically *unfair* by poor South Africans. The apparent willingness of foreign nationals to work for lower pay (arguably in the face of hard won labour rights that were intrinsic to the South African liberation struggle) is a recurring theme: "they are cheap and willing to work hard" (HSRC, 2008, p.39).

A number of analysts identify this practice as potentially problematic:

Perhaps the most dangerous view held by South Africans is that foreigners are 'stealing' jobs. Many argue that employers prefer to hire foreigners because they can settle for low wages (Misago, Landau & Monson, 2009).

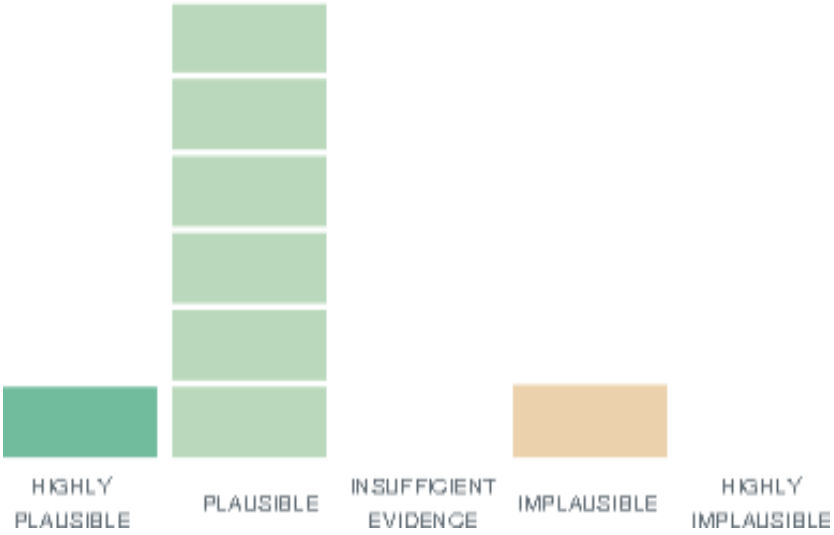
The issue of foreigners working for low wages would seem to extend beyond the unskilled labour market, even at a professional level the perception is one of South Africans being "crowded out" by foreign nationals (in particular by Zimbabweans) that are "talented and cheap" (Everett, 2011, p.22).

Employment of foreigners would also seem in some instance's to violate to well-established gender conventions in addition to professional pride, the Human Sciences Research Council highlights the perception within the Western Cape that "men from other countries, specifically Malawi, are taking jobs previously performed by local women" (HSRC, 2008, p.39).

Such is the importance of the sense of *injustice* felt by South Africans in the face of competition from foreign nationals for jobs and opportunity that the issue is further explored in the *emerging* ideas section that follows.

4.4.3 Proposition F - Foreign nationals as occupants of a social space where they access opportunity beyond that which is available to nationals.

4.4.3.1 Results of Poll



The proposition that Foreign Nationals occupy a social space where they access opportunity beyond that which is available to nationals, as a contributing factor to violence was accepted by seven out of eight respondents with one considering the proposition to be implausible.

4.4.3.2 Discussion

The model proposes that foreigners are better able to *take advantage* of opportunity as compared to local South Africans.

But why should this be so? Martin Mande from Damietta Trust puts it quite plainly:

> *They [foreign nationals] are more skilled than them [South Africans] so they get opportunity compared to South Africans (interview, 7th March 2011).*

Lance Thomas suggests that foreigners who arrive in South Africa are in some ways *self-selecting* and represent those with more drive from amongst their own communities, that is after all why they have left:

> *People who come here as refugees are risk takers who have left everything that they own in order to go to another country to make something of themselves - they don't have the option of failure, they are willing to start from nothing …[and] risk everything to succeed*

(interview, 7th March 2011).

Accepting that foreign nationals may indeed be *self-selecting* and with reference to the proposal that foreigners occupy a space where they access more opportunity, Christa Kuljian helpfully clarifies what she sees to be the situation:

> *Its not that they have more opportunity but they make more of that - a subtle difference... they are able to exploit it more effectively (interview, 18th January 2011).*

Foreign nationals being seen to be able to exploit opportunity and to bring skills to bear that South Africans may not have is fair enough, but Michael Neocosmos argues that this *in itself* is not sufficient to provoke people to violence. In his view it depends on how communities where different groups are based, view each other:

> *It depends entirely on what the surrounding and dominant ideology within that group is - if its a collectivistic one in which individuals who are doing well are seen as representing the community somewhere else "doing us proud" then its different than an individualistic one where we are all at each others throats in order to get there (interview, 4th February 2011).*

It would seem reasonable to speculate that within many of the informal settlements where foreign nationals live alongside poor South Africans the dominant ideology is indeed *individualistic* rather than collectivist, or that at very least one where people operate in closely knit network of groups that are defined by their origins. As Lance Thomas explains, those who have migrated to the urban settlements "still function from the context of the local chiefdom" (interview, 7th March 2011).

But further to the issues of illegitimacy and collectivist vs. Individualistic approaches within communities, it is the relationship between groups in terms of *social rank* that the model suggests is of central importance as the source of tension.

4.4.4 Proposition G - The importance of perceptions relating to the lower social rank of foreign nationals

While a sense of unfair competition, and the perception that opportunity has been stolen, promises to be a volatile mix, the model suggests that it is the *lower social rank* of

foreigners that makes this relationship critical. The lower social rank of foreigners (by virtue of them being foreigners) places them above the opportunity line where they are seen to be accessing levels of opportunity that are not in accordance with social norms (see Figure 8).

4.4.4.1 Results of poll



In considering the proposition that foreign nationals are perceived as holding a lower social rank to South Africans, respondents appeared to be slightly less convinced. Nonetheless, five out of eight felt that this was a plausible contributing factor to violence while two were inconclusive and one felt that this was implausible.

4.4.4.2 Discussion

Neocosmos in *From Native foreigners to foreign natives* (2010, p. 5) while not specifically referring to the perceived *lower social rank* of foreigners refers instead to the *elevated* position in which South Africans see themselves in relation to citizens from the rest of Africa:

> *There is of course a dominant arrogant political discourse held by many South Africans of all racial groups regarding the apparent exceptionalism of the country on the African continent, a discourse which forms part of South African nationalism.*

Other Africans are therefore seen as citizens of "some kind of strange backward continent characterised by primitivism, corruption, authoritarianism, poverty and 'failed states'" (Neocosmos, 2010, p.5).

In interview, Lance Thomas of the Damietta Trust echoes this take on South African self-perception but goes further to suggest that the *paradox* that results from the presence of

low ranking yet *well educated* and *capable* foreigners sits uncomfortably with South African exceptionalism:

> *South Africans' attitude is that South Africa is better than all other countries - when they start encountering people from other countries who come to their community [they think] 'we are supposed to be better' - but yet these people in the way they live and in everything else they do appear to be better (interview, 7th March 2011).*

There is evidence to suggest that a significant number of foreigners upon arriving in South Africa are obliged to take up employment in sectors for which they are overqualified[34] representing a "step down" in terms of their social status. Lance Thomas points out that therein lies the source of confusion and frustration for South Africans:

> *We don't look at the social standing of the people coming from those countries - they actually come from a higher social class but then insert themselves in a lower social class here. So the comparison is an unequal comparison and that adds to the inferiority complex of South Africans (interview, 7th March 2011).*

Martin Mande echoes the sense of frustration that this inferiority complex generates and uses language that hints at a social hierarchy that has been upset:

> *You have been living in that community for 10 or 20 years you have kids you have raised and some have grown up, and they [foreigners] have just come for two months and you see them giving **you** the job, the moment **you** are the one who is supposed to give **them** job [emphasis added] (interview, 7th March 2011).*

This juxtaposition in what seems to be regarded as the *natural order of things* is at the root of what the model identifies as the source of societal tension.

4.4.5 Emerging ideas from Theme B

4.4.5.1 Perceptions of Injustice and theft

Its perhaps obvious that individuals with wide and developed skill sets coupled with a

[34] Francis Antonie recounts the story told to him by a friend and colleague, of a qualified mathematics teacher from Zimbabwe being obliged to work as a gardener in the Johannesburg suburbs.

driving aptitude will have a strategic advantage in a competitive business environment over those with few. However in the South African context this advantage that foreigners possess is crucially overlaid with a sense of *injustice*. The point is illustrated by Martin Mande's comments:

> *We need to get back because it is our things, which they are getting (interview, 7th March 2011).*

Mohammed Jahed points out that it is not just newcomers or strangers that are the target (highlighting the difficulties in interpreting the violence as exclusively xenophobic in the traditional sense i.e. driven by a fear of strangers):

> *It's people who are settled …it's not like they are outside communities, and there's now this perception we need to attack your businesses we need to attack you because you are taking our jobs away (interview, 14th March 2011).*

Nyar points out that the GCRO quality of life survey part of which set out to gauge public attitudes towards foreigners, showed that 69 per cent of those polled felt that foreigners were *taking* benefits that were *meant* for South Africans:

> *There was a pervasive sense within communities of being cheated - 'we've waited and waited for what you [government] promised and we have all these un-met expectations and now you've let all these people in who are here to cheat and deprive us of what we are entitled to (interview, 8th March 2011).*

Coupled to the sense of unfair competition there would seem to be evidence that for many it represents an *act of theft* on the part of foreign nationals towards South Africans. In fact the language that has been reported in relation to this is one of "stealing", "eating" or erosion of "dignity":

> *[Their] menial or ill-paid work undermines the hard-won fruits of democracy and undermines dignity (HSRC, 2008).*

And in the procurement of government services:

> *Where foreigners and locals maybe both of them are going to hospital they both want service but maybe a foreigner will get a better service than a local. That creates a*

tension "this is our money that these people are eating" (Martin Mande interview, 7th March 2011).

4.4.5.2 Foreign Nationals and the association with criminality

A number of analysts have pondered as to why foreigners seem to have been disproportionally associated with criminal activities (CSVR - CoRMSA - HBS, 2008; Landau, 2005; Landau, Ramjathan-Keogh, & Singh, 2005).

The perception of foreigners as "stealing" opportunity (jobs, women etc.) has already been noted and recognised as potentially dangerous (Landau, Ramjathan-Keogh, & Singh, 2005) especially given the violent way in which local justice has been meted out to "criminals" from within impoverished communities in South Africa's past. But it is the *extension* of this logic from "stealing" to wider "criminality" that perhaps warrants further exploration.

Misago *et al.* hypothesise that the answer lies in the popular definition of criminality:

> *Communities' understanding of criminality is different from the one of the state (e.g. vigilant groups assign criminality to what is not necessarily defined as such e.g. stealing jobs, women, buying or renting RDP houses (Misago, Landau, & Monson, 2009).*

Lance Thomas provides an alternative logic and goes on to suggest that it is this *paradox of perception* that spawns the crucial branding of foreigners as criminals:

> *So there must be something happening here - we started at the same level, they must be involved in crime or something because we are not advancing and they are. (interview, 7th March 2011).*

Clearly an association with on-going criminality (rational or irrational) is dangerous in South Africa.

4.4.5.3 Perceptions of Entitlement

The sense of *entitlement* on the part of previously disadvantaged South Africans also featured in conversations with respondents:

> *In the focus groups that I saw …there were people saying "Government should help*

*every single person in this country - that is governments job" . There was no notion that **I** have to do anything [emphasis added](Everatt, interview, 19th January 2011).*

Annsilla Nyar in interview also refers to responses from respondents in the same survey who were asked about their attitudes towards skills upgrading:

There was also a very honest reflection - 'why should we? I don't feel the need to go' - the community were offering sewing lessons and there was a sewing machine 'but I don't really feel like it! Why should I bother to learn a skill?' So I think that people understand that its counterproductive to have these attitudes but at the same time they are so engrained just from living in the community so that its very difficult for people to challenge it (interview, 8th March, 2011).

And with entitlement the sense that the *fruits* of entitlement are being diluted by those who through being undocumented (and therefore uncounted) are swelling the numbers across which scarce resources have to be spread:

There is also this issue of registration in the community - you will see that people come into to count people in the community, normally they count people who have green ID, but foreigners they are not counted in that - but foreigners in the community they will start all of them consuming electricity, all of them will consume water, and so the issue comes again - why these people who are not part of our census when we are counted and when they come we have to share the same things with them again? (Mande, interview, 7th March 2011).

While a strong sense of *entitlement* coupled with an impression that others are *stealing* opportunity is undoubtedly fertile ground for generating resentment and anger that can spill over into violence, the link between a strong sense of entitlement and opportunity as a *finite* commodity that can be stolen is not an immediately obvious one. As Francis Antonie points out - the concept of *opportunity* being an asset that is finite and limited is for many counter intuitive. After all entrepreneurs are often regarded as being able to *create* opportunity.

Yet the language of "theft" and "eating" seems to suggest that this is indeed the way in which opportunity is regarded.

4.4.5.4 The nature of competition between businesses

Woven amongst the complex perceptions relating to unfair competition for limited opportunity there would appear to be a more *tangible* and *direct* competition between businesses in poor communities.

Lance Thomas of Damietta Trust describes how strong networking within the Somali community enables them to collectively bargain for better wholesale prices on basic commodities allowing them to sell for "Pick and Pay rates" as opposed the relatively high prices charged by the locally owned spaza shops.

Recounting the case of an ANC youth league leader who was found by police to be responsible for instigating violence against foreigners and whose parents were local business owners, he paraphrases the imagined conversation between them:

> *We got you into this position - our business is suffering and your livelihood is going to be affected - you had better close these foreign business down (interview, 7th March 2011).*

But again the dynamics would seem to go beyond simple competition. Lance Thomas refers to the *violation* by foreign businessmen of unwritten collective agreements amongst business operators in informal settlements:

> *Business owners would say 'we will charge ten rand for bread - anyone who charges less than that is not a friend of ours'. Ethiopians who charge nine rand are therefore 'seen as sabotaging the business of local people' and so become a business threat [to] the livelihoods of powerful people (interview, 7th March 2011).*

Membership of networks and groups for both communities would seem to be important - used on the one hand by Somalis to leverage greater bargaining power for commodities and improve profitability, and by the South Africans on the other to engage in rudimentary price fixing. This extension of the argument about competition between businesses in a confined and crowded business environment (Bond, Ngwane, & Baruti, 2010), into competition *between groups* has perhaps some potential to take us a little closer to understanding the link to violence.

4.4.5.5 Multiple relative relationships

The positioning of South Africans both black and white, on the social rank/opportunity curve is clearly a product of a socially engineered past. While it is possible to see how this may have generated the dissatisfaction and that drove the South African liberation struggle, it is less clear how these same forces contribute to and drive xenophobia. What seems reasonable is that the superposition of foreigners onto the social rank/opportunity curve in South Africa has placed them within a *complex* social environment that is historically charged.

What is evident from interviews (and literature) in fact is that there is not a *single* defining relationship here but a *number* of relationships between locals and foreigners that can be plotted on the social rank/opportunity curve. All are potential sources of tension, and each would seem to feature at different stages in the course of violent xenophobic outbreaks. The precise nature of these relationships and their place within the unfolding of violence will be examined in Chapter 5.

Relationships that can be identified using the social rank/opportunity framework are:

- High capacity foreign nationals moving to South Africa, successfully competing for professional posts and "crowding out" South African professionals.

- High capacity foreign nationals who moving to South Africa are obliged to take up positions of *much lower social status* on the opportunity ladder than those they would have occupied at home (e.g. the maths teacher operating as a gardener) and having a technical competitive advantage.

- Foreign nationals of a similar capacity to poor South Africans who are obliged/willing to take up employment for a lower wage thereby displacing South Africans from certain labour markets. (e.g. Fruit pickers and gardeners in the Cape)

- Relationships with foreigners who are perceived as having a *lower* social status but who are accessing equivalent or greater levels of opportunity through

entrepreneurship and effective networking (Somali and Bangladeshi businessmen).

– And relationships with foreigners who are perceived to be of *lower* social status and who are accessing opportunities for which they have no entitlement and that South Africans feel they are unfairly denied (foreigners allocated ID cards and RDP housing)

All of the above are relationships are cited as evoking xenophobic sentiment (Bond, 2011; CSVR, 2008; Harris, 2002; HSRC, 2008). However the groups involved would appear to differ significantly in terms of their own social ranking in their country of origin, and subsequent social ranking upon arrival in South Africa. A deeper examination of these relationships is included in Chapter 5 where they are examined in relation to Relative Deprivation Theory.

4.5 Theme C - The impact of opportunity shocks

The *rapidity* with which widespread violence broke out and escalated in 2008 is evident in the accounts within a number of reports (Misago, Monson, Polzer, & Landau, 2010; Parsley & Everatt, 2010). In fact such was the sudden and rapid onset of violence that it caught government and NGOs unawares (SAMP, 2008). If we look for *external drivers* in the environment that might be correlated with this rapid change, there are few conventional ones that are obvious. Social indicators tend to move relatively slowly (if sometimes unpredictably) and even political machination has an inherent lead-time before rhetoric translates into action. The one factor that was notable in 2008 for its rapid onset, reach and impact was the global financial crisis that swept across the globe.

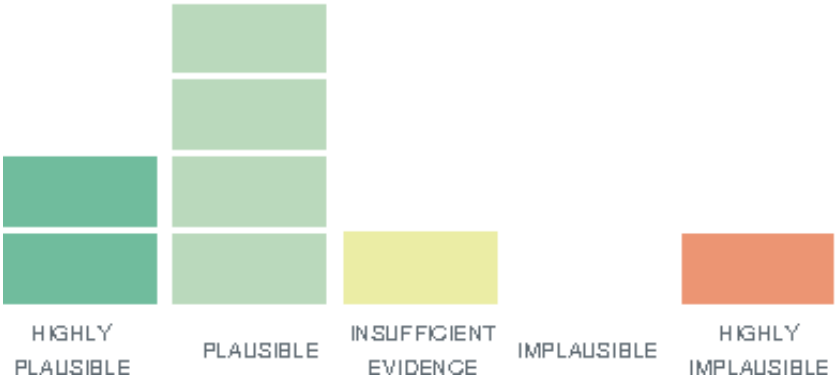
In explaining the *dynamics* surrounding widespread outbreaks of xenophobic violence (why it happened *when* it did) the model suggests that it was this "opportunity shock" that was the factor that rapidly transformed a tense environment into a volatile and violent one. The proposal is that perceptions around access to opportunity during the *opportunity shock* were primary in transforming an environment that was tense into one that was volatile by *spotlighting* certain groups within society that were perceived as *outliers* from the accepted norms prescribed by the social rank/opportunity curve.

Immediately after the opportunity shock, for these groups, there was a discrepancy between the levels of opportunity that was *acceptable* for individuals to access, and the actual levels of opportunity that they were *perceived* to be accessing.

Discussions relating to propositions 8 and 9 explored the plausibility of *opportunity shock* as a factor that turns a tense xenophobic environment into a volatile one. The propositions also explore the strongly *temporal* nature of volatile environments for xenophobic violence.

4.5.1 Proposition H - Opportunity shock as a phenomenon which transforms dissatisfaction into resentment

4.5.1.1 Results of Poll



The majority of respondents found this concept highly plausible (2) or plausible (4) as a contributor to violence, with one respondent inconclusive and one considering the proposition implausible.

4.5.1.2 Discussion

4.5.1.3 Evidence of an opportunity shock

There is no doubt that South Africa (along with many other economies) underwent a significant opportunity shock in 2008 and that this was overlaid on top of an already difficult situation. As Nyar points out:

> *It was a horrendous year by anyone's account and we all felt it - whether we were living in a privileged white suburb or a township where you had to catch a bus every day to work. People were very nervous - it was a time of global recession - we had electricity cuts and we were warned that electricity tariffs would be increasing all these costs*

started going up - taxi fares, food, and real dissatisfaction on the ground. People went into 'Pick and Pay' and started taking food off the shelves because there is no other way that 'we can get food other than we take it' (interview, 8th March 2011).

In the synthesis paper within the Atlantic Philanthropies Report, "Why Did It Happen" Bond et al. highlight the confluence of multiple economic pressures that came to bear during 2008 including the latest in a series of currency crashes, "an enormous balance of payments deficit", a dramatic drop in GDP growth and a record year high in domestic debt coupled with soaring interest rates (2011, p.18).

David Everatt during interview emphasises the impact of the opportunity shock on top of a socio-economic environment that was becoming progressively challenging:

*You get liberated at the same time as HIV starts wiping you out, with a president who denies that it exists the same time that the gold mines are on their downward spiral, at the same time that you are hit by a series of economic shocks from the 90s onwards, your currency is just going 'bananas', your global ranking is dropping quite significantly your life expectancy drops by 22 years, its a **terrible** time and at the **same** you're being told you are the miracle nation the rainbow nation [emphasis added](interview, 19th January 2011).*

Behind the figures and statistics, the experiences of those working on the ground demonstrate the very real social impact that the global recession was having in South Africa, and begin to hint at where those affected might target their frustration and anger:

It was a global event, and listening to some of the people who had a salary of 2000 rand which is supposed to feed a family, [provide] money for taxi fares from Soshanguve to Waterkloof - doubled in price, bread went from 6 rand to 12 rand, all this was extra expense at a time when there was no money around. How do explain to your child that you are going out to work all day and coming home with nothing - you can't feed your child. You can't blame government that you fought many years to put in place for your lack of resources so who do you blame? (Thomas, interview, 7th March 2011).

In addition to the increased cost of public transport (a significant cost factor in the fragile budgets of poor South Africans) the shock also had an impact on the transport of those

who were a little better off. The "cost of mobility", a composite index produced by Wesbank based on "maintenance costs, fuel, insurance premiums, capital portion and interest portion on an average South African's motor vehicle" had increased a staggering 46% in four years (Leathern, 2008, p. 1).

More significantly and concurrent with this, but perhaps less well reported, were record levels of repossessions of cars and homes - coveted symbols of the *new dignity* of the upwardly-mobile, black middle class in post-apartheid South Africa.[35]

The opportunity shock of 2008 might therefore be thought of as not only eroding the *economic* well-being of previously disadvantaged South Africans, but in a very real sense, snatching away the spoils of a hard won *social* victory that was part of the political struggle against apartheid.

4.5.1.4 Opportunity shock and a link to violence

While opportunity shock may conceivably create a potentially volatile social condition there remains a question as to whether it also provides the *trigger* for violence?

While some interviewees (Jahed) were confident that economics and even inflation were forces behind the violence others felt that it was how groups *interpreted* macro and micro economic developments within their own social context as being crucially important. Lance Thomas of Damietta Trust describes the simplified analysis that takes place in the communities in which his organisation works:

> *People don't understand economics, they don't understand these other things, they had to look at what the reality was - what they saw in the streets everyday to try and justify why they were no longer living the life they were leading before - somebody had to be blamed for that (interview, 7th March 2011).*

The need to find blame together with the perception amongst perpetrators that opportunities had been somehow *stolen* by foreigners, (Misago, Landau, & Monson, 2009) prompted many to explain the violence using the theory of "scapegoating"

[35] Repo rates for cars during the quarter April to June 2008 were double that of previous years (Leathern, 2008)

(Amisi, Bond, Cele, & Ngwane, 2011).

Other such Polzer (interview, 27th March 2011) acknowledge the likelihood of opportunity shock contributing to a volatile environment for xenophobic violence, but emphasise the crucial role of *local leaders* in instigating violence, "as a means to appropriate localised state authority for personal political and economic benefits" (Misago, Monson, Polzer, & Landau, 2010)

The model suggests that those who are seen to be accessing opportunity beyond that which is socially acceptable are suddenly exposed with their heads above the parapet - not as a result of raising themselves up but the fact that the parapet *drops* leaving them *exposed*. While this might potentially explain the vulnerability of certain businessmen (Somalis) as a number of interviewees pointed out, it does not explain the targeting of those who were clearly not *commercially competitive* nor the targeting of poor South Africans. Clearly there is an additional dynamic at work here. Potential explanations for these *collateral* victims are explored in Chapter 5.

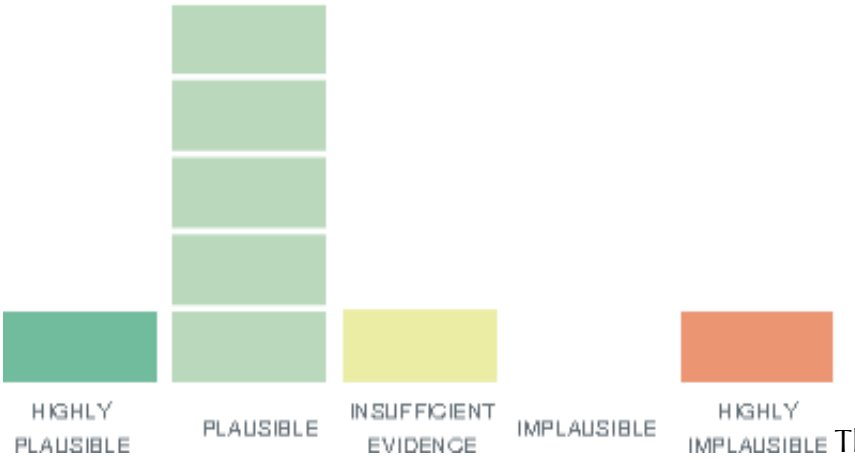
While the majority of interviewees felt that *opportunity shock* was a plausible contributing factor to outbreaks of violence a word of caution around "dominant economic perspectives" was sounded by Neocosmos who believes that it overlooks peoples thinking:

> *If you have an increase in economic crisis then the chances are that you are going to have more inter-ethnic violence or you are going to have more xenophobic violence. It's only true if you accept, you exclude modes of thought, ways of thinking (interview, 4th February 2011)*

4.5.2 Proposition I - The strongly temporal nature of volatile environments for xenophobic violence

Conversations with interviewees regarding this aspect of the model were intended to probe their reactions to the concept of widespread outbreaks of xenophobic violence as a phenomenon that exhibits a particularly *temporal* nature (i.e. that in some sense have a recognisable life cycle).

4.5.2.1 Results of Poll



The majority of respondents found that the concept relating to the strongly *temporal* nature of volatile environments for xenophobia to be highly plausible (1) or plausible (5), with one respondent remaining inconclusive, and one respondent deeming the proposition implausible

4.5.2.2 Discussion

Despite an underlying current of xenophobic sentiment in the country that had been widely recognised and documented (SAMP, 2008) the *rapidity* with which xenophobic sentiment exploded into mob violence in May 2008 took many by surprise (Parsley & Everatt, 2011).

Equally noteworthy, well documented and observed (but arguably less rigorously analysed) were the *dynamics* that characterised the "wave" of violence.

Tension that had built over an underlying undercurrent of discontent, built throughout March and April climaxing in May 2008 when killings were at their peak, and then gradually tailed off by July.

4.5.2.3 Evidence of a dynamic within language

An intuitive sense of "dynamic" is clearly evident in the language that commentators and analysts used to describe events. Paul Verryn's "Thunderstorm of violence" (Worby, Hassim, & Kupe, 2008, p.i) captured for many the rapidity with which the tempest engulfed whole areas and moved rapidly across the country catching communities unawares. Everatt too describes tension:

> *...which erupted in May 2008 in an orgy of violence that spread rapidly from Alexandra in Johannesburg to other sites across the country... and then seemed to have stopped almost as suddenly (2011, p. 8).*

Nyar talks about violence that "seemed to have a life of its own" (interview, 8th March 2011) while Kuljian describes "Tension, awareness and coverage in the media (that) seemed to rise and then disperse" (interview, 18th January 2011)

Polzer in describing events in 2010 refers to a "viral" dynamic, fed by informal "chatter" on taxis and in public places which built to a climax (admittedly contained) of violence in Kya Sands, in the period directly following the completion of the FIFA world cup (interview, 16th August 2010).

While the "viral" analogy captures the sense in which a sentiment of threat grew and spread rapidly, Kuljian (interview, 18th January 2011) observes that unlike a viral dynamic the violence did not seem to have an unbridled "exponential growth" (a prospect that is truly worrying) but was eventually contained.

4.5.3 Emerging ideas from Theme C

4.5.3.1 Wheels set in motion

In considering the *dynamics* of violence, there is a sense amongst interviewees of *wheels set in motion* together with a sense of *momentum*. Nyar describes violence that "spread from the taxi industry and took on a life of its own" (interview, 8th August 2011).

And with momentum the sense that, once set in motion, the train of violence was difficult to stop:

> *Whatever preventative measures that local leadership - especially the older and more respected people in the community might have tried to implore calm - it didn't work... it didn't seem to penetrate what words of wisdom might have come from above (Annsilla Nyar, interview, 8th March 2011).*

While the impetus of violence may have facilitated its spread, recognition of *pattern* also provided a grasp however tenuous, that allowed the violence to be "monitored, predicted and eventually contained" *(Ansilla Nyar, interview, 8th March 2011)*.

4.5.3.2 Logic and Pattern

If the rampant unfolding of violent incidents suggested an inherent *epidemiology,* the dynamics also influenced the way violence was interpreted and understood. In the midst of the tempest and in the forthright way in which it moved, some saw method and plan:

> *There was **a pattern** and **logic** to violence - starting in one place and climbing borders, mobile - spread to KZN eastern cape and Cape Town [emphasis added] (Ansilla Nyar, interview, 8th March 2011).*

In fact the apparent *pattern* and *logic* led many to speculate that this was the work of a hidden hand - the widely reported third force theory.[36] The alternative - that the seeming well defined-dynamics of violence were actually an *emergent* social phenomenon driven by forces within society itself was only given credence once the evidence of third force involvement failed to materialise:

> *Only after dust had settled people realised that it wasn't organised (Ansila Nyar, interview, 8th March 2011).*

The majority of interviewees acknowledged that there was certainly a *dynamic* to the violence, however few had well defined views on factors that drove it or shaped its profile. In addition there would seem to be little research carried out into the *pattern* and *spread* of outbreaks of violence and the significance that these dynamics have on the overall *shape* of violent disorder. This topic is explored briefly in Chapter 5.

4.6 Overall plausibility

4.6.1 Proposition J - Overall plausibility of the model

The final question on the poll asked respondents to rate the overall plausibility of the model in describing the nature of xenophobic violence.

[36] The idea of involvement of a third force was first suggested by Manala Manzini, head of the National Intelligence Agency

4.6.1.1 Results of poll



The majority (six out of eight) felt that the model was either plausible (3) or highly plausible (3) with two respondents stating that they felt the model offered an implausible explanation.

4.6.1.2 Discussion

While the poll and interview conversations demonstrated that the predominant response to the models plausibility was affirmative, there were those who felt that the "modelling" approach to social dynamics had inherent shortcomings:

> *I think crude positivist methods such as these are not at all helpful for explaining social phenomena (Michael Neocosmos, E-mail, 31st January 2011).*

Others while less critical of the approach sounded a note of caution:

> *If you look at Luke Sinwell's piece on Alexandra it absolutely confirms your point … and I think that each of those [case studies] will offer support for different parts of your model …[however] total models are very **rarely** correct [emphasis added](Everatt, interview, 19th January 2011).*

Polzer reserved judgement regarding the *universality* of the model but was generally affirmative:

> *It's not a general model that applies across societies but it's a model that might apply to a very specific point in time in a specific transitional period …an alternative to other explanations trying to explain the same environment which are generic; poverty, … apartheid legacies, self hate … you are basically saying hey that's not enough (interview, 27th March 2011).*

Jahed, a development economist was amongst those who supported the plausibility of the model. However he highlighted the limitations of research without primary data:

> *It's [about]* ***perception*** *and what you are trying to do is to look for causality, which is dangerous without evidence [emphasis added] (interview, 14th March 2011).*

Harris was amongst those who were most supportive of the model:

> *I think it looks fabulous, a nice presentation taking complex issues and presenting them in an accessible way… it seems to have a lot of explanatory power… a great contribution to the field of violence as well as xenophobia (interview, 3rd March 2011).*

While the responses from interviewees during discussion represent an immediate reaction as to the plausibility of the model, the results from the key informant poll give a slightly more detailed picture. These results are discussed in the section that follows.

4.6.1.3 Plausibility in relation to literature

In terms of plausibility in relation to literature, the model would seem to resonate strongly with a range of theoretical literature originating both in South Africa and from international sources.

There is certainly a strong consistency between aspects of the model and *Relative Deprivation Theory* – in fact the *relationships* between groups and individuals that inhabit the social rank/opportunity landscape might be regarded as key to understanding potential RD tensions that arise between them. Further discussion of the model's congruence with RD theory and additional insights that it affords are discussed in Chapter 5.

The model was also found to resonate with Wimmer's concept of xenophobia as a phenomenon emanating from a "struggle for collective goods" (1997, p.28). *Opportunity shock* overlaid on a transitional *social rank/opportunity* profile would appear to resonate closely with Wimmer's account of phenomenological "deep gripping crises" that occur repeatedly as a result of "intensive phases of modernization" (1997, p. 27). Wimmer argues that these can emerge if: "promises of a societal model… can no longer be kept" (1997, p. 27). The South African government arguably has a major challenge in

delivering on the "promises" of societal liberation, a fact that widespread service delivery protests underline all to clearly. In terms of the *social rank/opportunity* model, this failure to deliver on societal promises might be represented by the physical *gap* between the levels of opportunity defined by the *constitutional opportunity line* and the levels of opportunity that are *actually available* to poor South Africans (defined by the *transitional opportunity line*) as illustrated in Figure 5. Interestingly the model suggest that if we could *plot* these curves we might have a *measure* of that failure

The model appears to fit also with Amisi *et al*.s account of "uneven and combined development" (2011, p. 59) as a *structural* cause of xenophobia in South Africa. In this instance the opportunity/social rank contour and its movement between pre 94 and present day profiles can be seen as a *measure* of the extent of uneven and combined development and how it has changed (or has not changed) since 1994.

4.7 Analysis of the Key Informant Polls

While the sample number within the key informant poll is too small to be statistically relevant, a rudimentary analysis of the results allows a certain level of triangulation with data gathered from interviews and affords some interesting insights.

4.7.1 Summary of Key Informant Poll

Table 1 shows a summary of data from the key informant poll in matrix form. *Key informants* are displayed along the horizontal axis and propositions relating to discreet *components* of the model are displayed along the vertical axis.

The results from interviewees' individual responses to the poll are shown as *cells* within the matrix with (5) corresponding to a response of *highly plausible* and (1) corresponding to a response of *highly implausible*. Responses of *plausible, insufficient evidence to make a judgement* and *implausible* are represented by scores of 4,3, and 2 respectively.

To add a visual dimension to the matrix and aid in its interpretation, cells have been

shaded in a range of colours from dark green *(Highly Plausible)* to dark orange *(Highly implausible)* with light green, yellow and light orange representing intermediate responses.

4.7.2 Concurrence, divarication, consistency and consensus

Concurrence, divarication, consistency and consensus for the purposes of analysis are defined as follows:

Concurrence/Divarication - the degree to which responses reflect confidence in the model (measured by individual response scores). A score of five is taken to demonstrate strong concurrence. A score of one is taken to demonstrate little or no concurrence.

Consistency - the degree to which interviewees responses are *internally* similar across *all* propositions (measured by calculating the standard deviation of response scores by interviewee) subject to a maximum of 2.1, and a minimum of 0. The degree to which *internal consistency* represents a meaningful measure is perhaps debatable within this context, however given that the propositions represent *logical steps* in the formation of the model, it could be argued that this is in part (when taken in combination with concurrence) a reflection of the degree to which the respondent concurs with the *logic* of the model.

Consensus - the degree to which interviewees responses are *externally* similar to those of other interviewees across *individual* propositions (measured by calculating the standard deviation of responses scores by *proposition*) subject to a maximum 2.1, and a minimum of 0. The higher the level of *consensus* around a proposition the more *weight* the combined responses can be accorded.

4.7.3 Illustrating concurrence and divarication

In Table 1 scores from the Likert scale responses have been combined along each *vertical column* to identify and place *informants* who strongly *concur* with the range of propositions, to the right and those who strongly *divaricate* to the left.

Similarly scores have been combined along each *horizontal row* of the matrix to place those *propositions* for which there is a high level of *concurrence*, at the top and those for

which there is *lower* level of *concurrence*, at the bottom.

The matrix therefore shows both respondents and the elements with which they strongly concur at the *top right* of the matrix, and the respondents and the elements with which they strongly *divaricate* at the *bottom left*.

Table 1 **Concurrence of respondents with propositions**

	Q. In your opinion, to what extent do the models *components* as presented, contribute to a *plausible* or *implausible* explanation of the social dynamics that lead to a widespread outbreak of xenophobic violence in South Africa in 2008.?	Michael Neo Cosmos	David Everatt	Ansilla Nyar	Tim Kenny	Mohammed Jahed	Christa Kulejan	Tara Polzer	Bronwyn Harris	Total
E	Perceptions of unfair **competition** for access to opportunity	5	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	36
A	The concept of a causal relationship between **social rank** and **access** to **opportunity,**	5	3	4	4	4	5	5	5	35
C	The gap between **expected** access to opportunity and **actual** access to opportunity by South African Nationals	4	3	4	4	4	5	5	5	34
B	The process and (slow) pace of **social transition** from levels of opportunity (pre 94) towards ideal levels of opportunity	2	3	4	4	5	5	5	5	33
F	Foreign nationals as occupants of a social space where they access opportunity **beyond** that which is available to nationals	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	31
D	The existence of **empowerment** and **capacity** barriers for South Africans in terms of access opportunity that is constitutionally available to them	2	4	4	4	4	3	4	5	30
H	**Opportunity shock** as a phenomenon which transforms societal dissatisfaction towards foreign nationals into resentment	1	3	4	5	4	4	4	5	30
G	Perceptions relating to the lower **social rank** of foreign nationals	4	2	4	3	4	3	4	5	29
I	The strongly **temporal** nature of volatile environments for xenophobic violence	1	4	3	4	4	4	4	5	29
	Total	26	30	35	36	37	38	40	45	
J	The **overall** plausibility of the model	2	2	4	5	4	5	4	5	
		5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	

High concurrence by proposition

Lower concurrence by proposition

KEY

Highly Plausible	5
Plausible	4
Insufficient evidence	3
Implausible	2
Highly Implausible	1

Lower concurrence by respondent

High concurrence by respondent

4.7.3.1 Overall levels of concurrence

From the matrix it can be seen that on the whole there is a *strong* level of concurrence amongst respondents in relation to the model (predominance of green cells), with 58 out of a possible 72 (81%) respondent elements measured as *highly plausible* or *plausible*. In comparison 8 respondent elements (11%) are measured as *inconclusive*, and 6 (8%) measured *implausible* or *highly implausible*. In addition it can be shown that six out of eight respondents agreed that the same six out of nine propositions were *plausible* or *highly plausible* (as indicated by the areas bounded by the dotted line).

4.7.3.2 Concurrence by respondent

In terms of respondents, Bronwyn Harris, and Tara Polzer measure the highest levels of concurrence with propositions of the model (scores of 45 and 40 respectively with respect to a theoretical maximum of 45), while Michael Neocosmos, and David Everatt measure the most critical (scores of 26 and 30 respectively with respect to a theoretical minimum of 9).

4.7.3.3 Concurrence by proposition

Strongest concurrence amongst the group is with the propositions that ***E - perceptions of unfair access to opportunity*** and ***A - a causal relationship between social rank and access to opportunity*** are plausible contributors to the social dynamics that lead to an outbreak of xenophobic violence.

There is less concurrence is with the concepts of **G - perceptions relating to the lower social rank of foreign nationals**, and **H - opportunity shock as a phenomenon which transforms societal dissatisfaction towards foreign nationals into resentment**. Having said that the majority of respondents (five out of eight) find these propositions plausible or highly plausible).

4.7.3.4 Interpretation

The results of on *concurrence* of respondents to propositions are broadly backed up by evidence from discussion. Michael Neocosmos expressed strong personal reservations about the efficacy of "models" and of the appropriateness of using a "reductionist"

approach when looking at xenophobia. This is in keeping with his own approach in explaining the root causes of xenophobia that draws heavily on discourse[37] theory. Bronwyn Harris (the strongest concurrent) on the other hand, was rather more enthusiastic and as well as commending the explanatory power of the model saw opportunities to apply similar constructs to other forms of violence in South Africa.

In terms of concurrence by *proposition* the findings correspond broadly to information flowing from discussions where the first two propositions, E and A (referring to perceptions of unfair competition and the relationship between social rank and opportunity) are familiar to interviewees and whose popular acceptance would indeed seem to be reflected widely in literature, while propositions G and I (referring to opportunity shock and the social rank of foreigners relative to South Africans) would appear to be relatively new and therefore subject to more cautious review.

4.7.4 Consensus and consistency

Table 2 displays the same scores from the key informant poll responses, this time combined along each vertical and horizontal column to show *standard deviation*[38] amongst responses from each *interviewee* and across each *proposition*.

Interviewees are ranked from right to left in accordance to the extent that they have been internally *consistent* in their responses (measured using standard deviation across individual *interviewee* responses) and propositions from top to bottom in accordance with the extent to which there has been *consensus* as to their level of plausibility (measured using the standard deviation across individual *proposition* responses).

4.7.4.1 Consensus across propositions

There is an area of strong consensus (represented by the predominantly green area at the top of the matrix) around propositions E and C (relating to perceptions of unfair competition and the gap between expected and actual access to opportunity) while there

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[37] For an explanation of discourse theory see Wimmer (1997) within the literature review.

[38] In calculating and using the standard deviation we assume that the scores are measured on an *interval scale* of measurement. If the reader does not accept this, a discussion based on the frequencies and the colour coding of the dispersion will suffice for this reader.

are markedly fewer consensuses around proposition H (the role of opportunity shock).

4.7.4.2 Consistency by respondent

Meanwhile Bronwyn Harris and Mohammed Jahed appear to have been the most consistent in their responses *across propositions* while Michael Neocosmos shows the greatest *diversity* of confidence across components of the model. The area at the top right of the matrix (bounded by the heavy dotted line) additionally shows consensus amongst *five* respondents around the *same five* propositions of the model that they found to be *plausible* or *highly plausible*.

Table 2 Consensus amongst respondents around propositions

	Q. In your opinion, to what extent do the models *components* as presented, contribute to a *plausible* or *implausible* explanation of the social dynamics that lead to a widespread outbreak of xenophobic violence in South Africa in 2008.?	Michael Neo Cosmos	Christa Kulejan	David Everatt	Tara Polzer	Tim Kenny	Ansilla Nyar	Mohammed Jahed	Bronwyn Harris	SD
E	Perceptions of unfair **competition** for access to opportunity	5	5	4	5	4	4	4	5	0.53
C	The gap between **expected** access to opportunity and **actual** access to opportunity by South African Nationals	4	5	3	5	4	4	4	5	0.71
A	The concept of a causal relationship between **social rank** and **access** to **opportunity,**	5	5	3	5	4	4	4	5	0.74
F	Foreign nationals as occupants of a social space where they access opportunity **beyond** that which is available to nationals	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	0.83
D	The existence of **empowerment** and **capacity** barriers for South Africans in terms of access opportunity that is constitutionally available to them	2	3	4	4	4	4	4	5	0.89
G	Perceptions relating to the lower **social rank** of foreign nationals	4	3	2	4	3	4	4	5	0.92
B	The process and (slow) pace of **social transition** from levels of opportunity (pre 94) towards ideal levels of opportunity	2	5	3	5	4	4	5	5	1.13
I	The strongly **temporal** nature of volatile environments for xenophobic violence	1	4	4	4	4	3	4	5	1.19
H	**Opportunity shock** as a phenomenon which transforms societal dissatisfaction towards foreign nationals into resentment	1	4	3	4	5	4	4	5	1.28
	SD	1.62	0.83	0.71	0.53	0.50	0.33	0.33	0.00	
	The **overall** plausibility of the model	2	5	2	4	5	4	4	5	

High concensus amongst resondents

Lower concensus amongst respondents

KEY

Highly Plausible 5
Plausible 4
Insufficient evidence 3
Implausible 2
Highly Implausible 1

Lower respondent consistency

High respondent consistency

4.7.4.3 Interpretation

Again the highest consensus exists around propositions that are familiar to interviewees and that are reflected in literature. While Harris (experienced in the study of social violence) and Jahed (a development economist) appear to be amongst those who consistently support the logic of the argument, Neocosmos (a proponent of discourse theory) stands out as the respondent to most strongly dispute the line of argument. Again this is in keeping with his approach to xenophobia that was apparent during discussions.

A comparison of the *two* tables also shows that there would appear to be a *correlation* between *concurrence* and *consensus* in that the propositions with which respondents *strongly* concur also display *high* consensus, while the propositions with which respondents concur *less*, display *lower* consensus.

This suggests that rather than a *low level of plausibility* there may rather be unfamiliarity amongst interviewees with these propositions (otherwise there would arguably be a high level of consensus in their *rejection*)

A major part of the research has been concerned with exploring the plausibility of the model through discussion with recognised experts in South Africa. While this exercise has produced rich feedback and has been broadly affirmative, it remains limited in its scope. To critically assess the hypothesis and to further develop it, it is important to explore how the model might be accommodated within a recognised conceptual social framework.

5 Developing the model

5.1 The model and social theory

5.1.1 The relevance of relative deprivation theory

While a wide range of social theories ranging from Rational Choice to Discourse Theory, have been associated with the phenomenon of xenophobia (see the review of Wimmer's paper within Chapter. 2 (1997)), Relative Deprivation theory uniquely offers a construct with the potential to shed light on the question of why certain groups (black Africans) seem to been the target of violence while others (Whites and Asians) have been less so. Tshitereke (1999) is amongst analysts that have attempted to use RD theory as part of an explanation for xenophobic violence in South Africa linking it critically with other social theories such as *scapegoating* that can convincingly explain the transition to violence.

RD theory does not however enjoy universal support. Analysts such as Neocosmos have dismissed it as being "woefully inadequate" (2010, p.4) and points out during interview that it does not explain why poor South Africans selected other poor Africans as target for the frustration generated by their relative deprivation.

5.1.2 Objective and subjective comparison

One of the central tenets of relative deprivation theory is that people react to *objective* circumstances in a manner that is shaped by their *subjective* comparison of themselves with others (Walker & Smith, 2002). Crosby (in Walker & Smith, 2002) found that working women whose salaries were lower than that of male counterparts were less angry than would otherwise be expected because they compared themselves with *other women* rather than *other men*. Similarly Stouffer et al. (in Walker & Smith, 2002) found that during World War II, African American soldiers in the northern states of the US were less satisfied that their African America counterparts in the southern states — even though conditions for them within the Army were the same. Their conclusion was that soldiers from the southern states compared their situation *subjectively* to the conditions of poor African Americans from the South rather than their significantly better off counterparts in the North.

It is the power of the relative deprivation construct to explain such social *paradoxes* by suggesting that people compare *relative* rather than *absolute* values that led to its widespread adoption by social scientists in the 1970s (2002).

Latterly the theory has received more attention with work to develop a distinction between RD experienced by individuals (egoistic) and RD experienced by groups (fraternal).

5.1.3 Fraternal and egoistic RD

Runciman, an early proponent of relative deprivation theory, introduced the concept of *fraternal* relative deprivation in 1966 (Taylor, 2002). This importantly looks at attitudes of subordinate towards superordinate *groups* as opposed to *individuals*. The distinction between group (fraternal) and individual (egotistic) attitudes is important as it is the latter that has been shown to lead to collective (as opposed to individual) action — such as taking part in protest or strikes (Tyler & Lind, 2002).

5.1.4 Downward RD

While *upward* relative deprivation is experienced by those who see themselves as being unjustifiably unequal with those above them on the social ladder, *downward* RD is experienced by those who are uncomfortable with the progress of *subordinate* groups that are seen to be eroding their relative privilege (Runciman in Walker and Smith, 2002). Thus grievance that results from inequality is not a *one-way street*, and while downward relative deprivation is less frequently associated with collective action it has been used to study and explain phenomenon such as white racism towards African Americans in the USA (Walker and Smith, 2002).

Taylor (2002, p.17) following a discussion on work around *downward fraternal RD* concludes that:

> *Fraternal deprivation on the part of a dominant group vis-à-vis a subordinate group may be a particularly powerful phenomenon.*

She goes onto characterise the experience of this type of RD as:

> *Encompassing frustration, anger and resentment …[and that it] flows from a sense of*

entitlement; it may entail the perception that the norms of fairness and justice have been violated; it is a manifestation of group solidarity, salient inter-group boundaries, and investment in in-group identity, encouraged not only by personal and situational factors but by prevailing norms (Taylor, 2002, p. 17).

5.1.5 RD and South Africa

Relative deprivation has been used within social research in the South African context most notably to explore attitudes between Black South Africans and Whites during the pre and post transitionary period (Duckitt & Mphuthing, 2002)

Duckitt's study measures changes in the perception of relative deprivation by Black South Africans towards White South Africans and attempts to correlate these with changes with inter-group attitudes measured over a four-month period prior to and after elections in 1994.

While the study is arguably of limited relevance to the study of xenophobic violence, Duckitt and Mphuthing make a number of valuable observations. The first relates to the difference between *cognitive* and *affective* relative deprivation:

It is not just the perception of the degree or magnitude of deprivation relative to another group (cognitive relative deprivation) but the perceived illegitimacy or injustice of the degree of deprivation. Affective relative deprivation - [is] the degree to which feelings of anger, upset and outrage are elicited by a perception of relative deprivation to another group (Grant and Brown in Duckitt and Mphuthing, 2002, p.71).

Significant to the exploration of racist sentiment and group violence, writers have propounded a *causal chain* linking affective RD to feelings of resentment and anger leading to social protest (Dube & Guimond in Taylor, 2002; and Tshitereke in Harris, 2002).

While this has been interpreted by Duckitt and Mphuthing within the context of upward relative deprivation (Black South Africans with respect to White South Africans), extrapolating these dynamics to potential RD experienced by South Africans towards other black Africans would seem to have potential to explain sentiments of upset, anger, perceived illegitimacy and injustice that feature prominently in literature describing

xenophobia in South Africa.

5.1.6 Preconditions for RD

To experience Relative Deprivation researchers have suggested that certain pre-conditions are necessary. While there have been as many as six preconditions suggested at different times, recent work has focused on two (Crosby in Walker & Smith, 2002, p.2) - "*Wanting* what one does not have, [and] feeling that one *deserves* whatever it is one wants but does not have". Interestingly the latter precondition has been interpreted more specifically as *entitlement* by sociologists such as Williams (Taylor, 2002, p.14) - another theme that crops up regularly within the discourse on xenophobia in South Africa (Amisi et al. 2010; CSVR, 2008; Everatt, 2011; HSRC, 2008; Misago et al., 2009; Neocosmos, 2010; Nyar, 2010; Sinwell, 2011),(Nyar, interview, 8th March 2011).

5.1.7 Relevance of RD theory to South African Xenophobia

Having introduced Relative Deprivation theory and its principal constructs, we need to look at what it can offer terms of understanding the phenomenon of xenophobic violence in South Africa. In it's favour RD would seem to offer the following (adapted from Walker & Smith, 2002):

- Preconditions for RD which have been interpreted to include a sense of *deprivation* coupled with *entitlement*
- The potential of *affective RD* to generate sentiments of group anger and frustration.
- The power of *fraternal (group) RD* to lead to collective action.
- The recognition that RD is experienced towards groups that are considered *subordinate* as well a *superordinate*.

Perhaps one of the most compelling attributes of RD as a lens through which to view xenophobia in South Africa is the overall the importance that it places on the *subjective* nature of social comparison. Central to the events of May 2008 after all, was the

paradox[39] of why black South Africans chose to vent their anger on other *poor Africans* as opposed to privileged whites with whom inequalities remain very much greater:

> *Its not just the people who were better off who were attacked in May 2008 but people who were as poor and whose heads didn't stick out of the top of the parapet, they weren't even foreign a lot of them but they were perceived to be outsiders of the community, …they were migrants from rural areas of Limpopo for Christ's sake (Neocosmos, interview, 4th February 2011).*

While Neocosmos explains the paradox by asserting that perpetrators' choice of victims was informed by "stereotypes that are held regarding what foreigners are supposed to look like" *(interview, 4th February 2011),* a more sophisticated interpretation of RD theory promises to give us a more nuanced viewpoint.

5.1.8 RD and the social rank/opportunity framework

So is the relative deprivation that the social rank opportunity framework highlights between South Africans and foreigners, *downwards*, *upwards* or *sideways*? It might help first to map our understanding of the recognised forms of relative deprivation onto the social rank opportunity curve.

For the purposes of our exploration we will look at theory of *fraternal affective* RD as it is this that would seem to relate most closely to the South African situation i.e. RD experienced at a *group* level (poor south Africans) and seen to be rooted in the perceived *illegitimacy* of benefits accessed by the target group (foreign nationals).

While the model under consideration suggests that access to opportunity in society is dependent on social rank - as a description of a *normative* distribution, it also implies that the distribution is widely *accepted* by members of society i.e. while some have access to more opportunity and some to less, generally people understand and accept their position on the curve (with the implicit understanding that they have opportunity to move forwards and upwards). The model suggests that *discontent* arises when

[39] This 'Paradox' emerged frequently in interviews most notably those with Nyar, Kuljian, Everatt, Antonie and Neocosmos

individuals or groups feel that they have a *deficit* in access to opportunity correspondent with their *rank* (or see others with a surplus). These *subjective* social comparisons made on the basis of rank as opposed to *absolute* comparisons with other groups elsewhere on the curve would seem to be very much in keeping with the *subjectivity of comparison* that is central to relative deprivation theory (Walker and Smith, 2002).

If we consider that in South Africa this discontent arises when one group (poor South Africans) perceive a deficit in access to opportunity correspondent with their *rank* and see others (foreign nationals) with a surplus, then we have within relative deprivation theory a potential explanation for discontent that might be interpreted as *xenophobia*.

Exploring and developing RD theory within the context of the model let us plot three groups, **A** and **B** and **C** (Figure 10).

A occupies a position *vertically* below **B** so that while they both occupy a position of similar *social rank*, **A** is able to access significantly less opportunity than **B**. Group **C** is vertically above group **A** and **B** but occupies a superordinate *rank* to the right of both.

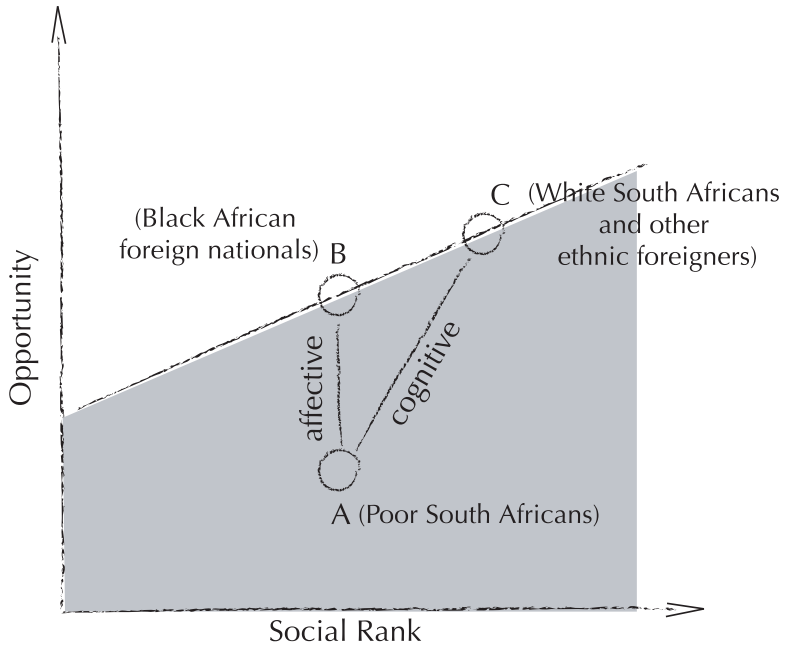


Figure 10 Cognitive and affective RD plotted on the SR/OP curve

If we accept that the social rank opportunity curve is *normative* and that people are generally satisfied as long as they lie somewhere on the line, then while theory tells us that **A** will experience RD towards both **B** and **C**, the *model* suggests that RD towards **C** will be *cognitive (i.e. **A** perceives the magnitude of deprivation with respect to **C**)*, and that towards **B** will be *affective* (generated through a sense of *injustice* that **B** is accessing more opportunity than **A** at the *same* social rank). The model additionally suggests that the *vertical space* that separates **A** and **B** might be considered as a relative *measure* of affective deprivation between them.

The arrangement can be used to illustrate Crosby's study of resentment amongst underpaid female workers (Crosby in Walker & Smith, 2002 p.1). He found that women under study (**A**) were *less angry* than would otherwise be expected given their absolute deprivation with respect to all workers as they chose to compare themselves with other *female* workers (**B**) rather than *male* workers (**C**).

If for the purposes of xenophobic resentment, Group **A** is taken to represent poor South Africans, Group **B** other Black Africans (who are seen to be accessing greater levels of opportunity), and Group **C** White South Africans (or indeed other non nationals who occupy a higher social rank), then the corresponding RD interpretation suggests that the *social comparison* that leads to a sense of RD will take place between South Africans and foreign Nationals - with white South Africans left out of the equation. This provides an attractive answer as to why White South Africans (and indeed other Foreign Nationals such as Chinese) were not included as targets for violence. It is of course dependent on the perceived positions of the respective groups relative to one another.

If we also plot on our curve a group **D** (see Figure 11) who for purposes of the exercise are perceived to be of *lower social rank* than group **A**, then they will be vertically above group **A** but displaced to the left with respect to the opportunity line. An additional group **E** (accessing even greater opportunity) and of similar social rank to **D** might be placed *above* the opportunity line.

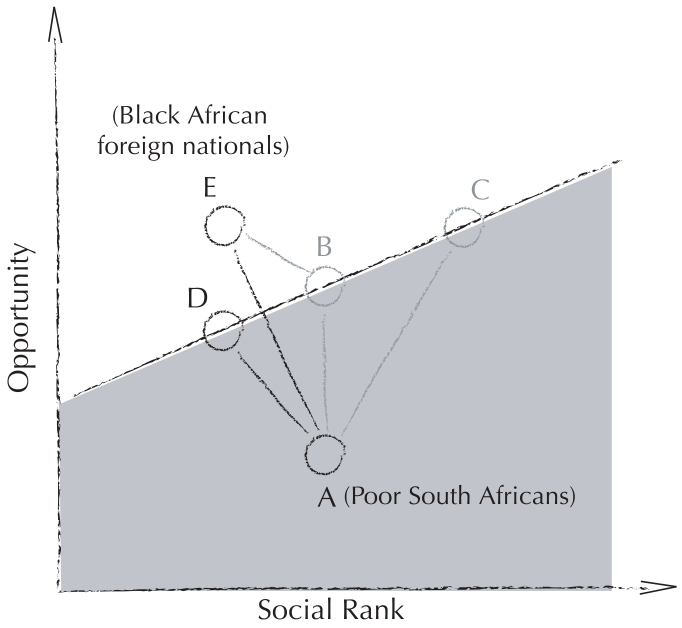


Figure 11 RD experienced by poor South Africans towards foreign nationals

The model suggests however that *both* groups **D** and **E** may be the source of Relative Deprivation with respect to **A** who sees a "double whammy" of injustice given that groups **D** and **E** are both vertically above (accessing greater levels of opportunity) and horizontally to the left (of lower social rank).

These *diagonal* relationships take us into an area where the traditional definitions of *upward* and *downward RD* are insufficient and hint at the complexity of the South African situation.

Interestingly if we consider the social *opportunity line* to be at least in part, positioned by the constitution and legal framework within the country, then group **E** may in addition be perceived to be operating *illegally* - again a theme that crops up regularly within the discourse on xenophobia in South Africa.

So given that foreign Nationals may be perceived to occupy positions corresponding to **B**, **D** and **E** (and conceivably positions in between) the social rank/opportunity framework suggests that South Africans may have experienced multiple dimensions of relative deprivation towards non-nationals concurrently.

5.1.9 Conclusion to section on RD

While there appears to be little research into this phenomenon where RD is experienced along multiple dimensions simultaneously, it would seem reasonable to assume that the combined effect is at the very least mutually reinforcing.

It would also appear that the model itself fits well with Relative Deprivation theory and generates some insights as to the role that *social rank* might potentially play in determining the identity of groups between which *relative subjective comparisons* are made.

5.2 Explaining the attacks against Shangaans and Vendas

5.2.1 The racial element to xenophobic violence

It has been pointed out in a number of studies that while the xenophobic violence of 2008 was ostensibly targeted at foreigners, violent attacks were notable for their racial *focus*. As Nyar reports: *"the common denominator of victims was their blackness with victims often singled out for attack based on the darkness of their skin"* (2010, p.18). This has led some analysts to speculate that there was a form of negrophobia at play:

> *It is not simply xenophobia, but specifically negrophobic in character. No one is attacking wealthy German, British or French foreigners in Camps bay or anywhere else in South Africa. European citizens are not amongst those foreigners who are safe to violate in a xenophobic manner. (Gqola, 2008, p. 213)*

While this *negrophobic* aspect of the violence has been widely acknowledged, a comprehensive explanation as to its origin remains to be developed. Nyar cites the "racial devaluation of black lives and the internalisation of an inferiority complex" (2010, p.18) as a possible explanation.

Gqola (2008) points to on-going *narratives* that perpetuate the association of blackness with criminality, and the imagined emasculative threat that black African males present to their South African counterparts in a competitive marketplace for jobs and sexual partners.

Whatever its origin, the issue raises uncomfortable questions around black on black

prejudice within South African society and even the extent to which xenophobia (the fear of foreigners) can be presented as an *exclusive* explanation for the violence.

While the targeting of dark skinned Africans (both South Africans and foreigners) has been termed *negrophobic* it resonates strongly with a phenomenon that until recently has been relatively poorly researched, but which is beginning to attract more interest within social science - that is the phenomenon of *colourism*.

5.2.2 The concept of colourism

Colourism is defined as the "preference for lighter skin and the ranking of individual worth according to skin tone" (Nakano Glenn, 2009). The phenomenon has until recently generated debate in as much as it impinges on portrayal of race in the popular media[40] and in questioning the morality of the multi billion-dollar skin-lightening cosmetics industry (Cannick, 2007).

More recent studies have shown however that the impact of colourism potentially goes beyond that of shaping societies' views on what it means to be attractive. In 2006 the University of Georgia in the US, carried out what was considered a controversial study on skin cast. The study confirmed that *lighter-skinned* African Americans were more likely to be successful in job-hunting than their *darker-skinned* colleagues. In fact the study revealed that skin tone was "so salient, that it is regarded more highly than one's educational background and prior work experience" (Harrison, 2004).

In a collection of works that looks at the phenomenon in Latin America, Asia, Africa, and North America, Evelyn Nakano Glenn - professor at the department of Ethnic Studies at Berkley, (2009) explores the influence that skin tone has on peoples' access to opportunity and draws conclusions along the same lines - that access to opportunity in many societies would appear to be correlated with skin tone.

But while Colourism operates *across* races it seems also (in a manner that sets it out as distinct from racism) to manifest itself through the practice of lighter-skinned people

[40] Prominent TV characters in the USA are more often than not depicted as being lighter rather than darker skinned (Cannick, 2007)

discriminating against those with darker tones within the same ethnic group (Leslie, 2006).

So can the theory of Relative Deprivation combined with colourism shed any light on the targeting of dark skinned South Africans? In order to examine the issue more closely it may be necessary to review the mechanisms that have been used historically in South Africa to determine the relative position of various groups within the social hierarchy.

5.2.3 South Africa as a paradigmatic hierarchy

There has been much written on the subject of South Africa's institutionalised use of racial discrimination to structure a social hierarchy that ensured in-built privilege of certain racial groups over others. Indeed as Miri Song (2004) puts it, South Africa is the "most paradigmatic and contemporary historical example of racial hierarchy" where "black people were deemed inferior to both 'coloureds' and whites".

It would seem reasonable to assume that such a *paradigmatic racial hierarchy,* which was for generations embedded within attitudes and behaviours as well as within the institutions of state, cannot be dismantled over night. While Everatt's reference to "Not yet Uhuru" highlights South Africa's as yet unrealised transition to true socio-economic equality, might there not be an even *deeper* transformation that is yet to take place - that is a move away from the use of race and colour to determine one's position on the social ladder to value an individuals' *social currency* that is used to buy access to opportunity?

5.2.4 From Racism to Colourism

In a society where *race* and *colour* has historically been used to determine social rank and subsequent access to opportunity (with whites regarded as being superior to coloureds then blacks), it is not unreasonable to speculate that skin tone *in addition* to race has been a factor in shaping South Africa's social hierarchy.

While there would seem to be little research to date on the phenomenon of *colourism* in South Africa, it would seem plausible that the world's most 'paradigmatic racial hierarchy' based on race, also spawned a "pigmentocracy" the remnants of which remain with us today.

5.2.5 Colourism in South Africa and links to violence

If indeed a 'pigmentocracy' is responsible within impoverished black communities, for placing those with darker skin tones on the lower rungs of a localised social ladder, this would place many Shangaans and Vendas on the social rank/opportunity curve somewhat to the *left* of other South Africans within communities where they live side by side.

So how might these relationships appear when plotted on the Social Rank/Opportunity curve? While the position of *foreign nationals* who are seen by poor South Africans to be successful in running businesses are hypothetically situated to the *upper* left (with the consequent downward RD tensions) the precise *vertical* position of Shangaans on the social rank/opportunity profile is as yet unclear - many would appear after all to be as equally disadvantaged as their neighbours (see Figure 12) thereby minimising the relative deprivation experienced with respect to them.

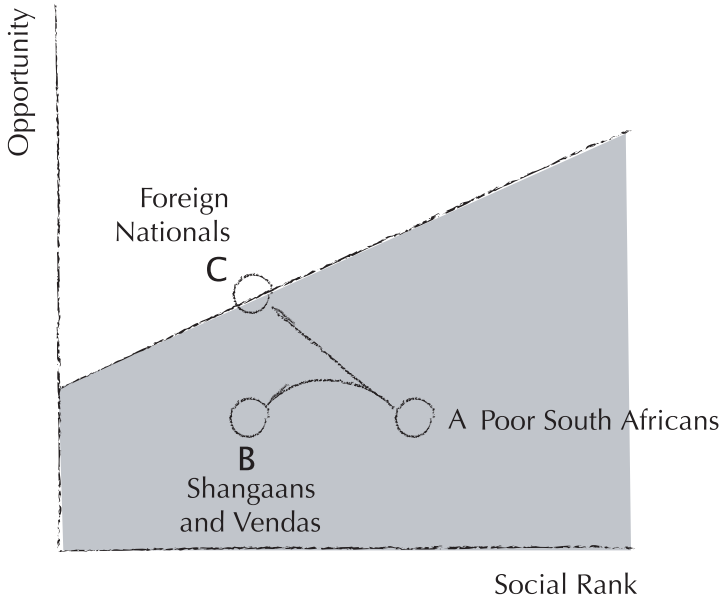


Figure 12 Relative deprivation experienced towards Shangaans and Vendas

One possible explanation for their targeting lies in the *dynamics* of violence. In that occupying the same "social rung" when violence erupted, Shangaans, Vendas and other South Africans were caught up in the "backdraught" of violence that allowed them to be identified as "others". The violence through this lens is therefore seen as an attack against

all those who occupy a particular *space* on the social ladder within the micro societies of informal settlements and less about *nationality*.

If this hypothesis were correct, then it would suggest that those Shangaans, Vendas and other victims of violence who were identified because of their darker skin, were occupying the *same* rank position as their foreign national counterparts on the RD framework. These groups therefore become targeted not so much as a result of being mistaken for being *foreign*, but as being in *close proximity* to a group that represents a threat primarily due to their *relative position* on the social rank/opportunity curve. This hypothesis may not hold much water in a context where xenophobic sentiment is considered to be the result of a rational response to deprivation - but we must remember that at the height of the violence (when South Africans were caught up amongst the victims) the situation was *anything but* rational, as Nyar reports - even the areas with a history of strong community order had descended into chaos:

> *Alex[andra] with all of its progressive nature and its strong community leadership (not just after 94 - it's Alex's' historical legacy) - Alex was unable to prevent this from exploding into the madness that we saw in May 2008 (interview, 8th March 2011).*

The nature of this *dynamic* (the move from a latent and rational state into one which is potent and chaotic) and the potential impact it has on shaping the way we view xenophobic violence over *time* is explored in the next section.

5.3 Examining the dynamics of violence

Although the magnitude of events in 2008 invoked a number of institutions to draw up a timeline of the "xenophobic episode" (SAMP, 2008; Nyar, 2010; Misago, Monson, Polzer, & Landau, 2010), the ensuing analysis has essentially been one that has been applied to a broad and *static* canvas. Analysts have typically looked at factors that have been present in the environment associated variously with structure, agency and political discourse and have attempted to link them directly or indirectly to an all-encompassing explanation of the violence.

A closer inspection of the data reveals that the *characteristics* of the xenophobic episode changed *over time*, and that some crucial aspects were, in David Everatt's words

"absolutely rooted in the fabric of how people were seeing that moment". Considering xenophobic episodes as an *evolutionary process* opens up the possibility that the *nature* of violence might in itself be shaped by the *way* in which it evolves.

5.3.1 The perception of two states

Interviews with experts highlighted a perception of *two states* of xenophobia in South Africa, which are quite distinct. Polzer (interview, 27th March 2011) underlines the importance of distinguishing between xenophobic *attitudes* and xenophobic *action*, while Nyar (interview, 8th March 2011) describes *latent* and *potent* phases of xenophobia:

> *We need to distinguish between xenophobia as a fear of foreigners and the doing part - violence to give expression to that fear (interview, 8th March 2011).*

Everatt too points out what he terms a *background* of continuous anti-foreigner sentiment within South Africa and the periodic outbreaks of violence that he describes as the "big conflagrations" (interview, 19th January 2011).

5.3.2 Evidence of xenophobic "states" within literature

There is evidence too in literature to support the concept of different states of xenophobic sentiment. Rygden (2003) in his study on the emergence of Radical Right Wing Parties and associated racism in Europe refers to three phases: a *latent* phase which comprises "unarticulated negatively prejudiced stereotypes and beliefs that are taken for granted", a *manifest* phase with "elaborated beliefs and attitudes at a higher level of consciousness", and finally an *ideologicalised* phase which he claims "can be as a result of a Radical Right Party" (2003, p.48).

This recognition and description of xenophobic phases (by both interviewees and Rygden) implicitly infers a sense of *process* with *progression* from one state to the next. As previously stated, much of the literature generated following the violence of 2008 includes a *timeline* of events as they happened, however there would appear to date to have been little analysis of the *dynamics* of the violence itself - that is the manner in which tensions rose, sparked into violence, spread, climaxed and fell away.

From the first recognised incident in January 2008 to the restoration of order following the crisis that emerged in May, a period of approximately 6 months had passed in which xenophobic violence had encompassed settlements in 75 locations across 6 provinces. After its early development from rumblings to lightning strikes in April the "thunder storm" had essentially abated by June.

5.3.3 The wave of violence

So how might the dynamics of xenophobic violence be visualised? The violence itself (while complex and multi-faceted) can be considered to have a range of *proxy* indicators ranging from reports of xenophobic threat, to police arrests, to reports of physical attacks against individuals and/or property. A rudimentary exercise to plot the number of recorded *fatalities* that resulted from xenophobic attacks against a timeline generates the graphic that is reproduced below in Figure 13.

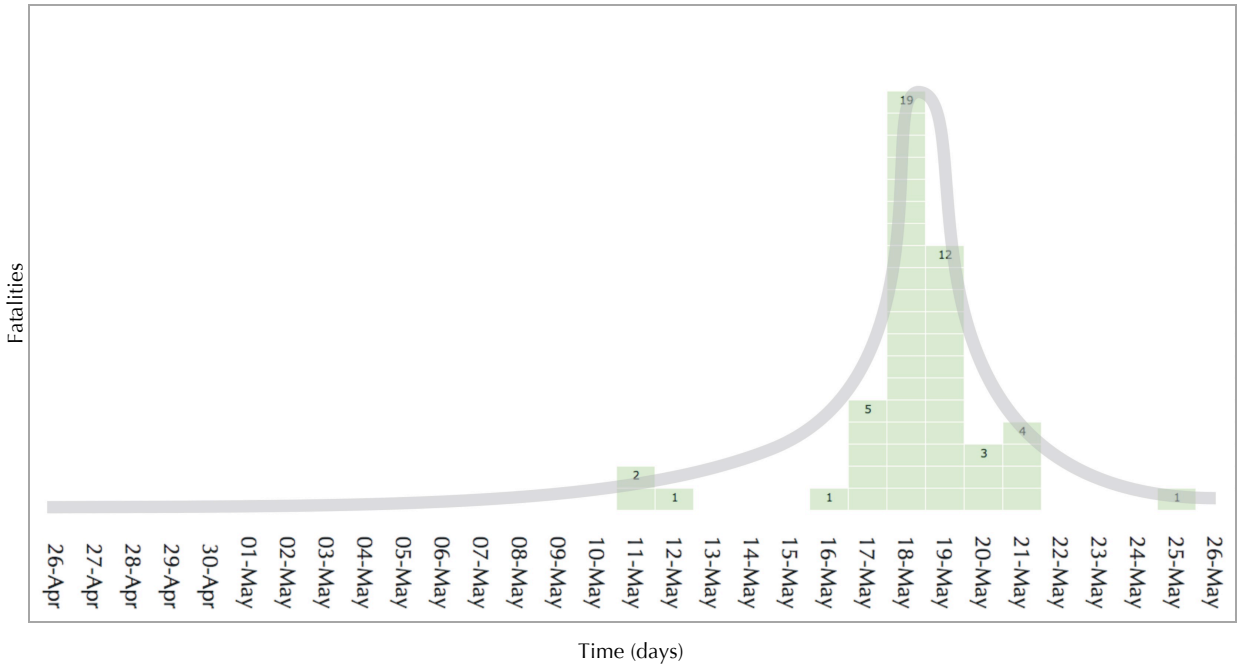


Figure 13 Xenophobic fatalities vs. time (26 April to 26 May 2008)

The horizontal axis shows a timeline running from 26th April to on 26th May 2008. The vertical axis represents a simple histogram reflecting the number of recorded fatalities as

a result of xenophobic violence.[41] A line plotted through the peaks of each column gives a rudimentary *profile* to the violence.

Note - The graphic plots the number of recorded fatalities (arguably indicators of the most extreme aspects of the outbreak of violence) and runs over a period of 15 days. It is therefore a representation of the most *volatile* period of the xenophobic *episode*. If indicators such as incidents of intimidation, or attack on property were plotted, they might be expected to extend over a *broader* timeline - indeed reports of these incidents run from January to July 2008.

Nonetheless, as can be seen from the histogram, the profile of violence is indeed that of a *wave* which started in the early part of May and reached its peak on the weekend of the 18th, and then died away over the following few days.

5.3.4 Overlaying the concept of phase

So what can a cursory analysis of this profile of violence reveal? Figure 14 shows a modified version of the same graphic, which takes the profile generated by the frequency of fatalities and attempts to illustrate what might be described as *four phases* to the episode of xenophobic violence.

5.3.4.1 Phase I - Latent

From the evidence available it would appear that the violence in 2008 emerged out of an on-going and continuous background of xenophobic sentiment (Everatt, 2011; SAMP, 2008) populated with isolated and sporadic acts of violence towards individuals that were growing in frequency and intensity.

It is during this phase that Bond's *structural* issues (measured at the *macro level)* can be used to describe a context that is "theorized using tools of political economy and social analysis" (2010, p.6). Issues that are pervasive at a *national level* such as factors of

[41] Data on the number of fatalities was extracted from a timeline that appeared within the Atlantic Philanthropies report entitled "What Happened" (Nyar, 2010)

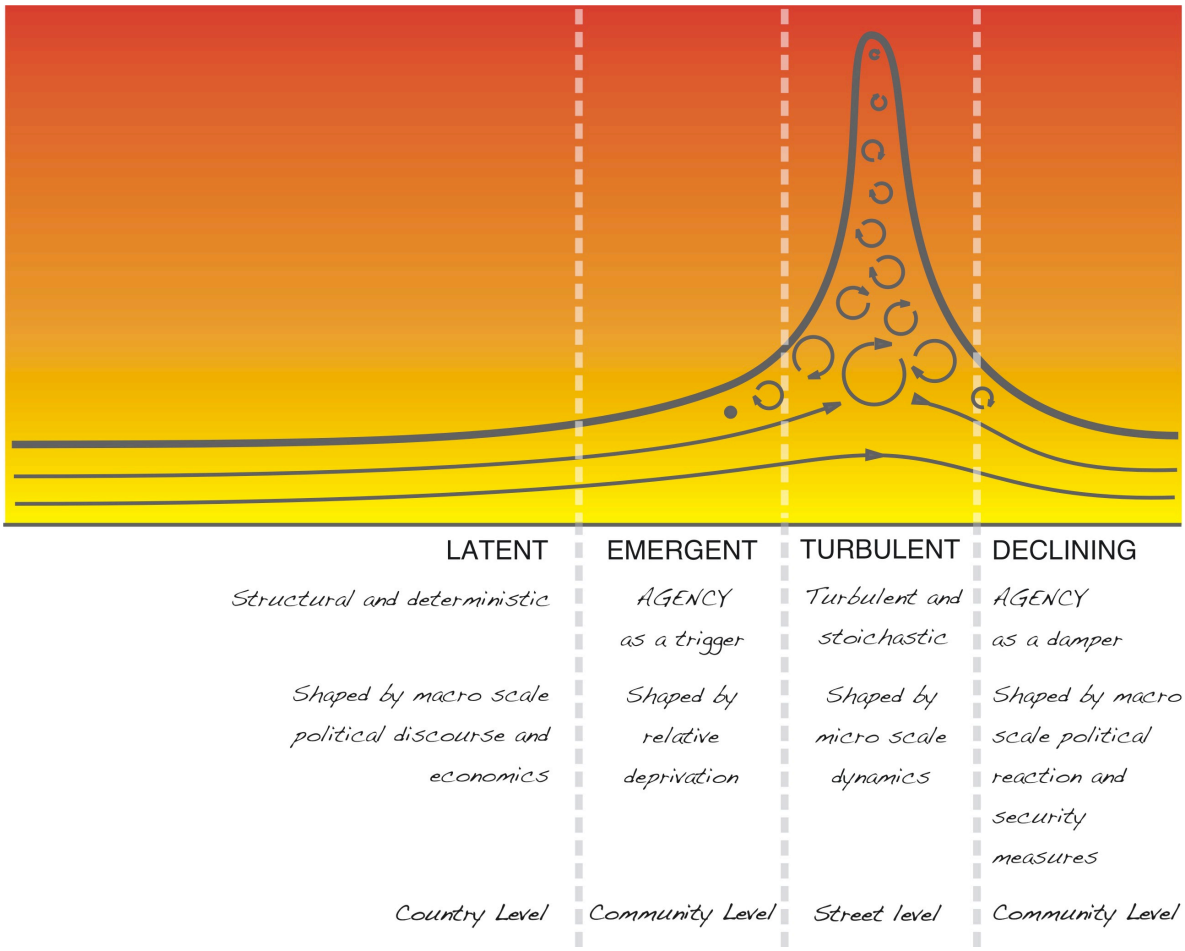


Figure 14 Four phases of the xenophobic episode

unemployment, competition for housing, and poor service delivery are all of significance here in creating the tense and volatile environment.

5.3.4.2 Phase 2 - Emergent

In the emergent phase violence is on the increase and emerges in *multiple* centres. It would seem to be targeted primarily at businesses and shops (although there are some exceptions to this)[42] giving credence to approaches that seek to explain violence based on *relative deprivation* and the perception of unfair distribution of opportunity across social rank.

[42] There are recorded sporadic incidents of attacks against individuals such as the attack on a young Zimbabwean on board a Western Cape Commuter Train.

It would seem to be in this phase also that local level leadership plays a crucial role in either stemming potential violence or indeed flaming it.

5.3.4.3 Phase 3 - Turbulent

This phase is where the violence would seem to have escalated rapidly and the *ochlocracy* of the mob came to the fore. Turbulent and unpredictable, the violence takes on "a life of its own" (Nyar, interview, 8th March 2011), mob dynamics govern the spread on a *micro scale* that is typically at street or household level. Nobayethi Dube who carried out a case study in Ramaphosa provides an illustration of the street level dynamic that determined victims at this stage:

> *Mozambicans had grouped themselves and assigned a section for themselves along Road Reserve. It appears this could have been the area where there was a door to door campaign searching for people who were non-nationals. Perhaps this is why they were identified easy (Dube, 2010 p.20).*

While the violence in this turbulent phase had moved from those targeted solely because of their business activities, to include the widespread evictions of foreign nationals from their homes, the *targeting* of victims in this phase would also appear to have become less focussed with some individuals seeming to be caught in the "wrong place at the wrong time" (Nyar interview, 18th January 2011). It was during this period that the majority of South Africans were targeted amongst the victims.

As well as individuals being caught up, as *victim*s there would appear to be others caught up as *perpetrators* such as a 20 year-old female from Itireleng:

> *Not everybody had real reasons of fighting foreigners. This was started by few people and we all joined… Some of us do not have real reasons why we fought. (Misago, Landau, & Monson, 2009, p. 41).*

It was also during this phase that the nature of violence took on the characteristics of

hate crime[43] - the most notable of these being the shockingly brutal murder of Mozambican, Ernesto Nhamuave who was burnt to death in Johannesburg in front of media cameras.

It is this phase where Bonds "*contingent* and *conjunctural*" factors (2010, p.8) have most relevance in understanding the violence.

Following the escalation and climax of violence, the incidents fell away rapidly so that by 27th May the situation was considered to be under control. Whether this was primarily due to the mobilisation of security forces or in part due to the fact that violence had passed a *natural climax* is hard to say.

5.3.4.4 Phase 4 – Declining

In this phase the violence dies away under the influence of both national level political reaction and the impact of security measures. In the case of the 2008 episode this period can be measured over a period of days.

5.4 Accommodating alternative approaches

The question for analysts is: if there was indeed a pattern or *lifecycle* to the xenophobic episode, what were the factors that caused it to emerge as sentiment, evolve into violence and then escalate rapidly and spread?

The concept of a *phased* dynamic to the phenomenon allows us to speculate that the factors that drove evolution, emergence, and rapid escalation of violence are actually complimentary but *different*.

5.4.1.1 Structure, discourse and agency

Within the phased model we can potentially accommodate an approach that argues the

[43] Nyar reports that CORMSA (Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa) has linked violence designated as xenophobic to that of hate crimes "in terms of the visible 'messaging' quality of the attacks which communicate symbolically messages of hatred and a threat of future violence to an entire grouping of people beyond an individual incidence of violence" (2010)

importance of Bond's *structural*[44] issues and Neocosmos' political *discourse*[45] to explain the evolution of a *volatile environment* that characterises xenophobia in its *latent* phase.

We can also accommodate Polzer, & Landau's approach in an *emergent* phase that highlights the significance of *agency* in the form of local leaders who acted as triggers and "used popular frustration as a means of mobilising people to commit violence" (2010) targeted at those who (from a relative deprivation standpoint) were accessing more than their perceived fair share of opportunity.

5.4.1.2 Chaos and group emotion

Finally we can turn to the rather more complex and *chaotic dynamics* of the violent events themselves to try and understand how in the final *turbulent* phase, mob violence spread uncontrollably like a *bushfire* from one street to the next sweeping up those who were not only foreigners, but those who were socially marginalised - Shangaans, Vendas and others who were targeted because of their dark skinned "otherness" and who perished in a *backdraft* of violence that was as *indiscriminate* as it was *irrational*.

5.4.2 Rationale Choice or Intergroup Anger?

On a broader level, consideration of the dynamics of a violent xenophobic "episode" might potentially give some clues as to how to go about answering what have been up to now, difficult questions regarding the integration of xenophobia with accepted conceptual frameworks.

Chris Claassen (2011) is currently carrying out research in Alexandra to determine to what extent *group emotion* (specifically inter-group anger) played a role in encouraging people to participate in xenophobic riots. His work challenges the proponents of Rationale Choice theory that "still dominates the explanation of collective action" (2011, p.1). With a *phased* view of violent xenophobic episodes its possible to see how *both* approaches might be accommodated - Rationale Choice as the dominant mechanism in

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[44] Bond et al. argue from this approach

[45] Political discourse and the definition of citizenship is at the centre of Neocosmos' explanation of xenophobic violence.

the *latent* phase and intergroup anger as the dominant mechanism in the *emergent* and *turbulent* phases.

5.5 Linking sentiment to violence – the role of instigators

As pointed out in the literature review, there is a divergence of opinion amongst social and political scientists regarding the explanatory power of various social theorems when it comes to xenophobia. While concepts such as *bioculturalism, isolationism* and *exceptionalism* (see Chapter 2) offer some explanation as to the *origins* of xenophobic sentiment they would not seem to offer a comprehensive explanation as to *why* xenophobic sentiment is at times translated into mob violence.

Neocosmos (2010) adds what he sees as an essential ingredient - the political discourse around the definition of citizenship and indigeneity in what he terms the "politics of fear". In this respect his analysis resonates with the account of discourse theory (Wimmer, 1997) whose review of discourse theory includes an analysis of the role of the media. However discourse theory and Neocosmos' "politics of fear" are social behaviours that emerge *gradually* over time, and the question remains - if these are present in society on an *on-going* basis why is widespread xenophobic violence not also present on a *continuous* basis?

Tshitereke (1999) too, recognising the limitations of Relative Deprivation Theory, engages psychological theory of aggression and frustration to demonstrate a "causal link between relative deprivation, xenophobia and collective violence" (1999, p.4). The link is completed through constructing the foreigner as a scapegoat (Tshitereke in Harris, 2002).

The forced Migration Study Programme undertook research commissioned by the Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa (CoRMSA) that involved a comprehensive study of violence in nine different locations (Misago, Monson, Polzer, & Landau, 2010). The report is unequivocal in terms of pointing to *local leadership* in affected areas as *instigators* of violence. In the words of the authors:

> *Violence against foreign nationals was organised and led by local groups and individuals who used popular frustration as a means of mobilising people to commit*

violence… [in order to] appropriate localised state authority for personal political and economic benefits (p.10).

While the report acknowledges the contribution of "broad structural and historical factors" in creating a tense and volatile environment, the evidence would seem to be compelling surrounding the role of local leaders. Understanding that this may well have happened in what we have termed as the *emergent phase* of the xenophobic episode, the question arises as to what prompted local leaders to take such drastic action *when* they did, especially when the stakes were so high and the benefits uncertain?

A closer look at the role of local leaders within poor communities and their position on the localised social rank/opportunity curve may provide some clues.

5.5.1 The role of local leaders

The role of local leaders (formal or informal) in informal settlements is an important if not always obvious one. Staff from the Damietta trust who work within informal settlements afford us an inside view. According to Lance Thomas, local informal leadership emerges from the desire amongst collective groups, *"to support someone from their culture to promote their agenda in the informal settlement" (*interview, 7th March 2011).

Both he and Martin Mande go on to describe how, in an environment where *opportunity* is *scarce* and in high demand, informal Leaders emerge as *brokers* that are able to negotiate with other leaders and in turn "push" opportunities in the direction of their constituents - but all of this comes for a fee:

This person [leader] in order to maintain these informal structures needs to have the financial resources in order to maintain it (Thomas, interview, 7th March 2011).

It seems that the fee charged for *brokering opportunity* is extended to become an informal tax on all significant activities that take place within the area. Martin Mande relates his experience of trying to organise a community football match in Atteridgeville:

I will take an example of the football match - there was a head guy with 4 or 5 people to whom everyone who wanted to play football had to go. There was a problem because we

didn't go to them and they created a barrier between us and them saying that they couldn't acknowledge what we are doing because we didn't go through them (interview, 7th March 2011).

Landau also recognises this activity of *opportunity brokering* (while not referring to it as such), and describes informal leaders who while claiming to act in a *voluntary* capacity, charge for services, organise "protection", broker the sale or rent of shacks and receive payment for "solving problems" (Misago, Landau, & Monson, 2009, p.38)

Both Landau and Thomas identify these leaders as being *integral* in instigating violence and point to their motives:

The violence served them because they were getting rid of people that weren't part of their informal structure… so they were at the forefront of organising young people to break these shops down (Thomas, interview 7th March 2011).

Landau's take is that leaders used violence as a way of reinforcing their legitimacy and describes:

Self-serving members of formal institutions who capitalised on residents' feelings, fears and negative attitudes towards non-nationals… [to] consolidate their identity as the only 'true' leaders (2009, p.40).

While the explanation is convincing, the question remains as to why leaders chose to instigate violence *when* they did. Looking at the positioning of these local leaders on the social rank/opportunity curve gives us a clue as to their motivation and more importantly why they might have acted *when* they did.

5.5.2 Opportunity brokers in times of opportunity shock

The role of local leaders as *brokers of opportunity* has direct relevance when trying to plot these individuals on a social rank/opportunity curve. The very fact that they are *recognised* as leaders infers that their *social rank* is elevated relative to their constituents. The fact that they are able to *broker* opportunity infers that their *access* to opportunity (through political networking and influence) is *greater* than those around them.

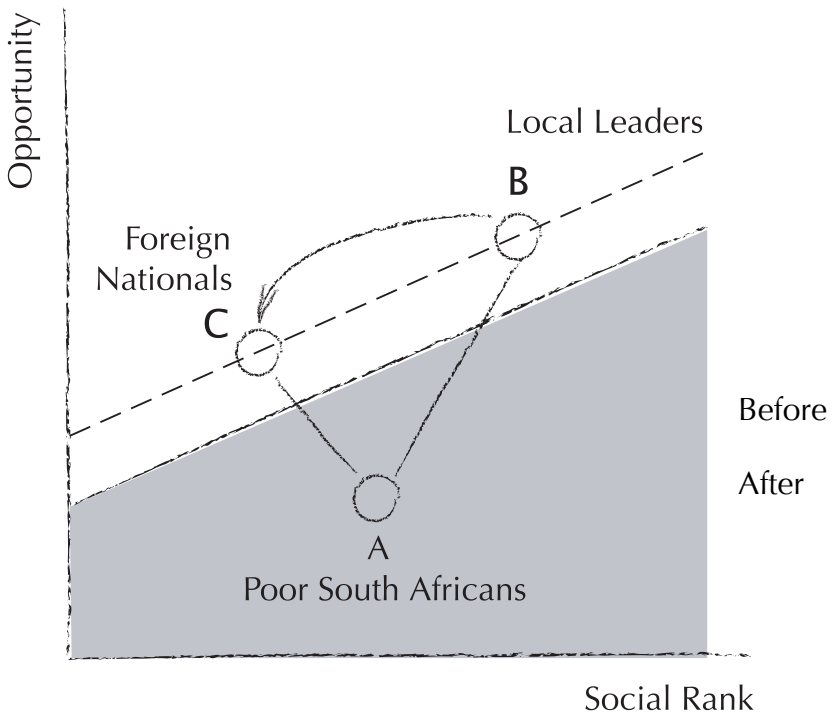


Figure 15 The exposure of local leaders during opportunity shock

If we were to plot them on the social rank/opportunity curve (Figure 15), then they might appear in a position B where they access the maximum opportunity available to them in their environment. In this position they access *greater* levels of opportunity relative to their constituents (A), but this is acceptable as they are obliged, after all, to "portion" it out. Leaders are therefore positioned both *vertically* above their constituents A (by virtue of the fact that they are able to access greater opportunity), and horizontally to the *right (*by virtue of the fact that they enjoy an elevated position in terms of local social rank).

The model hypothesises that during an opportunity shock, the amount of opportunity that is *perceived* to be available drops suddenly and significantly (as indicated by the dotted line). What this infers that instead of just successful *foreign nationals* becoming exposed above a parapet that has dropped - so too are *local leaders* who find themselves in a *particularly* difficult situation as the recognised *brokers of opportunity* to everyone else. Now that opportunity is perceived to be suddenly and significantly in short supply, they must justify their on-going position on the social rank/opportunity curve and more importantly, the continuing extracting of a "salary" from their constituents.

The role of local leaders in the instigation of violence might therefore be seen as a

reaction to *deflect* away the spotlight from themselves onto others. *Scapegoating*, instead of a socio-pathological reaction to displace anxiety around uncertainty onto a convenient (but otherwise blameless) "sacrificial lamb" - might in this case be seen as an attempt by individuals to deflect potentially dangerous sentiment directed towards themselves as *opportunity brokers* during a period of extreme *opportunity hardship* onto an alternative group (Foreigners) that also appear in the spotlight.

5.6 Foreign nationals and corruption

The involvement of non nationals in corrupt practices in their dealings with government and other officials has oft been cited by aggrieved South Africans as a source of resentment and identified as a legitimate source of tension by analysts (Amisi, Bond, Cele, & Ngwane, 2011; Harris, 2001; Jung Park & Rugunanan, 2010; Landau, 2005; Neocosmos, 2010; Parsley & Everatt, 2010; Phakathi, 2010; Sigsworth, Ngwane, & Pino, 2008; Valji, 2003).

Michael Neocosmos in "From foreign natives to native foreigners" (2010) highlights the fact that foreign Nationals who enter into formal procedures to acquire official documents such as refugee papers are regularly required to bribe officials and security agents in order to secure legitimate entitlements.

Bronwyn Harris (2002) recounts how in attempting to access public health services, foreign nationals are required to bribe officials to just to maintain a place in the queue.

Police, gangs and local leaders have also extracted payments from foreign nationals who wish to acquire shacks or run businesses (Misago, Monson, Polzer, & Landau, 2010).

The acquiring of RDP homes by foreign nationals through payments to government officials has been highlighted by the HSRC (2008) as one of the key factors in instigating violence in Alexandra, Mamelodi and the East Rand.

Reliable statistics on the extent to which foreign Nationals engage in extra-legal payments in order to obtain benefits, are understandably hard to come by so the exact scope of the issue is unclear. However all commentator's agree that perceived corrupt practices on the part of foreign nationals would seem to contribute to xenophobic

sentiment.

While corruption and xenophobic sentiment are clearly linked, little work would appear to have been carried out to examine the *range* of corrupt practices involving foreign nationals and how (if at all) they are interrelated. One distinction that might be made straight away is to look at whether bribery of officials occurs with a view to securing entitlements or in obtaining benefits.

A closer look at extra legal transactions in relation to the opportunity/social rank curve may help to shed light on the possible dynamics that underlie this issue.

5.6.1 The moral spectrum of corrupt practices – from entitlements to illicit benefits

Within the range of corrupt practices that foreign nationals engage there would appear to be a spectrum. At one end there are practices where foreign nationals are required to make payments in order to secure basic rights and entitlements such as avoidance of unnecessary arrest, or the issuing of papers confirming their refugee status. At the other end are reported practices of foreign nationals bribing officials to be illegitimately allocated RDP houses or South African ID cards.

So how can this spectrum be accommodated on the Social Rank/Opportunity framework? We must first consider how individuals move on the Social Rank/Opportunity curve as part of the process of *self-betterment*.

5.6.2 The Great Wall and the Glass Turnstile

One of the basic tenets of the opportunity/social rank construct is that in capitalist societies, individuals generally strive to move in a left to right and upwardly mobile direction. This is in line with numerous social theories from Marx to Weber (Farganis, 1996) that describe social hierarchy and social mobility - nothing new here.

The opportunity/social rank diagram however allows us to speculate exactly *how* individuals or groups move. Gaining acceptance within established social circles is difficult for outsiders (Fukuyama, 2001) and is often only won after lengthy periods of *trust building*. Social class mobility (horizontal movement along the social rank opportunity curve) means in practical terms the traversing of multiple social classes. In

societies where class structures are well established this may only happen between generations (Borjas, 2006) and there may well be a whole range of barriers to the social mobility of foreigners.

In societies such as South Africa where such movement of the previously disadvantaged has been described as a *scramble* (Nyar, interview, 8th March 2011), the barriers to the movement by *non-nationals* to positions of social rank where they can access more opportunity may be considerable.

Jahed who describes it thus underscores perceptions to this effect:

> *It will take a hell of a long time to get access ... they are outsiders, even if they become nationalized citizens they are still outsiders ... no one wants to be associated with Somali or Pakistanis businessmen ... they are basically on their own for the next three or four generations and they are going to have to battle it on their own. (interview, 14th March 2011).*

What we have potentially is a social *Great Wall* that like its monolithic Chinese counterpart, is designed to keep out marauding invaders from the fertile and productive land of opportunity beyond (see Figure 16).

5.6.3 The only way is up

Faced with the *great wall* the only route that Foreign Nationals can follow in order to increase access to opportunity is a vertical one. For many this involves a starting point well below the Opportunity/Social Rank curve where individuals are denied basic rights and entitlements such as registration documents. Evidence suggests however that this is a precipitous route and in following it they instead face a series of *glass turnstiles*[46] where they are obliged to engage in bribery to secure *rights*. At each these *checkpoints* there are extra legal payments to government officials, police officers and even local leaders.

[46] This metaphor alludes to the more commonly recognized *glass ceiling* – the unseen, yet unbreachable barrier that keeps minorities and women from rising to the upper rungs of the corporate ladder (The Federal Glass Ceiling Commission,1995). The *Glass Turnstile* alludes to an equally invisible barrier that prevents foreign nationals from increasing their access to *opportunity* unless they pay a bribe to gatekeepers for the benefit (frequently government officials).

This may well start with where people are:

> *Corrupt police officers often extort money or goods from foreigners on a regular basis in return for no longer arresting us. (Human Rights Watch in Harris, 2002, p.31).*

and extend across processes to claim basic entitlements:

> *A Mozambican, eligible for the 1996 amnesty, being told to pay R800 for fingerprints at the Randburg Home Affairs office (Duncan in Harris, 2002, p.37).*

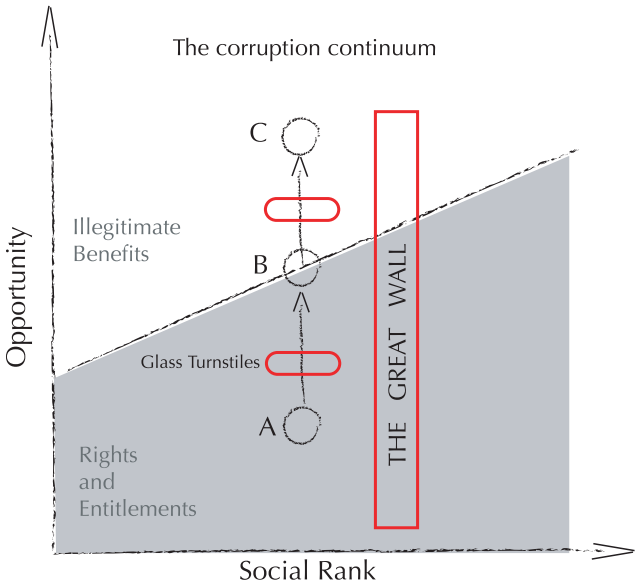


Figure 16 **Plotting the path to corruption on the social rank/opportunity curve**

Having secured legal entitlements, foreign nationals are additionally required to enter into extra legal transactions in order to avoid punitive action with respect to unavoidable infringements of the law. Somali businessmen pay "fees" to local officials to be able to trade without an appropriate license (even though appropriate licenses are effectively not available to them). This is a grey area where infringement of the law is effectively unavoidable if *legitimate* opportunities are to be accessed.

The fact that the stretch of the *Great Wall* is vast and unbroken, means that having reached the opportunity frontier line, claimed entitlements and entered into a grey area -

the only way is up, but here lies yet another problem. Having maximized opportunity to the level of entitlement (through extra legal payments) continuing along this path takes the foreign national into a area where payment of bribes brings access to benefits which are no longer *entitlements* - in fact movement on this side of the line is contrary to both socially acceptable norms and the constitutional legal framework. As Bond et al. report on public perceptions of foreign nationals in Durban:

> *Such fraudulently acquired citizenship resulted in foreign nationals getting access to child support grants, permits to work permanently in South Africa, access to free medical treatment in state hospitals and acquisition of free houses. (Amisi, Bond, Cele, & Ngwane, 2011, p. 80).*

And with the sensitive of issue of RDP housing, itself an important indicator of new found social dignity for South Africans:

> *In May 2008, Hostel dwellers carried out attacks in Lithuleni where Pakistani traders had allegedly "converted RDP houses into shops" (Nyar, 2010, p. 11).*

The important insight that mapping these activities on the opportunity/social rank curve affords is that *all* of these extra legal transactions can be pictured as a *continuum* on a single *vertical trajectory*, starting with the illegal extraction of *rent* from foreign nationals seeking basic rights and entitlements such as refugee status, through the grey area of infringements of the law to obtaining *non-entitlements* such as RDP housing - a single path between legitimacy and illegitimacy. Having been forced to pass though a sequence of *glass turnstiles* in securing basic entitlements, the *Great wall*, obliges a continuing upwards trajectory into the region of *fraudulently acquired citizenship* if the momentum of increasing access to opportunity is to be maintained.

While this analysis does not offer an *excuse* for corrupt practices - its goes some way to explain how for some there may appear to be a *seamless transition* between engaging in corruption for *entitlement* to engaging in corruption for illegitimate benefit.

6 Conclusions

6.1 Introduction

The process of research that has formed the basis of this project, has essentially been one of *exploring ideas* for an explanatory model for violent xenophobic episodes in South Africa. Starting with a rudimentary framework, based on a relationship between *social rank* and *access to opportunity*, the model argues that the *opportunity/social rank* curve in South Africa is in the process of changing from one that favoured a white minority over a black majority, to one that is more in line with a conventional *liberal capitalist democracy*. The process however is still incomplete, with a consequent gap between the opportunity that is *constitutionally available* to poor South Africans and that which they are *practically* able to claim. Foreign nationals who enter the country, it is argued, are able to take advantage of all opportunities that are constitutionally available, and are often at an advantage to poor South Africans in terms of their capacity and empowerment. Such competitive advantage places foreign nationals at an *elevated* position in relation to poor South Africans on the social rank opportunity scale, and while *tolerated* generates dissatisfaction. *Opportunity shock* (in the form of a sudden economic downturn) serves to exacerbate and spotlight the *gap* between poor South Africans and foreign nationals, leading to an explosive environment for *xenophobic violence*.

The research process has allowed deeper exploration of various aspects of the model and highlighted potential areas for further research. The fact that secondary data only has been used as part of the research process has necessarily limited its scope.

6.2 Plausibility

The majority of respondents (six out of eight) found the hypothetical framework as described to be *plausible* or *highly plausible*, while two found it to be *implausible* as a model to explain the social dynamics leading to a widespread outbreak of xenophobic violence in South Africa.

The majority of respondents also found the propositions that form the *logical steps* from which the model is constructed to be *plausible* or *highly plausible*. Proposition E (relating to perceptions of unfair competition for access to opportunity), demonstrated the *highest concurrence* amongst respondents (eight out of eight found it to be highly plausible or plausible), while proposition I (relating to the strongly temporal nature of volatile environments for xenophobic violence), showed *least concurrence* amongst respondents (five out of eight felt that it was *plausible* or *highly plausible*). One respondent was *inconclusive* regarding this proposition and one thought it *implausible*.

There was found to be a *correlation* between *concurrence* and *consensus* in terms of respondents' views as to the plausibility of propositions (that is on propositions where there was strong *concurrence* there was also strong *consensus*, on propositions where there was less concurrence there was less consensus). This may be due the fact that respondents are less familiar with these propositions.

The model was found to be consistent with *Relative Deprivation Theory* and in particular would seem to be well placed to illustrate the effective difference between *cognitive* and *affective* relative deprivations (Walker & Smith, 2002), experienced by poor South Africans towards White South Africans and Foreign Nationals respectively. This may well offer an explanation for the xenophobic targeting of foreign black Africans as opposed to foreigners of other ethnicities.

The model was also found to resonate with Wimmer's concept of xenophobia as a phenomenon emanating from a "struggle for collective goods" (1997, p.28). *Opportunity shock* overlaid on a transitional *social rank/opportunity* profile would appear to resonate closely with Wimmer's account of phenomenological "deep gripping crises" that occur repeatedly as a result of "intensive phases of modernization" (Wimmer, 1997, p. 27).

The model appears to fit also with Amisi *et al*. account of "Uneven and combined development" (2011, p. 59) as a *structural* cause of xenophobia in South Africa. In this instance the opportunity/social rank contour and its movement between pre 94 and present day profiles can be seen as a *measure* of the extent of uneven and combined development and how it has changed (or has not changed) since 1994.

6.3 Development

The discussions with experts produced a diverse range of rich information and knowledge that offer potential to develop the model.

6.3.1 The dynamics of violence

Respondents' descriptions of *two states of xenophobia* (feeling and doing), prompted a consideration of the *dynamics* of violence and led to a rudimentary profiling of the 2008 *xenophobic episode*. This points to a potential hypothesis that the factors that drive violence in different phases of a xenophobic episode are *complimentary* but *different*. Initial inspection suggests the possibility of a *latent phase* (where political discourse and macro level socio economics are prevalent) that is followed by an *emergent phase* (where the role of local leaders and RD tensions are prevalent, and violence is targeted primarily at businesses) followed by a *turbulent phase* (where inter-group emotion and street level mob dynamics are prevalent and violence is targeted at members of the community). It is during this *turbulent phase* where South Africans are caught up in the violence and where certain attacks take on the characteristics of *hate crime* (see Figure 12).

Not all environments develop from one phase to the next, *local* conditions would seem to be critical with impoverished urban communities having a *crucible* effect. Considering this dynamic of violence, it would seem that the model as presented is most useful in describing social dynamics during the *emergent phase* of xenophobic episodes.

6.3.2 Relative Deprivation

The model would seem to fit well with the theory of Relative Deprivation and affords a more nuanced view of how RD tensions might be shaped by the hierarchies of social rank and the ethnocentric networks that appear to be prevalent within impoverished urban communities. RD provides a possible explanation as to why local leaders instigated violence *when* they did (in reaction to the RD tension generated towards them by a significant opportunity shock) and may also offer an explanation for the targeting of South Africans (principally Vendas and Shangaans) amongst victims, and the exclusion of white and other ethnic foreigners from the violence.

6.3.3 Opportunity/Social Rank Approach

While the model proposed is still rudimentary in nature, the approach would seem to provide a useful framework against which to examine other social phenomena. Using the Social Rank/Opportunity approach, perceived corruption and criminality amongst foreigners can be envisaged as the consequence of a continuous vertical *path* along the social rank/opportunity curve, a route to increasing access to opportunity in the face of significant barriers to building social status.

6.4 Shortcomings of the model

While the model would seem to have been generally well accepted (with six out of eight respondents finding it to be highly plausible or plausible) the research process revealed that it has a number of shortcomings.

It is clear that the model potentially describes some of the social dynamics that occur during a *particular period* of the *xenophobic episode*. As David Everatt points out: "its perfectly acceptable to say what I am looking for are the big worrying outbreaks" (interview, 19th January 2011), but more work is needed to explain how the dynamics of the model must be developed to explain on-going levels of xenophobic violence that have been present in South African since the 1990's. Further research work to develop an understanding of the phases of xenophobic episodes might help here.

A number of respondents pointed out the potential benefits of looking at the social dynamics within areas where violence *did not* break out. Xenophobia is a social phenomenon where there is still a great deal of understanding to be uncovered; a closer examination of the factors that *prevented* outbreaks of violence are likely to be as informative as a study of those that are deemed to have *spawned* violence.

Mitchell Mackay at the Helen Suzman foundation, and Michael Neocosmos pointed out that a factor that the model does not take into account is the impact of the increased rate of migration of foreign nationals into South Africa during the period 2003 -2008. Driven by political crises in the Southern African region (notably Zimbabwe and Democratic Republic of Congo) some estimates put the figure of foreign Nationals in South Africa as high as 8 million (Everatt, 2011). While Everatt himself is wary of "playing the numbers

game" (p.12) - the relative deprivation *dynamics* if they are to be given weight must in some sense factor in the "relative size" of groups that are seen to be posing the RD threat. Further research using field-generated data might shed light on this.

Both Michael Neocosmos and David Everatt pointed out that the model did not explain why others on the social rank/opportunity curve (white and other ethnic foreigners) were *not targeted* during the violence. Subsequent examination of the model with reference to Relative Deprivation Theory would promise to shed some light on this. It has been argued in this report that the tension generated by Relative Deprivation may well be dependent on the *relative social rank* of the group in question, thus explaining why certain ethnic foreigners were excluded from the targeting.

6.5 Areas for development

It is evident that the majority of violence during 2008 took place within impoverished informal settlements where poor people (both South Africans and foreign nationals) were living in extremely cramped and poorly served conditions. There is a sense that these environments acted as a *crucible*[47] where sentiments of frustration and anger once ignited, set off a chain reaction which was in many instances impossible to stop until the fuel that sustained them had been exhausted. Jahed has suggested that a closer study of the *nature* of these environments would demonstrate whether they were *correlated* in any way[48].

Such a study might also shed further light on the *dynamics* that provoke leaders to instigate violence. In particular the *well defined* but poorly understood *hierarchies* of

[47] The primary characteristic of the *crucible* (a receptacle used for smelting ore) is that it can contain and withstand heat that, while sufficient to melt its contents, leaves the receptacle itself intact. Arthur Miller, famously used the allegory in a four-act play of the same name, to describe the seemingly bizarre and dangerous social dynamics that can flare within a localised environment. The play dealt with the phenomenon of witch-hunting in America in the 17th century and alluded to the era of fear and insistence on orthodoxy under the influence of the Senator Joseph MaCarthy in the 1940s.

[48] The African Centre for Migration and Society (ACMS) has produced a draft paper that outlines what they feel are components of an Estimated Violence Risk Index within communities. These include high levels of deprivation, high percentage of males, high levels of ethnic heterogeneity and low levels of absolute poverty (correlated with high income inequality).

informal authority that determine the distribution of *opportunity* amongst the local population. Such a study might allow us to build a more detailed Social Rank/Opportunity curve for these environments and allow us to plot key individuals and groups within the community upon it.

A more detailed study of the dynamic characteristics of xenophobic episodes could well shed light on how they *develop*. While there would not appear to be ready access to comprehensive time stamped data, the databases that have been collated by various research groups to date would make a good starting point. Interestingly the UK Guardian website has produced an animated "flash graphic" showing the *evolution* and *spread* of civil unrest in Britain during the riots that broke out there in August 2011. Primarily intended as a communication tool to spark online discussion amongst readers, they nonetheless demonstrate the power of using a *spatial database* approach to support a *time and motion* study of violence (Rogers, Sedghi, & Evans, 2011).

During discussions, Tara Polzer made the point that in findings of research carried out by ACMS, people have not *consciously* linked levels of *economic hardship* with their *resentment* towards foreigners. That is not to say however that a *subconscious* relationship does not exist. A longitudinal study to measure people's perceptions of levels of opportunity over time would form a central part of any research to establish a link between opportunity shock and the propensity within society for xenophobic episodes. Some creative approaches to measuring *perceived levels of opportunity* might be necessary to generate this valuable data.

Harris whose work with CSVR has provided extensive insights into the area of violence in South Africa, has suggested that the Opportunity/Social Rank model and in particular RD related tensions that it predicts, might prove valuable in understanding other manifestations of violence such as *taxi violence*, *gender* based violence and violence within *prisons*.

One factor that was recognised as being potentially significant to the "national mood" during the period leading up to the outbreak of violence was the record number of repossessions being carried out by lending institutions on homes and motor vehicles. Given the importance in South Africa of motor vehicles as indicators of "social status"

the impact of large-scale repossessions on the hard won dignity of upwardly mobile black South Africans cannot be underestimated. While those who were subject to repossessions are unlikely to have been amongst those at the forefront of the violence, its not unreasonable to speculate that this sudden and widespread erosion of "social status" amongst an important group of "opinion formers" might have had a role to play in chilling the national mood towards outsiders who were seen to be unfairly benefitting from the fruits of liberation. A more detailed study to look at possible correlation of repo rates with xenophobic sentiment might shed light on this.

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9 Appendices

Appendix A - List of interviewees

Six of the interviewees (Everatt, Nyar, Polzer, Harris, Neocosmos and Kuljian) are authors of international papers, books (or forthcoming books) on the subject of xenophobia. Two (Antonie and Kenny) are members of a think tank that has looked in detail at Xenophobia and organised high-level round table discussions on the subject. Thomas and Mande bring first hand experiences of working with communities that have been impacted by xenophobic violence, while Jahed brings in the perspective of a development economist and social stratification in South Africa.

Attempts were made to secure interviews with Patrick Bond, Director of the Centre for Civil Society at UKZN and author of the Atlantic Philanthropies report "Why did it happen", Alphonse Munyaneza of UNHCR who has first hand experience of dealing with the humanitarian emergency following the violence in 2008, and Loren Landau, director of the African Centre for Migration and Society and author of a number of international papers and reports on Xenophobia in South Africa. Unfortunately none were available for interview during the period of the research.

Francis Antonie

Francis Antonie is the director of the Helen Suzman Foundation - an independent policy institute committed to the promotion of human rights and liberal democratic principals espoused by the late and widely recognised anti-apartheid activist (HSF, 2011). Engaged in research and publications, Antonie in 2010 chaired a high-level roundtable discussion bringing together recognised experts and analysts on the subject of xenophobia in South Africa.

David Everatt

Professor David Everatt is Executive Director of the Gauteng City-Region Observatory (GCRO) and counts 17 years experience in applied development and socio-economic

research (GCRO, 2011). He has recently co-authored the 2010 synthesis and overview report, part of a study commissioned by the Atlantic Philanthropies to look into the response of civil society to the May 2008 Xenophobic Violence. He has also acted as guest editor for the international journal Politikon in a special issue looking at Xenophobia, Civil Society and South Africa

Bronwyn Harris

Bronwyn Harris is currently a senior researcher at the centre for Health policy at WITS University. Formerly with the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, she has critically examined issues of discrimination in relation to identity, race and gender in countries undergoing democratic transition (WITs, 2011). Her contribution to the book - *Psycho-pathology and Social Prejudice,* which examines the relationship between xenophobia and the process of Nation Building in South Africa, has been widely cited in literature dealing with xenophobia

Mohammed Jahed

Mohammed Jahed is a development economist who is widely recognised for his expertise in economic development, economic policy formulation and public and development management. A former Professor at the University of Witwatersrand in the Graduate School of Public and Development Management he is currently a senior economic planning specialist at the Development Bank of Southern Africa (Jahed, 2011).

Timothy Kenny

Timothy Kenny is a researcher at the Helen Suzman Foundation. A graduate in Political Science and History and holder of a Masters Degree in International Relations, Timothy's area of specialism lies in Institutional Governance and the influence and impact of South Africa amongst its regional neighbours (HSF, 2011).

Christa Kuljian

Christa Kuljian is a writer and development consultant, working with a range of Donors and NGOs. In 2010 she was the recipient of the prestigious Ruth First Scholarship, an award that she used to research the hostility and controversy surrounding Johannesburg's Central Methodist Church. The result, which uses powerful narratives to tell the story of the thousands of displaced foreign nationals who made their home there, is the basis of a forthcoming book and a Phd. Christa is a graduate from Wits' Creative Writing Masters programme and holds a Masters in Public Affairs from Princeton and an undergraduate degree from Harvard (JOCOZA, 2010).

Martin Mande

Martin Mande is a fieldworker for the Damietta Peace Initiative based in Pretoria. He oversees community groups, almost all of which have been affected by xenophobic violence, in Pretoria and Northwest Province including Pretoria CBD, Sunnyside, Atteridgeville, Olievenhoutsbosch, Mamelodi, and Rietvallei.

Michael Neocosmos

Michael Neocosmos is an author, translator and Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Humanities Research, University of the Western Cape. He is also Honorary Professor in Global Movements at Monash University (HSF, 2010). His book "*From foreign natives to native foreigners: explaining xenophobia in post-apartheid South Africa"* is widely cited within contemporary literature and outlines the emergence of the "politics of fear", a political discourse which he argues has a major influence in shaping definitions of citizenship and subsequent xenophobic rejection of foreigners within the post-apartheid state.

Annsilla Nyar

Annsilla Nyar is a Senior Researcher with GCRO. A development activist and writer, her academic interest and writings have centred on development issues relating to social

justice, human rights and the role of civil society (GCRO, 2011). Her recent work has included the authoring of the report "What Happened" (Nyar, 2010), an account of the sequence of events leading up to, and including the period of xenophobic violence in South Africa in 2008. Annsilla has had first hand experience in leading discussions and focus groups amongst communities that have experienced xenophobic violence.

Tara Polzer

Tara Polzer is a Senior Researcher at the African Centre for Migration and Society "one of the continent's leading institutions for research, teaching and outreach on migration" (ACMS, 2011, p. 1). Her research encompasses the study of refugees and migrants from Mozambique and Zimbabwe and has focused in particular on South Africa's legal and humanitarian response to xenophobic violence. She is a recognised commentator on the issue of xenophobia and has co-authored a number of reports and articles including an in-depth study into the violence against foreign Nationals in May 2008 (Misago, Monson, Polzer, & Landau, 2010).

Lance Thomas

Lance Thomas is a programme manager with the Damietta Trust, a faith based NGO that implements projects to promote peace building and mitigate against xenophobic violence across six provinces in South Africa. The Damietta Trust is active in many of the areas that experienced violence during the outbreak of xenophobic violence in May 2008.

Appendix B - Schedule of interviews

Interviewee	Designation	Date	Location
Tara Polzer	Senior Researcher, African Centre for Migration and Society (ACMS)	16th August 2010, 27th March 2011	Johannesburg
Christa Kuljian	Ruth First Scholar	18th January 2011	Johannesburg
David Everatt	Director - Gauteng City Regional Observatory	19th January 2011	Johannesburg
Francis Anthony	Director, Helen Suzman Foundation	3rd February2011	Johannesburg
Tim Kenny,	Senior Researcher, Helen Suzman Foundation	3rd February 2011	Johannesburg
Michael Neocosmos		4th February 2011	Pretoria
Bronwyn Harris	Senior Researcher, Centre for Health Policy WITS University	3rd March 2011	Johannesburg
Lance Thomas	Programme Coordinator, Damietta Trust	7th March 2011	Pretoria
Martin Mande	Field Worker, Damietta Trust	7th March 2011	Pretoria
Ansilla Nyar	Director - Gauteng City Regional Observatory	8th March 2011	Johannesburg
Mohammed Jahed	Head of Policy Unit, Development Bank of Southern Africa	14th March 2011	Midrand

Appendix C - Interview template

Purpose

The purpose of this research project is to develop, present and test a model for xenophobic violence in South Africa based on a consideration of public perceptions around *access to opportunity* and the *social ranking* of individuals and groups within impoverished communities.

Research Questions

Main question

To what extent is the model, as presented, valid in describing the social dynamics that lead to outbreaks of xenophobic violence in South Africa in the period 2008 -2010?

Sub questions

a. What aspects of xenophobic violence in South Africa during the period are *consistent* with the model?

b. What aspects of xenophobic violence in South Africa *cannot* be explained by the model?

c. In what can ways can the model be improved or adapted to better describe *what is going on*?

d. What are potential areas for *further research* that consideration of the model suggests?

Introduction and warm up

Introduce myself as the researcher and explain the purpose of the research project.

Request permission to record the interview and point out that

- recordings can be made available to interviewees,
- interviews can choose to remain anonymous for purposes of the research should they so wish (a pseudonym can be used for this purpose),
- that information gathered will be published as part of a Master's research

report at the School of P&DM

Ask for how long the interviewee has been involved in his/her area of work relating to xenophobic violence (warm up question – adapt according to particular interviewee).

Explain that I will now present a hypothetical model that attempts to describe the social dynamics that lead to Xenophobic violence in South Africa and that the rest of the interview will be used to solicit their responses and feedback to it based on some simple questions.

Present the model using pre-prepared laminated (or power-point) slides.

Interview Questions

Main question

In your view, to what extent is the model valid in describing the social dynamics that have lead to outbreaks of xenophobic violence in South Africa between 2008 and 2010?

Probing questions

a. What aspects of xenophobic violence in South Africa during the period do you think are *consistent* with the model?

b. What aspects of xenophobic violence in South Africa do you think *cannot* be explained by the model?

c. Given that the model has potential validity, can you suggest ways in which the model be improved or adapted to better describe *what is going on*?

d. What do you think might be potential areas for *further research* that consideration of the model suggests?

Paper and pencil will be used to encourage interviewees to sketch out graphics that present modifications and/or alternatives to the model being presented.

Key Informant Poll

Explain that in order to record a summary of their overall reaction to the model's plausibility you would like to round off by helping them completed a short survey questionnaire.

Concluding the interview

Thank the interviewee(s) for her/his time and invite them to e-mail any further thoughts or suggestions that they might have to you (provide them with e-mail address and contact).

Request permission to contact the interviewee later if necessary (by phone or email) should any comments or points that they made during the interview need clarification

Appendix D - Key informant poll

Q. In your opinion, to what extent do the models *components* as presented, contribute to a *plausible* or *implausible* explanation of the social dynamics that lead to an widespread outbreak of xenophobic violence in South Africa in 2008. (Please mark a *single* response corresponding to each concept by placing a tick in the relevant column.)	Highly implausible	Implausible	Insufficient detail/evidence to make judgement	Plausible	Highly Plausible
Model Components					
a) The concept of a causal relationship between **social rank** and **access** to **opportunity,**	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b) The process and (slow) pace of **social transition** from levels of opportunity (pre 94) towards ideal levels of opportunity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c) The gap between **expected** access to opportunity and **actual** access to opportunity by South African Nationals	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d) The existence of **empowerment** and **capacity** barriers for South Africans in terms of access opportunity that is constitutionally available to them	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e) Perceptions of unfair **competition** for access to opportunity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f) Foreign nationals as occupants of a social space where they access opportunity **beyond** that which is available to nationals	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g) Perceptions relating to the lower **social rank** of foreign nationals	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h) **Opportunity shock** as a phenomenon which transforms societal dissatisfaction towards foreign nationals into resentment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
i) The strongly **temporal** nature of volatile environments for xenophobic violence	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
j) The **overall** plausibility of the model	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
k) In your experience, are there specific aspects of xenophobic violence that are **not explained** by the model? Please elaborate					
l) In your experience, are there specific aspects of xenophobic violence that **contradict** the model? Please elaborate.					
m) Are there potential areas for further research that the model suggests?					
Name of Informant					
Date					

Appendix E - Summary of Key Informant Poll results

Respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they felt the model and its components were plausible using a five point Likert scale that ranged from Highly Plausible to Highly implausible. In the table below these responses have been transcribed into scores (1 - Highly Implausible, 5 - Highly Plausible) and given a colour coding (Dark Green - Highly Plausible, Bright Orange - Highly Implausible).

	Q. In your opinion, to what extent do the models *components* as presented, contribute to a *plausible* or *implausible* explanation of the social dynamics that lead to a widespread outbreak of xenophobic violence in South Africa in 2008.?	Michael Neo Cosmos	David Everatt	Ansilla Nyar	Tim Kenny	Mohammed Jahed	Christa Kulejan	Tara Polzer	Bronwyn Harris
A	The concept of a causal relationship between **social rank** and **access** to **opportunity,**	5	3	4	4	4	5	5	5
B	The process and (slow) pace of **social transition** from levels of opportunity (pre 94) towards ideal levels of opportunity	2	3	4	4	5	5	5	5
C	The gap between **expected** access to opportunity and **actual** access to opportunity by South African Nationals	4	3	4	4	4	5	5	5
D	The existence of **empowerment** and **capacity** barriers for South Africans in terms of access opportunity that is constitutionally available to them	2	4	4	4	4	3	4	5
E	Perceptions of unfair **competition** for access to opportunity	5	4	4	4	4	5	5	5
F	Foreign nationals as occupants of a social space where they access opportunity **beyond** that which is available to nationals	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	5
G	Perceptions relating to the lower **social rank** of foreign nationals	4	2	4	3	4	3	4	5
H	**Opportunity shock** as a phenomenon which transforms societal dissatisfaction towards foreign nationals into resentment	1	3	4	5	4	4	4	5
I	The strongly **temporal** nature of volatile environments for xenophobic violence	1	4	3	4	4	4	4	5
	The **overall** plausibility of the model	2	2	4	5	4	5	4	5

KEY	
Highly Plausible	5
Plausible	4
Insufficient evidence	3
Implausible	2
Highly Implausible	1