

https://dspace.org/

Politically-Coordinated Social Movements or Hashtag Campaigns? A Discourse Analysis of Online Anti-Immigrant Tweets in South Africa

Lindie, Sivuyile Zenani

2024

University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

https://hdl.handle.net/10539/45704

Lindie, Sivuyile Zenani . (2024). Politically-Coordinated Social Movements or Hashtag Campaigns? A Discourse Analysis of Online Anti-Immigrant Tweets in South Africa [Master`s dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg]. WIReDSpace. https://hdl.handle.net/10539/45704

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/



Politically-Coordinated Social Movements or Hashtag Campaigns? A Discourse Analysis of Online Anti-Immigrant Tweets in South Africa

Student Name: Sivuyile Zenani Lindie

Student Number: 1076063

Supervisor: Dr. Ben Scully

A research report submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts by Coursework and Research Report (Sociology) in the School of Social Sciences, Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand

July 2023

ABSTRACT

The recent emergence of online anti-immigrant sentiment on Twitter in South Africa has been interrogated by a few research organizations to determine the extent to which digitally-mediated spaces are being increasingly leveraged by various social and political actors to further stimulate widespread anti-immigrant propaganda about African migrants and refugees residing in South Africa. This research study determines and analyzes whether online anti-immigrant contestations on Twitter in South Africa are a new model of collective protest action either building on or superseding the orthodox characteristics of social movements. In doing so, it conducts a discourse analysis to understand how social media-driven forms of collective action, contestation, and/or protests are coordinated and mobilized through the powerful discursive use of *language* on Twitter. The study's primary theoretical framework, the 'Social Constructivist Paradigm' and 'Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)', forms a crucial aspect of understanding how widespread feelings of frustration and disillusionment among the majority of marginalized South Africans are channelled through various Twitter posts and interactions to continue legitimizing a growing anti-immigrant populist discourse. The methodology of the study followed a mixed-methods research approach using the filtering and querying features of a free cloud-based research software tool called *COSMOS* (Collaborative Online Social Media Observatory Software), to collect and analyze data on Twitter. The findings of this study were analyzed using content and statistical analyses. The study found that the hashtags used to spread online anti-immigrant discourse in South Africa, particularly, #PutSouthAfricansFirst, #OperationDudula, and #ForeignersMustGo, can be conceptualized as 'hashtag campaigns' that are a microcosm of larger politically-coordinated offline anti-immigrant social movements in South Africa. These findings demonstrate how the discursive coordination of language into the virulent anti-immigrant discourse on Twitter draws on various conventional attributes of 'social movements' to constitute a novel model of online collective action. Indeed, an emerging model of online collective formations mobilized by various politically-connected groups of people with shared anti-immigrant beliefs and identities that further seek to deepen already fractured relations between South African citizens and African foreigners.

Keywords: online anti-immigrant campaigns, Twitter, African foreign nationals, xenophobia, South Africa, CDA.

DECLARATION

University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

School of Social Sciences

SENATE PLAGIARISM POLICY

I, Sivuyile Zenani Lindie (Student number: 1076063) am a student registered for the Master of Arts by Coursework and Research Report (Sociology) in the year 2023.

I hereby declare the following:

- I am aware that plagiarism (the use of someone else's work without their permission and/or without acknowledging the original source) is wrong.
- I confirm that ALL the work submitted for examination for the MA research report is my own unaided work except where I have explicitly indicated otherwise.
- I have followed the required conventions in referencing the thoughts and ideas of others.
- I understand that the University of the Witwatersrand may take disciplinary action against me if there is a belief that this is not my own unaided work or that I have failed to acknowledge the source of the ideas or words in my writing.

Signature:  Date: 21 July 2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT **1**

DECLARATION **2**

LIST OF FIGURES **7**

LIST OF TABLES **9**

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION **10**

1.1 Background 10

1.2 Problem statement 12

1.3 Aims of the study 13

1.4 Research questions 14

1.5 Research objectives 15

1.6 Structure of Study 15

1.7 Conclusion 16

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW……. **17**

2.1 Introduction 17

2.2 Social Constructivist Paradigm 18

2.1.1 Social Identity Theory (SIT) 19

2.1.2 Integrated Threat Theory (ITT) 20

2.3 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) 22

2.4 Framing Theory 25

2.5 Framing the rise of online-mediated anti-immigrant contestations in post-apartheid South Africa: crystallization of xenophobic views and attitudes 27

2.6 The rise and contemporary changes of traditional social movements as an articulation of conflict: socio-political and cultural elements 31

2.7 'Networked' anti-immigrant campaigns: the emergence of online anti-immigrant social and political contestations in post-apartheid South Africa....38
2.8 Conclusion....42
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY....44
3.1 Introduction....44
3.2 Data Collection Methods....44
3.2.1 Qualitative Approach (Discourse Analysis)....44
3.2.2 Quantitative Approach (Statistical Analysis)....45
3.3 Sampling....46
3.3.1 Sample criteria....46
3.3.2 Sample size....46
3.4 Data Analysis....47
3.5 Opportunities and Challenges....47
3.6 Ethical Considerations....49
3.7 Conclusion....50
CHAPTER FOUR: SENTIMENT AND GEOSPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF TWEETS..... 51
4.1 Introduction....51
4.2 Sentiment of Tweets....52
4.2.1 Jobs....52
4.2.2 Crime....56
4.2.3 Service Delivery....57
4.2.4 Law Enforcement....58
4.3 Geospatial Distribution of Tweets....60
4.4 Conclusion....63
CHAPTER FIVE: FREQUENCY OF TWEETS....65

5.1 Introduction 65
5.2 Frequency of Tweets 66
5.2.1 Daily Frequency of The Top Four Hashtags (2020-2022) 66
5.2.2 Daily Frequency of Tweets Posted on Significant Public Holidays (2020-2022) 67
5.2.3 Daily Frequency of Tweets Posted During Notable Protest Events (2020-2022) 69
5.2.4 Weekly and Daily Frequency of Tweets Posted During Anti-Immigrant Protests at Kalafong Hospital in August 2022 71
5.3 Discussion 74
5.3.1 'Framing' of Online Anti-Immigrant Discourse 78
5.4 Conclusion 80
CHAPTER SIX: CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS (CDA) OF ANTI-IMMIGRANT TWEETS 82
6.1 Introduction 82
6.2 Representation of 'Us' and 'Others' (Keyword Analysis) 82
6.3 Linguistic Analysis of Anti-Immigrant Tweets (Micro Level) 98
6.3.1 Vocabulary Analysis 100
6.3.2 Grammar Analysis 101
6.3.3 Textual Structure Analysis 102
6.4 Discursive Analysis of Anti-Immigrant Tweets (Macro Level) 103
6.4.1 Propaganda 103
6.4.2 Euphemism, Dysphemism, and Monoglossic Views 105
6.4.3 Ideological Positioning 108
6.4.3.1 Construction of an 'Us-Versus-Them' Political Identity 110
6.5 Conclusion 111
CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION 113
7.1 Introduction 113

7.2 Objectives Revisited 115

7.2.1 To determine whether online anti-immigrant contestations on Twitter in South Africa are a new model of social media-driven collective protest action either building on or superseding the orthodox characteristics of social movements: 115

7.2.2 To identify and analyze the main socio-economic issues raised and framed to construct and amplify online anti-immigrant discourse on Twitter in South Africa: 115

7.2.3 To analyze the linguistic and/or discursive strategies used to frame and organize online anti-immigrant discourse on Twitter in South Africa: 116

7.2.4 To examine how effective the pre-existing public discourse on African migrants and refugees is in shaping citizens online attitudes, feelings, and opinions about them residing in South Africa: 117

7.3 Strengths and Limitations 117

7.4 Implications 118

7.5 Suggestions for future research 120

REFERENCE LIST 123

APPENDIX 136

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Three questions/characteristics to consider around the participation and the emergence of contemporary social movements……18

Figure 2.2: Fairclough's dimensions of discourse analysis…….....24

Figure 4.1: Jobs (Negative Sentiment)……..53

Figure 4.2: Jobs (Positive Sentiment)……..55

Figure 4.3: Crime (Negative Sentiment)……..56

Figure 4.4: Service Delivery (Negative Sentiment)……..57

Figure 4.5: Law Enforcement (Positive Sentiment)……..59

Figure 4.6: Law Enforcement (Negative Sentiment)……..60

Figure 4.7: Geospatial Distribution (Combination of Positive and Negative sentiment of tweets)……61

Figure 5.1: Daily frequency of top four hashtags in online anti-immigrant campaigns (2020-22)……..66

Figure 5.2: Daily frequency of tweets posted on significant public holidays (2020-22)……..67

Figure 5.3: Daily frequency of tweets posted during significant protest events (2020-22)…….70

Figure 5.4: Weekly and daily frequency of tweets posted during anti-immigrant protests at Kalafong Hospital in August 2022……..72

Figure 5.5: Anti-immigrant protests at Kalafong Hospital (Negative Sentiment)…….....73

Figure 6.1 and 6.2: Frequent and dominant words describing the 'us-group' and 'others-group'…….....83

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: 'Us' versus 'Others' representation…….....86-87

Table 2: Sample of anti-immigrant tweets…….....89-91

Table 3: Analysis of linguistic features……...98-99

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Throughout various historical periods, social movements have played an important role in mobilizing various groups of people that are connected by common goals and shared values. According to van Stekelenburg and Klandermans (2009:20-21), social movements are ‘’interlocking networks of groups, social networks, and individuals and the connection between them with a shared collective identity who try to prevent or promote societal change by non-institutionalized tactics’’. Since the late 1960s, there has been an enormous growth in social movements sparking social change and transformation on both local and global scales. These include the civil rights movement, the peace movement, the women’s movement, and the environmental movement, to name a few (van Stekelenburg and Klandermans, 2009). In contemporary times, globalization processes along with the exponential rise of the digital age, underpinned by the use of various information and communication technologies (ICTs) such as the Internet and smart devices, have re-shaped and intensified the nature of social movements. These have been coined as *networked social movements*, which can be defined as a decentred and fluid form of collective action that is created and sustained on the Internet through the use of various digital technologies (Castells, 2012). The mobilization of these movements is driven by peer-to-peer forms of organization and intervention within an enclosed online network that spreads and amplifies information about an issue that one is in support of (Castells, 2012; Dolata, 2017).

In various ways, networked social movements are geared toward some sort of social change and/or disruption using social networking sites (SNS) such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. The social and political impact of the Internet on contemporary social movements such as the Arab Spring, Black Lives Matter (BLM), Fees Must Fall (FMF), Me Too, Free Palestine, and Make America Great Again (MAGA), to name a few, has been theorized to form part of the broader influence of ‘contentious politics’ in social movements (Tarrow, 2011). Specifically, the online component of these movements has relied on increased interactions and engagements using ‘hashtags’, where conversations coordinated around certain issues and events are prefixed with the hash symbol ‘#’ to make communication more instant, sustained, and effective. Likewise, Bruns and Stieglitz (2012) comment that hashtags are an important user-generated

mechanism on SNS that make conversations around an identified issue or event easily discoverable and accessible to large masses of people.

In the context of South Africa, the role of various SNS has played an integral role in catalyzing massive social and political changes which were clearly illustrated by the recent FMF student movement between 2015 and 2016 (Olagunju, Frankish, and Wade, 2022). Likewise, in late September 2020, an anti-immigrant movement, '#PutSouthAfricansFirst', calling for the immediate deportation of African migrants and refugees from South Africa, rapidly emerged both online and offline. Specifically, the politically-affiliated leaders of the movement mobilized hundreds of citizens in Pretoria to march to the Nigerian High Commission demanding the immediate removal of undocumented African foreign nationals who are widely perceived to be responsible for rising rates of unemployment and violent crime (Khumalo, 2020).

According to Akande, Musarurwa, and Kaye (2018), anti-immigrant attitudes and sentiments, widely labelled as 'xenophobic' and/or 'Afrophobic', are driven by the scapegoating of mostly black African immigrants for the failures of the ruling South African government in addressing increasing levels of poverty, unemployment, and inequality. Importantly, these grievances are framed under the guise of nationalism and patriotism that mask the discrimination and demonization of African migrants and refugees residing in South Africa. The increasing popularity of SNS has been leveraged by various political actors and parties in South Africa as an extended conduit to express offline views and agendas for their own political gain (CABC, 2022a; amaBhungane Reporters, 2022).

Using the emergence of online anti-immigrant 'social movements' in South Africa as a case study, this paper demonstrates the ways in which Twitter's free and open-ended features and functions are leveraged for sinister reasons. In particular, the use of its features to broaden the action and influence of online forms of collective action and protest is a key contributing factor to a new model of coordinating and mobilizing collective action that is highly fragmented, spontaneous, and diverse in scale and scope (Goswami, 2018; Dolata, 2017). Moreover, these online forms of social and political action are providing a space for symbolic struggles for power and control to be exerted by various Twitter users to stimulate, perpetuate, and legitimize anti-immigrant sentiment in South Africa (Onslow, 2021; amaBhungane Reporters, 2022). Indeed, an emergent aspect of collective protest action that needs to be meticulously interrogated.

1.2 Problem statement

Against this backdrop, most mainstream media outlets in South Africa have generically referred to the increasing rise of online anti-immigrant contestations on Twitter as 'social movements' (Atabong, 2020; News24, 2022; Myeni, 2022; Charles, 2020), which, upon close interrogation, is not entirely accurate. Indeed, these online political contestations and/or conversations are actually characterized by fragmented, diverse, and multi-sided configurations that cannot be aptly described as *social movements* in the orthodox sense. The classic literature on social movements (Touraine, 1985; van Stekelenburg and Klandermans, 2009; Cohen, 1985; Diani, 1992) does not account effectively for the diverse and fragmented nature of online contestations that lead to various collective social and political protest formations that are mostly sporadic in nature. However, in the context of this study, the orthodox characteristics of social movements lay the theoretical groundwork for interrogating new manifestations of collective (online) action and protest that cannot be aptly described as 'social movements'. Importantly, these new formations should not render obsolete the core characteristics of traditional and networked social movements that are more organized and cohesive in scope. As such, this study mainly explores the extent to which online anti-immigrant contestations are an extension (or not) of the conventional attributes of orthodox social movements with diverse organizational configurations that are pointing to the existence and/or emergence of a *new* model of collective protest action.

The evidence gathered in this study on the *persistence* of online anti-immigrant conversations and/or contestations amongst individual Twitter users in South Africa between 2020 and 2022 actually points to a degree of internal cohesion and organization within these formations. These contestations, coalesced by various hashtags, are primarily driven by the scapegoating of African foreign nationals for various socio-economic issues (Durokifa and Ijeoma, 2017). Indeed, where the influence of various social and political actors is driving a model of online collective protest action that relies on opinion-forming and identity-building processes to co-opt various Twitter users, who share similar anti-immigrant attitudes and sentiments, into growing and legitimizing this discourse through increased engagement and participation (CABC, 2022a; amaBhungane Reporters, 2022).

As such, in order for these online anti-immigrant contestations to avoid having a fleeting existence there are various strategies of mobilization now employed to ensure the longevity and

virality of these online political formations which this study interrogates utilizing various forms of analysis.

1.3 Aims of the study

This study relates to the existing literature on the emergence and influence of social media-driven protest action on broadening the scope of formation and action of contemporary 'social movements'. Specifically, as a case study, the study focuses on the rapid rise and impact of online anti-immigrant contestations on Twitter in South Africa, a new type of collective online protest action that is characterized by multi-sided political contestations and formations through the use of various hashtags to increase engagement and interaction with anti-immigrant sentiment. Using the recent rise of offline social movements such as 'Put South Africans First' and its prominent offshoot 'Operation Dudula' as case studies that mobilize under various popular hashtags such as #PutSouthAfricansFirst, #PutSouthAfricaFirst, #OperationDudula, and sub-hashtags such as #ForeignersMustGo on Twitter; the study argues that online anti-immigrant formations through the use of these popular hashtags form part of broader strategically coordinated political movements that do not simply reflect wider offline attitudes and views. Rather, these are politically-connected forms of protest action used to *stimulate* and *entrench* anti-immigrant sentiment to create further social discord and violence between South African citizens and African foreigners for various agendas.

The study investigates and illuminates how the strong influence of populist anti-immigrant views are injected, amplified, and sustained within a digitally-mediated space by various social and political actors. Particularly through the use of various mobilization and organizational strategies to build sustained collective opinions and contestations that seek to alienate and demonize African foreign nationals residing in South Africa.

More specifically, first, it draws on tweets featuring these hashtags to examine the production of online anti-immigrant discourse fanned by certain groups of politically-connected users on Twitter. In this case, further analyzing how these tweets, which are framed around various socio-economic issues and linked to the broader politics of citizenship and nationality by implication, emerge as discursive themes to justify the spread of anti-immigrant rhetoric against mostly (black) African migrants in South Africa. Second, building on the aforementioned using a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), it identifies and discusses how these discursive themes are

constructed through the use of various linguistic and discursive strategies in the tweets posted by local Twitter users expressing social and economic grievances disproportionately directed towards foreign nationals. In terms of the CDA, more specifically, identifying and exploring how these themes are framed using language as a discursive tool to assert a pro-nationalist ideological position that contributes to the othering and alienation of black African migrants in South Africa.

Importantly, in terms of the identified linguistic/discursive strategies, it argues that *anti-immigrant language*, in particular, serves as a key discursive practice of power and control to mobilize, amplify, and legitimize online anti-immigrant discourse on Twitter through the use of the popular hashtags. More broadly, it is this type of polarizing language that underpins how the changing scale and scope of collective forms of action and protest are increasingly shaped by symbolic forms of power, control, and impunity that the free and open-ended space of Twitter affords its users. As a result, de-emphasizing social cohesion, belonging, and transformation.

Overall, the study argues that at first glance these online anti-immigrant contestations appear to be largely spontaneous and uncoordinated, however, their persistence over time lends credence to the increased influence that SNS are having on stimulating and legitimizing anti-immigrant sentiment in South Africa. More specifically, the organizing and mobilizing features afforded by SNS to broaden the scope of influence and action over time can be argued to be transforming these contestations into consciously constructed and organized forms of online collective action and/or protest for various agendas influenced by the normalization of a widespread anti-immigrant populist discourse.

1.4 Research questions

The following are the research questions:

1. Are online anti-immigrant contestations on Twitter in South Africa a new model of collective protest action either building on or superseding the orthodox characteristics of social movements?
2. What are the main socio-economic issues framed in the tweets motivating the spread and persistence of online anti-immigrant discourse on Twitter in South Africa?
3. What linguistic and/or discursive strategies are used to frame online anti-immigrant discourse on Twitter in South Africa, and how effective is it?

1.5 Research objectives

The main research objectives are as follows:

1. To determine whether online anti-immigrant contestations on Twitter in South Africa are a new model of social media-driven collective protest action either building on or superseding the orthodox characteristics of social movements.
2. To identify and analyze the main socio-economic issues raised and framed to construct and amplify online anti-immigrant discourse on Twitter in South Africa.
3. To analyze the linguistic and/or discursive strategies used to frame and organize online anti-immigrant discourse on Twitter in South Africa.
4. To examine how effective the pre-existing public discourse on African migrants and refugees is in shaping citizens online attitudes, feelings, and opinions about them residing in South Africa.

1.6 Structure of Study

The study is thematically organized as follows. Following this introductory chapter, *Chapter Two,* 'theoretical framework and literature review', discusses and situates the relevant theories and literature within the aims and objectives the study has sought to achieve. *Chapter Three*, 'methodology', describes and elaborates on the research methods and data analysis that underpins the study.

Chapter Four, 'sentiment and geospatial distribution of tweets', is two-fold. First, it discusses the variation of sentiment (the strength of mood or tension expressed in tweets) in the identified socio-economic issues that dominated the framing of anti-immigrant sentiment on Twitter, and how these issues are used to scapegoat African foreign nationals residing in South Africa. Second, the chapter provides an analysis of the geospatial distribution of the tweets discussed in the sentiment analysis which illustrates the main provinces where the majority of the tweets were posted. *Chapter Five,* 'frequency of tweets', builds on the previous chapter by presenting a frequency analysis of randomized subsets of the overall tweets collected for data analysis through various charts illustrating how persistent the mobilization and distribution of online anti-immigrant contestations have been since these discussions began to appear more frequently on Twitter as from 2020. *Chapter Six*, 'critical discourse analysis (CDA) of anti-immigrant tweets',

provides a comprehensive discourse analysis of the tweets collected. It describes and analyzes in detail, using various linguistic and discursive strategies, how a dominant pro-nationalist ideological position is discursively articulated and reinforced in the construction and distribution of online anti-immigrant contestations on Twitter in South Africa.

Last, *Chapter Seven,* 'conclusion and discussion', revisits the study's questions and objectives by providing a closing discussion of its main arguments presented in the findings chapters, and briefly comments on the study's strengths and limitations, implications, and suggestions for future research.

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the research study by outlining the following: background, problem statement, aims of the study, research questions, research objectives, and the thematic structure of the entire study. Importantly, it provided an introductory framing of the relevant and interesting scholarly debates it seeks to engage and contribute to around the emergence and influence of divisive social media-driven forms of collective protest action in South Africa. The next chapter discusses the theoretical framework relevant to the study and provides a review of the literature in which the study is situated.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Several theoretical approaches can be used as a lens to understand the fragmented, sporadic, and diverse nature of social media-driven forms of social and political contestations through the free, decentralized, and open-ended mechanisms these online platforms afford users with. Although the literature on digitally-mediated forms of action or protest covers a wide variety of such approaches; the theoretical framework, firstly, will use the 'Social Constructivist Paradigm', 'Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)', and 'Framing Theory' to elucidate and analyze the strategic use of *language* in shaping and disseminating online anti-immigrant discourse by individual users on Twitter in South Africa. More importantly, the theories that frame this study account for the powerful and effective ways in which online anti-immigrant contestations in South Africa are socially and discursively embedded which lends credence to their enduring persistence.

Secondly, the literature review provides an in-depth background framing of the fragmented and diverse nature of mobilizing and coordinating collective anti-immigrant opinions and views on Twitter in South Africa. Specifically, it focuses on the multifaceted configurations in the construction and spread of anti-immigrant discourse on Twitter that has, over the past three years, become a powerful space for social and political contestations that reconcile and reinforce pre-existing attitudes and views about African migrants and refugees residing in South Africa. The review focuses on three major themes which emerge repeatedly throughout it. These themes are: (1) the crystallization of anti-immigrant attitudes and views widely characterized as 'xenophobic'/'Afrophobic'; (2) the evolution and influence of the orthodox characteristics of social movements on the diverse and sporadic formation of online-mediated forms of contestation and protest informed by social conflict and tension; and (3) building on the aforementioned themes by focusing on the politically-connected emergence of online anti-immigrant campaigns in South Africa, specifically. This theme captures how the core organizational patterns of traditional social movements have been leveraged by the rapid emergence and impact of the Internet; therefore, giving way to a range of new and diverse online social and political formations such as those coalesced through hashtags and keywords on SNS.

2.2 Social Constructivist Paradigm

As a point of departure, the interrogation of the role of language in the form of 'discourse' can be approached using the *social constructivist theoretical paradigm* suggested by van Stekelenburg and Klandermans.

This paradigm is predicated on understanding how groups of people perceive and interpret their material and/or socio-political context as the catalyst for protest action and conflict (van Stekelenburg and Klandermans, 2009). It can be organized around the three broad concepts of *interpretation*, *symbolization*, and *meaning*, to investigate how and why these contexts trigger various emotionally-charged reactions to present socio-economic and political conditions. In the context of this study, it proved useful in the interrogation of the powerfully symbolic use of language to mobilize online social and political contestations on Twitter. Specifically, using the paradigm to analyze the ways in which language, in both covert and overt ways, is used to frame online anti-immigrant discourse increasingly influenced by the perception that African foreign nationals are to blame for various socio-economic problems affecting South Africa today.

In order to interrogate the role of Twitter in the mobilization of online anti-immigrant contestations in South Africa, the below figure sums up the three questions/characteristics germane to this paradigm and answering the aforementioned research questions that frame this study (van Stekelenburg and Klandermans, 2009:20):

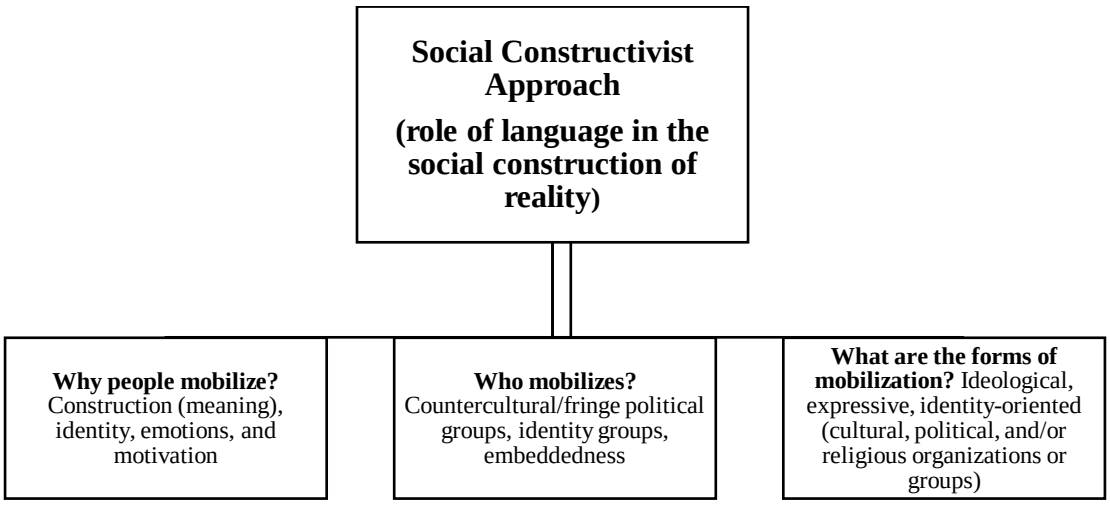


Figure 2.1: *Three questions/characteristics to consider around the participation and the emergence of contemporary social movements*

To better support the adoption of this paradigm in the data analysis, the *social identity theory (SIT)* and the *integrated threat theory (ITT)* are considered to investigate the role of psychosocial factors in the mobilization and spread of online anti-immigrant discourse on Twitter in South Africa.

2.1.1 Social Identity Theory (SIT)

A variety of research studies looking into the post-1994 prevalence of anti-immigrant sentiment and attitudes in South Africa have scrutinized the role of politicians and traditional media in creating, influencing, and perpetuating an 'us' (South Africans)-versus- 'them' (African foreigners) social and national identity that has led to a dangerous intolerance of poor and black African migrants and refugees residing in the country (Kerr, Durrheim, and Dixon, 2019; Solomon and Kosaka, 2014; Mutanda, 2022). As such, the 'social identity theory' provides better clarity into the symbolic ways in which intergroup conflict between both of these social groups is articulated and maintained through the use of emotionally-charged and divisive language.

The theory has been utilized to investigate 'why' and 'who' forms part of the online 'us'-group, and how espousing anti-foreigner views and attitudes, whether explicitly xenophobic or not, is an important part of this identity in terms of articulating and solidifying the nature of the fragmented intergroup relation between citizens and foreigners. Specifically, the articulation of 'us' and 'them' groups can also be categorized into the 'in-group' (South Africans) and 'out-group' (African foreigners), wherein there has been a tendency by South African citizens to show bias towards their in-group at the expense and degradation of the out-group (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). The emergence of anti-immigrant attitudes and views, and the concepts of 'in-groups' and 'out-groups', are inextricably linked.

According to Tajfel (1981:255), *social identity* can be defined as ''that part of the individuals' self-concept which derives from their knowledge of their membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance of that membership''. These online anti-immigrant contestations have become an extension of pre-existing prejudiced attitudes and discriminatory behaviour towards African foreign nationals, increasingly fanned and influenced by cynical political leaders for their own personal gain, by providing a remote space of belonging and expression for like-minded Twitter users (Onslow, 2021). In order for the online in-group to continue feeling a sense of belonging—an important source of pride and self-esteem for them—

the group has to exaggerate the negative qualities of the out-group through comparison and stereotyping, for example (Islam, 2014; Tajfel and Turner, 1979).

To better construe the creation and legitimization of anti-immigrant group identities in South Africa, Tajfel and Turner (1979) provide three processes or ways in which the in-group and out-group mindset and position are sustained by those participating in these online anti-immigrant discussions:

1. *Social Categorization:* for people to identify and understand others, we have to categorize them, e.g., white, black, fat, thin, tall, short, etc. In the context of this study, in order to maintain a sense of difference and superiority over the out-group, through various forms of bias and/or discrimination, words and phrases are used by the in-group to exaggerate their positive qualities and the negative qualities of the out-group (Tajfel and Turner, 1979).
2. *Social Identification:* when we belong to a certain group, we end up adopting the identity of the group by behaving within the boundaries of the norms of the group that are perceived to be common sense (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). In this case, the ways in which the emotional significance of group identification (Islam, 2014) has been articulated and spread through these online anti-immigrant contestations is of particular interest to this study.
3. *Social Comparison:* once an individual is settled in the in-group, comparisons with the out-groups are made to increase the in-group's self-esteem, and protect and reinforce their own self-identities (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). By drawing on various categorizations of both groups, the in-group will try and maintain their distance from the out-group by emphasizing and exaggerating their negative qualities through negative evaluations and stereotypes, for instance (Islam, 2014; Tajfel and Turner, 1979). This is an important component that provides a better understanding of the online prejudice and discrimination spread against African foreign nationals in South Africa.

2.1.2 Integrated Threat Theory (ITT)

Building on the aforementioned theory, the integrated threat theory (ITT) provides an explanatory factor for the rise in widespread anti-immigrant attitudes in South Africa which can be attributed to the perception of *threat.* Generally, this feeling is brought on by the 'fear' that

immigrants are a threat to the host society's economy and culture. More importantly, this perception manifests in the development of prejudicial feelings and discriminatory behaviour towards the out-group, articulated through sentiment, attitudes, and demonstrations (Croucher, 2017). Also, the extent of the perception of threat by the in-group of the out-group is usually preceded by a range of antecedent factors such as 'intergroup contact and conflict', 'status inequalities', 'knowledge of the out-group', and the 'strength of the out-group' (González, Verkuyten, Weesie, and Poppe, 2008). In the view of Stephan and Stephan (2000), for individuals to feel motivated to protect their group, 'threat' is one of many factors that needs to be present.

Broadly speaking, there are two types of threats that impact people's behaviour:

1. *Personal threat* – this is usually the effect of the impact that a social group has on an individual's social identity. The effects of a negative interaction and/or assumption about the out-group often leads to the assumption that one's identity is threatened, and thus, increases the desire and need to protect and secure the identity (Stephan and Stephan, 2000; Croucher, 2017).
2. *Intergroup threat* – this is the result of the perception that the out-group's actions, beliefs, and/or characteristics are a direct threat to the goals and well-being of the in-group such as competition over scarce resources and opportunities (Stephan and Stephan, 2000; Riek, Mania, and Gaertner, 2006).

More specifically, using Stephan and Stephan's (2000) conceptualization of the ITT, four types of threats characterize the prejudicial and negative attitudes that the in-group feels towards immigrants (out-group): 'intergroup anxiety', 'realistic threat', 'symbolic threat', and 'negative stereotypes':

1. *Intergroup anxiety*: this is usually the result of a range of issues that causes a strong dislike for out-group members such as a history of antagonism, lack of prior contact, ignorance, ethnocentrism, and/or the out-group benefiting from resources and opportunities provided by the host country which leads to them occupying a higher socio-economic status than the in-group. The higher the level of anxiety is for the in-group, the more negative they become towards the out-group (Stephan and Stephan, 2000; Islam and Hewstone, 1993).

2. *Realistic threat*: the very existence of the out-group in the host country leads to the perception of threat. This includes the threat that the in-group perceives from the out-group toward their political and economic power, and material or physical welfare (Stephan and Stephan, 2000).
3. *Symbolic threat*: this is more specifically located in the threat that the out-group poses toward the in-group's cultural way of life in terms of differences in beliefs, values, attitudes, standards, and morals between the two groups (Stephan and Stephan, 2000).
4. *Negative stereotypes*: this refers to the common and generalized assumptions believed about the out-group by the in-group. Moreover, these are characterized as implied threats to the in-group, where there is a fear that any form of interaction or contact with the out-group will result in negative consequences. This perceived fear leads to the in-group trying to avoid any interaction with the out-group which further entrenches stereotypes about them because of this lack of contact (Stephan and Stephan, 2000).

These four types of threats that inform the ITT are applied in the data analysis of this study to better understand how ideologically established positions, triggered by perceptions of fear and threat, are deeply embedded in the curation and spread of these online anti-immigrant contestations; and thus, further affecting the fragmented relations between the in-group (citizens) and out-group (foreigners) in South Africa. Overall, both the Social Identity Theory (SIT) and Integrated Threat Theory (ITT) were included to expand the scope of analysis provided by the Social Constructivist Paradigm. All three theories combine to foreground the influence of *psychosocial* aspects on coordinating online forms of collective action. Broadly speaking, to understand how widespread feelings of anger, frustration, and disillusionment felt by most marginalized South Africans are weaponized by various groups of people with political party ties to foster and sustain organized forms of online anti-immigrant agendas on Twitter. More specifically, to better understand the role that Twitter plays in articulating and sustaining an organized *anti-immigrant group identity* that feeds off various emotionally-charged negative feelings towards the flawed perceptions of African foreign nationals residing in South Africa.

2.3 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Building on the above, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has strong ties to the studies of sociolinguistics and is used to frame various linguistic and discursive strategies used in the

mobilization and spread of anti-immigrant discourse in these online forms of political contestation. This is a theoretical approach that falls under the broader analytical perspective and method of *Discourse Analysis*. Largely used interchangeably with CDA, it is a method for the analysis of connected speech or writing texts, specifically, the analysis of 'language in use' where we analyze a set of social tenets such as norms and beliefs that connect language to context in order to draw various meanings that shape our social world (Kamalu and Osisanwo, 2015). To meet the main objectives of this research study, the CDA is the central theoretical frame that informs its qualitative (discourse) method of analysis. Overall, it features both as a theoretical perspective and methodological tool in the empirical findings of this paper.

CDA is necessarily an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourses (Cameron, 2001). This approach defines discourse as both 'language in use' and a form of 'social practice and application' that shapes our understanding of reality. As Cameron (2001:123) explains, CDA refers to a ''way of understanding the social world…as *constructed*, shaped by various social forces''. Notably, she argues that CDA is concerned with unveiling the 'hidden agenda' of social discourse (various sets of representation that we use to make meaning of reality), i.e., how power relations shape its use. Thus, pointing out that it has an *ideological* dimension where language is used to shape, control, challenge, manipulate, and/or oppress various groups of people. Furthermore, CDA posits that the ways in which people socially relate with each other through various interactions are not random but an *ideologically patterned* way of framing their socio-cultural realities (Cameron, 2001). As Machin and Mayr (2012) point out, CDA assumes that power is strategically allocated and practiced through discourses that shape people's identities, representations, and relations. Significantly, it is a fundamental theoretical approach for understanding issues pertaining to race, power, ideology, social structure, social order, etc. This study, in various ways, has applied the CDA to link the impact of the textual features (micro) of the tweets with the sociocultural (macro) impact on social relations between citizens and foreigners in South Africa.

The below Figure 2.2 is Fairclough's (1995a) 'dimensions of discourse and discourse analysis' which is crucial for understanding the role in which language is used to constitute, maintain, and change social relations of power. It takes the form of investigating how language has been used in three ways: (1) *description* – the manifestation of language through textual features; (2)

interpretation – the meanings that various beliefs, ideas, values, and stereotypes engender which influences the ways in which we interpret language; and (3) *explanation* – this concerns examining the link between the textual features and broader societal structures, i.e., the social and cultural effects on human relations (Fairclough, 1995a).

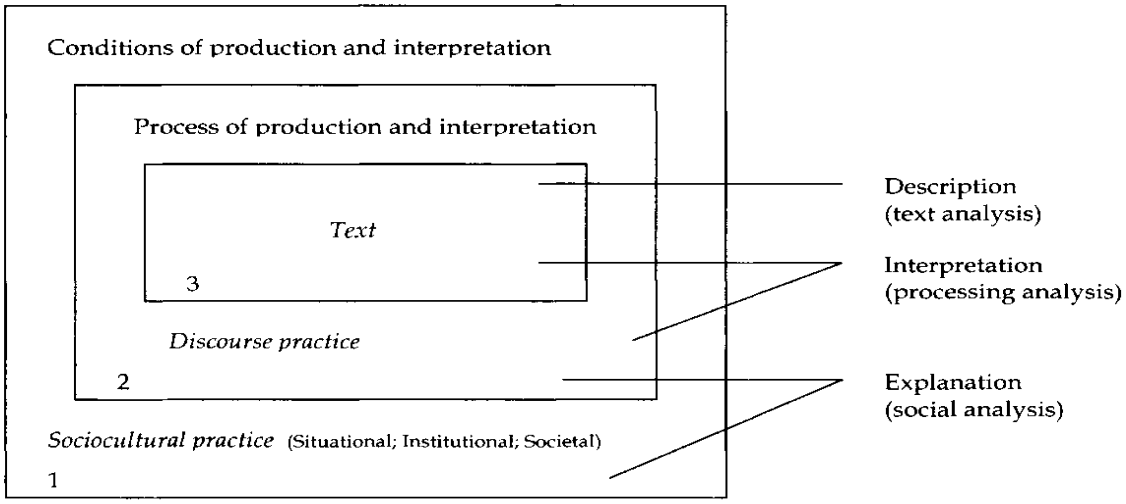


Figure 2.2: *Fairclough's dimensions of discourse analysis*

Likewise, van Dijk (2001:352) states that CDA is crucial for understanding how ''social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in social and political contexts''. In the context of this study, this point has formed an important foundation to interrogate how people online construe an 'us' versus 'them' position, and how the relationship between the two shapes and influences social relations. In this case, to interrogate how the polarizing language used on Twitter to mobilize these online anti-immigrant conversations is shaped by pre-existing fragmented social relations between South African citizens and African foreigners, and how it continues to shape these relations today.

More broadly, drawing on the work of Fairclough and Wodak (1997:271-280), CDA is theorized from the following five perspectives:

1. Discourse is shaped by power relations.
2. Discourse has historical ties that inform present social and political processes.
3. Discourse through the use of language constructs and constitutes reality that shapes our socio-cultural contexts.

4. Discourse provides a lens through which to understand the dominance and persistence of ideologies.

5. Discourse is interpretive and explanatory.

Furthermore, to investigate the more technical aspects of language used to mobilize and spread these contestations, various linguistic strategies are used to connect the (micro) text analysis to the (macro) social analysis. Specifically, how these strategies are used by various Twitter users to reinforce a pro-nationalist ideological position through *us*-representations and *others*-representations (Luo, He, and Yu, 2021) that are aimed at alienating mostly black African migrants and refugees living in South Africa. Additionally, how these tweets frame a positive *self*-presentation for citizens and a negative *other*-presentation for non-citizens (Luo et al., 2021). These strategies, amongst others, include (Mesthrie, Swann, Deumert, and Leap, 2000:321-323):

1. *Euphemism:* downplaying one's own aggression.

2. *Dysphemism:* over-exaggerating the bad qualities of 'opponents'.

3. *Mystification:* use of jargon/coded language to conceal one's real intentions.

4. *Propaganda:* a key element of manipulating public opinion through the spread of disinformation, creation of associations and connotations, repetition, and simplification of reality to trigger people's emotions rather than intellect.

2.4 Framing Theory

As Chenzi (2020) explains, social media platforms are rapidly emerging as powerful sources of information— 'agent provocateur's'—challenging the monopoly of journalism as the sole supplier of various types of news. Notwithstanding that traditional media forms such as television and radio are still the dominant mediums producing and distributing information as access to social media is contingent on some form of access to an Internet connection which the mostly destitute population cannot afford; findings from various research studies on the role of social media in producing anti-immigrant discourse in contemporary South Africa insist that this form of media is emerging as a dominant force in shaping anti-immigrant (xenophobic) attitudes and behaviours (Nkabane and Mutereko, 2021; Pineteh, 2017; Chenzi, 2020; Saleh, 2015).

Accordingly, building on the aforementioned theories, the 'framing theory', which has its roots in Media Studies, has become an adaptable interdisciplinary approach to various studies interested in the construction of discourse—especially 'agenda-setting' aspects of this (Chong and Druckman, 2007b). Indeed, this theory is germane to understand how anti-immigrant attitudes and sentiments are 'framed' to construct the corresponding discourse by individual Twitter users in South Africa. Pineteh (2017:3) explains that framing is the ''process by which people develop a particular meaning or reconfigure their minds about an issue''. In other words, how various pieces of information are constructed and presented, through the use and engagement of hashtags on SNS for example, that influence and amplify public discourse on a particular issue (Pineteh, 2017). In the context of this study, the use of this theory has been applied to explore the numerous ways in which online anti-immigrant views and opinions have been perceived and framed to portray a dominant representation of reality.

Likewise, in terms of Fairclough's (1995b) work on discourse, this theory provides an opportunity to investigate 'xenophobia' beyond a neutral term of description—that is, rather to interrogate the term *itself* as a multifunctional word symbolic and representative of certain aspects of our social world. In other words, understanding how anti-immigrant language is representative and descriptive of the post-apartheid South African landscape (ideational function) that enacts fragmented social relations and identities (interpersonal function) (Fairclough, 1995b).

For this study, both Chong and Druckman (2007a) and Scheufele (1999) suggest identifying four processes in the framing of public discourse: (a) *frame building*-the dynamics of how speakers frame their communication, in the case of Twitter this includes the use of hashtags, retweets, likes, shares, and replies; (b) *frame setting*-the dominant context and content of the issue framing the messages; (c) *individual-level effects*- refers to the impact that framing has on people's subsequent attitudes and behaviours; and (d) *frame effects*-the implications that the framing of information has on broader societal issues. As previously mentioned, there are various linguistic and discursive strategies used to frame these four processes in the formation of online anti-immigrant discourse on Twitter that seeks to manipulate public opinion on the increased presence of mostly black African foreigners in South Africa (CABC, 2022a).

The remainder of this chapter discusses the literature review that frames this research study.

2.5 Framing the rise of online-mediated anti-immigrant contestations in post-apartheid South Africa: crystallization of xenophobic views and attitudes

This sub-section of the literature review seeks to illustrate how specific elements that constitute anti-immigrant views and attitudes in South Africa, widely described as 'xenophobic', are integrated into the research study as a key discursive practice of stereotyping and Othering African foreign nationals. As the following discussion will exemplify, xenophobia is clearly an attitude adopted by various social and political actors, consisting of various negative symbols and representations, to alienate certain groups of people. Building on this, the theories that frame this study form an important lens to demonstrate how these attitudes and views, through various mobilization strategies, are adopted by individuals online that points to the powerful use of language as a discursive tool to express and maintain fragmented socio-cultural relations between South African citizens and African non-citizens.

According to UNESCO (2017:1), xenophobia refers to ''an attitudinal orientation of hostility against non-natives in a given population''. Moreover, it is a form of prejudice and discriminatory behaviour to vilify, exclude, and/or alienate outsiders based on perceptions that they are a threat to the native community's values and identities (Solomon and Kosaka, 2014). Specifically, described as a global phenomenon, it is closely associated with the effects of globalization which have led to high levels of migration across various regions (Kersting, 2009; Khan, 2021). A report published by *The Human Rights Watch* on the persistence of xenophobic conflict and violence in South Africa attributes this to subaltern groups and senior public officials scapegoating mostly black African immigrants for the country's complex socio-economic problems such as crime, unemployment, and the breakout of diseases (Human Rights Watch, 1998). There are broad and structural historical, political, economic, and psychosocial factors that account for the causal explanations for the high incidence of xenophobic conflict in South Africa (Kersting, 2009). In Misago's (2019) view, the prevalence of xenophobia in South Africa is largely a result of competition over scarce resources and opportunities between poor South African citizens and African non-citizens. Importantly, Solomon and Kosaka (2014) argue that the hopes of a peaceful and transformative transition from apartheid to democracy has still failed to materialize, thus, leading to various social and economic crises exacerbated by the stagnation of South Africa's economy over the past decade. Also, Kersting (2009) and Mutanda

(2022) maintain that xenophobia is prevalent in countries undergoing complex forms of social and political transition.

As a result, xenophobia is one of many negative cultural attitudes that have emerged as a consequence of widespread social unrest in various parts of South Africa due to a lack of socio-economic opportunities and resources for the majority poor and non-white population (Solomon and Kosaka, 2014). Since 2008, a period that marked the beginning stages of a major and ongoing economic downturn in South Africa, these types of attitudes have led to sporadic violent outbreaks against black African migrants that are indicative of some form of cultural hostility toward this population (Langa and Kiguwa, 2016). Indeed, Mamabolo (2015) maintains that typically *black* African foreigners bear the brunt of these negative attitudes and stereotypes meted out by other native blacks as this racial group makes up most of South Africa's poor demographic.

More importantly, xenophobia is an attitude that also fits into one of many *hypotheses of xenophobia* that suggest reasons for the high incidence of xenophobic outbreaks—the 'scapegoating', 'isolation', and 'biocultural' hypotheses have been discussed to theorize the prevalence of xenophobia in South Africa by various scholars (Harris, 2002; Tshitereke,1999; Morris, 1998). The 'scapegoating hypothesis', specifically, is of particular interest to this study which conceptualizes xenophobia as an attitude of 'frustration' and 'relative deprivation' where outsiders are blamed for ongoing social inequalities—indeed, a 'frustration-scapegoat' (Tshitereke, 1999). The 'deprivation-grievances-discontent' link is the underlying condition that instigates the desire for collective forms of action and/or violence against foreign nationals. Specifically, deprivation stems from real feelings of generalized and/or perceived social, economic, and political deprivation of resources and opportunities that lead to intense feelings of discontent and anger (Misago, 2019; Aya, 1979).

Also, the perception of relative deprivation results in group conflict between citizens and foreigners where tension and violence are rooted in clashes for competing social, economic, and/or status-based interests (Misago, 2019; Sniderman, Hagerndoorn, and Prior, 2004). Indeed, collective discontent, resentment, and deprivation are important elements in the heightening of anti-immigrant tensions and violence in South Africa. As previously mentioned, since most poor black South Africans do not have access to better resources and opportunities, the threat to their

basic rights is disproportionately placed on black Africans, of similar socio-economic standing, who come into the country competing for the same access, as opposed to blame placed on foreign whites and/or Asians, for instance, with a higher socio-economic status (Harris, 2002; Nyamnjoh, 2006).

On the other hand, Solomon and Kosaka (2014:5) explain that these negative attitudes are closely related to the concept of *nationalism* as a result of ''increased migration, economic inequalities, and underdevelopment'' that has led to increased forms of tension and violence between 'autochthons' and 'aliens'. Importantly, nationalism, understood as a political ideology, is symbolically reinforced through tension and violence where a sense of national superiority, cultural incompatibility with 'outsiders', distinguished cultural identities, and pitting local groups against external groups is advocated (Hervik, 2015). In the context of South Africa, the application of nationalism is closely linked to broader issues of citizenship and nationality, where the former especially, narrowly and exclusively defined by access to rights, entitlements, and interests of local citizens, is not fully enjoyed by the poor black majority (Nyamnjoh, 2006). As a result of varying periods of migration into South Africa post-1994, Durokifa and Ijeoma (2017) point out that the majority perceive most poor African foreign nationals as a threat to the benefits of their full citizenship, which, since at least 2008, has resulted in ongoing sporadic instances of violent xenophobic/Afrophobic outbreaks driven by unsubstantiated stereotypes and myths about their presence in South Africa.

This identification of nationalism as a key driver of xenophobic attitudes is a key point of analysis that all three theoretical approaches are used to articulate how certain discursive strategies framed in Twitter posts are used to produce, reinforce, and perpetuate this ideological position in the spread of online anti-immigrant discussions. Thus, this ideological component, attached to the construction and circulation of anti-immigrant discourse on Twitter, frames the 'political value' of anti-immigrant attitudes, where various discursive tropes articulate and reinforce symbolic forms of power and superiority over social groups perceived as 'foreign' (Harris, 2002).

More importantly, various studies have pointed out that anti-foreigner, xenophobic, and/or Afrophobic attitudes have been instigated and legitimized by mainstream media, and specifically, political leaders for their own personal gain (Mutanda, 2022; Neocosmos, 2008;

Misago, Monson, Polzer, and Landau, 2010). Therefore, the online and offline organization and coordination of political processes in the fanning of anti-foreigner views in South Africa is an important aspect of the prevalence of this phenomenon. Equally, Misago (2019) argues that the practice of *mobilization* is at the heart of triggering xenophobic conflict and violence in South Africa. Rather than simply the grievances attached to the collective action. Indeed, the mobilization of the aforementioned discontent, deprivation, and frustration triggers collective action and violence. In this case, 'mobilization' refers to the activities, interactions, and processes required to recruit and persuade potential individuals to participate in some form of collective action (Misago, 2019).

This point about *mobilization* is crucial in the context of the prevalence of online anti-immigrant contestations against foreign nationals in South Africa—to be discussed in depth in the last sub-section of this review—as Twitter has emerged as an increasingly influential free and open-ended space and conduit for organizing and coordinating anti-immigrant feelings for potential acts of conflict and violence on the ground (Onslow, 2021; CABC, 2022b). Furthermore, even within the remote space of Twitter, the use of 'hashtags' to streamline the inflammatory opinions and views articulated by various users is an important mobilizing feature that creates and sustains a collective digitally-mediated space of contestation.

As Gamson (1975) reveals, the key traits of mobilization include the ability of leaders, organizers, and/or mobilizers to develop and articulate a set of ideas that are connected to widely held beliefs and opinions about immigrants, in this case. In particular, crystallizing anti-foreigner beliefs and opinions as a 'collective problem' that needs to be dealt with through various collective means of action or violence enables organizers to recruit members to participate in the cause or campaign (Misago, 2019; Smelser, 1963). By fostering the belief that collective means of action and solutions through various acts will resolve the perceived injustice or problem experienced, organizers of these anti-immigrant discussions gain both behavioural and ideological support from interested online users (Misago, 2019). Linking this to the previously discussed social identity theory, mobilization is a key aspect of creating and entrenching the national, social, and group identities of those who take issue with the presence of African foreign nationals in South Africa. Indeed, the support and approval of the collective problem or injustice, in this case, the entry of foreign nationals into South Africa, helps facilitate mobilizing for

collective action by embedding and rationalizing participation in anti-foreigner sentiment and/or protest as a necessary act of 'loyalty' to the in-group (Misago, 2019; Bond, 2007).

Moreover, the mobilization and coordination of anti-foreigner views and attitudes by various influential political and social actors is a key part of entrenching the 'us-versus- them' mindset and position exhibited by a large segment of individuals in South Africa. In the context of this study, the discourse analysis, specifically, has been used to describe and discuss examples from the data of techniques and processes of mobilization used to construct and amplify online anti-immigrant contestations on Twitter.

In sum, the aforementioned discussion locates anti-immigrant and/or xenophobic/Afrophobic attitudes and sentiments as a consequence of ongoing complex and fragmented social, political, economic, and cultural transformation and change in post-apartheid South Africa (Mutanda, 2022; Harris, 2002). Therefore, the theoretical framework that frames this study also investigates how this phenomenon is posited as a belief and attitude—largely influenced by political processes that have compounded negative tropes and stereotypes associated with black African foreign nationals—that disproportionately influences how locals perceive and interpret their socio-economic realities. The discursive framing and shaping of these anti-immigrant attitudes and sentiments, mainly based on social and economic grounds, forms an essential component of investigating how language is powerfully coordinated and mobilized by users participating in these online discussions on Twitter as a reaction to dire socio-economic conditions, as well as intentionally inciting and deepening social divisions between South African citizens and African non-citizens.

2.6 The rise and contemporary changes of traditional social movements as an articulation of conflict: socio-political and cultural elements

Since the late 1960s, social movements have been acknowledged by various social scientists as key proponents of social and cultural change that are driven by the pursuit of 'alternative' forms of life to realize equality, transformation, and justice (van Stekelenburg and Klandermans, 2009; Touraine, 1985; Castells, 2012). In this sub-section, the concept of 'social movements' will depart from a theoretical angle that necessarily allows for an interdisciplinary approach to be adopted by this research study to locate the primacy of language within the changing nature of social movements, especially networked forms of collective action and protest. In particular, the

role of social movements in engendering social conflict and tension is emphasized within the broader complex structures of socio-cultural action and change that constitute social movements (van Stekelenburg and Klandermans, 2009). Likewise, Touraine (1985) argues for a notion of social movements in sociology that studies this phenomenon as a form of socio-cultural action and change that recognizes and integrates the autonomy of other social science disciplines to strengthen the application of social movement theories.

It is not sufficient to build on common notions of social movements that define it as a 'network of groups/individuals' that are bound together by a collective cause and identity. Although this is an important starting point that establishes social movements as a crucial part of informing our social realities, Touraine (1985) observes in a study of social movements that any analysis of social movements, that is situated in a more general theoretical frame of reference, must clearly specify which particular elements of a social movement form the basis of the research being conducted. Indeed, social movements are not a monolith, they are an ''element of a specific mode of constructing reality'' (Touraine, 1985:749) that must be related to a broader frame of reference such as social change, transformation, and/or conflict.

As the previous section highlighted that the prevalence of anti-foreigner sentiment and rhetoric, and subsequent outbreaks of violence in South Africa are linked to collective frustrations with the lack of socio-economic opportunities for locals; the rise of online anti-immigrant contestations on Twitter fits into Touraine's (1985) theorization of social movements as a form of *social conflict.* He explains that this presupposes some sort of social discord between a network of actors and opponents to control, negotiate, and/or secure access to certain resources that are valued by both groups within a society (Touraine, 1985). In terms of this, the author situates broad definitions of social movements into various 'types of social conflict' that can be used to illuminate the ways in which this phenomenon can be considered a struggle over scarce societal resources. Thus, to show how language is used to shape tension and conflict online where the dire material conditions of subaltern groups in South Africa trigger the use of nationalist-charged language on Twitter to further alienate black African immigrants; two of the suggested categories of social conflict illuminate the research questions and objectives this study seeks to achieve: (1) *the pursuit of collective interests*- local actors oppose certain groups of people, such as foreign nationals, from accessing any type of societal rewards that can potentially

improve their social position and; (2) *reconstruction of a social, cultural, or political identity*- the opponent is defined by the local actors as a 'foreigner' and/or 'invader' who is seen as a threat to the social and cultural values of the host community (Touraine, 1985).

Additionally, Touraine (1985) argues that these categories of social conflict can have positive and negative aspects. Seeing that xenophobia is a form of hatred/fear toward what is perceived as 'strange' or 'foreign' (Wicker, 2001), it fits within the negative aspect of social conflict. That is, the emergence of online anti-immigrant contestations in South Africa embodies negative aspects, wherein local actors identify themselves with certain values, posit that the internal socio-economic issues of the community are caused by foreigners, and maintain an image of a homogenized community where people who appear to be socially and culturally different are considered 'enemies' (Touraine, 1985). However, this analysis is lacking in emphasizing that the polarizing attitudes of local citizens towards African foreign nationals are a result of a diffusion of certain ideas where the role of *language*, especially, plays a primary function in the formation of various new forms of collective protest action. Specifically, how language powerfully constructs meaning to reinforce a particular ideological position (van Stekelenburg and Klandermans, 2009).

On the other hand, another element that has come to shape contemporary changes in social movements is the role of *contentious politics*. Using Sidney Tarrow's book 'Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics' as a point of departure, the author argues that 'contentious politics' is a construct that emerges when there are significant political changes within a society that brings both opportunities and threats to various groups of local citizens (Tarrow, 2011). Through various forms of action, those that perceive these changes as a threat to their precarious livelihoods, for instance, come together to act 'contentiously' in both organized and sporadic ways. Significantly, when these political changes are perceived as a threat to the current social order, it leads to the formation of various collective forms of action and/or violence (Tarrow, 2011).

Applied to this study, this provides another angle to investigate how language, through the spread of virulent anti-immigrant discourse, is framed on Twitter as an expression of frustration with the dire material conditions of subaltern groups; that, then broadly reinforces contentious boundaries of politics in these online forms of social and political contestation that are predicated

on negative forms of conflict. Similarly, Tilly and Tarrow (2015) comment that the practice of contentious politics can be used to understand how social, economic, cultural, and political elements combine as a whole to reorganize power relations between local and non-local groups. Also, van Stekelenburg and Klandermans (2009) explain that social changes, transformation, and/or conflict, key reasons for collective forms of action, whether online or offline, affect the dynamics of contention between social and/or political actors. Indeed, theorized this way, contentious politics forms another point of analysis that, using the theoretical approaches, better elucidates how language carries political forms of contention (i.e., a nationalist tone and implication) in the organization and spread of online anti-immigrant contestations in South Africa.

Additionally, the framing of online anti-immigrant discussions on Twitter in South Africa can also be theorized using Manuel Castells' work in 'Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age', wherein he argues that the formation of social movements facilitated by the Internet and digital technologies are *networked social movements*, where online forms of communication are being used to increase and encourage people to participate in various forms of collective action (Castells, 2012). Moreover, he argues that this is the new context in which the formation of networked social movements is now contributing to a new social structure of relations and patterns mediated by the digital realm (Castells, 2012). Though he theorizes from the context of social movements that bring about positive forms of transformation and justice such as the BLM movement in the United States (US), there are key theoretical elements in his work that can be repurposed to account for the emergence of new forms of collective protest action online. There are various characteristics of networked social movements present within these online anti-immigrant contestations that are a microcosm of deeper, complex, and fragmented offline social movements that mobilize against African foreign nationals. Indeed, underpinned by the emergence and persistence of online anti-immigrant discussions that falsely target black African immigrants as scapegoats for the lack of better material opportunities.

Castells (2012:221-228) presents various common characteristics of 'networked social movements' that form the basis of influencing the emergence of these online anti-immigrant contestations:

1. *Networked in multiple forms:* these movements are multimodal in nature—reinforcing the online and offline components of social demonstrations.
2. *Timeless time:* these types of movements are not necessarily bound by space and time.
3. *Spontaneous in their origin:* usually sparked in response to an event or change in society where instantaneous calls to action are prioritized.
4. *Space of autonomy:* social media platforms have exponentially revolutionized how we communicate and interact without relying on a central political leader or organization to spark action or change.

As this research study seeks to understand the discursive mobilization of online anti-immigrant 'networked' contestations in South Africa, the use of language is specifically located in the way in which Twitter is possibly giving way to less 'formal' networks of mobilization compared to previous historical periods as the aforementioned characteristics of networked social movements underpin. These online contestations and protests now operate in more decentralized and diffused ways that reinforce fractured socio-cultural relations (van Stekelenburg and Klandermans, 2009). The decentralized components of networked social movements formed an important part of conducting the CDA in this study which seeks also to understand how these online discussions are largely influenced by the coordination affordances that hashtags, for instance, engender to organize and shape online anti-immigrant discourse. Especially, how these hashtags amplify and legitimize the construction and spread of this discourse.

Additionally, using the polarizing populist figure of Donald Trump and his weaponization of social media to spread his controversial views post-2016 US elections as an example, many studies have shown how the Internet has become a central organizing tool for controversial social movements such as 'Trumpism' and/or 'Make America Great Again' that entrench divisive social relations both online and offline (Stimmel, 2018; Luo et al., 2021). In a case study approach to the use of Facebook by Donald Trump and his supporters to mobilize a 'Trumpist networked social movement', Stimmel (2018) points out that Donald Trump used certain linguistic strategies on SNS to appeal to 'non-conforming' individuals, that is, individuals that reject the dominant social and political order. Thus, his coded statements on social media, throughout the course of his presidency, proliferated a call for non-conforming individuals to

come together to form a 'non-conforming' group (i.e., social movement) that is mobilized around 'organized forms of expression' (Stimmel, 2018). Specifically, Stimmel (2018), Bruns and Stieglitz (2012), and Tufekci (2017) argue that the decentralized nature of SNS allows for large-scale collective forms of action and protest through fast-paced interactions, discussions, and message amplification, all streamlined by hashtags and keyword searches.

The broad aforementioned introductory framing of the traditional and modern characteristics of 'social movements' lays the groundwork for interrogating new manifestations of collective (online) action and protest, which should not render obsolete the core characteristics of traditional and networked social protests and movements. In the view of Dolata (2017), online forms of social contestation and protest, albeit heavily fragmented and diverse, still comprise the central characteristics of social organization, collective identity, and the leadership of various leaders/activists forming, instigating, and coordinating a directed and sustained discussion into some form of collective action—whether structured or diffuse.

However, the aforementioned classic literature on social movements does not account effectively for the diverse and fragmented nature of online conversations that lead to various social and political contestations that are not organized but rather sporadic in nature. Specifically, the role of Twitter's functionalities and algorithms enable new forms of individual and collective action in ways that veer significantly from the traditional concept of a social movement that is characterized by a stable degree of collectiveness for action. The increased injection and spread of populist messaging online by politically-connected actors, for example, to curate and amplify social discord for their personal gain, resulting in various fragmented online forms of contestation and conflict, should be characterized as 'online-mediated forms of protest and action' (Dolata, 2017).

These include online-based activities such as boycotts, petitions, and political hashtag campaigns (Bonilla and Rosa, 2015). Indeed, 'political hashtag campaigns' is a formation that captures how online anti-immigrant contestations in South Africa are formed and sustained through the reflexive injection and circulation of divisive discourse within a large or small network of users on Twitter (amaBhungane Reporters, 2022; Onslow, 2021). These are spontaneous, low-threshold, and short-term forms of coordination and mobilization that can of course result in broad offline exposure and visibility, such as the provocation of public debates and social unrest

(Dolata, 2017). These online anti-immigrant discussions specifically are characterized by means of expression and behaviours where, even though they appear to be volatile and divisive in terms of the propaganda spread about African foreign nationals, the spike in engagement is always irregular (CABC, 2022a; amaBhungane Reporters, 2022; DFRLab, 2020b).

Though, Dolata (2017) argues that the mostly temporary and fragmented nature of online-mediated forms of protest does not imply that their effect cannot eventually transform into more organized online forms of collective action, and indeed, insert themselves into the offline protest activities of well-organized social movements. In Mare's (2014) view, these heterogenous forms of contestation and protest are new and sporadic digitally-mediated 'counterpublics' that provide various social groups with the space to articulate, express, and defend their interests in a public setting that is less threatening. Additionally, he explains that the mobilization of various online counterpublics, such as political hashtag campaigns, is indicative of the role that social media platforms are playing as 'parallel discursive arenas' for groups of people to construct and distribute discourse that reflects their interests, identities, and needs (Mare, 2014). Also, Karekwaivanane (2016) writes that digital (counter)publics are increasingly shaping the ability of different actors to mobilize and coordinate around various social and political agendas. In particular, the increased participation and influence of political figures on SNS in the spread of political discourse points to a method of legitimation and form of authority enabled within the network of users reached. Furthermore, the pervasive and rapid ways that digital (counter)publics in Africa have grown in access and use, especially as a space of protest for marginalized groups, indicates the profound changes in how people interact and spread information in deeply politically significant ways (Demirhan, 2014; Karekwaivanane, 2016; Warner, 2005).

In a study on the power and effect of 'hashtag' activism in the formation of online-mediated forms of action and protests on Twitter, Goswami (2018) argues that the use of hashtags (#) forms an important part of streamlining, organizing, and mobilizing people around a single and/or collective theme or issue, to inject and amplify user's attention and participation. Participation in online campaigns that are attached to a particular hashtag requires the simple action of retweeting and liking tweets (Bonilla and Rosa, 2015). As a way of building up public support for an event, issue, and/or cause, hashtags are the most simple and influential ways of accumulating, ordering, and shaping public discourse into internally cohesive threads of

engagement (Goswami, 2018). Importantly, the success of the campaign will always depend on the virality of the hashtag campaign (Goswami, 2018; Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, and Silvestre, 2011). Likewise, the rapid growth and expansion of online anti-immigrant contestations in South Africa on Twitter underpin the importance of this function in the formation of digitally-mediated forms of protest action. Undoubtedly, as the next and final sub-section of this review will illuminate, hashtags have clearly been leveraged by various social and political actors in South Africa as a necessary tactic to encourage, mobilize, and coordinate various hashtags focused on bringing awareness to a range of social, political, and economic issues.

By and large, the influence of traditional organizational and mobilization strategies that shape the emergence and persistence of various social movements cannot be negated, especially the influence these aforementioned principles, characteristics, and strategies shaping various types of social conflict have on framing online anti-immigrant social and political contestations in South Africa on Twitter. The theories that frame this study are integral for considering how the discursive framing and positing of online anti-immigrant views, identities, and attitudes are further underpinned by new, shared, and interpretive patterns of togetherness for collective forms of action and/or protest online (Calderaro, 2018).

2.7 'Networked' anti-immigrant campaigns: the emergence of online anti-immigrant social and political contestations in post-apartheid South Africa

This final sub-section of the literature review on the emergence of 'networked' anti-immigrant campaigns in South Africa will synthesize the issues discussed so far as a lens to provide greater clarity on the ways in which the theoretical approaches have been applied to investigate how online anti-immigrant discourse is articulated, influenced, and amplified by political processes through the use of hashtags and keywords by a network of connected users in South Africa. These processes, especially, have influenced the growth and persistence of the #PutSouthAfricansFirst 'hashtag campaign' against African foreign nationals through the weaponization of Twitter's technical characteristics.

In the South African context, there is a dearth of research studies that have utilized the main theories of this study to comprehend the *discursive* networked formation of anti-immigrant campaigns on Twitter. However, various research reports have acknowledged that the emergence

of online anti-immigrant campaigns, through the use of related hashtags and keywords, is now increasingly becoming an alternative site for networks of users to spread xenophobic/Afrophobic messages that are often masked by a nationalist language and tone. An investigation into the prevalence of online anti-immigrant campaigns on Twitter by digital research organizations, such as the Centre for Analytics and Behavioural Change (CABC), amaBhungane Reporters, and the Digital Forensic Research Lab (DFRLab), found that there are popular anonymous Twitter accounts connected to the 'South Africa First (SAF)' political 'party'—a fringe nationalist political group that mainly mobilizes and communicates using SNS to spread anti-immigrant views. This group is particularly behind the rise of the online and offline controversial and divisive #PutSouthAfricansFirst anti-immigrant movement and hashtag campaign (DFRLab, 2020a; 2020b).

Specifically, a former member of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) with political aspirations, Sifiso Gwala, was the man unmasked behind the now suspended popular anonymous account *@uLerato_pillay*, which was identified as the main account at the centre of inciting xenophobic rhetoric and violence using popular hashtags such as #PutSouthAfricansFirst and #ForeignersMustGo to increase the following and engagement around these hashtag campaigns. Moreover, since the beginning of #PutSouthAfricansFirst in 2020, popular accounts such as *@uLerato_pillay*, with hidden political connections, have clearly and successfully co-opted organized groups of users into spreading hate speech and inciting violence against African foreign nationals in South Africa (Onslow, 2021). Importantly, the lack of stigma and anonymity that SNS afford users with also encourages the spread of divisive content (Calderaro, 2014; Onslow, 2021). Equally, the CABC's (2022a) research concluded that the use of inflammatory xenophobic language against foreign nationals in full view of the public not only constitutes a violation of general laws on hate speech and the incitement of violence but is deliberately incited in politically-coordinated ways to further destabilize social relations between South African citizens and African foreign nationals.

More importantly, the emergence of these campaigns has relied on creating 'hyper-connected' networks of users that consistently engage with the aforementioned hashtags to further encourage and 'bootstrap' a movement of connected users through the legitimization of ideological 'echo chambers' (large and/or small networks of social media users with selective exposure to

information of interest on SNS) (amaBhungane Reporters, 2022). The kickstarting of the #PutSouthAfricansFirst campaign on both Twitter and Facebook in 2020 relied on creating, injecting, and amplifying various artificial opinions and views into the pre-existing anti-immigrant public discourse about foreign nationals by anonymous fringe political figures such as Sifiso Gwala. The articulation and spread of this campaign by politically-connected figures, coupled with the increased use of Twitter's retweet, like, and reply functions, has been crucial in signalling the legitimacy of these views, which eventually become socially acceptable over time, within the existing echo chambers (Onslow, 2021; amaBhungane Reporters, 2022).

In South Africa, the recent rise in the social media participation of these anti-immigrant discussions on platforms such as Twitter and Facebook is strongly influenced by political actors and practices that work to expand public engagement and reach. As amaBhungane Reporters (2022), CABC (2022a; 2022b), and DFRLab (2020a; 2020b) have concluded in their research into the prevalence of online anti-immigrant campaigns in South Africa, there have been monetary benefits for political 'influencers', such as Sifiso Gwala, hired by legitimate political parties to create, inject, and spread certain information at sporadic times to increase their support base.

Likewise, the benefits of SNS for the political party landscape include, first, increases in 'party competition' for minor and/or offshoot political parties, which is crucial in raising their visibility and support base at a similar level to bigger parties. Since social media platforms allow for the dissemination of large amounts of information, ordinary users can engage in social and political issues based on their own personal interests and needs (Calderaro, 2014; Chadwick, 2006).

Second, the 'diffusion of power among both parties and citizens', implies that SNS have increased grassroots control of political processes. More specifically, the interactive network structure of social media platforms allows politicians to coordinate and mobilize their supporters for key moments of action (Calderaro, 2014; Chadwick, 2006).

Third, 'institutional adaptations', the shift in diversifying political practices to SNS, allows for parties to regulate the innovative potentials offered by these sites, by reproducing or replicating the same offline practices and trends in their online activities. The growth of social media has made communication much more effective and persistent through the injection of discourse into 'network hubs' of users following the accounts of prominent politically-affiliated figures, which,

in turn, ensures that the discourse spread is consistently engaged with (Calderaro, 2014; Chadwick, 2006).

There is a large body of literature on the technical influences of social media platforms in the facilitation and mobilization of political processes. In particular, social and political actors have leveraged the enormous technical and communicative powers that SNS provide through their capabilities to rapidly diffuse vast amounts of information (Demirhan, 2014). Four characteristics inform the use of SNS that have been appropriated to influence and amplify political processes in the formation and spread of online anti-immigrant contestations in South Africa on Twitter. First, a 'pluralist environment' of open-ended and free communication enables the rapid circulation of social and political discussions where the use of hashtags, for example, amplifies and encourages ordinary users to participate in the debates or discussions (Demirhan, 2014; Dahlberg, 2001).

Second, 'online journalism', not only challenges the traditional power relations concentrated within mass media organizations but ordinary users are now part of a form of 'journalism' that Woo-Young (2005) insists is more interactive in scope. Specifically, social media platforms have opened up avenues for users to be active political participants in the production and dissemination of information which is more open to immediate feedback and responses by other users (Demirhan, 2014; Quinn and Lamble, 2008).

Third, as 'new social environments and social collectivities', the increasingly interactive nature of digitally-mediated connections influences the growth of various communication and interaction networks within the bounded system of the SNS (Demirhan, 2014). By connecting various people, groups, and organizations, the dissemination of information is more rapid and efficient. In the context of this study, these online anti-immigrant contestations can also be characterized as 'social networks', open to individual participation of various users, that provide an alternative political space for debate and engagement in social and political issues (Demirhan, 2014; Kim, 2011; Castells, 2011).

Fourth, SNS are facilitating the emergence of 'new social movements', such as the previously discussed 'networked' formation, where a variety of communication channels are used by social and political actors and organizations to coordinate and mobilize political action and/or contestation. The crucial difference in the organization of these types of 'social movements' is

that SNS provide diversified and sporadic forms of social and political interaction, participation, and coordination among *demonstrators.* More importantly, this form of political participation and engagement is not limited to one being an official member of a political organization/party (Demirhan, 2014; Loader and Mercea, 2011; Stalker and Wood, 2012).

Indeed, the technical infrastructures of SNS such as Twitter, especially its far-reaching organizing potential through hyper-connected networks of users, inform the *technical constitution of collectivity* within online-mediated forms of contestation and protest (Bennett and Segerberg, 2011; Dolata, 2017). This study also reinforces firstly, the dynamic role of the technical characteristics of Twitter, and secondly, the role that the technical characteristics—especially the social and political conditions they shape and affect—play in influencing the connectivity-enhancing abilities of online anti-immigrant contestations in South Africa (Dolata, 2017).

Overall, the findings provided by the research organizations mentioned here on the role of Twitter, as a fragmented digitally-mediated space of entrenching political power and dominance, underpin that these online anti-immigrant contestations are not simply a 'reflection' of wider pre-existing social attitudes and views about black African foreigners in South Africa. Indeed, centred around the creation and spread of mis/disinformation, these discussions-turned-campaigns are strategically curated and amplified by social and political actors to purposefully manipulate online public opinion about African migrants and refugees. Furthermore, by perpetually spreading misleading information at different times online to further stimulate and drive anti-immigrant sentiment and rhetoric in South Africa, in an effort to sustain fragmented socio-cultural relations between both South African citizens and African foreigners (Onslow, 2021; DFRLab, 2020b; CABC, 2022a).

2.8 Conclusion

On the whole, this chapter provided a comprehensive discussion of the theories and literature that the research study positions itself in. The chapter started by outlining the theoretical framework consisting of the 'Social Constructivist Paradigm', 'Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)', and the 'Framing Theory'. These three theories form an important part of theorizing the powerful ways in which language has been strategically employed within online anti-immigrant

contestations on Twitter in South Africa to construct and legitimize anti-immigrant discourse for various agendas.

This was followed by a wide-ranging literature review that focused on the following themes: (1) the crystallization of anti-immigrant attitudes and views widely characterized as 'xenophobic'/'Afrophobic'; (2) the evolution and influence of the traditional characteristics of social movements on the diverse and sporadic formation of online-mediated forms of contestation and protest fashioned by expressions of social conflict and tension; and (3) building on the aforementioned themes by focusing on the politically-connected emergence of online anti-immigrant 'hashtag campaigns' in South Africa as well as the technical characteristics of Twitter leveraged to spread these campaigns.

Specifically, the themes identified in the review, coupled with the core and sub-theories that frame this study, broadly account for how the main organizational patterns of traditional social movements have been leveraged by the rapid emergence and impact of the Internet, therefore, giving way to a range of new and diverse online social and political formations such as those coalesced through hashtags and keywords on SNS. Indeed, in the context of this study, the collective forms of action and protest driven by individual Twitter users in the form of online hashtag campaigns on the platform. Through the use of language, online hashtag campaigns that are distinctly characterized by fragmented and sporadic political elements of power and control for the coordination and mobilization of a discourse rooted in intensifying long-standing and deeply fractured social relations between South African citizens and African foreigners.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed account of the research methodology that underpins this study. Specifically, details are provided about the data collection, sampling, and data analysis undertaken in the study. Moreover, the research opportunities and challenges of using a cloud-based social media analysis software tool are discussed. Finally, the ethical considerations of the study are provided.

3.2 Data Collection Methods

Various studies using Twitter as their primary site to collect relevant data suggest that either qualitative or quantitative approaches can be utilized depending on the research topic and its aims (Kim, Hansen, Murphy, Richards, Duke, and Allen, 2013; Sugawara, Narimatsu, Hozawa, Shao, Otani, and Fukao, 2012; Bruns and Stieglitz, 2012; Coats, 2017). For the purposes of this study, a *mixed-methods* research approach (both qualitative and quantitative methods) was used to examine various tweets posted by Twitter users between 2020 and 2022. These include Twitter posts accompanied by the following popular hashtags: #PutSouthAfricansFirst, #PutSouthAfricaFirst, #OperationDudula, and #ForeignersMustGo. The primary data collection site is *Twitter*. Using *COSMOS* (Collaborative Online Social Media Observatory Software)—a free cloud-based research software used for collecting, analyzing, and visualizing large sets of social media data—the relevant data has been collected, discussed, and analyzed using the aforementioned hashtags and/or keywords (see Appendix A). This social media analysis tool makes it simpler to collect, store, and analyze large Twitter datasets in Twitter-based research (Burnap, Rana, Williams, Housley, Edwards, Morgan, Sloan, and Conejero, 2015).

3.2.1 Qualitative Approach (Discourse Analysis)

Bless, Higson-Smith, and Sithole (2013) describe qualitative research as a non-numerical data collection process that uses words or descriptions to record different aspects of the social world. This study has relied heavily on finding relevant data that provides considerable descriptive details about ‘how’ and ‘why’ these online anti-immigrant contestations on Twitter are emerging as another conduit to mobilize and amplify organized forms of xenophobic discourse in South

Africa. Specifically, how Twitter has become a vehicle for deepening pre-existing fragmented relations between South African citizens and African foreigners.

In concert with the various data analysis types provided by COSMOS such as the 'keyword' analysis, the qualitative part of the research approach will rely on undertaking a *discourse analysis* using the characteristics described in the CDA section of the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter Two. Broadly speaking, the analysis of the tweets collected will combine, at different stages, three different levels of analysis: (1) *Textual (discourse as an object)* – an examination of the linguistic processes involved in creating and shaping the language used to produce and characterize the discourse at the centre of the tweets posted; (2) *Contextual (discourse as a singular event)* – locating and understanding the discourse within a singular or multiple acts and events, especially how this affects its enunciation; and (3) *Interpretative (discourse as information, ideology, or social product)* – this aspect focuses on what the discourse implies, as a product of various socio-cultural issues, by providing a sociological explanation of the dominant discourse framing the tweets (Ruiz, 2009). The three levels of analysis are not considered in a linear process, i.e., moving from one level to another, but instead are considered simultaneously at different points within the discussion of the findings in the forthcoming chapters.

The discourse analysis, mainly carried out in Chapter Six, is particularly informed by the keyword analysis (i.e., a word-cloud view of frequent words used) provided by COSMOS to better analyze and decipher the role of language in the internalized cohesion of online anti-immigrant discourse on Twitter.

3.2.2 Quantitative Approach (Statistical Analysis)

A quantitative research approach—numerical data collected for statistical purposes (Bless, Higson-Smith, and Sithole, 2013)—was also utilized to comprehend the 'sentiment', 'geospatial distribution', and 'frequency' or density of the tweets during certain days or events over the specified time period. COSMOS generates various statistical charts for researchers interested in analyzing these parameters of analysis for the pool of tweets collected. Importantly, as the forthcoming data analysis will illuminate, this approach has necessarily prefaced and strengthened the qualitative research component of the study.

The data collection process of this study using the COSMOS software took place at different times between October and December 2022. The method of data collection using the mixed-methods approach is a *content analysis*. In terms of this, using the filtering and querying mechanisms provided by COSMOS, the content of Twitter posts using the keywords and/or hashtags that mobilize and spread anti-immigrant rhetoric has been quantified and analyzed to interpret the meanings, patterns, trends, and overall implications of the posts. Also, this analysis considers how Twitter's primary features and functions such as retweets, mentions, and replies provide users with the ability to curate, amplify, and legitimize the content of the exchanges themselves. In other words, how this type of technology affects the *production* of discourse, not just the ways in which they are circulating.

3.3 Sampling

The study mainly utilized *probability sampling*, specifically, the 'simple random' sampling strategy. Using the capabilities of COSMOS, this sampling strategy has been used to collect a large random sample of tweets that point to various ways in which anti-immigrant views and attitudes are mobilized and expressed on Twitter by different individual Twitter users in South Africa. More specifically, this strategy has been crucial for interpreting and understanding more deeply 'why', 'who', and 'what' are the dominant forms of mobilization in these online contestations as illustrated in Figure 2.1 in Chapter Two.

3.3.1 Sample criteria

Using the filtering features provided by COSMOS, various tweets, between 2020 and 2022, accompanied by the popular hashtags and/or keywords were collected. These include the hashtags #PutSouthAfricansFirst, #PutSouthAfricaFirst #ForeignersMustGo, and #OperationDudula. These hashtags are a central organizing feature of these online anti-immigrant discussions on Twitter, enabling users to assemble together and extend the reach of their posts to those interested. No posts have been collected without being accompanied by the relevant hashtag(s).

3.3.2 Sample size

To ensure an increased variation in findings, using COSMOS, 3.5 million tweets (a combination of tweets, retweets, mentions, and replies) from over 280,000 Twitter accounts between 2020

and 2022 were collected and analyzed. Most tweets were posted using the #PutSouthAfricansFirst, #PutSouthAfricaFirst, #ForeignersMustGo, and #OperationDudula hashtags to curate and spread inflammatory and divisive views about the increased presence of African migrants and refugees residing in South Africa.

3.4 Data Analysis

This study has been carried out using thematic (content) and statistical analyses to support its central CDA approach. The presentation of the research findings is based on the developed themes informed by the literature that frames this study. Specifically, the main analyses are strengthened using various 'data analysis' types that COSMOS provides researchers with to collect and analyze Twitter-based data: (i) *sentiment analysis* – determines whether a tweet is 'positive', 'negative', and/or 'neutral'; (ii) *frequency analysis* – provides the volume or density of tweets over a specific timeframe; (iii) *geospatial distribution* – the primary locations or 'hotspots' of tweets posted; (iv) *keyword analysis* – through a word-cloud view, a visualization of frequent words is provided; and (v) *qualitative overview* – a summary/overview of the aforementioned parameters of interest identified in the tweets such as text content, sentiment, gender, location, etc., is generated by the software in Microsoft (MS) Excel format (Burnap et al., 2015).

The findings have been deciphered and analyzed to create a subset of themes and patterns from the data based on the research questions, objectives, and literature that frames this study. In terms of answering all three research questions, firstly, for Chapters Four and Five, the analysis of the collected Twitter posts is informed by the *sentiment, geospatial distribution,* and *frequency* parameters of the tweets. Secondly, using the CDA approach (the link between the micro and macro use of language), the *keyword* analysis was included and utilized in Chapter Six, specifically, to understand how the technical aspects of language have been strategically used to curate, amplify, and distribute anti-immigrant discourse on Twitter threaded by the various popular hashtags. All the data collected has been analyzed and presented in light of the aims and objectives of the study.

3.5 Opportunities and Challenges

The potential opportunities or benefits of combining computational methods with a discourse analysis in this content and corpus-based research paper include the following:

1. *Organization of corpus size:* the process of gathering and analyzing large datasets of communicative texts is increasingly simplified using a corpus-oriented research tool with various filtering and querying features. Specifically, it enables and enhances a more unique empirical analysis of a broad scope of language patterns that would not be feasible without it (Stegmeier, 2012).
2. *Diverse corpus analysis:* through the various data analysis features offered by the tool, it allows the application of a discourse analysis that focuses on understanding *language in action* (Matheson, 2023). In other words, better analyzing the patterning of various items, words, or phrases in a text such as expressions of identity or exercising of social control, which are aspects of language use that play powerful roles in constructing, shaping, and contesting our shared social world (Blommaert, 2005; Matheson, 2023).
3. *Broad application of statistical approaches:* the use of various statistical measures and probabilistic features to assist in detecting various patterns such as sentiment and frequency, coupled with a discourse analysis, allows the researcher to both generalize and contextualize certain properties observed in a sample of tweets to ‘’the same properties in the language as a whole’’ (Stegmeier, 2012:95). Doing both a statistical and discourse analysis in parallel, whether focusing on one after the other or jumping between them, allows the researcher to interpret the connection or disconnection between the various social and textual practices in the texts (Matheson, 2023). This combination of both analysis techniques allows for a more diverse and rich description of the significance of the findings.

In general, the use of COSMOS to collect large-scale social media datasets has been invaluable to the success of this research study. Adopting COSMOS for Twitter-based research was a crucial medium through which to target a diverse sampling pool for analysis. There were various instruction videos provided on the COSMOS website to demonstrate and guide new researchers through its capabilities. Specifically, its user-friendly interface made it simpler and more cohesive to generate the necessary data required to meet the empirical aims and objectives of this study.

In terms of applying computer-assisted analyses to enhance the interpretive value of content-driven research, there were no overall challenges with combining both techniques of analysis.

However, there were *technical* challenges experienced with collecting data on the quantitative side of the research. For large datasets in the millions range, even with a strong Internet connection, contrary to what some of the advantages are of using COSMOS that are provided on its website, it struggled to collect the data all at once as fast and efficiently as possible—not least in my case. There were multiple instances of glitches during the data collection process which proved to be very frustrating, and thus, data collection had to be broken up into various subsets to reach the targeted number of 3.5 million tweets. Additionally, at times, it was extremely difficult to interpret some of the statistical graphs/charts that were generated by the software for the frequency analysis in Chapter Five particularly. In this case, some of the data had to be broken up into even smaller subsets/samples and replicated by myself using the charts provided in MS Word in order to appropriately include, extract, and interpret the data in Chapter Five. All the pie charts provided in the sentiment and geospatial distribution analysis in Chapter Four were generated by COSMOS and included without any modifications to the charts—as well as the word-cloud diagrams included in Chapter Six for the keyword analysis. Only the headings of the pie charts were edited to better elucidate the data being represented.

Overall, the extraction of social media data through an automated cloud-based software tool is the most reliable medium through which to collect and analyze diverse forms of data from Twitter. Notwithstanding some of the challenges faced with certain functions provided by the software, its ability to provide a diverse pool of analysis through the various aforementioned data analysis types proved itself useful and necessary to ensure the collection of reliable and meaningful data in order to meet the objectives of this study.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

As per university rules, the research proposal and 'Ethics Waiver Application Form' for this research study were submitted and cleared by the University of the Witwatersrand's School of Social Sciences Ethics Committee in June 2022.

All the data collected and analyzed for this study was used for academic purposes only. The study relied primarily on Twitter to collect and analyze the data that relates to the questions, objectives, and literature that frames the study. No contact with human participants occurred, thus it was classified as 'No Risk', as stipulated in the university's 'Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC Non-Medical) Risk Table'.

COSMOS provides ethical access to social media data in a variety of ways depending on the research being conducted by the researcher. It provides a user-friendly data collection mechanism, through its filtering and querying features, to obtain aggregated datasets of Twitter posts that preserve the anonymity and confidentiality of the findings throughout the collection process (Burnap et al., 2015). For the purposes of the quantitative analysis of the data, tweets were collected and analyzed in thematic and aggregate form ensuring that the identification of individual Twitter users was concealed. Conversely, for the qualitative analysis, especially the discourse analysis, various subsets of the data were created by myself through COSMOS to provide a small sample of various tweets, by quoting various statements made by the anonymous accounts, where necessary. This was important and necessary to ensure that the discourse analysis was comprehensive and clear as possible to meet the objectives of the study. As consent could not be obtained, the parameters of the tweets (e.g., sentiment, geo-location, keywords, etc.) were provided by COSMOS' 'qualitative overview' table of the data without individual Twitter account names.

Overall, the research process undertaken was underpinned by principles of credibility and integrity, and at all stages committed to upholding these guiding principles of ethical research throughout the data collection and analysis.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the methodology that underpins this research study. It provided an in-depth discussion and account of the overall research design carried out using a social media research analysis tool called COSMOS. Specifically, the chapter provided important details concerning the data collection methods, sampling strategy, and data analysis approach used in the research study. Moreover, the chapter elaborated on the opportunities and challenges faced by combining statistical and discourse analysis techniques as well as using a cloud-based social media research tool for collecting and analyzing large datasets on Twitter. Finally, the ethical considerations guiding and promoting the general aims and objectives of the study were accounted for.

CHAPTER FOUR: SENTIMENT AND GEOSPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF TWEETS

4.1 Introduction

As previously mentioned, the data collection process of this study using COSMOS took place between October and December 2022. As reported by CABC (2022a), since late 2020, there has been a sharp increase in the spread of online anti-immigrant sentiment and rhetoric on Twitter using the popular hashtags *#PutSouthAfricansFirst* or *#PutSouthAfricaFirst* which are connected to the broader offline 'Put South Africans First' anti-immigrant social movement. Throughout the past two years, these particular hashtags have morphed into various sub-hashtags such as #WeWantOurCountryBack, #ForeignersMustGo, and more significantly, #OperationDudula, which forms part of the broader prominent 'Operation Dudula' (Zulu for 'force out') anti-immigrant social movement. This anti-immigrant and vigilante movement, in particular, was founded in July 2021, during the widespread looting and riots in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), by a faction of people with fragmented political affiliations supporting and amplifying the initial 'Put South Africans First' movement (Ho, 2022; Peralta, 2022).

Specifically, the movement was founded and led by social and political activist Nhlanhla 'Lux' Dlamini in 2021 until mid-2022—now the leader of a community leadership structure called 'Soweto Parliament'—who has been a central figure in fuelling online and offline inflammatory anti-immigrant sentiment and violence against African foreign nationals in South Africa (Ho, 2022). Throughout its existence, the group has carried out sporadic and illegal 'anti-lawlessness' campaigns in Gauteng mostly, targeting and threatening both legal and illegal foreign nationals who are perceived, without evidence, to be stealing jobs, increasing crime, and overall straining the country's public resources and services (Myeni, 2022).

To meet the aims and objectives of this study, using COSMOS, 3.5 million tweets (a combination of tweets, likes, mentions, retweets, and comments) from over 280,000 accounts (see Appendix B and C) between 2020 and 2022 have been collected and analyzed across Chapters Four to Six. Most tweets were spread using the #PutSouthAfricansFirst, #PutSouthAfricaFirst, #ForeignersMustGo, and #OperationDudula hashtags to curate and spread inflammatory views about the increased presence of African migrants and refugees in South Africa who are disproportionately targeted and scapegoated for the ruling government's failures to do its job effectively (Durokifa and Ijeoma, 2017).

This chapter and the following ones focused on frequency and CDA, in different sub-sections, accounts for 'who' is behind the spread of online anti-immigrant discourse, 'why' people participate in the spread of this discourse, and 'what' the dominant form of mobilization is as illustrated in Figure 2.1 (social constructivist approach). The findings and discussion of the data gathered in this chapter are two-fold from both qualitative and quantitative perspectives. First, the sentiment ('positive' or 'negative' tone) analysis of the tweets is grouped into four broad socio-economic issues that dominated the framing of anti-immigrant sentiment on Twitter*: jobs, crime, service delivery,* and *law enforcement*. This sub-section analyzes the variation of sentiment in the four socio-economic issues and how these issues, in particular, are used to increasingly scapegoat African foreign nationals residing in South Africa. Specifically, the sentiment pie charts provide a summary of the strength or polarity of the mood expressed in the tweets (Burnap et al., 2015), which have been grouped into four categories of issues. In terms of measuring 'negative sentiment', a score between -5 and -4 is considered 'extremely negative'; -3 and -2 are considered 'negative'; and -1 is considered 'neutral'. Conversely, in terms of measuring 'positive sentiment', a score between 5 and 4 is considered 'extremely positive'; 3 and 2 are considered 'positive'; and 1 is considered 'neutral'. The scores of -1 and 1 are ignored as they do not provide any bearing on sentiment (Burnap et al., 2015).

Second, the geospatial distribution of the sentiment of the tweets is provided to show the main provinces which the majority of the tweets were posted from. From both these points of analysis, the chapter mainly argues that the four main socio-economic issues framing the online anti-immigrant discussions on Twitter have been strategically fanned by certain groups of politically-connected users to further stimulate anti-immigrant sentiment in South Africa. More importantly, this chapter, alongside the following two chapters that build on this one, in different and interesting ways, illustrates the mobilization and organizational strategies used by various individual Twitter users to construct and legitimize collective anti-immigrant opinions and contestations online that seek to alienate and demonize African foreign nationals in South Africa.

4.2 Sentiment of Tweets

4.2.1 Jobs

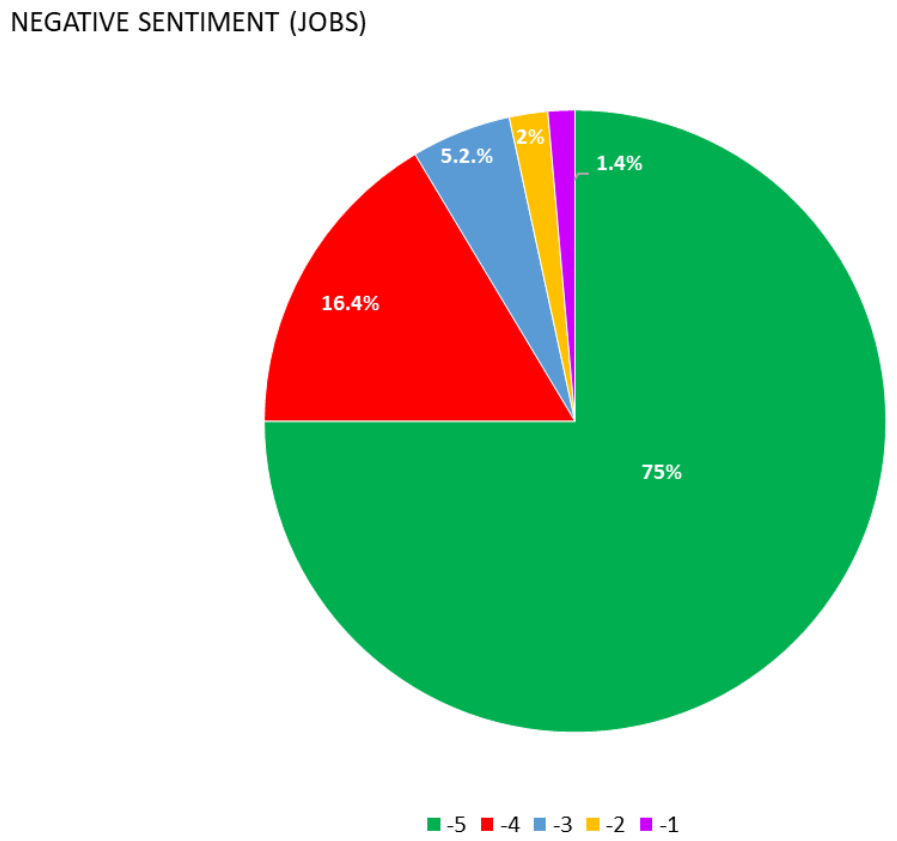


Figure 4.1: *Jobs (Negative Sentiment)*

In terms of jobs, it was observed that the data is analyzable from two perspectives— 'positive' and 'negative' sentiments surrounding the issue of employment/joblessness in South Africa. In terms of the total distribution, the software showed that 70% of tweets collected regarding this issue were found to be negative, and 30% of them were found to be positive. In order to prompt the software to analyze this particular issue, the keywords 'job', 'employment', and 'unemployment', alongside the popular hashtags, were entered into the search query on COSMOS to gather the sentiment of these tweets related to jobs. Overall, the software found that this group of tweets, alongside the hashtags #PutSouthAfricansFirst, #PutSouthAfricaFirst, #OperationDudula, and #ForeignersMustGo were extremely negative. In the first instance (Figure 4.1), for the overall 70% negative tweet sentiment regarding jobs, the software observed a high 'negative' sentiment score of -5 for 75% of these tweets surrounding the issue of unemployment. Moreover, a -4 negative sentiment score of 16.4%, a -3 score of 5.2%, and a -2 score of 2% for the tweets collected were observed.

In particular, the -5 through -2 negative sentiment scores in question captured a large subset of tweets where 'undocumented' foreign nationals from Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, and Mozambique, particularly, were portrayed as the main culprits 'stealing' employment opportunities from ordinary South Africans. In the case of individuals from these countries, 'amakwerekwere', a derogatory term used to refer to black African migrants as 'strange' or 'unwanted' (Nyamnjoh, 2006), alongside words such as 'stealing' and 'thieves', appeared in this category of negative tweets tied to the issue of employment where they were blamed for stealing jobs in sectors such as hospitality, for example.

Likewise, CABC (2022a) revealed in their own research that foreign nationals are labelled as a hindrance for ordinary poor and working-class South Africans to enter the labour market in various sectors. Interestingly, the results of the sentiment analysis within the software found that the majority of the individual accounts propagating these tweets were also connected to, in the form of retweets and comments, posts scapegoating foreign nationals for the high levels of unemployment by the public Twitter accounts of three South African political parties: Patriotic Alliance (PA), African Transformation Movement (ATM) (linked to the African National Congress' (ANC) Radical Economic Transformation faction), and ActionSA. As discussed in the literature that frames this study, the incitement of online anti-immigrant sentiment alongside the popular hashtags has been found to be linked to various political actors injecting and spreading false and discriminatory views about foreign nationals for their own political gain (CABC, 2022a; amaBhungane Reporters, 2022).

On the contrary, in the second instance, for the overall 30% positive tweet sentiment, COSMOS found 'positive' public opinion in tweets concerning employment where the messaging was focused on general pleas for the ruling ANC government to create more employment opportunities for South Africans. The majority of these tweets were only posted alongside the hashtags #PutSouthAfricansFirst and #PutSouthAfricaFirst. This is an interesting observation as the aforementioned negative tweets surrounding the issue of jobs only appeared with tweets that also included #OperationDudula and #ForeignersMustGo additionally. In the below Figure 4.2, on a scale of 1-5, the software observed a positive sentiment score of 5 for 68.8% of the tweets, a score of 4 for 15.4%, a score of 3 for 8.7%, and a score of 2 for 4.2% of tweets regarding employment where foreign nationals were sparsely mentioned but not necessarily blamed and

demonized. In these tweets specifically, it was also found that the calls for the government to prioritize jobs for South African citizens were also linked to the public Twitter accounts of the PA and ActionSA.

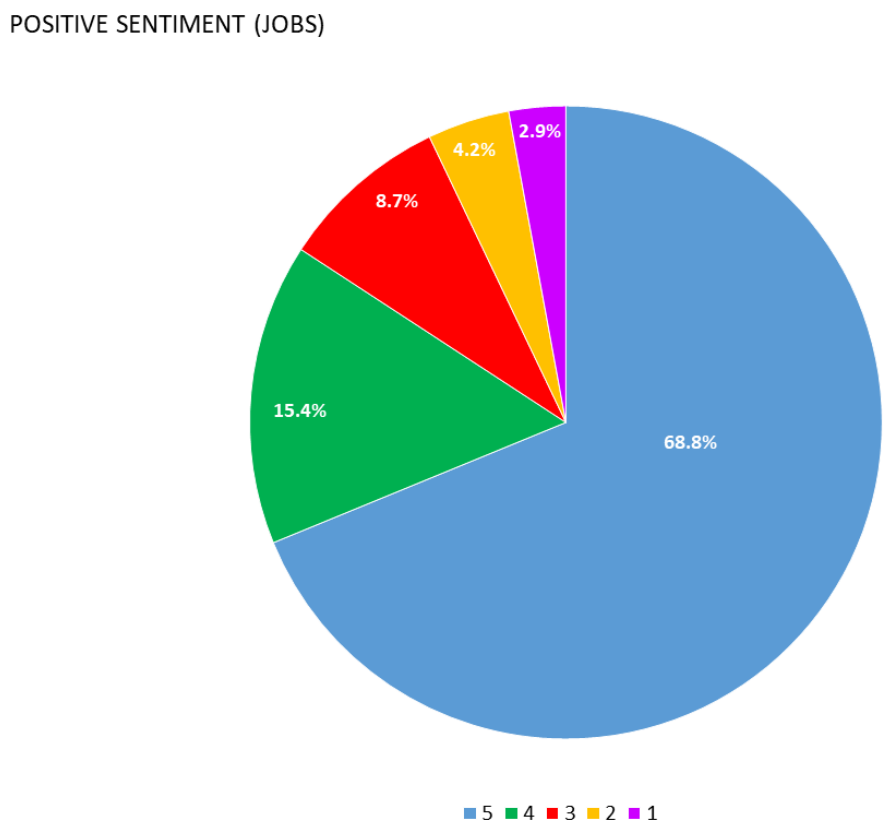


Figure 4.2: *Jobs (Positive Sentiment)*

Importantly, even though these tweets were posted alongside the #PutSouthAfricansFirst and/or #PutSouthAfricaFirst hashtags, it highlights that there is a segment of the population who do not weaponize these hashtags to spread dangerous rhetoric and stereotypes about African foreign nationals. Unfortunately, these types of tweets calling for the government to do its job more effectively, alongside the popular hashtags, get saturated by the large volume of inflammatory anti-immigrant rhetoric—which is also prioritized by Twitter's algorithm because of the high interaction and engagement with this content—that is increasingly shaping the persistence of these discussions (DFRLab, 2020b; CABC, 2022a; 2022b).

This was the only anomaly found in the sentiment data analysis, with the majority of the tweets collected including extremely discriminatory content targeting mostly black African migrants residing in South Africa.

4.2.2 Crime

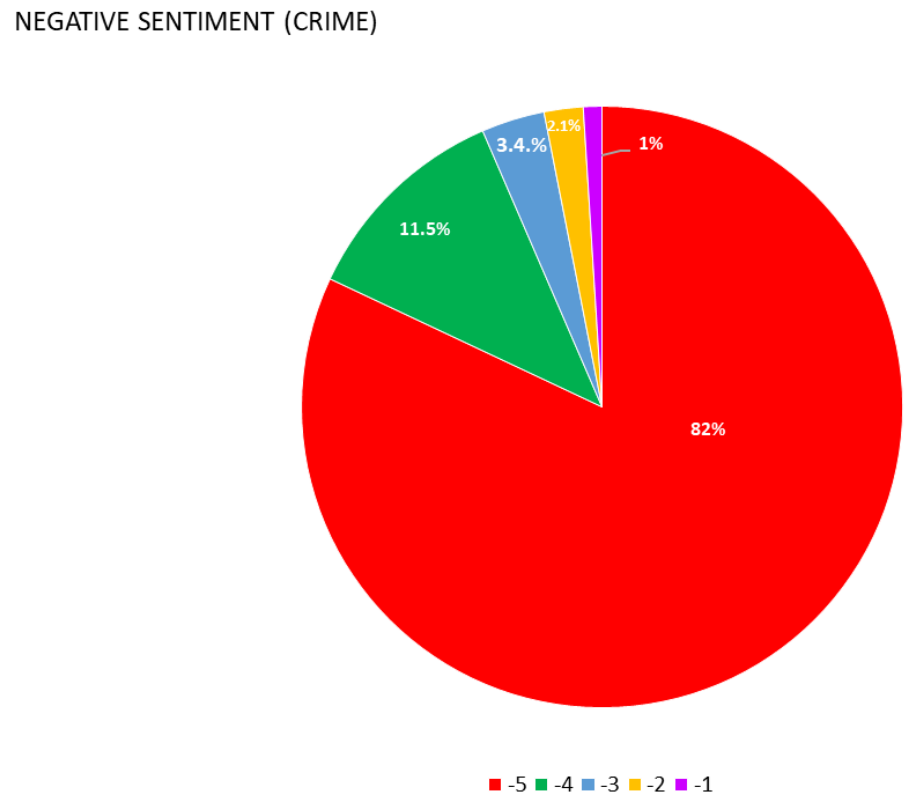


Figure 4.3: *Crime (Negative Sentiment)*

The tweets related to the scapegoating of African foreign nationals for various criminal acts generated an 82% negative score of -5, 11.5% score of -4, 3.4% score of -3, and 2.1% score of -2 (Figure 4.3) alongside hashtags #PutSouthAfricansFirst, #PutSouthAfricaFirst, #OperationDudula, and #ForeignersMustGo. Most of the tweets collected reinforced the views and opinions that foreign nationals are largely responsible for committing crimes such as fraud, homicide, sexual assault, drug/sex trafficking, and violence related to illegal mining ('Zama-Zamas').

The software found that the issue of crime alongside joblessness is one of the biggest issues used to scapegoat foreigners from certain African countries such as Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Lesotho, and Nigeria. Equally, it forms part of stimulating and amplifying pre-existing

stereotypes about black African migrants residing in South Africa that contribute to their overall demonization within South African society (Khan, 2021; Muyanga, 2017; Neocosmos, 2006).

4.2.3 Service Delivery

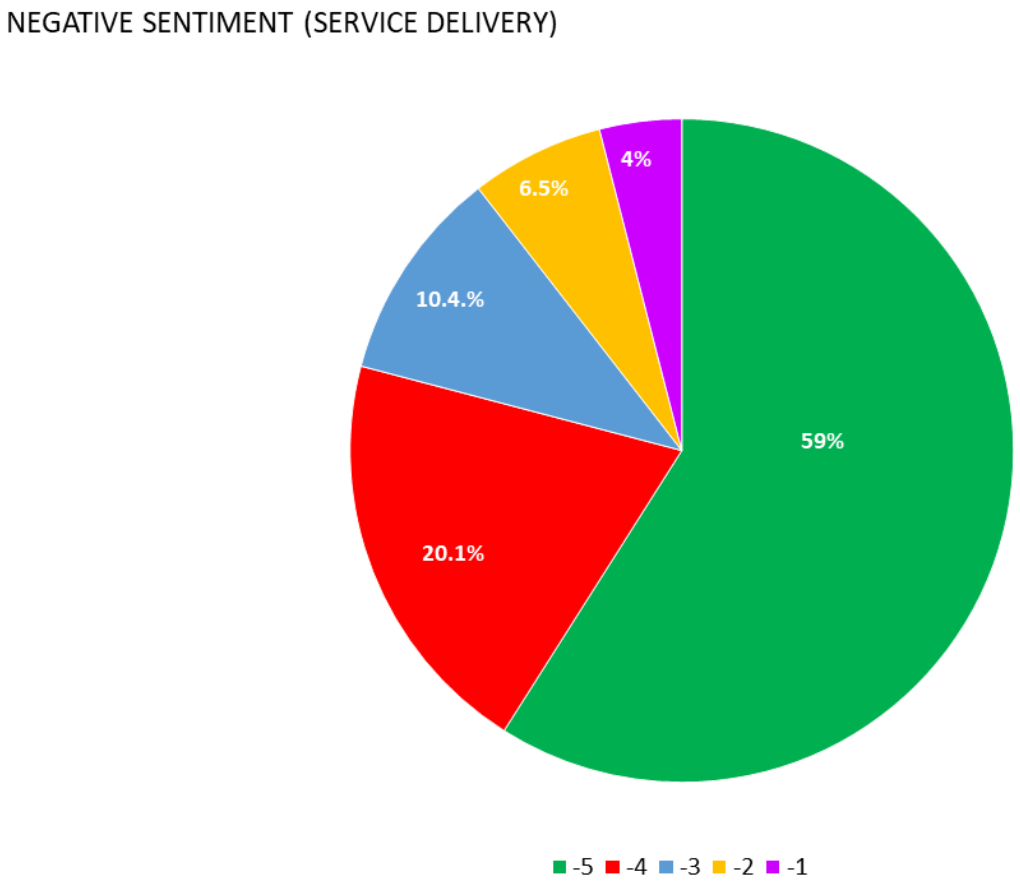


Figure 4.4: *Service Delivery (Negative Sentiment)*

In terms of service delivery (Figure 4.4), it was found that there was an overwhelmingly negative sentiment around this socio-economic issue, with a -5 negative sentiment score of 59%, -4 score of 20.1%, -3 score of 10.4%, and -2 score of 6.5% for tweets posted alongside the hashtags #PutSouthAfricansFirst, #PutSouthAfricaFirst, #OperationDudula, and #ForeignersMustGo. Again, foreign nationals were scapegoated for placing a burden on the distribution of public services and resources in South Africa. The negative sentiment around service delivery was mainly directed toward taking issue with foreigners in mostly low-income communities having access to public resources such as health, housing, education, and other basic services (e.g.,

sanitation and water). Moreover, a large subset of these tweets expressed the need for the government to prioritize this expenditure for citizens while disparaging and demonizing foreign nationals at the same time.

As Palmary (2009) comments, even though the high entry of migrants and refugees into South Africa has no doubt put an extra strain on local levels of government to ensure the effective provision of basic services (Sikhwivhilu and Zwane, 2018), the scapegoating of foreign nationals for this issue is still grossly misdirected. The provision of service delivery, or lack thereof, is primarily linked to governance issues within the state, more particularly, its inability to regulate its borders effectively, process foreign nationals accurately, and overall widespread misappropriation of funds and corruption that takes place within various local municipalities by ward councillors, among others (Mutanda, 2022; Anyadike, 2015).

4.2.4 Law Enforcement

The views and opinions expressed about the role of law enforcement in the regulation of the entry of African migrants and refugees can also be analyzed two-fold—both positive and negative sentiments were observed by COSMOS. In terms of the overall distribution between positive and negative sentiment, the software found 80% of the tweets around this issue were negative and 20% were positive. First, for the tweets regarding the issue of law enforcement, posted alongside the hashtags #PutSouthAfricansFirst, #PutSouthAfricaFirst, and #OperationDudula, there was a large corpus of positive sentiment expressed (Figure 4.5).

On the other hand, for the tweets including these hashtags as well as #ForeignersMustGo, the software found a large portion of negative sentiment concerning law enforcement (Figure 4.6). First, in Figure 4.5, for the overall 20% positive tweet sentiment regarding law enforcement, 2% of the tweets were given a score of 2, 10.2% were given a score of 3, 14.6% were given a score of 4, and 72% of tweets gathered were given a score of 5 for positivity, particularly linked to statements made by various users that included words such as ‘defence’, ‘protect’, ‘patriots’, and ‘policing’. Notwithstanding, the invocation of patriotic beliefs, the desire to ‘defend’ and ‘protect’ the country’s borders, is still located within the context of a dominant anti-immigrant discourse seeking to remove illegal/undocumented African foreigners from the country (Harris, 2002; Kerr et al., 2019; Crush and Ramachandran, 2014). Furthermore, the encouragement of this type of online collective action/protest, mostly spearheaded by Operation Dudula members

under the guise of patriotism, has been successful in co-opting people into resonating with widely held beliefs that foreigners are to blame for the state's inability to govern its borders effectively (CABC, 2022b).

Likewise, Onslow (2021) insists that even though there are online remarks and statements made by Twitter users about African immigrants that are not explicitly xenophobic per se, the patriotism expressed by some is narrowly based on exclusivity which still forms part of the ongoing inflammatory anti-migrant sentiment, discourse, and mobilization for various protest action (Harris, 2002).

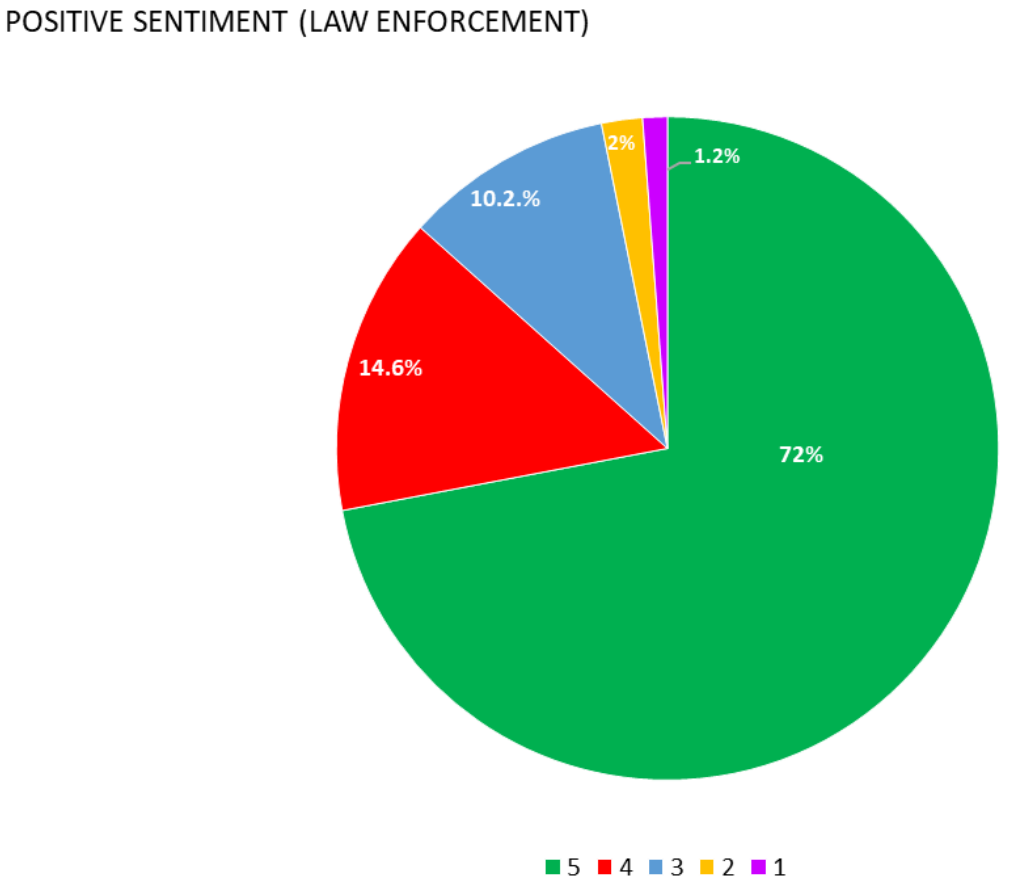


Figure 4.5: *Law Enforcement (Positive Sentiment)*

Conversely, in Figure 4.6 below, 85.5% of tweets were given a negative -5 score, 9% were given a -4 score, 3.8% were given a -3 score, and 1.2% of them were given a -2 score. Specifically, these tweets included a variety of anti-migrant statements made about African foreign nationals,

calling for them to be ‘evicted’, ‘deported’, ‘removed’, and emphasizing that the ANC government has been ‘useless’ in their handling of immigration issues in South Africa.

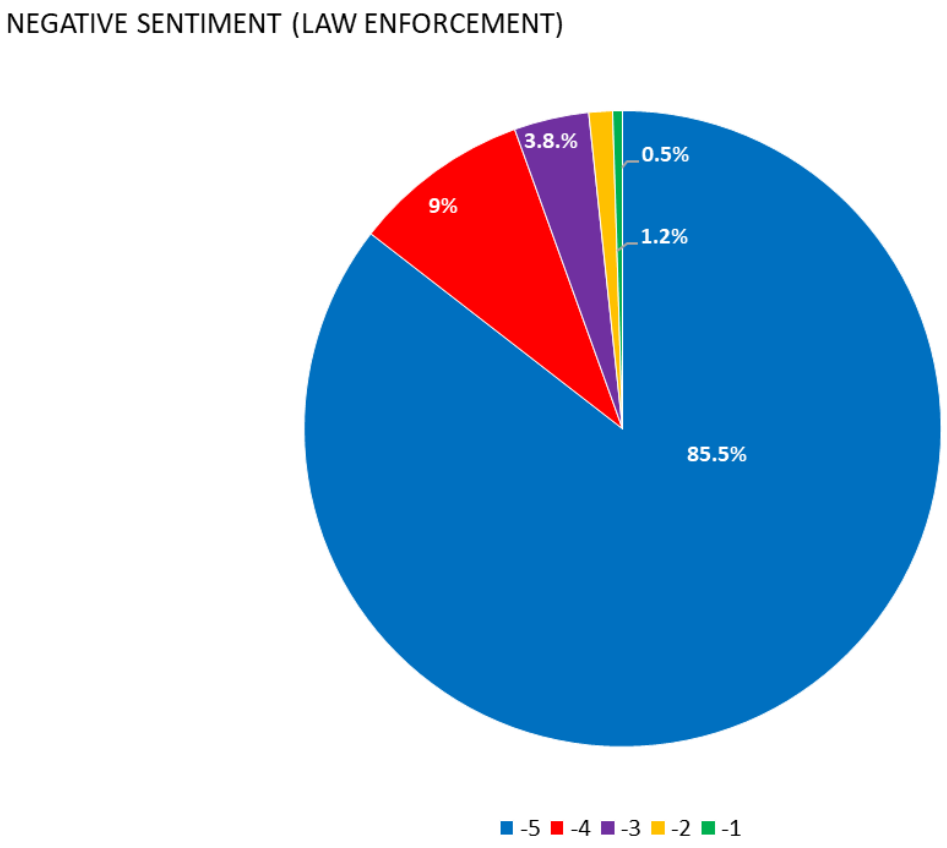


Figure 4.6: *Law Enforcement (Negative Sentiment)*

4.3 Geospatial Distribution of Tweets

In terms of the geospatial distribution of tweets collected about the previously discussed four socio-economic issues framing and shaping the discourse about African immigrants in South Africa, a large portion of them, considered to be ‘hotspots’, were posted in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), Western Cape, and the Eastern Cape. The below chart (Figure 4.7) is an overall summary of the main provinces where the tweets gathered for the purposes of the sentiment analysis were posted—a combination of both the positive and negative sentiments across the four socio-economic issues. Importantly, this also lends credence to the increasing shift in South Africa to the use of various SNS to engage and receive information above and beyond

mainstream media (television and radio) channels (Chenzi, 2020; Umejei, 2021). Furthermore, through the use of various hashtags, Twitter's features and functions have made it easier to organize groups of people to articulate their opinions, views, and attitudes, whether positive or negative, in more organized, amplified, and impactful ways (Dolata, 2017; Onslow, 2021).

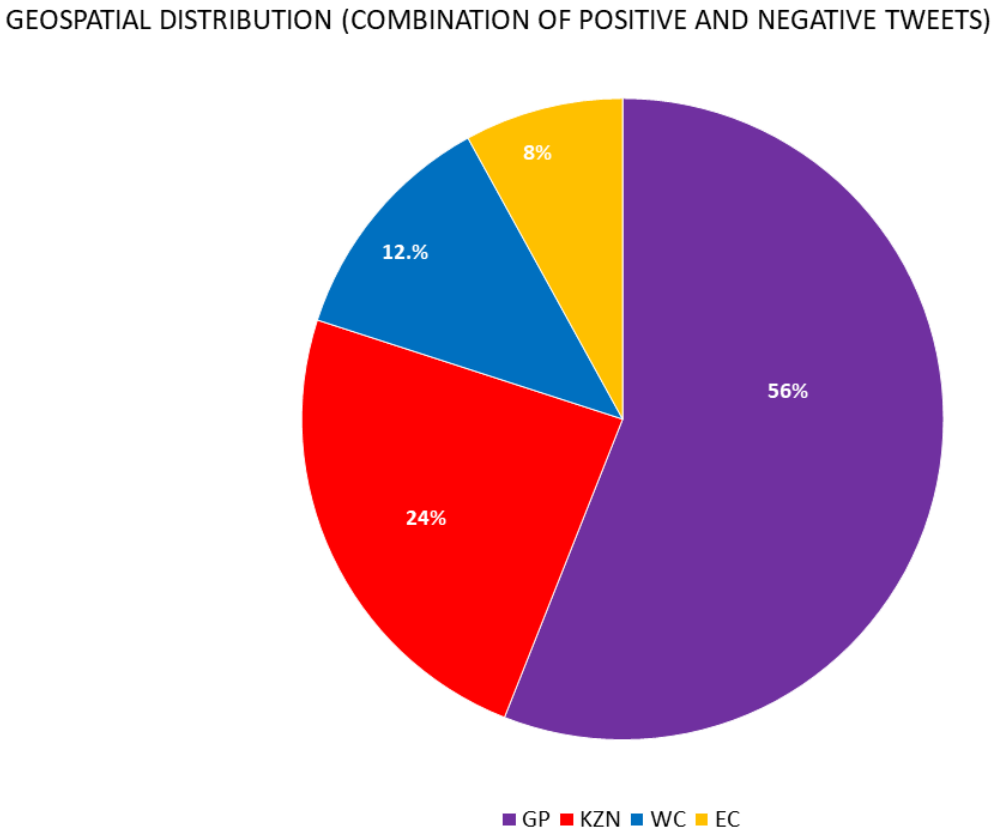


Figure 4.7: *Geospatial Distribution (Combination of Positive and Negative sentiment of tweets)*

First, the province of Gauteng accounted for 56% of the tweets posted, second, KZN accounted for 24%, third, the Western Cape accounted for 12%, and last, the Eastern Cape accounted for 8% (see Appendix D).

As reported by the CABC (2022a), DFRLab (2020a; 2020b), and amaBhungane Reporters (2022), the curation and spread of the online #PutSouthAfricansFirst 'movement' was incited by political actors connected to various political parties operating in Gauteng, KZN, and the Western Cape. Specifically done to increase engagement and awareness of the country's social ills for political gain, through the spread of anti-migrant propaganda, especially during times of

campaigning (CABC, 2022; amaBhungane Reporters, 2022). Even though COSMOS was not able to pinpoint popular individual accounts of ordinary users, in terms of follower numbers, that are directly linked to verified political parties on Twitter, this point of analysis corresponds with previous findings of the provincial hotspots of tweets posted (CABC, 2022a; DFRLab, 2020b; amaBhungane Reporters, 2022). Seeing that Gauteng, KZN, and the Western Cape, in particular, are considered to be South Africa's economic powerhouses contributing to its social stability, growth, and overall development (Rugunanan and Xulu-Gama, 2022); the increased interaction with #PutSouthAfricansFirst and other related hashtags through various online echo chambers in these locations is key in mobilizing various groups of people when needed for impactful collective action and protests on the ground such as the recent activities of Operation Dudula in all three of these provinces (Evans, 2022; Ho, 2022).

The portion of tweets posted in Gauteng, KZN, and the Western Cape are significant as these provinces have become hotspots (especially Gauteng) for various sporadic anti-immigrant protests and even violent outbreaks against foreign nationals (Muyanga, 2017; Onslow, 2021; Misago, Landau, and Monson, 2009). Additionally, these provinces, as well as the Eastern Cape to a certain extent, have become popular locations to settle and reside for African immigrants seeking better economic opportunities such as starting new businesses in various townships and informal urban settlements (Kerr and Dixon, 2021). Importantly, the expansion of Operation Dudula protest activity beyond Gauteng in the past year and a half (Evans, 2022) has also influenced the increased interaction with the popular hashtags #PutSouthAfricansFirst, #OperationDudula, and #ForeignersMustGo.

Moreover, there is cause for concern regarding the large segment of tweets considered to be negative in the aforementioned sentiment analyses. The analysis of the tweets gathered here and by other similar studies, especially its divisive and inimical tone, suggests that the echo chambers of anti-immigrant views and opinions crystallized on Twitter especially, could in future be contributing factors toward South Africa descending into violent xenophobic demonstrations of inconceivable proportions—beyond that of 2008 and 2015. Indeed, violence that could significantly undermine its social stability and development (amaBhungane Reporters, 2022; CABC, 2022a; 2022b). Importantly, the increased amplification and legitimization of this discourse, alongside the relevant hashtags, within various echo chambers that the sentiment and

geospatial analyses have shown underpins the argument that the spread of online anti-immigrant discourse forms part of various online anti-immigrant 'hashtag campaigns' being circulated on Twitter in South Africa to stimulate and deepen divisions between South African citizens and African foreigners (Onslow, 2021; amaBhungane Reporters, 2022; CABC, 2022a).

Equally, Onslow (2021) writes that the legitimization of online anti-immigrant campaigns, facilitated and distributed through Twitter, is exponentially stimulating and driving anti-immigrant attitudes and feelings in South Africa, both online and offline, that could have serious domestic implications for the country's present and future stability, development, and relations with its fellow African states.

4.4 Conclusion

The findings and discussion of the data gathered in this chapter were analyzed from two interrelated points of view. First, the sentiment ('positive' or 'negative' tone) analysis of the tweets was grouped into four broad socio-economic issues that dominated the framing of anti-immigrant sentiment on Twitter*: jobs, crime, service delivery*, and *law enforcement*. This section analyzed the variation of sentiment in the four socio-economic issues that have been used to scapegoat African foreign nationals. In this case, the sentiment was found to be overwhelmingly negative, and a huge contributing factor toward entrenching fragmented divisions between both South African citizens and African foreigners. Even though the software found that some views expressed regarding the issue of jobs were 'positive', indeed, an exception to the rule, and alongside the popular anti-immigrant hashtags; the positive sentiment around this issue still exists within a dominant socio-cultural context of excluding and alienating African foreign nationals by various offline anti-immigrant social movements. Second, building on the previous section, the geospatial distribution of the sentiment of the tweets was provided to illustrate the main provinces which the majority of the tweets were posted from. This section particularly underscored that a large volume of these tweets were geographically concentrated in provinces with high levels of poverty and unemployment as well as a large population of African immigrants.

From both these points of analysis, and drawing on the work conducted by various research studies to substantiate the findings, the chapter found that the four main socio-economic issues framing the online anti-immigrant discussions on Twitter have been strategically fanned and

weaponized by certain groups of politically-connected users to further stimulate anti-immigrant sentiment in South Africa. Both points of analysis, especially the sentiment analysis, interrogated and illustrated that the discourse of the tweets gathered by COSMOS largely consisted of views and opinions expressed to alienate, demonize, and exclude African migrants and refugees residing in South Africa. The overwhelmingly anti-immigrant discourse was expressed in both implicit and explicit ways.

These issues form a central discursive base encouraging the spread and legitimization of anti-immigrant opinions and beliefs about African foreign nationals in South Africa. More specifically, the chapter illustrated how the increased framing of anti-immigrant opinions and views through the highlighted four socio-economic issues is a key part of threading the discourse into various online anti-immigrant hashtag campaigns with the goal of further stimulating anti-immigrant rhetoric in South Africa. Furthermore, the sentiment and geospatial distribution of these online campaigns are increasingly influenced by populist anti-immigrant social and political views being injected, amplified, and sustained through the curation and spread of anti-immigrant discourse within various Twitter echo chambers by various groups of people.

The following chapter builds on the central issues raised here by analyzing the daily and weekly frequency of anti-immigrant tweets posted alongside the popular hashtags during certain times and events.

CHAPTER FIVE: FREQUENCY OF TWEETS

5.1 Introduction

As previously mentioned, this chapter builds on the arguments and findings provided in Chapter Four by presenting a frequency analysis—the volume and/or density of randomized subsets (of up to 160 000) of the overall 3.5 million tweets collected. It provides an important framing of how *persistent* the mobilization and distribution of online anti-immigrant campaigns on Twitter in South Africa has been since these discussions began to appear more frequently as from 2020. The main idea of this chapter is to provide a quantified frequency summary of the ways in which online anti-immigrant campaigns have been co-opted and legitimized by various groups of politically-connected users. Again, this chapter also, in different sub-sections, broadly accounts for 'who' is behind the spread of online anti-immigrant discourse, 'why' people participate in the spread of this discourse, and 'what' the dominant form of mobilization is.

Using the frequency analysis charts generated by COSMOS, it further illustrates the ways in which these hashtag campaigns have been heightened to alienate and demonize African foreign nationals residing in South Africa from four interesting perspectives: (1) the daily frequency of the top four hashtags (2020-2022); (2) the daily frequency of tweets posted on significant public holidays (2020-2022); (3) the daily frequency of tweets posted during notable protest events (2020-2022); and (4) the weekly and daily frequency of tweets posted during the anti-immigrant protests at Kalafong Hospital in August 2022.

Finally, it provides a concluding discussion of the implications of the arguments raised in Chapter Four and this present chapter—linking the empirical issues raised in both chapters to the broader politics of xenophobic conflict and violence that continue to take root in post-apartheid South Africa. Specifically, the final discussion in this chapter exemplifies the main argument in the introduction of this study that the broader contentious politics of citizenship and/or belonging are a key background force in fuelling virulent online xenophobic opinions and beliefs about African foreign nationals residing in South Africa.

5.2 Frequency of Tweets

5.2.1 Daily Frequency of The Top Four Hashtags (2020-2022)

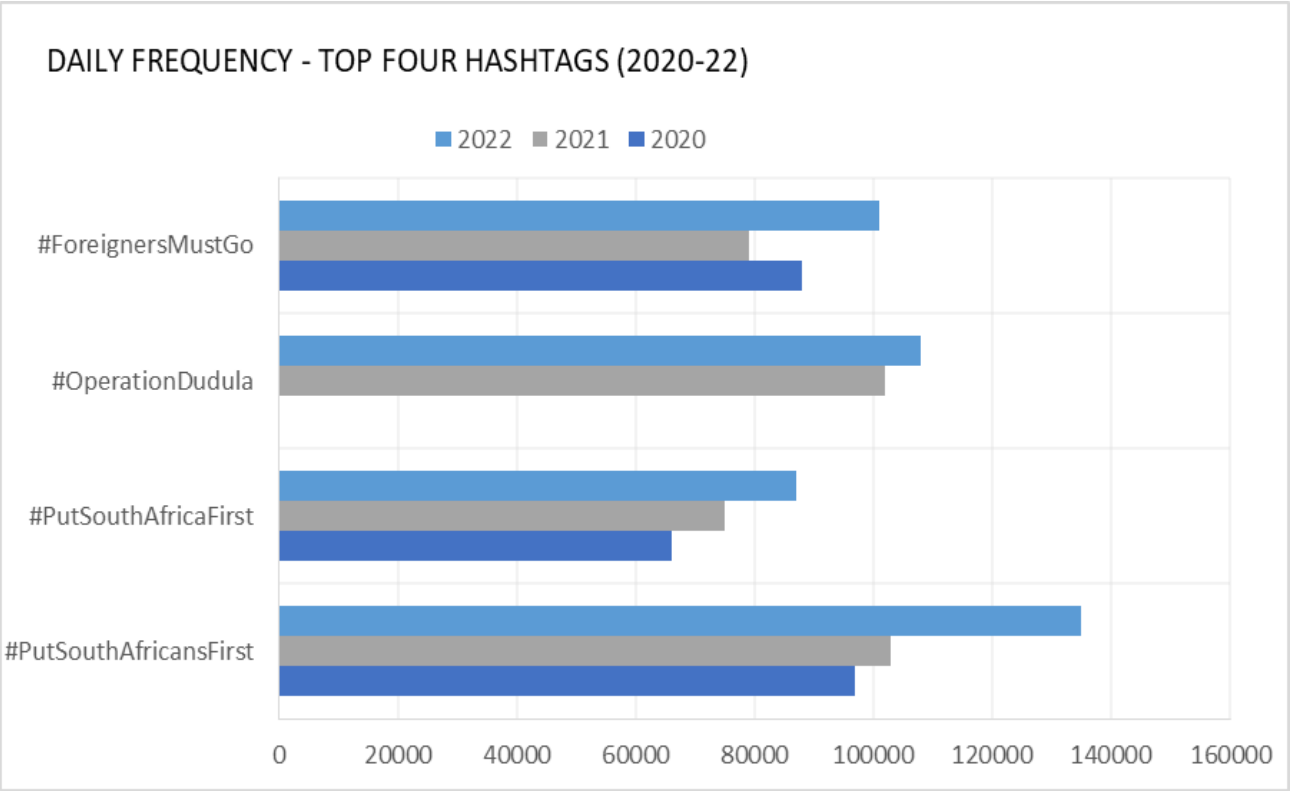


Figure 5.1: *Daily frequency of top four hashtags in online anti-immigrant campaigns (2020-22)*

The bar graph above (Figure 5.1) provides an overview of the average evolution and frequency of the popular hashtags used daily between 2020 and 2022 (up to December) to bootstrap online anti-immigrant campaigns on South African Twitter (see Appendix E). A subset of 160 000 tweets is provided in the graph. Through the use of retweets, mentions, and replies, the evolution of #PutSouthAfricansFirst, which has morphed into other sub-hashtags, in this frequency chart provides a snapshot of the persistence of these online campaigns since 2020. These hashtags include #PutSouthAfricansFirst, #PutSouthAfricaFirst, #OperationDudula, and #ForeignersMustGo. The *#PutSouthAfricansFirst* hashtag has been at the heart of the momentum gained by these campaigns since 2020, with an average of 117 000 daily interactions between 2020 and 2022. *#PutSouthAfricaFirst* had an average of 82 000 daily interactions between 2020 and 2022; *#OperationDudula*, which began its activities in 2021, had an average daily interaction of 105 000 between 2021 and 2022; and *#ForeignersMustGo* had an average daily interaction of 92 000 between 2020 and 2022.

As found in this research and other similar studies, the emergence of Operation Dudula in June 2021 through its mobilization of both online and offline anti-foreigner demonstrations, targeting and calling for the removal of illegal foreign nationals, has exponentially increased the spread and legitimization of anti-foreigner sentiment on Twitter (amaBhungane Reporters, 2022; CABC, 2022b). Additionally, the lack of desire by law enforcement agencies to curtail their offline activities further illustrates how anti-foreigner discourse has been institutionalized both in government institutions and broader society which, within online spaces, will only continue to amplify and spread (Onslow, 2021; CABC, 2022a; 2022b; amaBhungane Reporters, 2022).

5.2.2 Daily Frequency of Tweets Posted on Significant Public Holidays (2020-2022)

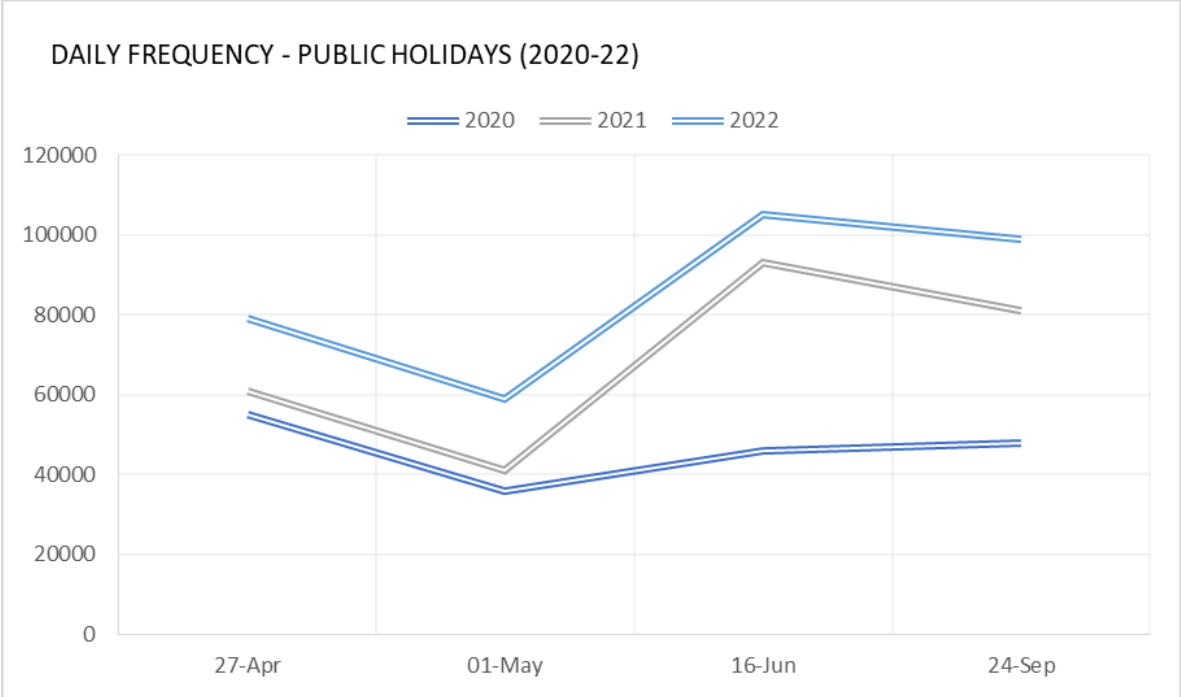


Figure 5.2: *Daily frequency of tweets posted on significant public holidays (2020-22)*

The above line graph (Figure 5.2) provides a subset of up to 120 000 tweets that were posted on the following public holidays between 2020 and 2022: (1) *Freedom Day* (27 April) – 65 000 daily average across 2020 and 2022; (2) *Workers Day* (1 May) – 45 000 daily average across 2020 and 2022; (3) *Youth Day* (16 June) – 81 000 daily average across 2020 and 2022; and (4) *Heritage Day* (24 September) – 76 000 daily average across 2020 and 2022. Specifically, these tweets were posted on these days alongside the hashtags #PutSouthAfricansFirst, #PutSouthAfricaFirst, #OperationDudula, and #ForeignersMustGo (see Appendix F). All of

these public holidays are historically, socially, and culturally significant days reinforcing the progress of democratic South Africa since the end of apartheid, and have long been observed by Twitter users to trigger and amplify the spread of anti-immigrant sentiment since the beginning of the #PutSouthAfricansFirst online campaign in 2020 on Twitter (CABC, 2022a). As Onslow (2021) and CABC (2022a) note, public holidays in South Africa form an important part of the invocation of patriotic beliefs and values for various sectors of society.

First, in the qualitative table overview of these tweets, a large segment of the tweets posted on Freedom Day (65 000 daily tweet average), the day of recognition and celebration of South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994, included an emphasis that foreigners do not belong in South Africa through statements such as:

1. ''*Phumani eSouth Africa makwerekwere!* [Get out foreigner!] … *We will not rest until those with no documents are gone #FreedomDay #PutSouthAfricansFirst #ForeignersMustGo''* – (Quote from Twitter User, 27 April 2021).

Second, both Workers Day (45 000 daily tweet average) and Youth Day (81 000 daily tweet average), which have become days heavily focused on bringing awareness to high unemployment levels in South Africa by various public sectors, especially for the youth, included the expression of grievances about unemployment, more specifically, with unsubstantiated claims that foreigners are 'stealing' jobs:

2. *''There is no way we can get jobs in a country where foreigners are coming in with no regulation to take away our jobs, what must we do when we are also competing with these people? #PutSouthAfricansFirst #ForeignersMustGo #WorkersDay''* – (Quote from Twitter User, 1 May 2020).
3. *''ANC has still done nothing to improve situation for the youth, when we apply for jobs, there is nothing…why must we compete for them with people from Zim and Nigeria who are stealing opportunities from us? They must go all of them #YouthDay #PutSouthAfricansFirst #OperationDudula #ForeignersMustGo''* – (Quote from Twitter User, 16 June 2022).

Last, Heritage Day (76 000 daily tweet average), which is a recognition and celebration of the cultural diversity of South Africa, included posts of tweets emphasizing that foreigners are aliens/outsiders in the country:

4. *''We will never see foreigners as part of our country, they are bringing too many problems here #HeritageDay #OperationDudula #PutSouthAfricaFirst #ForeignersMustGo''* - (Quote from Twitter User, 24 September 2022).

Similarly, CABC (2022a) found that there was a significant increase in interactions with the popular hashtags on various public holidays including those mentioned here. More specifically, the symbolic and cultural significance of these holidays was weaponized by users to continue amplifying the spread of disinformation about the presence of African foreign nationals in South Africa. The strategic use of significant South African public holidays to amplify and strengthen the persistence of these campaigns points to how fully connected users are in ensuring that the campaigns remain internally cohesive for a prolonged period of time, even if engagement is sporadic in nature (amaBhungane Reporters, 2022; CABC, 2022a).

5.2.3 Daily Frequency of Tweets Posted During Notable Protest Events (2020-2022)

The below bar graph (Figure 5.3) provides an overview of the high daily average of tweets posted during significant protest events between 2020 and 2022: (1) *23 September 2020* (85 000 daily tweet average)- #PutSouthAfricansFirst anti-immigrant protest in Pretoria; (2) *16 June 2021* (102 000 daily tweet average) - #OperationDudula anti-immigrant protest in Soweto; (3) *19 February 2022* (114 000 daily tweet average) - #OperationDudula anti-immigrant protest in Hillbrow; and (4) *4 August 2022* (125 000 daily tweet average) - #OperationDudula anti-immigrant protest in Atteridgeville, Pretoria (see Appendix G).

First, the anti-immigrant protest that took place in Pretoria on 23 September 2020 consisted of hundreds of citizens who marched to the Nigerian High Commission with a memorandum of demands asking for the immediate removal of undocumented African foreign nationals (Khumalo, 2020). Second, the Youth Day protest in Soweto on 16 June 2021 was organized and led by Operation Dudula members armed with sticks and sjamboks who targeted and forcefully removed foreign nationals suspected of criminal activities in various homes. Moreover, foreign business owners in the township were told to immediately vacate their premises (Bornman, 2021). Third, another anti-immigrant protest, led by Operation Dudula members on 19 February 2022, was organized and carried out to forcefully remove undocumented foreign nationals occupying abandoned buildings in Hillbrow (Simelane, 2022).

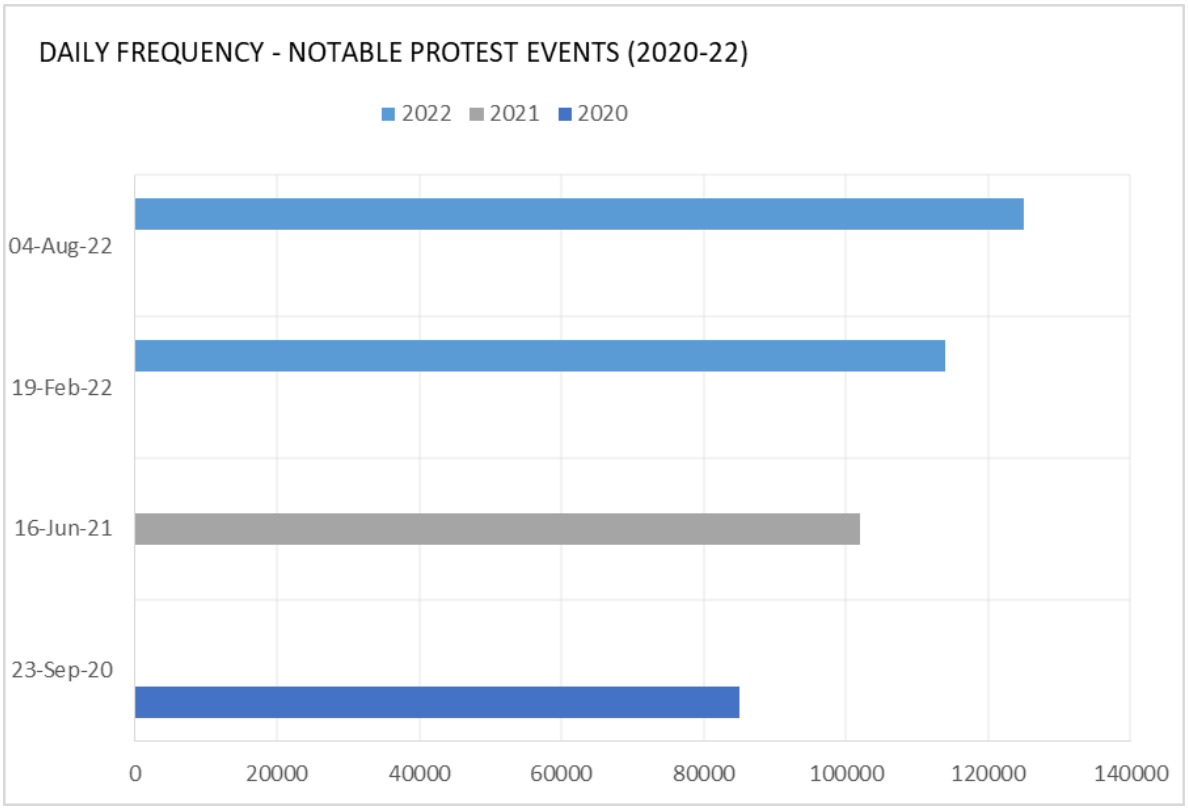


Figure 5.3: *Daily frequency of tweets posted during significant protest events (2020-22)*

Last, the anti-immigrant protest, which began on 4 August 2022, and throughout the rest of the month, was organized and led by Operation Dudula members at Kalafong Provincial Tertiary Hospital in Pretoria West township Atteridgeville, where 'foreign-looking and sounding' patients and staff were being denied access to the hospital (Rafapa, 2022). These protest days were chosen because of the high levels of media and public attention garnered across the country (Atabong, 2020; Bornman, 2021; Simelane, 2022; Rafapa, 2022; O'Regan and Banda, 2022). More importantly, as the graph illustrates, the influence of Operation Dudula's offline activities since 2021 has led to a great increase in the frequency and mobilization of anti-immigrant discourse within these campaigns, which is an important part of ensuring the persistence of these campaigns. As CABC (2022a; 2022b) and amaBhungane Reporters (2022) found in their research, the mobilization of collective action on the ground has a tremendous knock-on effect on influencing, amplifying, and legitimizing anti-immigrant discourse online in South Africa.

Building on the aforementioned, at the beginning of August 2022 and throughout the rest of the month, violent anti-immigrant protests led by Operation Dudula took place at Kalafong Hospital in Atteridgeville, Pretoria. Members of the vigilante group were blocking the entrance of patients

and employees believed to be 'undocumented' African migrants based on appearance and accent (MSF Southern Africa, 2022; Rafapa, 2022). The reason for the protest was triggered by complaints by the general public of poor service and long queues at the hospital which Operation Dudula leaders and members have falsely attributed to the entry of African migrants and refugees into South Africa.

The protests at the hospital triggered intense and polarizing debates about the issue of foreign nationals flocking South Africa's borders and subsequently putting a 'burden' on the increasingly fragile public healthcare system (Rafapa, 2022; O'Regan and Banda, 2022). Not only were these activities conducted by Operation Dudula a gross violation of African foreign nationals' human rights, who have a right to access healthcare as set out in the South African Constitution; but more concerning, the lack of effort by law enforcement to immediately stop these violent protests (Rafapa, 2022; O'Regan and Banda, 2022). Yet again, this serves as another significant example of the government's tolerance of prejudice, and more broadly, the normalization of xenophobia in South Africa across various social and political institutions (Ho, 2022).

5.2.4 Weekly and Daily Frequency of Tweets Posted During Anti-Immigrant Protests at Kalafong Hospital in August 2022

Building on the aforementioned, the below bar chart (Figure 5.4) provides a weekly and daily frequency analysis of tweets posted during the first week of the Kalafong Hospital protests (4 August-11 August 2022) when there was intense media coverage of violent intimidations and altercations between Operation Dudula members, patients, and staff (see Appendix H). The frequency analysis on COSMOS showed a total of 862 215 Twitter interactions for that week regarding the protests. Again, this is yet another statistical example of the growing emergence and influence Operation Dudula is having on amplifying public interaction and engagement with online anti-immigrant campaigns in South Africa.

Additionally, a sentiment analysis in Figure 5.5 was conducted for the tweets posted during the first week of the protests at Kalafong Hospital to support the frequency analysis. The pie chart shows that 87.3% of the tweets were found to be highly negative with a -5 score, 9.5% of the tweets were given a -4 score, 2.4% of the tweets were given a -3 score, and 0.5% of the tweets were given a -2 score. This overall high negative sentiment for these protests underpins the

impact of the growing politicization of the public healthcare sector in South Africa by the leaders of various political parties, which continues to intensify the xenophobic climate in the country both online and offline (MSF Southern Africa, 2022).

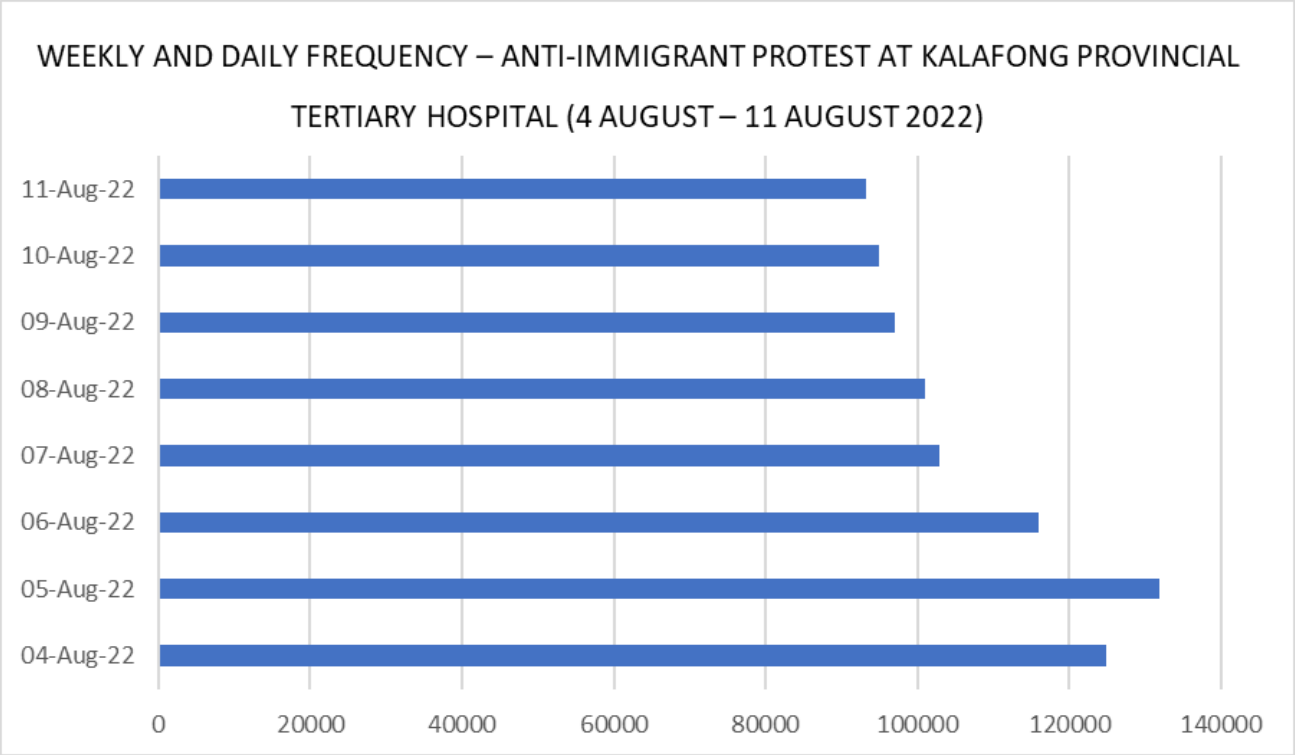


Figure 5.4: *Weekly and daily frequency of tweets posted during anti-immigrant protests at Kalafong Hospital in August 2022*

The below sample of a small portion of the negative tweets posted during the Kalafong protests continues to highlight how deeply embedded xenophobia is across various institutions, and how the *perception* that migrants are to blame for local and national governance issues continues to influence the production and spread of online anti-immigrant discourse in South Africa (Kerr et al., 2019). Moreover, the continued shift towards employing populist tactics to gain supporters and followers, by cynical political actors and movements, by spreading anti-immigrant rhetoric for political mileage, is at the heart of fanning social discord and tensions between both citizens and foreigners in South Africa (Ho, 2022; amaBhungane Reporters, 2022):

1. *''I'm so happy that this is happening, we cannot allow for foreigners to now also hijack our hospitals #KalafongHospital #OperationDudula #ForeignersMustGo''* – (Quote from Twitter User, 8 August 2022).

2. *''We need to open a criminal case against that CEO of Kalafong Hospital, accepting illegal immigrants is criminal #OperationDudula #KalafongHospital #PutSouthAfricansFirst''* – (Quote from Twitter User, 10 August 2022).
3. *''We will keep standing and protecting what is ours. No illegal foreigner will use this hospital, go back to Zim! #KalafongHospital #OperationDudula''* – (Quote from Twitter User, 5 August 2022).
4. *''Nothing will stop us, Kalafong will be the first hospital free of illegal foreigners #OperationDudula #KalafongHospital #PutSouthAfricansFirst''* – (Quote from Twitter User, 4 August 2022).
5. *''Good morning patriots, let's go back to Kalafong Hospital today to protect our hospital #OperationDudula #PutSouthAfricansFirst #KalafongHospital #ForeignersMustGo''* – (Quote from Twitter User, 11 August 2022).

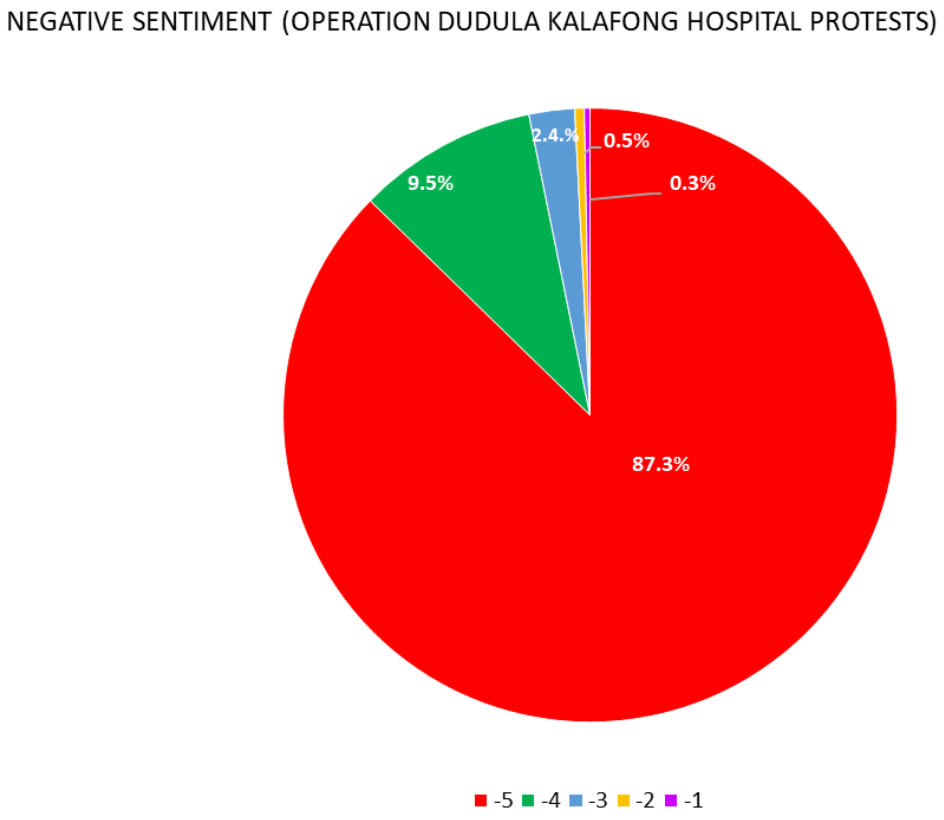


Figure 5.5: *Anti-immigrant protests at Kalafong Hospital (Negative Sentiment)*

5.3 Discussion

The anti-immigrant attitudes and views expressed in most of the tweets analyzed in both Chapters Four and Five can be better accounted for using two of the three *hypotheses of xenophobia*: 'scapegoating' and 'isolation' hypotheses (Harris, 2002). Moreover, Neocosmos (2008) insists that the prevalence of anti-immigrant rhetoric expressed in these online campaigns requires an understanding of anti-immigrant discourse as a *political discourse* (ideologies and consciousness) that has been allowed to arise with impunity in the post-apartheid dispensation as a result of a *politics of fear* towards immigration that has been normalized by both the South African state and society at large. In this case, three major discourses inform the institutionalization of anti-immigrant sentiment and rhetoric in South Africa: 'state discourse of xenophobia', 'discourse of exceptionalism', and the 'discourse of indigeneity' (Neocosmos, 2008).

First, all four socio-economic issues, discussed in Chapter Four, shaping the content posted within these online anti-immigrant campaigns characterized as 'negative' in sentiment, and the frequency of anti-immigrant tweets posted in Figures 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, and 5.5, for instance, linked to public holidays and protest action as previously discussed, capture the *scapegoating hypothesis*, which conceptualizes xenophobia as an attitude of 'frustration' and 'relative deprivation' wherein outsiders are blamed for ongoing social inequalities in the host country. More importantly, this hypothesis accounts for xenophobia in terms of broad social and economic issues (Harris, 2002) that inform the 'deprivation-grievances-discontent' link. The high percentage of tweets captured by COSMOS as highly negative in sentiment points to an increased level of tension and frustration amongst users posting this content on Twitter. As examined, most of the tweets captured a sense of 'deprivation' in terms of access to resources and protection from people perceived to be a barrier and threat to living a more financially prosperous life for mostly black poor and working-class groups. The negative sentiment analyses of the four issues capture subjective feelings of collective dissatisfaction. Indeed, the perception of deprivation provides a psychological level of explanation that is necessarily connected to a more sociological interpretation, wherein these feelings breed frustration which in turn leads to 'scapegoating' (Tshitereke, 1999).

Likewise, Harris (2002) explains that the scapegoating of foreign nationals for various social ills is derived from the psychological effects of deprivation that rests on the perception of socioeconomic realities. In the case of the negative sentiment around the issue of 'joblessness' (see Figure 4.1), Crush and Ramachandran (2014) assert that xenophobia is a result of the structural processes of unequal social development informed by high levels of economic competition and scarcity, and entrenched inequality, unemployment, and poverty experienced by the poor black majority. This trio of socio-economic ills for the poor and destitute influences a way of devising and articulating their relative deprivation to feel a sense of worth through a range of frustration strategies, which includes resorting to xenophobic conflict and violence (Kerr et al., 2019).

Moreover, this hypothesis has been legitimized by the anti-immigrant discourse produced and distributed by the state (Khan, 2021), i.e., the 'state discourse of xenophobia'. This point can be exemplified by the data presented about the Kalafong Hospital protests (Figures 5.4 and 5.5) where the mere *presence* of African foreign nationals in various low-income communities is used as a scapegoat for the problems faced within the overburdened public healthcare system. In this case, the scapegoating of foreign nationals for various socio-economic ills, by drawing on negative myths and stereotypes about African migrants and refugees, can be traced back to former Minister of Home Affairs Mangosotho Buthelezi stating in 1998 that South Africans are competing for scarce resources with millions of 'aliens' who were preventing the government from effectively implementing the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) of 1994 (Neocosmos, 2008; Mutanda, 2022).

These incendiary statements, naturalizing a politics of fear being adopted by the ruling ANC government, have sparked more politicians over the years to spread xenophobic views about Africans from specific nations, such as Nigeria and Zimbabwe, who have long been stereotyped as criminals contributing to the increasing levels of violent crime rates in South Africa. This disinformation has been largely propagated by politicians for their own personal gain (Misago et al., 2010). More importantly, these anti-immigrant attitudes and sentiments have been legitimized within various state institutions such as policing which have contributed to and participated in the ongoing discrimination and demonization of African migrants and refugees.

Second, the *isolation hypothesis* points to the effects of apartheid which heavily emphasized isolating and excluding the majority black population from resources and opportunities, and more broadly, the entire population from the international community (Harris, 2002). Broadly speaking, the legacy of apartheid and the transition to democracy is clearly a factor in the construction of anti-immigrant discourse within these online Twitter campaigns. It takes into consideration the articulation of xenophobia as a product and consequence of large-scale disruptive social and political transition. In the view of Harris (2002), the insulation of previously segregated South Africans from other nationalities beyond its borders during apartheid, combined with the transition to the post-1994 democratic dispensation which opened up the country's borders to various foreign nationals, has induced high levels of intolerance to difference amongst those who remain deeply disenfranchised.

In other words, apartheid's normalization of boundary maintenance, wherein the black majority, especially, was perceived as 'foreign' and 'strange' by the previous National Party (NP) government at the time, has culminated into an internalized intolerance of difference. Similarly, this hypothesis is exemplified by the constant emphasis in some tweets pathologizing foreign nationals through the use of the words 'makwerekwere' and 'shangaan' found in the sentiment analyses conducted in Figures 4.1, 4.3, and 4.4, words that are laden with racial and xenophobic overtones, which further situates the idea of 'foreignness' at the centre of hostility towards black African foreign nationals (Harris, 2002). Indeed, as Morris (1998) argues, the 'foreignness of foreigners' implies something different, unknown, and ultimately perceived as threatening and dangerous.

Additionally, for the issue of 'law enforcement', or the lack thereof, when it comes to the online Twitter discussions concerning the tightening of South Africa's borders, various Twitter posts emphasized the need for ordinary citizens to take the law into their own hands, by 'defending' and 'protecting' the country from 'lawlessness' (see Figure 4.5 and 4.6). Indeed, this nationalist posture taken up by certain Twitter users as defenders of South Africa's 'sovereignty' from foreign nationals, situates these online anti-immigrant campaigns in a context of ongoing transformation and change that continues to find it difficult to assimilate into an environment characterized by high levels of transition, difference, and diversity. Equally, Neocosmos (2006) argues that the changes in the meanings of citizenship during the transition from apartheid to

democracy exemplify this intolerance to difference, where a strong distinction between black South African citizens and black African non-citizens/foreigners was articulated and normalized by the ruling government. The 'new South African citizenship/nationalism' defined by emphasizing a discrete exclusivity of South African citizenship/nationalism (Neocosmos, 2006), has contributed to the high intolerance of African migrants with distinct cultural and physical differences (Harris, 2002; Morris, 1998).

Similarly, Mutanda (2022) points out that public and private urban spaces are still constructed in terms of exclusion rather than inclusion, which has entrenched a sense of competitiveness in terms of social mobility where access to resources and opportunities to improve one's social condition is perceived to be restricted to those holding full citizenship. Likewise, Neocosmos (2008) argues that the exclusionary nature of apartheid has normalized a sense of exceptionalism in post-apartheid South Africa. Given that the country's post-apartheid transition was influenced by values and principles of political liberalism, reconciliation, and democracy, positioning it as one of the most industrialized and advanced country on the continent, there is a sense of false superiority that this has bred amongst a large segment of the population in the country (Neocosmos, 2008).

Indeed, the high circulation of online anti-immigrant sentiment and rhetoric draws from the 'discourse of exceptionalism' where there is a prevalent belief that the rest of Africa is alien, strange, and backward. This discourse is further entrenched by the perception that certain groups of Africans from certain countries are directly associated with poverty, disease, corruption, and primitivism, as has been widely portrayed by mainstream media outlets and politicians for the past two decades in South Africa (Mutanda, 2022; Neocosmos, 2008; Misago et al., 2010). Indeed, the discourse of exceptionalism can be seen in the high negative sentiment of crime in Figure 4.3, for instance, where it was found in some tweets that foreigners from certain African countries such as Nigeria and Mozambique are the prime perpetrators of certain crimes. More importantly, it entrenches a false and misleading belief that these crimes, especially violent forms, will be eradicated if all foreign nationals left South Africa, which would not be the case.

In addition, the isolation hypothesis also draws from a 'discourse of indigeneity' where citizenship is believed to be only founded exclusively on indigeneity (Neocosmos, 2008). Specifically, the narrow understandings of citizenship and belonging inform the belief that

indigeneity is the only way to have access to employment, resources, and other opportunities which are perceived to be exclusively reserved for natives (Neocosmos, 2008). In particular, Neocosmos (2008) argues that the post-apartheid classification of people according to apartheid groupings continues to be an issue present-day, as it constitutes a polarized thinking of politics through the naturalized lens of national and racial stereotypes where *blackness* is stressed in relation to whites rather than Africans. The curation and amplification of the various socio-economic issues framing these online anti-immigrant campaigns discussed in Chapter Four draw on both the discourses of exceptionalism and indigeneity to perpetuate a sense of exclusivity and difference based on social and economic access to various resources, opportunities, and power.

Overall, as the findings of this study have shown in both Chapters Four and Five, the central impact of these online anti-immigrant campaigns has been the articulation and distribution of an anti-immigrant nationalist discourse that is rooted in excluding and alienating African foreign nationals residing in South Africa.

5.3.1 'Framing' of Online Anti-Immigrant Discourse

On the other hand, the data analysis in both Chapters Four and Five illustrates how anti-immigrant rhetoric, the *negative sentiment,* and the *persistence* of this rhetoric, contributes towards building a particular political identity that is rooted in displaying exclusionary practices against African foreigners. Indeed, both chapters have indicated that the dominant form of mobilization in these online anti-immigrant campaigns is shaped by an exclusive social and/or political identity. Specifically, in terms of the framing theory, the articulation and interpretation of these views, especially their frequency, are influenced by the construction of online anti-immigrant discourse in six different ways:

(1) *Organizing:* the nature in which a frame successfully, comprehensively, and/or completely organizes information (Reese, Gandy, and Grant, 2001; Linström and Marais, 2012). As fragmented and sporadic these politically-affiliated formations and conversations are, as a result of the free and open-ended nature of Twitter, there is still a powerful internal cohesion of connected users informing the persistence of these campaigns (amaBhungane Reporters, 2022). In the sense that the articulation of #PutSouthAfricansFirst, and its offshoot #OperationDudula, have successfully leveraged the politically-coordinated offline dynamics of anti-immigrant sentiment. Furthermore, extended it to online spaces not only to continue amplifying and driving

these views and attitudes but with the goal of deepening tensions between both citizens and foreigners (CABC, 2022b; Onslow, 2021).

(2) *Principles:* this points to the use of abstract mechanisms by which messages are constructed and amplified (Reese et al., 2001; Linström and Marais, 2012). As illustrated in the discussion of the various socio-economic issues articulated in the tweets in Chapter Four, and the frequency of these issues in this chapter, a broad variety of mostly socially divisive content has been coordinated through the use of Twitter's features, particularly *hashtags*. Indeed, the tweets posted alongside the popular politically-connected hashtags allow for these conversations to be easily discoverable and accessible to masses of people in more threaded and organized ways.

(3) *Shared:* similar to the above, this builds on the use of various abstract mechanisms—the streamlining of information using hashtags in the case of these online campaigns—to ensure information is diffused and accessed on a larger and more significant scale (Reese et al., 2001; Linström and Marais, 2012).

(4) *Persistent:* building on the previous two frames, the use of Twitter's mechanisms to distribute information on a larger scale also increases the durability and persistence of an issue/event over a prolonged period of time (Reese et al., 2001; Linström and Marais, 2012). In terms of these anti-immigrant campaigns, as discussed in the frequency analysis, the use of popular hashtags peaked at varying times during significant events such as the anti-immigrant protests at Kalafong Hospital in Atteridgeville, Pretoria (Figure. 5.4). Indeed, previous research studies and the data collected for this study show that #PutSouthAfricansFirst and #OperationDudula have remained persistent, even if sporadically since their launches in 2020 and 2021, respectively (CABC, 2022b; amaBhungane Reporters, 2022; DFRLab, 2020a).

(5) *Symbolically:* this points to the effect that 'symbolic' forms of expression have on influencing and shaping people's perception of reality (Reese et al., 2001; Linström and Marais, 2012). In terms of these campaigns, Twitter has been leveraged in powerfully symbolic ways by users engaging in these campaigns, as the following CDA will demonstrate in the next chapter, thus encouraging a one-dimensional application of nationalism deeply rooted in xenophobic/Afrophobic attitudes.

(6) *Structure:* this refers to the use of frames in establishing identifiable practices or patterns (Reese et al., 2001; Linström and Marais, 2012), that is, ensuring that a dominant status quo remains. In this case, the expression and positioning of an anti-immigrant nationalism by various users in the findings discussed in both chapters operate in varied ways to reinforce and legitimize current social relations through an 'us-versus-them' dichotomy and group identity.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter set out to expand on the arguments and findings raised and discussed in Chapter Four by analyzing the frequency of randomized subsets of the overall 3.5 million tweets collected for data analysis in this research study. In particular, using the frequency analysis charts generated by COSMOS, it aimed to illustrate various ways in which these online Twitter hashtag campaigns have been heightened to alienate and demonize African foreign nationals residing in South Africa from four related and distinct perspectives: (1) the daily frequency of the top four hashtags (2020-2022); (2) the daily frequency of tweets posted on significant public holidays (2020-2022); (3) the daily frequency of tweets posted during notable protest events (2020-2022); and (4) the weekly and daily frequency of tweets posted during the anti-immigrant protests at Kalafong Hospital in August 2022.

It provided a quantified frequency summary of the ways in which online anti-immigrant campaigns have been co-opted and legitimized by various groups of politically-connected users to alienate, demonize, and exclude African migrants and refugees residing in South Africa. More importantly, as previously mentioned, to further stimulate anti-immigrant sentiment about African foreign nationals. The frequency analysis of the tweets posted during notable protest events, particularly during the anti-immigrant protests at Kalafong Hospital in Atteridgeville, Pretoria for instance, illustrates how the increased sporadic engagement with these online hashtag campaigns on Twitter is triggered and connected to the offline protest activities of politically-affiliated anti-immigrant movements linked to the faction of the broader Put South Africans First movement, that is, Operation Dudula.

Last, it provided a concluding discussion of the implications of the issues and arguments raised in Chapters Four and Five—particularly linking the empirical issues raised in both chapters to the broader politics of xenophobic conflict and violence that continue to shape the effects of rising levels of social unrest within post-apartheid South Africa. This discussion set out to

underpin the main argument put forward in the introductory chapter of this study that the broader contentious politics of citizenship and/or belonging are a key background force in fuelling virulent online xenophobic opinions and beliefs about African foreign nationals residing in South Africa. Also, a brief account was provided of how these issues have been 'framed', i.e., constructed, to depict a dominant and skewed representation of reality at the expense of African foreign nationals. Overall, coupled with the analysis of the sentiment and geospatial distribution of the tweets collected, this frequency analysis of the tweets also illustrated how the overriding goal of these online anti-immigrant campaigns on Twitter is to further stimulate and drive xenophobic rhetoric and sentiment in South Africa.

CHAPTER SIX: CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS (CDA) OF ANTI-IMMIGRANT TWEETS

6.1 Introduction

Building on the previous two chapters that focused on analyzing the four main socio-economic issues shaping online anti-immigrant sentiment and rhetoric from different types of analysis; from a qualitative perspective and using the theories that frame this study as a lens, this chapter provides a critical discourse analysis (CDA) of the tweets collected. It describes and analyzes in detail how a dominant ideological position is discursively articulated and reinforced in the construction and distribution of online anti-immigrant campaigns on Twitter in South Africa.

In order to build on and strengthen the validity of claims presented in the previous two chapters, an in-depth CDA is conducted through the use of various linguistic and discursive strategies deployed by individual Twitter users to curate, spread, and legitimize online anti-immigrant campaigns in South Africa. This chapter argues that, through the deployment of various linguistic and discursive strategies, *language* is used as a discursive tool to assert a pro-anti-immigrant *nationalist* ideological position that contributes to the crude othering and alienation of black African migrants and refugees living in South Africa. The construction and legitimization of this ideological position also accounts for the 'who', 'what', and 'why' in the mobilization and persistence of these online anti-immigrant campaigns.

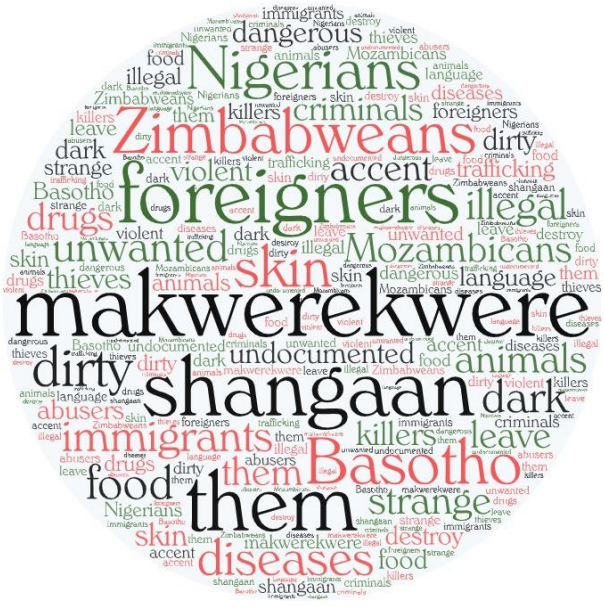
Specifically, the CDA is illustrated in four interrelated ways: (1) using word-cloud diagrams generated by COSMOS to account for the representation of 'us' and 'others' through the scrutinization of various frequent words, i.e., keywords, present in the majority of the tweets collected; (2) a linguistic analysis of the textual (micro) features of the tweets; (3) linking the micro level of analysis with the sociocultural (macro) impact on South African society by conducting a discursive analysis of the tweets; and (4) discussing the dominant ideological positioning and effect of the aforementioned issues presented.

6.2 Representation of 'Us' and 'Others' (Keyword Analysis)

The below word-cloud diagrams (Figures 6.1 and 6.2) are a summary of the most frequent words (the size of the font corresponds to the low/high frequency of use) that appeared in the 3.5 million tweets collected through COSMOS. In terms of the positive 'us'-representation (Figure

6.1), frequently deployed words in the tweets included ‘South Africa’, ‘first’, ‘united’, ‘ours’, ‘defend’, ‘love’, ‘together’, ‘us’ and ‘patriots’, all showing a strong appeal to patriotism and nationalism to endow citizens with positive properties. Moreover, positive sentiment scores of 4 and 5 were observed for the ‘us’ diagram in the overall data analysis on COSMOS. On the other hand, a negative ‘others’-representation of black African foreigners (Figure 6.2) was employed through the frequent use of words such as ‘makwerekwere’, ‘shangaan’, ‘dirty’, ‘animals’, ‘foreigners’, ‘them’, ‘skin’, ‘illegal’, ‘criminals’, ‘Nigerians’, ‘Basotho’, and ‘Mozambicans’. The articulation of the ‘others’ group relies heavily on solidifying a nationalist attitude and position through covert and overt expressions of anti-immigrant prejudice and discrimination. In this case, a negative sentiment score of -4 and -5 was mostly observed. Likewise, as highlighted in previous studies of the recent online upsurge in ‘xenophobic nationalism’—catalyzed by the #PutSouthAfricansFirst movement on various social media platforms in South Africa (CABC, 2022a; DFRLab, 2020a; 2020b; amaBhungane Reporters, 2022)—the articulation of an ‘us’ versus ‘them’ attitude and position is central to maintaining difference in countries with a high intolerance toward migrants (Harris, 2002).





Figures 6.1 and 6.2: *Frequent and dominant words describing the ‘us-group’ and ‘others-group’*

In terms of the CDA, Wodak (2001) explains that discourse, especially the deployment of various ideologies, can be used in interesting ways to construct, maintain, and legitimize social tensions and divisions. The frequent words identified in the online anti-immigrant campaigns

employ linguistic strategies of *repetition*, *metaphors*, and *hyperbole* to maintain a sense of solidarity for the 'us-group' and hostility for the 'others-group', to further consolidate some form of superiority over the latter (Locke, 2004). To better elucidate how the deployment of language has been carefully curated, weaponized, and legitimized to spread ideologically aligned online anti-immigrant sentiment, an analysis of the 'metafunctions of language' from three interrelated positions is undertaken throughout the rest of this chapter. First, the *interpersonal* metafunction explicates the process of social interaction occurring that has been influenced by a particular discourse; second, the *textual* metafunction scrutinizes the coherence of a text by seeking to understand the interplay between various linguistic elements; and third, the *ideational* metafunction involves the (ideational) construction of our social experiences through ideologies, for example (Halliday, 1994).

In this case, the representation of both the 'us'- and 'others'-groups through the above frequently mentioned words can be analyzed using Fairclough's (1992) 'social theory of discourse'. In terms of this theory, Fairclough (1992) argues that language functions in two interrelated ways linked to the interpersonal metafunction. First, the *identity* function is concerned with how social identity and subjectivity are constructed and maintained, and second, the *relational* function is concerned with how the former affects how relationships between people are constructed (Fairclough, 1992). In terms of the words deployed to distinguish the boundary between the 'us' and 'others' group, for example, the use of 'united' or 'together' to describe citizens juxtaposed with the use of 'makwerekwere' to describe foreigners are emotionally-charged words that have influenced and shaped the identities of users participating in these campaigns.

Similarly, amaBhungane Reporters (2022) found in their research into the prevalence of online anti-immigrant campaigns in South Africa that complimentary and derogatory words are heavily weaponized in the articulation of these Twitter campaigns through the creation of 'follow train' echo chambers. The persistence of these online campaigns has been attributed to the successful use of Twitter's core features such as the 'follow' and 'retweet' functions. In terms of these functions, it was found that the initial rise in the engagement and retweeting of #PutSouthAfricansFirst, connected to popular accounts such as the now suspended *@uLerato_pillay*, helped to connect different users through 'follow-and-retweet requests' at a much faster rate to turn these campaigns into a 'fully connected network' of disinformation and

propaganda (amaBhungane Reporters, 2022). The repeated use of the various words highlighted in Figures 6.1 and 6.2, coupled with the various hashtags to amplify user engagement, has reinforced and legitimized a hyper-connected community of like-minded Twitter users contributing to its persistent internal cohesion (amaBhungane Reporters, 2022). Furthermore, amaBhungane Reporters (2022) argue that the categorization of 'us' versus 'others' relies on tactics of mis/disinformation through the repeated use of specific phrases and words that reinforce an exclusionary and discriminatory attitude towards African foreign nationals.

Through the use and spread of these dominant words by various Twitter users, a distinct anti-immigrant social identity is articulated and embraced ('identity function'), and using the free and open-ended functions of Twitter to increase the volume of connectivity, relationships between users are formed, albeit virtually, to create and maintain a hyper-connected community of online users with shared opinions and interests ('relational function') (Fairclough, 1992; van Stekelenburg and Klandermans, 2009).

Additionally, a *text analysis* can be deployed to further consider these two functions, focusing on vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, and text structure. To analyze both the word-cloud diagrams in this sense, the 'vocabulary' component of the text analysis, which focuses on dissecting the use, meanings, and implications of individual words, is of relevance to this particular portion of the data.

In both word-cloud diagrams, the words used to ascribe the 'us'- and 'others'-group, citizens and foreigners respectively, with positive and negative properties, can be exemplified by Bhatia's (2006) three principal strategies of 'negativity' and 'positivity' that are employed in the creation and distribution of discourse:

1. *Achieve common ground or mutual understanding*: in Figure 6.1, the use of words/phrases such as 'South Africa', 'first', 'united', 'us', and 'together' accompanied by the relevant hashtags, infers a positive and united image of this group, promoting the patriotic beliefs and interests of citizens; whereas in Figure 6.2, the use of words such as 'makwerekwere', 'illegal', 'Zimbabweans', 'Nigerians', 'Mozambicans', and 'criminals' infers a negative and fragmented image of this group that the us-group needs to be increasingly sceptical of.

2. *Expression of praise and politically-motivated appreciation and/or criticism*: the spread of words such as 'love', 'legal', 'united', and 'patriots' in the construction of the us-group is deployed to consolidate a patriotic position that purports to not be xenophobic by invoking patriotic sentiment; whereas, the use of words such as 'makwerekwere', especially the singling out of certain nationalities such as 'Nigerians' is deployed to shape a negative, separate, and overall anti-immigrant position against those of black African descent particularly.
3. *Expression of differences*: the use of words such as 'legal' for the us-group contrasted with words such as 'illegal', 'shangaan', 'makwerekwere', and reference to the physical features of foreign nationals such as 'accent', 'dirty', and 'skin', is used to further entrench the cultural differences between the two groups and justify the widespread rhetoric that foreign nationals are to blame for various social ills in South Africa.

Equally, CABC (2022a) found in their research that these strategies are primary methods deployed by individual Twitter users to spread mis/disinformation and manipulate public opinion about the presence of African foreign nationals in South Africa.

'Us' versus 'Others' Representation	
Categories	**Themes**
	'Us' (Positive)
1. South Africans as *victims*	
'stolen', 'victims', 'unemployed', 'housing', 'crime', 'lack', 'government', 'belong', 'ours'	
2. South Africans as *superior*	
'first', 'land', 'united', 'good', 'together', 'belong', 'ours'	
3. South Africans as *defenders*	
'law-and-order', 'evict', 'remove', 'deport', 'protect', 'policing', 'illegal documents', 'patriots'	
	'Others' (Negative)
1. Foreigners as *criminals*	
'drugs', 'rapists', 'destruction', 'traffickers'	
2. Foreigners as *burden*	
'disease', 'dirty', 'waste', 'jobs', 'resources', 'stealing'	
3. Foreigners as *outsiders*	

	‘illegal’, ‘makwerekwere’, ‘shangaan’, ‘dirty’, ‘accents’, ‘animals’, ‘deport’, ‘immigration control’

Table 1: *'Us' versus 'Others' representation*

Building on the aforementioned, Table 1 provides a grouping of the use of the frequent/dominant words found in the word-cloud diagrams into various categories that endows the ‘us-group’ with positive characteristics and the ‘others-group’ with negative characteristics. As Reese et al. (2001) argue, social media has emerged as a powerful online public platform with various organizing principles (e.g., hashtags) that are widely shared, persistent, and work in symbolic ways to structure our social world meaningfully. In this case, *nationalism* is the dominant and central organizing ideology wherein various sentiments about both citizens and foreigners, through the use of hashtags and keywords, are framed, organized, and shared in mostly polarizing ways. A typology of ‘common frames’ (Neuman, Just, and Crigler, 1992) can be considered here to assess the ways in which nationalism is constructed and spread through the repetition of biased and emotionally-charged words.

The first category of the ‘us-group’, where South Africans are portrayed as ‘victims’ of the increased entry of foreign nationals into the country, forms part of the broader scapegoating of both legal and illegal African foreign nationals for draining opportunities and resources in South Africa. The words that have been used to shape this kind of discourse such as ‘ours’, ‘belong’, ‘unemployed’, and ‘stolen’, are illustrative of the ‘human impact’ frame that relies on describing a homogenous group of people affected by a certain event or issue (Neuman et al., 1992). Through the use of these words, there is the deployment of nationalism as a form of solidarity that relies on establishing themselves as victims of the perceived ‘consequences’ of immigration such as crime and unemployment. As observed by Tshitereke (1999) and Harris (2002), there is a sense of frustration and anger displayed by citizens who feel that their basic human rights, as set out in the Constitution of South Africa, are being denied by the increased presence of African foreign nationals. More importantly, it shows the impact of offline propaganda spread by various cynical South African politicians seeking expediency where foreigners are repeatedly blamed for the country’s socio-economic problems (CABC, 2022a; 2022b; Ho, 2022).

The second category shows a range of words used to portray the us-group as ‘superior’ such as ‘first’, ‘ours’, and ‘united’. This is an example of the ‘powerlessness’ frame which points to the

dominance of one group over another (Neuman et al., 1992). It is indicative of the growing intolerance of cultural differences in the form of foreign nationals which breeds resentment from citizens in the host country. The individual feelings of frustration, anger, and resentment result in the us-group seeking to address this powerlessness, which is perceived to be exacerbated by the presence and activities carried out by foreign nationals, through various collective expressions of superiority such as conflict and violence. Likewise, amaBhungane Reporters (2022) and Onslow (2021) argue that the need to evince superiority over those deemed inferior through the spread of anti-immigrant sentiment on Twitter works to increasingly alienate and stimulate these feelings about certain groups of African foreigners.

Last, the third category, where the us-group is portrayed as 'defenders' of South Africa, depicts a range of words such as 'law-and-order', 'evict', and 'deport' that reflect the real-world application of power/dominance. The expression of this patriotic sentiment is increasingly influenced by the growing offline violent demonstrations by anti-immigrant and vigilante groups such as Operation Dudula masquerading as 'defenders' of the rule of law which they feel is being increasingly eroded by the growing presence of illegal African foreign nationals in South Africa (Bornman, 2021). In terms of nationalist rhetoric being propagated to convey power and/or dominance, this points to various individual Twitter accounts, especially those linked to #OperationDudula, using this rhetoric to threaten outbreaks of conflict and violence such as the forceful removals of undocumented foreign nationals by members of this vigilante group (Evans, 2022). The nationalist tone that these words carry is an example of the 'conflict' frame, referring to the conflict between various individuals, groups, and institutions (Neuman et al., 1992). In this case, it culminates from the frustration and deprivation felt in the aforementioned categories, and through the de-facto role of defending 'law and order' due to the perceived failures of the government to enforce more stringent border and immigration control (CABC, 2022a, 2022b; amaBhungane Reporters, 2022).

Conversely, the 'others-group' in Table 1 is characterized by categories that reflect the demonization of black African foreigners especially. In the first category where foreigners are portrayed as 'criminals', words such as 'drugs', 'rapists', and 'traffickers' are a reflection of the widespread offline and online sentiment that foreigners are to blame for high levels of violent crime in South Africa. Yet again the scapegoating of foreigners takes centre stage, highlighting

the need to exclude and alienate foreigners through the spread of disinformation (CABC, 2022a). As Mamabolo (2015) insists, these findings point to numerous instances of nationalism oscillating between frustration and disdain for the high entry of black African migrants into South Africa. Similarly, the second category, the others-group as a 'burden', builds on the previous category where various words such as 'disease', 'waste', and 'resources' are deployed to point to the perceived burden of foreigners on employment opportunities and public resources, and overall, as the reason for high levels of unemployment and poverty. Furthermore, this category takes the form of the 'conflict' frame to harness social tension and conflict between citizens and foreigners.

Last, the third category, the others-group as 'outsiders', which also utilizes the 'conflict' frame in crude ways, rests on the use of words such as 'makwerekwere', 'animals', and 'dirty' that are explicitly xenophobic, racist, and dangerous. Also, the use of these powerful words is an example of the deployment of the 'moral values frame' where the morals, values, and beliefs of foreign nationals are believed to be eroding those of the host country through various criminal acts, for instance (Neuman et al., 1992). The pervasive narrative that African immigrants are job snatchers and criminals through the use of these words in this category points to the use of nationalism in the 'responsibility frame', wherein certain individuals or groups are attributed the responsibility of causing an issue or problem (Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000). The use of these polarizing words further contributes to the othering of certain groups of African foreign nationals. Specifically, the use of divisive nationalist language in these online anti-immigrant campaigns to entrench an 'us' versus 'them' dichotomy, where foreigners are repeatedly scapegoated and alienated, has been observed by various research studies as emblematic of the rapid rise in right-wing tactics employed by certain politically-connected individuals and groups to incite both online and offline collective forms of action and protest in post-apartheid South Africa (Bornman, 2021; amaBhungane Reporters, 2022; CABC, 2022a).

Sample of Anti-Immigrant Tweets		
Number (No.)	**Tweet**	**Date**
1	''There is no such thing as a 'xenophobia'…the media uses this term to divide us…xenophobia se gaat! asking for foreigners to leave means we LOVE our country #PutSouthAfricansFirst''	10 July 2021

2	‘’These guys from Nigeria and Mozambique are coming here with drugs and weapons, we need to remove all of them #PutSouthAfricaFirst #ForeignersMustGo’’	18 January 2022
3	‘’We are seen as foreigners in their countries, why when they come to South Africa we must acknowledge them as one of us, njani? #ForeignersMustGo #PutSouthAfricaFirst #OperationDudula’’	16 November 2021
4	‘’We will go and raid there in Hillbrow to protect our people, we can’t have terrorists living for mahala [free] in South Africa, they must produce documents or go #PutSouthAfricansFirst #ForeignersMustGo #OperationDudula’’	17 February 2022
5	‘’Now we are hearing from Cele that the perpetrators of the gang rape in Krugersdorp are foreigners? You see the problems these people are bringing us. We will not stop calling for their removal! #PutSouthAfricansFirst #ForeignersMustGo’’	10 August 2022
6	‘’If showing support for my country by asking for foreigners to leave is ‘xenophobic’ then so be it, I AM XENOPHOBIC #PutSouthAfricansFirst #ForeignersMustGo’’	8 October 2020
7	‘’Its these shangaan illegal miners from Mozambique and Lesotho that are coming here committing all these crimes. Where is the border control from this useless government?? #PutSouthAfricaFirst’’	5 December 2020
8	‘’It is not up for debate anymore, are you guys seeing these high levels of unemployment? There are no South Africans working in most of our restaurants. These people from Zim are the problem, we must stop letting them in #PutSouthAfricaFirst #OperationDudula #ForeignersMustGo’’	17 June 2021
9	‘’It won’t solve all our problems, but removing all foreigners- black or white, Zimbabwean or Asian, illegal or legal, will make life much better here in South Africa #PutSouthAfricansFirst #PutSouthAfricaFirst’’	17 December 2020

10	‘’These makwerekwere are coming here benefiting from opportunities that are supposed to be created for South Africans, how can this be? It must be nice to be a makwerekwere you can come to South Africa and start business without documentation. I’ve never seen anything like this in other countries #PutSouthAfricaFirst #ForeignersMustGo’’	4 August 2021
11	‘’If immigration laws can’t be implemented and enforced properly by this so called ‘government’ then we must take matters in our hands to protect our country and border – we are not bullies, we are patriots of a country we love! #PutSouthAfricansFirst #PutSouthAfricaFirst #OperationDudula #ForeignersMustGo’’	30 January 2022
12	‘’Let me break it down for some of you: Mozambicans and Basotho -illegal mining Zimbabweans – rape and murder Nigerians – sex and drug trafficking These are the biggest contributors to our problems here in South Africa – we need them out immediately! #PutSouthAfricaFirst #PutSouthAfricansFirst #ForeignersMustGo #OperationDudula’’	24 September 2021
13	‘’We have a right to express how we feel about foreigners. There’s no other country in the world where you’ll see South Africans taking over cities and areas like its done here by illegal immigrants. We are tired of them #PutSouthAfricaFirst #ForeignersMustGo’’	25 March 2021

Table 2: *Sample of anti-immigrant tweets*

The above sample of tweets in Table 2 was selected from a qualitative table overview generated by COSMOS (see Appendix I) that provides a summary of the various parameters of analysis identified in the collection of tweets. Initially, for this portion of data analysis, 1.5 million tweets of the total 3.5 million were selected using #PutSouthAfricansFirst, #PutSouthAfricaFirst, #OperationDudula, and #ForeignersMustGo. However, in order to provide a more detailed and precise qualitative analysis of the tweets a subset of 250,000 tweets was generated focusing on the overwhelmingly negative sentiment of the collection. In this subset, 87% of the tweets were

found to be highly negative with most of them ranging between a negative -4 and -5 sentiment score. Furthermore, a snapshot of at least 20 tweets was then taken on COSMOS of the most negative tweets within the subset of 250,000, where 13 of them deemed interesting to conduct a thorough CDA were selected.

The above sample of thirteen tweets will be deciphered from the two critically interrelated perspectives of the micro (linguistic) and macro (sociocultural) effects of the online anti-immigrant discourse to demonstrate how these tweets are ideologically shaped by struggles over resources and power. Specifically, it builds on Table 1 in a more detailed manner, using full texts, to further illustrate the 'us' versus 'them' positive and negative representation of citizens and foreigners respectively. As the discourse analysis will demonstrate, the strategies deployed by various Twitter users in the production and distribution of anti-immigrant sentiment, through textual expressions of discrimination and prejudice, present and support the perpetual offline and online practices of conflict and violence against African foreign nationals in South Africa (Onslow, 2021).

As a point of departure, Fairclough's (1995a) 'dimensions of discourse and discourse analysis' (see Figure 2.2) will shape this discussion, focusing on the 'sociocultural practice', 'discourse practice', and 'text' to understand more deeply how these online anti-immigrant campaigns on Twitter are socially and discursively embedded in powerful and influential ways. First, *sociocultural practice* refers to the immediate situation, conditions, and/or context that has given rise to the hegemony of particular discourses (Fairclough, 1995a; Locke, 2004). As discussed in the literature that frames this study, since the transition to a democratic political dispensation which opened up its borders to various groups of people, especially African foreign nationals, coupled with the lack of socio-economic growth for the nation's black and poor majority, there has been a sharp rise in xenophobic attitudes and violence in response to rising social and economic issues in South Africa (Pineteh, 2017).

All thirteen tweets provided in Table 2 reflect and reinforce the lasting impact of the continuous scapegoating and stereotyping of African foreign nationals, especially those from certain countries such as Nigeria, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique, crystallized by the media and politicians alike since the late 1990s (Neocosmos, 2008). Moreover, these tweets provide empirical evidence that embodies the various hypotheses for xenophobia (Harris, 2002; Tshitereke, 1999)

discussed in the previous chapter. Specifically, popular social media platforms such as Twitter have become an extended remote and virtual space for anti-immigrant groups on the ground to continue amplifying and legitimizing anti-immigrant beliefs and attitudes that are rooted in falsehoods about the perceived socio-economic impact of African foreigners residing in South Africa. For example, tweets no. 2, 4, 5, 8, and 10 in Table 2 explicitly blame foreign nationals for various social ills such as crime and joblessness. Moreover, the legitimization of various stereotypes about certain nationalities as the most dangerous and unwanted, as two individual Twitter users express in tweets no. 2 and 12 about Nigerians, Zimbabweans, Basotho, and Mozambicans allegedly perpetrating various violent forms of crime.

Second, *discourse practice* entails how a text is produced, distributed, received, and interpreted by individuals (Fairclough, 1995a; Locke, 2004). It focuses on how discourses, crystallized by various sociocultural conditions and contexts that affect people's lives, are shaped, influenced, and legitimized. In this case, the rise and persistence of online anti-immigrant campaigns have been afforded the ability to operate with impunity through the use of Twitter's features and functions of retweets, follows, likes, and replies. These have to be utilized by Twitter users to amplify the circulation of anti-immigrant rhetoric streamlined by the relevant popular hashtags. As previously mentioned, the persistent nature of these online campaigns can be originally attributed to the circulation of anti-immigrant sentiment under the guise and stance of 'patriotism' by a sophisticated network of anonymous users and influencers linked to mainstream and offshoot political parties such as ActionSA, ATM, and the PA (CABC, 2022b; amaBhungane Reporters, 2022).

In the case of #PutSouthAfricansFirst, this sample of thirteen tweets provided is emblematic of these political parties adopting 'multi-level' strategies to harness support by engaging different users at different levels (amaBhungane Reporters, 2022). In the Twitter space specifically, certain 'influencers' linked to these parties have been recruited to gain more followers using the hashtag to spread the more extreme false agendas and narratives attached to African foreigners. The actual leaders of these parties will however take a more moderate stance and post content with the same hashtags that are tailored in more politically correct ways (DFRLab, 2020a; amaBhungane Reporters, 2022). As the data has revealed throughout the sentiment and frequency analyses in the previous chapters, political actors and parties tailoring their messages

at different levels has been successful up to this point as these online campaigns continue to gain high traction at different times. More specifically, as previously mentioned, CABC (2022b) and amaBhungane Reporters (2022) found that certain politically-affiliated influencers or users who kickstarted the #PutSouthAfricansFirst movement on social media in 2020 are using 'follow trains' (retweet-and-follow requests) to form various networks of individual Twitter users who then interact with one another to grow, amplify, and radicalize the impact and reach of these campaigns.

Also, the sample of tweets provided in Table 2 exemplifies the cumulative and insidious effect of these online anti-immigrant campaigns becoming fully and hyper-connected networks of mis/disinformation. Even though the sentiment is rooted in genuine social grievances that need to be addressed by the ruling government, the overwhelmingly extreme and biased content posted about foreign nationals are deliberate attempts to deepen social divisions between South Africans and African foreign nationals (Onslow, 2021; CABC, 2022a; 2022b). The implicit and explicit scapegoating of mostly African foreign nationals through the continued persistence of these online campaigns since 2020, reinforces the successful impact they are having on those who engage daily in spreading virulent anti-immigrant content online about foreign nationals. Furthermore, recent research studies have shown that this rapid propagation of xenophobic nationalist views in these campaigns since 2020 has solidified their internal cohesion, which should also be construed as microcosms of larger violent xenophobic outbreaks on the ground present-day (Bornman, 2021; CABC, 2022a; 2022b; amaBhungane Reporters, 2022).

Also, it should be noted that the prevalence of deeply xenophobic words such as 'makwerekwere' and 'shangaan' in the construction and distribution of anti-immigrant discourse both offline and online—informed by the alienation of people based on physical and cultural differences—highlights how deeply entrenched the practice of *other-ing* is in South Africa (Mathebula, 2019). The constant use of these words reinforces a politics of identity articulated by an 'us' versus 'them' mentality taken up by local citizens. Specifically, the *biocultural hypothesis* accounts for xenophobia at the level of physical differences, wherein certain groups of foreign nationals are also targeted for their differentiated biological and/or cultural features (Harris, 2002). As Morris (1998) argues, physical features, bearing, clothing, accent, and/or inability to speak one of the indigenous languages of the host country, all play a role in which

outside groups of people are discriminately targeted, especially as scapegoats in this case. Moreover, in South Africa, the articulation of this hypothesis is not applied equally to all foreign nationals (Harris, 2002). That is not to say that Asians and Whites do not experience xenophobia, but relative to black African foreigners, there is a lower risk of hostility towards them both online and offline (Langa and Kiguwa, 2016).

Likewise, in Figure 5.4 in Chapter Five, for example, the denial of 'foreign-looking' patients and staff members at Kalafong Hospital in Atteridgeville, Pretoria by Operation Dudula protesters based on language and accent is a prime example of this hypothesis. Furthermore, as shown in Table 2, certain nationalities, such as Nigerians, Basotho, Zimbabweans, and Mozambicans, are at a greater risk of experiencing hostility and violence driven by long-standing stereotypes and tropes about them (CABC, 2022a). And paradoxically, even South Africans who appear to fit the biological-cultural markers that are 'normally' associated with a certain segment of foreign nationals, such as the native Venda and Tsonga people, are also victims of anti-immigrant and/or xenophobic aggression (Mamabolo, 2015). Specifically, the derogatory use of *Shangaan* —a tribal group that forms part of the broader Tsonga ethnic group mostly native to Mozambique and South Africa—as an ethnic and xenophobic slur expressed against African foreign nationals in Figure 6.2 and tweet no. 7 in Table 2, underpins that South Africans who appear to be 'foreign' are also not exempt from this aggression both online and offline (Desai, 2008).

The targeting of South African Tsonga and Venda people, a social group whose language is discernibly different from the dominant Nguni and/or Sotho languages, forms an important part of the complexities of the articulation of xenophobia in South Africa. Additionally, skin complexion and other distinct bodily/facial features that are considered to reside similarly to those of black African foreign nationals play a part in relegating certain Tsonga and Venda people to the periphery of black 'South African-ness' (Mamabolo, 2015; Mathebula, 2019). These online campaigns reproduce the offline practice of black 'South African-ness' which is a concept that goes beyond geography, nationality, and/or citizenship (Mathebula, 2019). As Desai (2008) and Mamabolo (2015) maintain, it is a set of beliefs, values, traditions, and behaviours informed by various agents of socialization that maintain hierarchies of difference wherein certain groups are seen as the 'norm' and others as the 'outlier'. In this sense, the biological-

cultural hypothesis of xenophobia is an important account of how the othering of foreign nationals is also tied to the othering of 'ambiguous' black South Africans (Mathebula, 2019).

In various tweets discussed here, it is clear to see that the biological-cultural markers of foreignness operate as powerful discursive constructs in the organization and persistence of online anti-immigrant campaigns in South Africa. In other words, it gives people a point of reference for whom to target based on various physical indicators reproduced by the media and politicians, and the lasting effects of sporadic violent outbreaks on the ground (Desai, 2008). The constant referral to the physical features of certain black African foreign nationals in some of the tweets analyzed throughout this chapter, to distinctly indicate *which* groups of African foreign nationals need to leave the country, reveals a disproportionate application of anti-immigrant rhetoric towards these groups that is heavily predicated on the 'physical' as a signifier of foreignness (Harris, 2002).

As depicted in Table 2, the targeting of certain nationalities, linked to various physical and cultural markers, was apparent in a large segment of the tweets analyzed where Zimbabweans, Nigerians, and Mozambicans, etc., are declared to be the main perpetrators of various crimes such as rape, drug trafficking, and illegal mining. The asymmetrical application of xenophobia towards certain groups of black African foreigners is a constant theme in the group of tweets presented in Table 2, which in turn further entrenches intolerance towards foreignness in both crudely tangible (visible) and intangible (psycho-social) ways (Harris, 2002). More importantly, this foreignness shifts and adapts itself during different circumstances and times, subsequently informing its socio-cultural effects through various collective forms of action such as these online anti-immigrant campaigns.

The prevalence of online anti-immigrant sentiment and rhetoric on Twitter in South Africa discussed and analyzed throughout this chapter so far, especially in Table 2, can be further conceptualized using Stephan and Stephan's integrated threat theory (ITT) (Stephan and Stephan, 2000). The theory proposes that the negative, discriminatory, and prejudicial views and attitudes towards African immigrants and refugees (out-group) can be characterized by four types of threats: *realistic threat, symbolic threat, negative stereotypes,* and *intergroup anxiety* (Croucher, 2017). First, in Table 2, 'realistic threat' is portrayed in tweets no. 5 and 6 where the motivation to spread discriminatory and inflammatory opinions about the presence of African

foreign nationals is rooted in the desire to protect the social and economic interests of local citizens (in-group). In tweets no. 7 and 12, for example, the generalization of certain groups of foreigners from particular nations comes from a perceived threat to the economic and political power, and material well-being of natives (Stephan and Stephan, 2000), in a country where access to power and resources for the poor majority is limited by their inferior socio-economic standing.

Second, the more explicit and inflammatory opinions and views articulated in these online anti-immigrant campaigns through the use of words such as 'makwerekwere', 'shangaan', and 'terrorists' expressed in tweets no. 4, 7, and 10, are examples of the 'symbolic threat' that foreigners pose to citizens. These tweets reveal that there are false perceptions associated with foreign nationals as a result of various signifiers of difference (e.g., cultural and physical characteristics) that are applied to them. Also, the sense of superiority that has been espoused in the various tweets analyzed is invoked to protect the in-group's culture or way of life (Croucher, 2017). As pointed out by Harris (2002), the differentiated beliefs, morals, values, and standards that 'outsiders' bring into a host country that is deeply intolerant to difference are immediately rejected.

Third, in terms of 'negative stereotypes', there are several tweets (no. 2,5,7,8, and 12) analyzed that have drawn from pre-existing myths and stereotypes concerning African immigrants from certain nations, notably spread by various politicians throughout the past two decades (Harris, 2002; Nyamnjoh, 2006). The crude assumption that certain African nationalities are perpetrators of various criminal acts marks them as threats to the host country. The legitimization of various echo chambers on Twitter spewing and spreading anti-immigrant sentiment and rhetoric exemplifies the stereotypical perception of African foreign nationals. This characteristic of the ITT was prevalent throughout the sample of thirteen tweets included in this section, underpinning how entrenched anti-immigrant sentiment has become within the digital space of Twitter.

Last, 'intergroup anxiety' is clearly displayed in these tweets where various groups of African foreigners are scapegoated for committing various crimes and 'stealing' local jobs in tweets no. 2, 5, 7, 8, and 12. Furthermore, the sporadic violent outbreaks against foreigners, alongside the online discourse that concomitantly follows, continue to foster antagonisms between both groups

which in turn deepens this anxiety motivated by feelings of disdain and the perceived threat that foreigners pose to the livelihoods of poor and working-class black South Africans.

The remainder of this chapter will focus on systematically interpreting the corpus of words and tweets shown in Figures 6.1 and 6.2, Table 1, and those mostly in Table 2—through the use of various linguistic features and discursive strategies—by analyzing the discursive meanings of the tweets, especially how certain ideological positions have been positioned, reinforced, and legitimized.

6.3 Linguistic Analysis of Anti-Immigrant Tweets (Micro Level)

Analysis of Linguistic Features		
Vocabulary	**Grammar**	**Textual Structure**
Wording 'Foreigners', 'makwerekwere', 'shangaan', 'terrorists', 'patriots', 'Nigeria', 'Mozambique', 'Lesotho', and 'Zimbabweans'	Pronominal 'they' and 'you'; 'we' and 'us'	Interactional Control 'There is no such thing as a 'xenophobia'…asking for foreigners to leave means we LOVE our country'; 'these guys from Nigeria and Mozambique'; 'we can't have terrorists living for mahala in South Africa'; 'you see the problems these people are bringing us'; 'its these shangaan illegal miners from Mozambique and Lesotho that are coming here committing all these crimes'; 'it is not up for debate anymore…these people from Zim are the problem'; 'these makwerekwere are coming here benefitting from opportunities that are supposed to be created for South Africans'; 'we must take matters in our hands to protect our country and borders…we are not bullies, we are patriots of a country we love'; 'let me break it down for some of you: Mozambicans and Basotho – illegal mining…these are the

		biggest contributors to our problems here in South Africa'
Hyperbole ''there is no such thing as a 'xenophobia'…the media uses this term to divide us''; 'makwerekwere'; 'terrorists'; 'patriots'; ''these guys from Nigeria and Mozambique''; ''its these shangaan illegal miners from Mozambique and Lesotho coming here committing all these crimes''; ''… we must take matters in our own hands''	Modality (modal auxiliary verbs) 'can', 'have', 'will', and 'must'	Targeting of Specific Groups 'makwerekwere', 'shangaan', 'Mozambicans', 'Nigerians', 'Zimbabweans', and 'Basotho'
Metaphor 'makwerekwere' and 'shangaan'	Punctuation question and exclamation marks	
Repetition 'makwerekwere', 'xenophobia', '#PutSouthAfricansFirst', '#PutSouthAfricaFirst', '#ForeignersMustGo', and '#OperationDudula'	Tense present and future	

Table 3: *Analysis of linguistic features*

The above corpus of various words and phrases in the tweets (Table 3) selected for this qualitative analysis of the data provides an illustration of the textual 'metafunction' of language in the construction and distribution of the discourse that dominates online anti-immigrant campaigns in South Africa on Twitter. Based on the results, Table 3 has grouped certain words and phrases found in the tweets in Figures 6.1 and 6.2, and Tables 1 and 2, under various linguistic features. The analysis of *vocabulary* (analysis of individual words), *grammar* (analysis of sentences and/or clauses), and *textual structure* (broad organizational properties) (Fairclough, 1992), provides an important glance into the ways in which various individual Twitter users use the popular hashtags accompanying their posts in mostly inflammatory ways to curate, amplify, and legitimize an anti-immigrant agenda to further sow social discord in South Africa (CABC, 2022a).

6.3.1 Vocabulary Analysis

1. Wording

This property of the vocabulary focuses on the way various meanings can be 'worded'—that is, how similar people, objects, and experiences influenced by different perspectives are worded differently to discursively frame a topic (Fairclough, 1992). Building on the literature on the emergence of online anti-immigrant campaigns in South Africa, in this case, the use of the words under this property are used deliberately to manipulate the discourse about African foreign nationals in South Africa. For example, this property is exemplified by the repeated use of 'foreigners' and the derogatory term 'makwerekwere', which are constantly referenced to centralize the issue of foreigners living in South Africa; the use of 'terrorists' is an exaggeration of people classified as 'foreigners'; the use of 'patriots' to deny, deflect, and attenuate the strong tone of anti-immigrant views; and the denoting of various criminal acts to certain African nationalities is deeply discriminatory.

Additionally, the careless use of words such as 'illegal' and 'makwerekwere' to refer to undocumented African immigrants lends credence to their widespread victimization and criminalization by citizens. On the contrary, various studies have found that most African foreigners in South Africa are actually 'undocumented' due to administrative issues within the Department of Home Affairs rather than the skewed perceived narrative of them entering without papers to solely commit crimes (Misago et al., 2009). Overall, the frequent use of these words across a range of tweets and different time periods forms an important part of enlarging the subscription base of the online anti-immigrant network of Twitter users (Fairclough, 1992; Locke, 2004).

2. Hyperbole

As shown in Table 3, the use of hyperbole was deployed to make a sarcastic remark about South Africans being called 'xenophobic'; the derogatory term 'makwerekwere'; calling foreigners 'terrorists'; singling out people from certain African nations as the perpetrators of various criminal acts; and the feeling that the law needs to be taken into their own 'hands', are all linguistic strategies employed to emphasize and exaggerate the issue of migrants and refugees entering and settling in South Africa. Furthermore, as pointed out in similar research studies, it forms part of manipulating public opinion, particularly spreading disinformation about African

foreign nationals residing in South Africa (amaBhungane Reporters, 2022; CABC, 2022a; 2022b).

3. *Metaphor*

The use of the words ‘makwerekwere’ and ‘shangaan’ in some tweets (Figure 6.2 and Table 1 and 2), expressed within the online anti-immigrant discourse in South Africa, have become representative of explicitly describing *particular* groups of African foreign nationals that are strongly informed by their distinct physical and cultural characteristics (Solomon and Kosaka, 2014; Langa and Kiguwa, 2016; Mathebula, 2019).

4. *Repetition*

The use of the words/phrases under this property, especially the popular hashtag #PutSouthAfricansFirst is of course a way of emphasizing the discourse attached to the hashtag, but also forms a key part of curating, amplifying, and legitimizing the discursive hegemony of online anti-immigrant rhetoric on Twitter (Locke, 2004).

6.3.2 Grammar Analysis

5. *Pronominal (Pronouns)*

The results in Table 3 show that the repeated use of the pronouns ‘we’ and ‘us’ (‘us-group’), and ‘they’ and ‘you’ (‘others-group’), form part of reinforcing an ‘us’ versus ‘them’ dichotomy (Luo et al., 2021). The use of these pronouns to describe the us-group forms part of the invocation of patriotism in most tweets, that is, a sense of power, unity, and solidarity against the others-group. Conversely, the use of pronouns to describe the others-group is used to invoke some sense of superiority and power over foreigners who are seen as the outlier and aberrant in a growing fragmented socio-economic and political context of intolerance towards African migrants and refugees.

Importantly, the use of these pronouns forms part of establishing the ‘social categorization’ (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) of African foreign nationals through the use of other nouns such as ‘makwerekwere’ and ‘terrorists’ to establish and ascribe the negative meanings attached to the perceived ‘foreigner’. Moreover, the use of these pronouns and other social and cultural categories attached to them is a *personalization strategy* used to create and establish individual

and group identities (Locke, 2004) that are reflective of anti-immigrant sentiments and attitudes. The data presented in this chapter has shown that the use and meanings of these pronouns are disproportionately connected to black people from other African nations.

6. Modality

The force of an opinion or attitude towards a certain situation through the use of modal auxiliary verbs characterizes this property (Fairclough, 1992). The results showed extensive use of the auxiliary verbs 'can', 'have', 'will', and 'must' in the corresponding tweets to mostly make requests, promises, petitions, and threats against African foreign nationals. Indeed, the use of these verbs solidifies the tone and strength of a statement—whether positive or negative (Fairclough, 1992).

7. Punctuation

The use of question marks in tweets no. 3, 5, 7, 8, and 10 in Table 2 have been deployed to question the issue of the entry of various African migrants into South Africa. And the use of exclamation marks in tweets no. 1, 5, 11, and 12 have been conveyed to express anger and frustration about this situation. Both punctuation marks form part of the need to emphasize and solidify statements made in the circulation of online anti-immigrant discourse.

8. Tense

The repeated use of the modal verbs 'have', 'must', and 'will' in the sample of tweets in Table 2 all point to an emphasis on the present and future. In the case of the present, the use of 'have' in tweets no. 4 and 13, and the use of 'must' in most of the tweets with the hashtag #ForeignersMustGo, emphasize the issue taken with the presence of African foreign nationals in South Africa. And in the case of the future, the use of the verb 'will' in tweets no. 4, 5, and 9 has been invoked to express power and superiority over foreigners and further insists that anti-immigrant sentiment and action will continue to be conveyed until something concrete is done by the government about the migration of various African foreign nationals into South Africa.

6.3.3 Textual Structure Analysis

9. Interactional Control

This is a dominant linguistic property related to the structure of tweets in terms of controlling the agenda, establishing, and influencing interactions through the spread of false information such as propaganda, for example (Fairclough, 1992). Specifically, it has been used to evince power relations in the sample of tweets provided in Table 2 demonstrating how online anti-immigrant discourse has been constructed to maintain structures of unequal power in South Africa at the expense and demonization of African foreign nationals. It forms part of the broader 'discursive strategies of power' that will be analyzed in the following discursive analysis section. In terms of this, the example of words/phrases used in tweets provided in Table 3, specifically linked to tweets no. 7 and 12 in Table 2, provide a problematic generalization of African people from certain countries who are blamed for committing various crimes in South Africa without any evidence to support such bold claims. Indeed, this disinformation forms part of curating and amplifying an anti-immigrant agenda against certain groups of African nationalities (CABC, 2022a; amaBhungane Reporters, 2022; Onslow, 2021). And with the evidence suggesting that online anti-immigrant campaigns have gained high traction over the past two years, through the use of the popular hashtags, control over the discourse has undoubtedly been established and legitimized within the online space of Twitter.

10. Targeting of Specific Groups

This property is an example of interactional control, where the explicit deployment of an 'us' versus 'them' dichotomy is articulated and amplified (Locke, 2004) through the tendency to nationalize various crimes that have been attributed to certain foreign nationals. As previously mentioned, in tweets no. 7 and 12 in Table 2, there is a deliberate and deceptive stereotyping of specific groups of African foreign nationals that this study and other related studies have found to be xenophobic, Afrophobic, and/or racist in the recent rise of xenophobic nationalism online (CABC, 2022a; 2022b; amaBhungane Reporters, 2022).

6.4 Discursive Analysis of Anti-Immigrant Tweets (Macro Level)

6.4.1 Propaganda

All thirteen tweets presented in Table 2 spread propaganda about African foreign nationals, intending to appeal to people's emotions rather than intellect. It is deliberately deployed to create a negative representation of African foreign nationals living in South Africa. Some of the

propagandist information is more explicit than others. For the purposes of this discussion, nine of the thirteen tweets will be highlighted. As the following will illustrate, there are malicious elements of mis/disinformation associated with the tweets posted in Table 2 alongside the various anti-foreigner hashtags:

(1) In this tweet a denial and mockery of the validity of the term 'xenophobia' that has been imposed on those expressing extreme views about African foreign nationals is depicted through the use of quotation marks. Moreover, this denial of xenophobia is then reinforced with an emotional patriotic declaration that the Twitter user 'LOVES' their country which is emphasized in uppercase for emphasis.

(2) Through the correlation of 'drugs' and 'weapons' with foreigners from 'Nigeria' and 'Mozambique', a deliberate and negative association of being perpetrators of violent crimes related to drugs and bodily harm is imposed onto them. The dogmatic proclamation that people from certain African nations commit certain crimes in South Africa, which subsequently reinforces and legitimizes long-standing negative stereotypes about them, is a way of simplifying reality in a baseless/unsubstantiated way.

(5) In July 2022, eight women were gang raped in Krugersdorp, South Africa on the set of a music video shoot by a group of armed men believed to be illegal miners (Wicks, 2022). Here, the Twitter user is referring to a press briefing conducted in August 2022 about the incident by Minister of Police Mr. Bheki Cele who claimed at the time that the perpetrators were mostly undocumented African foreign nationals (Masweneng, 2022). Again, a correlation between the high incidence of rape in South Africa and the sporadic entry of illegal African foreign nationals is being made to scapegoat them for this particular crime.

(6) In this tweet, the Twitter user remarks about the accusation that 'showing support' for their country, by engaging in anti-immigrant sentiment and protests, is 'xenophobic'. The ironic sentiment of being patriotic is blurred and undermined by the remark that foreigners must leave. There is a repeated and sarcastic proclamation that they are content with being labelled 'xenophobic'. The implied contradictory denial of being xenophobic by sarcastically proclaiming that they are 'xenophobic' is a form of propaganda.

(7) Again, certain nationalities are being accused of committing various crimes in South Africa, in this case, those from Mozambique and Lesotho.

(8) In this tweet, people from Zimbabwe are being accused of being overwhelmingly employed in the restaurant/hospitality sector—seen as the 'problem' and supposedly limiting the chances of South Africans being employed in this sector.

(10) There is no basis or facts to support the claim that all 'makwerekwere' can come to South Africa and start businesses with no supporting documents, and also the claim that this is not taking place in other countries that also have their own challenges with immigration. It is also implied that 'makwerekwere' are preventing South Africans from starting their own businesses.

(12) This Twitter user explicitly claims and connects certain African nationalities with the perpetration of certain crimes. Again, this reinforces dangerous stereotypes and myths about Mozambicans, Basotho, Zimbabweans, and Nigerians as perpetrators of 'illegal mining', 'rape and murder', and 'sex and drug trafficking'.

(13) Last, in this tweet, the Twitter user falsely claims that the negative socio-economic effects of the migration of other Africans into South Africa on citizens is a phenomenon unique to South Africa.

6.4.2 Euphemism, Dysphemism, and Monoglossic Views

Next, in addition to the dominance of propaganda being spread in all the tweets in Table 2, in the following sample of tweets in Table 2 also, there is a deployment of discursive strategies, that also form part of the broader spread of propaganda, such as *euphemisms* (minimization of one's aggression), *dysphemism* (exaggeration of an opponent's bad qualities), and *monoglossic views* (limiting the possibilities for debate or contestation) (Mesthrie et al., 2000):

(3) This can be seen as a monoglossic view of the issue of African foreigners entering South Africa, as not all countries are indifferent to immigrant populations.

(4) The use of the word 'terrorists' is a dysphemism to describe and refer to undocumented African foreign nationals living in Hillbrow, Johannesburg as dangerous. An explicit way of emphasizing that African foreign nationals are a threat, violent, and unwanted in South Africa.

(8) This tweet provides a monoglossic view of the false accusation that Zimbabweans are overwhelmingly employed in the South African hospitality sector. It begins with 'It is not up for debate anymore…', explicitly implying that what they are saying in the rest of the tweet is factual.

(9) Again, this tweet provides an overly monoglossic and simplistic opinion of the 'deporting' of all groups of foreigners, not only those of African descent. It implies that the mere deportation of foreign nationals from South Africa will help improve its socio-economic situation, which is incorrect. Various studies have shown that migrants, especially those from bordering African countries, contribute considerably to South Africa's labour market and its overall economy (OECD/ILO, 2018; Mupotsa and Kreutzfeldt, 2016; Kersting, 2009).

(11) The deployment of the euphemism 'patriots' is used to justify the actions of various Operation Dudula members taking to the streets to illegally and forcefully deal with 'undocumented' African foreign nationals—when on the contrary, these are actually criminal acts. Also, the Twitter user employs a monoglossic view, pointing out that because South Africa's law enforcement is not dealing effectively with the entry of African immigrants it is then their right to take matters into their own hands, to 'protect our country', in order to deal with this issue.

Overall, the above micro and macro analysis of anti-immigrant tweets in both Tables 2 and 3 provided necessary scrutiny of the increasing persistence of online anti-immigrant Twitter campaigns at both the level of 'linguistic/discursive practice' (text's production, distribution, and consumption/interpretation), and 'sociocultural practice' (how a text supports the hegemony of different kinds of discourses) (Locke, 2004). Specifically, the visibly anti-immigrant tweets, whether explicitly xenophobic or not, illustrate how these individual Twitter users have asserted, perpetuated, and legitimized an anti-foreigner nationalist ideological position through the spread of inflammatory mis/disinformation to create and foster social discord between South African citizens and African foreigners. The findings discussed throughout this chapter show that the shaping and influence of an ideology through language relies on a strong degree of control and persuasion. In the case of these campaigns, their hyper-connected nature through the aforementioned diverse discursive forms of organization, coupled with the research conducted by the CABC and amaBhungane Reporters, reveals how these campaigns have been successfully

bootstrapped into online forms of social action that rely on hashtags to solidify and legitimize their internal operation and persistence, albeit sporadically in most cases (CABC, 2022b; amaBhungane Reporters, 2022).

Equally, as amaBhungane Reporters (2022) found in their research about the spread of xenophobic nationalism on Twitter, the spread of these types of tweets is largely due to the legitimization of hyper-connected 'echo chambers' (i.e., like-minded networks of users) where the selective exposure to anti-foreigner sentiment and propaganda has been bootstrapped by a range of various individual Twitter users since the beginning of the #PutSouthAfricansFirst online conversation in 2020. Through fully connected networks of Twitter users, often linked to offshoot South African political parties, content is created through the use of the popular hashtags and linked to an already established offline public discourse about African foreigners, amplified through the use of Twitter's features and functions, and legitimized eventually by the traction it gains over time.

In this sense, the corpus of tweets provided in Table 2 especially, the spread of propaganda about the presence of African foreign nationals which is largely predicated on scapegoating them for various socio-economic problems, are important examples of an existing and legitimate online echo chamber of anti-immigrant sentiment in the explicit form of xenophobia at most times. In terms of the CDA conducted in this section, these tweets are a concrete exemplification of a *negative* others-group ideological representation of African foreign nationals that relies on a notion of *nationalism* that is essentially exclusive and divisive. Moreover, mostly under the guise of presenting a *positive* us-group ideological representation of citizens that purports to be protectionist (Abidde and Matambo, 2021).

In particular, the deployment of the discursive strategies outlined here shows that the use of anti-foreigner nationalist language on Twitter has deep socio-cultural dimensions and implications that go beyond its textual structure. Additionally, the internal cohesiveness of these online campaigns underpins the production, maintenance, and continuation of offline asymmetrical social relations between citizens and foreigners. The socio-political power evoked over African foreigners in these online hashtag campaigns is enacted and practiced to isolate, exclude, and alienate them to reinforce divisions between the two groups (CABC, 2022a; 2022b; amaBhungane Reporters, 2022; Onslow, 2021). Overall, these online anti-immigrant campaigns,

through the production and distribution of divisive and inflammatory Twitter posts, have been successful in reinforcing the long-established negative anti-immigrant discursive hegemony concerning African foreign nationals residing in South Africa. Indeed, a public discourse that has been normalized since the late 1990s by various social and political actors on the ground (Pineteh, 2017; Durokifa and Ijeoma, 2017; Chenzi, 2020).

6.4.3 Ideological Positioning

The extensive data analysis conducted in this study focusing on the previously discussed main socio-economic issues framing the online anti-immigrant discourse and the present analysis of the linguistic and discursive strategies used to curate and spread online anti-immigrant campaigns has aimed to show the ways in which the discourse draws deeply on the ideology of *nationalism*. Specifically, the dominance of this ideology in the spread of these campaigns on Twitter accounts for 'what' the forms of mobilization are in these campaigns, which are mostly informed by *ideological* and *identity-oriented* processes (see Figure 2.1). Moreover, the data analyzed in this chapter aimed to illustrate that the construction of a narrow national identity based on chauvinism and in-group hostility towards African migrants and refugees, largely influenced by falsehoods spread about certain groups of African foreigners by the media and politicians in particular, is a dominant factor influencing the 'why' in the mobilization of these online Twitter campaigns in South Africa.

As multiple research studies have shown on the rise of anti-foreigner (xenophobic) sentiments and attitudes in post-apartheid South Africa, the fostering and establishment of an exclusionary nationalism by the state through various exclusionary and illegal practices of dealing with African foreign nationals has emphasized a homogenous national identity that views 'difference' entering its borders as a serious threat to the pursuit of the 'new' South African model of democracy (Harris, 2002; Mutanda, 2022; Neocosmos, 2006, 2008). The legitimization of the foundation for citizenship and/or belonging being based on 'exclusion' continues to create and serve distinct boundaries of inclusion and exclusion in post-apartheid South Africa (Mutanda, 2022).

Specifically, Ake (1996) explains that the rise of internal xenophobia in African countries such as South Africa can be attributed to the practice of a 'new nationalism'—a form of nationalism that is based on the exclusion of certain social groups within the same society. Broadly speaking,

the general processes of globalization influencing the levels of migration within countries and across borders for those seeking better socio-economic opportunities, coupled with growing and deepening socio-economic inequalities in the host country, for instance, has fostered popular sentiments of intolerance to the *perception* of the phenomenon of migration and its impact (Kersting, 2009). The continued failures of the ruling ANC government to live up to its 'nation' and/or 'state-building' mandate of significantly improving the socio-economic conditions of the poor and black majority has fostered an environment of deep frustration, resentment, and anger that rears its ugly head in the form of intolerance towards African foreign nationals (Solomon and Kosaka, 2014; Kerr and Dixon, 2021).

The inability to effectively quantify the irregular flows of undocumented immigrants from bordering African countries has been leveraged by South African political leaders in past campaigns for their own personal gain and agenda (CABC, 2022a; amaBhungane Reporters, 2022; Ho, 2022). By appealing to their poor, unemployed, and destitute supporters who have become increasingly agitated and disillusioned by their dire socio-economic realities, the history of spreading disinformation about African foreign nationals to account for these realities has opened a dangerous vacuum for the formation of problematic opinions, perceptions, and attitudes that are increasingly open to manipulation by those in power (Kerr and Dixon, 2021). Evidently, the history of sporadic violent conflict and outbreaks against African foreigners in South Africa, and the increasing levels of inequality present-day are influencing—for those who have access to the Internet—the growing interaction with these online campaigns as a necessary outlet to express and articulate various social grievances. Indeed, the need to emphasize a narrow and exclusive national identity that continues to manifest by adopting anti-immigrant attitudes toward anyone that is considered to be outside of that identity.

In terms of accounting for 'who' forms part of the mobilization and bootstrapping of a nationalist ideology in these online anti-immigrant campaigns, all of the tweets gathered for analysis were mostly posted by ordinary individual 'unverified' Twitter users who have been co-opted into participating in these campaigns by the popular hashtags #PutSouthAfricansFirst and #OperationDudula. Unfortunately, COSMOS was not able to pinpoint the more popular Twitter accounts for further analysis in this chapter, in terms of a large following, connected to verified/unverified accounts of various political parties in South Africa as presented in previous

research studies (DFRLab, 2020a; 2020b; CABC, 2022a; 2022b; amaBhungane Reporters, 2022; Onslow, 2021). Also, the possible participation of fully automated accounts that run with minimal human input known as 'bots' in the spread of these online campaigns was not able to be identified.

Notwithstanding, seeing that these campaigns are motivated by ideologically connected views, the online legitimization of anti-immigrant attitudes by networks of ordinary individual Twitter users that form part of an ideologically aligned echo chamber can be characterized as *anti-immigrant identity groups* that are unified by various beliefs, values, and views that reflect their established social and national identities (van Stekelenburg and Klandermans, 2009; amaBhungane Reporters, 2022). In this case, the articulation of anti-immigrant views and opinions online by like-minded Twitter users, rooted in maintaining dichotomous in-group (us) and out-group (them) relations, have become common sense within the echo chamber of a fully connected network of anti-immigrant identity groups (CABC, 2022a; 2022b; amaBhungane Reporters, 2022; Onslow, 2021). Consequently, to amplify and maintain their identities through articulating views that serve to deepen their distance from the out-group, the in-group must discriminate and demonize their counterparts (Tajfel and Turner, 1979).

6.4.3.1 Construction of an 'Us-Versus-Them' Political Identity

In addition, the exclusionary nature of citizenship and belonging in South Africa, increasingly symbolized in the anti-immigrant content spread within these hashtag campaigns, is influenced by the three processes of creating an individual and group social identity where the construction of an 'us-versus-them' attitude is shaped by exclusionary and discursively entrenched power dynamics on Twitter:

(1) *Social Categorization:* the use of various categories such as 'illegal', 'makwerekwere', and 'foreigners' discussed in the findings which, in South Africa, are mostly negatively attached to black Africans, is a way of reinforcing the notion of difference between native citizens (in-group) and foreign non-citizens (out-group).

(2) *Social Identification:* the increasing spread of anti-immigrant rhetoric on Twitter has co-opted those who have similar views and beliefs, and led to the construction of various hyper-connected anti-immigrant identity groups (i.e., networks) of individual Twitter users. The invocation of patriotic beliefs and values shown in Figure 6.1 and Tables 1, 2,

and 3, continues to be an influential factor in co-opting people disillusioned and frustrated with the current socio-economic situation in South Africa. As previously discussed, these campaigns have been largely influenced by pre-existing anti-immigrant discourse spread by cynical political actors and movements such as Operation Dudula to maintain a homogenous 'us' of the nation.

(3) *Social Comparison:* to maintain a sense of pride and superiority over African foreign nationals, implicit and explicit forms of comparison have been made to construe and solidify the us-versus-them division between citizens and foreigners. The sample of tweets analyzed here has strongly emphasized portraying South Africans as 'victims' of various negative socio-economic issues that African foreign nationals allegedly bring with them once they enter the country's borders.

6.5 Conclusion

From a sociolinguistics perspective, this chapter set out to conduct a comprehensive CDA illustrated in four interrelated ways: (1) using word-cloud diagrams generated by COSMOS to account for the representation of 'us' and 'others' through the scrutinization of various frequent words, i.e., keywords, present in the majority of the tweets analyzed; (2) a linguistic analysis of the textual (micro) features of the tweets; (3) linking the micro level of analysis with the sociocultural (macro) impact on South African society by conducting a discursive analysis of the tweets; and (4) discussing the ideological positioning and effect of the aforementioned issues raised and analyzed.

The CDA was predicated on identifying and describing the discursive practices of power and control employed by individual Twitter users to construct, spread, amplify, and legitimize online anti-immigrant campaigns in South Africa. It largely focused on linking the powerful discursive effects of the textual features of the tweets with the sociocultural impact on South African society, illustrating that the overwhelmingly anti-immigrant (xenophobic) discourse was expressed in both implicit and explicit ways, with the emphasis on excluding and alienating black African foreign nationals forming the dominant theme in the articulation of various grievances used to scapegoat them. In particular, the chapter found that a dominant ideological positioning of an anti-immigrant (xenophobic) nationalism, articulated through an 'us-versus-them' dichotomy, was emphasized by users in the linguistic and discursive formation of these

campaigns for the purpose of alienating African foreign nationals in South Africa. More importantly, the chapter aimed to show the powerful discursive influence on the mobilization of these campaigns through the strategic use of language, and broadly, the effect that these politically-connected campaigns are having on further inciting asymmetrical social relations and divisions between South African citizens and African non-citizens.

Specifically, in terms of accounting for the first research question especially, that is, analyzing how the rapidly growing influence of social media-driven forms of social action are broadening the scope and influence of traditional forms of protest; this discussion on the discursive mobilization of online anti-immigrant campaigns on Twitter in South Africa has illuminated the powerful role that *language* used on the Internet is playing in the organization and persistence of online collective protest action. This discursive component of mobilizing online-mediated forms of protest action not only builds on the orthodox characteristics of traditional social movements in terms of identity-building and opinion-forming processes that ensure a stable degree of collectiveness for action; but also *expands* the core organizational activity patterns of these new forms of protest action in terms of broadening the scope and scale of interaction and participation possibilities for various online users (Dolata, 2017; Onslow, 2021). Indeed, the linguistic and discursive analysis of the data in Tables 2 and 3, especially, highlighted the strategic use of language on SNS as a vital connective thread for various groups of people to coordinate, instigate, and transform various discussions into consciously directed and sustained forms of collective action using hashtags. More importantly, both tables illuminated the role of language in building and sustaining collective identities through the spread of powerful discourse that ultimately influences and alters people's attitudes and opinions about their social realities.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

7.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter summarizes the main aims and objectives set out in the introductory chapter of this research study which was predicated on undertaking an in-depth discourse analysis of the formation and coordination of online anti-immigrant discourse into various contestations on Twitter in South Africa. Specifically, the chapter briefly revisits the research study's objectives, reflects on its strengths and limitations, discusses its implications, and finally, considers a few suggestions that could potentially inform future research.

Broadly speaking, this research study set out to determine and analyze whether online anti-immigrant contestations on Twitter in South Africa are a new model of collective protest action either building on or superseding the orthodox characteristics of traditional social movements by conducting a discourse analysis in various ways to understand how social media-driven forms of collective action, contestation, and/or protests are coordinated and mobilized through the powerful discursive use of language on Twitter. Using the recent emergence of online anti-immigrant contestations on Twitter in South Africa as a case study, the findings of the study found that the construction and spread of anti-immigrant discourse on Twitter forms part of the mobilization of various 'hashtag campaigns' that are a microcosm of larger politically-connected offline anti-immigrant social movements in South Africa. Importantly, it described and analyzed how this social media-driven form of contestation is coordinated and mobilized through the powerful discursive application of an important empirical factor forming a vital connective thread in the mobilization and persistence of these anti-immigrant Twitter campaigns—that is, *language.*

The study showed that the recent rise of offline 'social movements' such as 'Put South Africans First', and its offshoot 'Operation Dudula'—particularly their shift towards using Twitter to discursively articulate, map, and coordinate widespread anti-immigrant discourse into various online hashtag campaigns, alongside the hashtags #PutSouthAfricansFirst, #PutSouthAfricaFirst, #OperationDudula, and #ForeignersMustGo—are deeply xenophobic and/or Afrophobic in scope. Additionally, the campaigns are increasingly influenced and amplified by political elements of power and control used to stimulate and entrench anti-immigrant sentiment and

rhetoric to create further discord and violence between South African citizens and African non-citizens for various agendas.

First, in terms of the four main socio-economic issues motivating and framing the spread of online anti-immigrant discourse on Twitter, using a sentiment, geospatial distribution, and frequency analysis, across Chapters Four and Five, the study interrogated and illustrated that the discourse of the tweets gathered by COSMOS largely consisted of views and opinions expressed to alienate, demonize, and exclude African migrants and refugees living in South Africa. Second, from a sociolinguistics perspective, in Chapter Six, a critical discourse analysis (CDA) was conducted to identify and critically discuss the discursive practices of power and control employed by individual Twitter users to construct, spread, amplify, and legitimize online anti-immigrant campaigns in South Africa. In particular, a dominant ideological positioning of an anti-immigrant nationalism, articulated through an 'us-versus-them' dichotomy, was accentuated by various Twitter users in the discursive formation of these campaigns. This aspect of the study in particular aimed to show the powerful discursive effect—through the use of various linguistic and discursive 'framing' devices—these politically-connected online campaigns are having on further inciting asymmetrical social relations and divisions between South African citizens and African foreigners for broader political and social agendas that are beyond the scope of the aims and objectives the study has sought to exemplify.

Even though these online campaigns are largely informed by fragmented and spontaneous political conversations and contestations that are organized and threaded by hashtags, and cannot be necessarily characterized as 'social movements' in the orthodox sense; as discussed throughout the study, their internal cohesiveness and persistence draw on various conventional attributes of traditional forms of collective protest action to co-opt and constitute a network of increasingly connected groups of people with shared anti-immigrant beliefs and identities. In particular, the technical and textual features and functions of Twitter are leveraged to construct, influence, and amplify the scope of these internally-connected discussions and/or contestations. More importantly, the study demonstrated that the powerful and strategic use of language online is a vital connective thread for various groups of people to coordinate, instigate, and transform various discussions threaded by hashtags into consciously directed and sustained forms of collective action. Indeed, these online anti-immigrant campaigns on Twitter in South Africa are a

pertinent example of the rapidly growing influence that the Internet is having on the *expansion* in scope and scale of the traditional organizational activity patterns of collective forms of protest action that allow for greater interaction and participation possibilities for various Twitter users.

Overall, the results and discussion around the sentiment, geospatial distribution, frequency, and content of the tweets collected have played a key part in the construction and spread of these online anti-immigrant campaigns on Twitter to further stimulate and drive xenophobic rhetoric and sentiment in South Africa.

7.2 Objectives Revisited

7.2.1 To determine whether online anti-immigrant contestations on Twitter in South Africa are a new model of social media-driven collective protest action either building on or superseding the orthodox characteristics of social movements:

This objective pertains to the first research question that framed this study. The study found that the formation and spread of online anti-immigrant discourse on Twitter by various users can be categorized as 'hashtag campaigns' that build on the core organizational characteristics of 'traditional' social movements. Indeed, the characteristics of identity-building and opinion-forming, for instance, are expanded in scope and scale online through the powerful and strategic use of language to construct, spread, and legitimize these online anti-immigrant campaigns. Evidently, the influence of the Internet in the form of social media is hugely impacting and transforming the organization and persistence of collective protest action. More importantly, based on this current and previous research studies conducted, these online anti-immigrant hashtag campaigns appear to be solely *extensions* of offline protest activities for the purposes of stimulating and entrenching anti-immigrant sentiment and rhetoric in South Africa by members of various political groups mentioned in the previous chapters. Indeed, campaigns that are a microcosm of larger politically-coordinated offline anti-immigrant social movements in South Africa.

7.2.2 To identify and analyze the main socio-economic issues raised and framed to construct and amplify online anti-immigrant discourse on Twitter in South Africa:

This objective pertains to the second research question of this study. Using the sentiment, geospatial distribution, and frequency analyses provided by COSMOS, the main socio-economic issues framing and motivating the spread of anti-immigrant discourse on Twitter included *jobs, crime*, *service delivery,* and *law enforcement*. In particular, the study showed that African foreign nationals are mainly scapegoated for the ruling government's inability to deliver or combat the respective issue. The pre-eminence of these issues in the curation and spread of online anti-immigrant campaigns form a central part of fuelling deeply xenophobic opinions and beliefs about African foreign nationals residing in South Africa.

7.2.3 To analyze the linguistic and/or discursive strategies used to frame and organize online anti-immigrant discourse on Twitter in South Africa:

This objective pertains to the third and final research question that frames this study, which, from a sociolinguistics perspective, was fulfilled by conducting a CDA to identify and critically discuss the discursive practices of power and control employed by individual Twitter users to construct, spread, amplify, and legitimize online anti-immigrant campaigns in South Africa. This part of the study aimed to demonstrate the powerful discursive effect that language—through the use of various linguistic and discursive strategies—has had on the formation and persistence of online anti-immigrant campaigns on Twitter, especially its use in the incitement of asymmetrical social relations and divisions between South African citizens and African non-citizens for broader political agendas.

Specifically, the overwhelmingly virulent xenophobic rhetoric disseminated on Twitter, in this case, is shaped by the complex intertwined issues of citizenship, nationality, and/or belonging, where these boundaries are defined by competition and access to scarce resources for both poor and/or working-class black citizens and non-citizens. These issues, by implication, as argued throughout this study, function as powerful, and mostly hidden, discursive tools in the formation of online anti-immigrant Twitter campaigns in South Africa. More importantly, the analysis of various linguistic and discursive strategies underpinned the ways in which the discursive elements of constructing and spreading online discourse on social media are a crucial technical aspect for growing the conditions of the emergence, action, and development of online forms of political contestation exemplified by the continued presence of these online anti-immigrant campaigns on Twitter in South Africa.

7.2.4 To examine how effective the pre-existing public discourse on African migrants and refugees is in shaping citizens online attitudes, feelings, and opinions about them residing in South Africa:

The findings and discussions that informed the previous three objectives illustrated that the long-established pre-existing attitudes and views about African foreign nationals living in South Africa, incited and spread by local mainstream media outlets and politicians alike, have clearly been effective in further curating, amplifying, and legitimizing anti-immigrant discourse within the digitally-mediated space of Twitter. Indeed, a dominant form of online discourse that seeks to further alienate African foreign nationals and deepen already fragmented divisions between poor/working-class South African citizens and African non-citizens.

7.3 Strengths and Limitations

The strength of the research activities conducted for this study is that they were undertaken to engage and expand on previous topical research studies focused on the emergence and prevalence of *online* anti-immigrant campaigns on SNS in South Africa. As previously mentioned, the combination of a content (discourse) analysis with computational methods through the use of COSMOS undoubtedly made the research process richer, innovative, and nuanced in terms of realizing its theoretical, methodological, and empirical objectives. The mixed-methods approach justified the advantage of utilizing computational methods when conducting a corpus-driven discourse analysis of large-scale social media data to ensure a detailed analysis of multifaceted communication practices that influence and shape our social contexts.

Specifically, the study is distinguished by the CDA approach through the lens of various linguistic and discursive strategies that interrogated the diverse ways in which these campaigns are discursively coordinated and organized to stimulate and perpetuate widespread anti-immigrant sentiment and rhetoric in South Africa. This interdisciplinary approach to analyzing the link between the textual organization and the broader sociocultural effect of these hashtag campaigns can be considered a novel contribution to a concerning human rights issue (in the form of xenophobia), amongst many others, that continues to plague post-apartheid South Africa.

On the other hand, as previously discussed in the Methodology Chapter, there were certain technical challenges experienced with utilizing a cloud-based research software tool for

gathering large-sets of data on Twitter that greatly impacted framing and summarizing some of the data (especially the frequency graphs) collected for the overall analysis and discussion. Moreover, in terms of providing diverse findings for all three research questions, especially the second and third, most of the data collected accounted for the mobilization of these online hashtag campaigns using the sentiment, geospatial distribution, keyword (word-cloud view), and frequency parameters of analysis provided by COSMOS. Its other parameters of analysis such as 'social network analysis' and 'gender detection', which could have potentially resulted in more diverse findings, were deemed inadequate for this study as COSMOS was not able to provide an accurate and sufficient analysis of these parameters for further consideration.

7.4 Implications

Building on the literature and findings that framed this research study, xenophobic attitudes and views are situated within South Africa's transition from apartheid to liberal democracy. By identifying how language is constructed and applied, through an emphasis on either protecting the nation's resources and borders that is not blatantly xenophobic but implied (i.e., 'protectionist'), and/or explicitly calling for the deportation of African foreign nationals (i.e., 'exclusionist'), the study showed that *xenophobia*, particularly Afrophobia, does not operate as a monolithic phenomenon. Indeed, as Harris (2002) argues, certain groups of people, mostly poor black Africans, bear the brunt of this form of violence and discrimination. Xenophobia continues to alarmingly emerge as a central feature and consequence of the broader culture of conflict and violence in South Africa that continues to define and expose the failures of the post-apartheid state in providing better material opportunities for its poor and black majority (Desai, 2008). There is clearly a growing trend toward the use of various social media platforms such as Twitter for average citizens to contribute and spread politically organized xenophobic narratives that will no doubt continue to deepen pre-existing tensions and conflicts between citizens and non-citizens from other African countries in the post-apartheid landscape.

Additionally, this research study has shown that xenophobia is a complex phenomenon within this culture that exposes the contradictory application of *nationalism* in South Africa, where on one hand, in theory, the democratic state, the purportedly 'Rainbow Nation', has always stood by its commitment to Pan-African inclusivity and unity by providing foreign nationals entering its borders with some form of legal social security as prescribed by the Constitution of South Africa.

On the other hand, in practice, its failure to provide better resources and services to its destitute majority has fostered xenophobic attitudes and behaviours as an outlet of frustration with their dire socio-economic realities (Harris, 2002; Nyamnjoh, 2006).

As previously discussed in Chapters Five and Six, the intertwined issues of citizenship, nationality, and/or belonging that emerge, by implication, as broader structural reasons for the emergence of xenophobia in the post-apartheid dispensation have been closely interrogated in various research studies. Indeed, these issues have been explored by various authors as playing a dominant role in fostering a divisive, asymmetrical, and contradictory application of nationalism underpinned by entitlement, separatism, and chauvinism that produces black African immigrants ('aliens'/ 'makwerekwere') as the racialized, undeserving, and alienated 'Other' (Nyamnjoh, 2006; Harris, 2002; Mutanda, 2022). The findings of this study provide interesting ways of further interrogating the broader politics of inclusion and exclusion of African foreign nationals in post-apartheid South Africa, underpinned by issues of nationality and citizenship. Both these issues are fundamental features of the production of xenophobic discourse where exclusion, alienation, and hostility operate in a complex ongoing struggle between mostly black poor/working-class citizens and foreigners of the 'New South Africa' where discrimination, prejudice, and violence in the form of xenophobia continue to mark contemporary South Africa (Nkabane and Mutereko, 2021; Nyamnjoh, 2006; Landau, 2011; Harris, 2002).

In claiming that Twitter is a 'networked' social space from which to organize, mobilize, and demonstrate against certain groups of people, these online anti-immigrant campaigns engender symbolic elements of violence and conflict that are contributing to the changing political nature of collective protest action in the twenty-first century, especially those that seek to entrench intolerance, conflict, and violence. Again, the strategic use of this digitally-mediated space by various groups of people has important implications for comprehending the impact of these online anti-immigrant campaigns on the broader politics of citizenship, nationality, migration, and/or belonging for both (black) citizens and foreigners in post-apartheid South Africa. Indeed, this study has shown that these issues, in broad and general terms, are important and complex matters, that mostly operate in symbolic ways online, influencing and inciting the mobilization of these campaigns.

On the whole, the politics of citizenship and belonging are national and local governance issues linked to the remnants of apartheid and the transition to democracy that has seen an insidious institutionalization of exclusionary nationalist politics by cynical leaders over the past two decades (Khan, 2021; Mutanda, 2022). The underlying conditions of desperation and precarity that have characterized post-apartheid South Africa are linked to broader political, economic, and social conditions that have resulted in the normalization of anti-immigrant views and attitudes, especially within mostly poor and working-class black urban communities. The online prevalence of anti-immigrant attitudes and views on both Twitter and Facebook is definitely an important facet and conduit for further investigating these complex socio-economic governance issues that—certainly not foreign to the points and concerns raised here—are beyond the scope of this study.

7.5 Suggestions for future research

By conducting a CDA of the tweets collected for data analysis using COSMOS, this study was heavily focused on engaging topical debates into the prevalence of online anti-immigrant (xenophobic) discourse. More particularly, how the discursive use of language has influenced the growing coordination and mobilization of online anti-immigrant campaigns on Twitter in South Africa. Building on the aforementioned section on the implications of this study, the data collected and analyzed serves as a foundation for further interdisciplinary research into the *linguistic/discursive* aspects of online social media-driven protests and contestations that seek to disseminate and incite hateful rhetoric and violence in South Africa. To date, besides this study, there are no other CDA studies that have been conducted to analyze the *discursive* mobilization of online anti-immigrant campaigns in South Africa, particularly.

Moreover, special attention is needed to understand the direct link and influence of online political contestations on offline protest activities. For the most part, and based on previous research studies conducted, these online campaigns appear to be solely *extensions* of offline protest activities for the purposes of stimulating and entrenching anti-immigrant sentiment and rhetoric in South Africa. There are limited studies that have looked into the impact that these online protests and contestations are possibly having on directly inciting and growing offline protest activities, especially those related to ‘Put South Africans First’ or ‘Operation Dudula’. As well as the real-world impact on the lives of African immigrants residing in low-income

communities with high levels of intolerance towards them. Though this paper's findings focused on highlighting the alarming ways in which social media, in terms of the styles of mobilization and action, is leveraged to amplify and sustain anti-immigrant sentiment; it is a vital contribution towards potentially informing practice into disrupting and preventing organized forms of xenophobia in digital spaces.

Importantly, as this current and previous research studies have shown, these online anti-immigrant campaigns are heavily incited and influenced by political actors and parties for their expediency. This aspect of the study needs to be further investigated more thoroughly in the future as one could hypothesize a myriad of political agendas that have seen a growing populist trend by South African politicians toward targeting and scapegoating African migrants and refugees for various social ills. Again, this study sought to investigate and analyze how the politically-connected nature of these online hashtag campaigns influences the discursive construction and distribution of the campaigns, in terms of the technical aspects of language, and not necessarily the *reasons* behind various political motives driving anti-immigrant agendas.

Last, as the title implies, this study is an important contribution to the increasing impact that social media platforms in general, as organizing agents of instant communication and engagement, are having on the changing nature of mobilizing and coordinating *online* collective forms of action and protest. In the context of this study, the research conducted is a valuable introductory insight into the role of social media platforms such as Twitter in the organization and spread of xenophobia in South Africa.

As previously mentioned, the 'social movement' aspect of this study was not to imply that these online political contestations and/or conversations should be characterized as such, as they are certainly not in the orthodox sense. The literature on different social movement formations was included to provide a solid scholarly foundation for then interpreting the more 'alternative' strategies of mobilization and coordination we are increasingly witnessing today on various SNS; that are used to bring people together to form a collective informed by shared beliefs and identities—even if fragmented, diverse, and sporadic in scope and scale. Furthermore, the intention is that this study can trigger further scholarly debates around the evolution of collective forms of action and protest within digitally-mediated spaces, such as these online anti-immigrant (hashtag) campaigns on Twitter. As these campaigns are not only extensions of controversial

offline protest activities conducted by various groups of people but also clearly influenced by the conventional principles of orthodox social movement formations—even if subtly.

REFERENCE LIST

Abidde, S.O., and E.K. Matambo, E.K. (2021). *Xenophobia, Nativism and Pan-Africanism in 21st Century Africa: History, Concepts, Practice and Case Study*. Switzerland: Springer.

Akande, O.D., Musarurwa, H.J., and Kaye, S.B. (2018). 'Students' Attitudes and Perceptions on Xenophobia: A Study of a University in Durban'. *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa*, 6 (2), pp. 1–17.

Ake, C. (1996). *Democracy and Development in Africa*. Washington: Brookings.

amaBhungane Reporters. (2022). *Who is behind South Africa's xenophobic nationalism?*. [online]. Available at: https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2022-04-28-who-is-behind-south-africas-xenophobic-nationalism/ [Accessed 23 January 2023].

Anyadike, O. (2015). *South Africa's xenophobia problem: dispelling the myths*. [online]. Available at: https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/analysis/2015/04/21/south-africa%E2%80%99s-xenophobia-problem-dispelling-myths [Accessed 23 January 2023].

Atabong, A.B. (2020). *How social media is being exploited for South Africa's long-standing xenophobia problem*. [online]. Available at: https://qz.com/africa/1909232/south-africa-s-xenophobia-protests-being-organized-on-twitter/ [Accessed 15 May 2022].

Aya, R. (1979). 'Theories of Revolution Reconsidered: Contrasting Models of Collective Violence'. *Theory and Society*, 8 (1), pp. 39–99.

Bennett, W. L., and Segerberg, A. (2011). 'Digital Media and the Personalization of Collective Action'. *Information, Communication & Society*, 14 (6), pp. 1-30.

Bhatia, A. (2006) 'Critical discourse analysis of political press conferences'. *Discourse & Society*, 17 (2), pp. 173–203.

Bless, C., Higson-Smith, C., and Sithole, S. (2013). *Fundamentals of Social Research Methods: An African Perspective*. 5th ed. Cape Town: Juta.

Blommaert, J. (2005). *Discourse: A Critical Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bond, M. (2007). ‘Culture and Collective Violence: How Good People, Usually Men, Do Bad Things’, in B. Drožđek and J.P. Wilson (eds), *Voices of Trauma: Treating Psychological Trauma Across Cultures*, pp. (27–58). New York: Springer.

Bonilla, Y., and Rosa, J. (2015). ‘#Ferguson: Digital protest, hashtag ethnography, and the racial politics of social media in the United States’. *American Ethnologist*, 42 (1), pp. 4-17.

Bornman, J. (2021). *Operation Dudula pushes ahead with hateful politics*. [online]. Available at: https://www.newframe.com/operation-dudula-pushes-ahead-with-hateful-politics/ [Accessed 23 January 2023].

Bruns, A., and Stieglitz, S. (2012). ‘Quantitative Approaches to Comparing Communication Patterns on Twitter’. *Journal of Technology in Human Services*, 30 (3-4), pp. 160-185.

Burnap, P., Rana, O., Williams, M., Housley, W., Edwards, A., Morgan, J., Sloan, L., and Conejero, J. (2015). ‘COSMOS: Towards an integrated and scalable service for analysing social media on demand’. *International Journal of Parallel, Emergent and Distributed Systems*, 30 (2), pp. 80-100.

Calderaro, A. (2014). ‘Internet Politics Beyond the Digital Divide’, in B. Pătruţ and M. Pătruţ (eds), *Social Media in Politics: Case Studies on the Political Power of Social Media* (pp. 3-18). New York: Springer.

Calderaro, A. (2018). ‘Social Media and Politics’, in W. Outhwaite and S.P. Turner (eds), *The SAGE Handbook of Political Sociology*, *2V* (pp. 781-796). London: SAGE Publications.

Cameron, D. (2001). *Working with Spoken Discourse*. London: SAGE Publications.

Castells, M. (2011). ‘A Network Theory of Power’. *International Journal of Communication*, 5 (1), pp.773–787.

Castells, M. (2012). *Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Centre for Analytics and Behavioural Change (CABC). (2022a). *Putting xenophobia first: Analysing the hashtags behind the Twitter campaigns*. [online]. Available at:

https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2022-02-20-putting-xenophobia-first-analysing-the-hashtags-behind-the-twitter-campaigns/ [Accessed 15 May 2022].

Centre for Analytics and Behavioural Change (CABC). (2022b). *#OperationDudula — the many faces of Nhlanhla Lux Dlamini.* [online]. Available at: https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2022-04-10-operationdudula-the-many-faces-of-nhlanhla-lux-dlamini/ [Accessed 23 January 2023].

Chadwick, A. (2006). *Internet politics: States, Citizens, and New Communication Technologies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Charles, M. (2020). *#PutSouthAfricaFirst movement causing alarm with xenophobic sentiment*. [online]. Available at: https://www.iol.co.za/capeargus/news/putsouthafricafirst-movement-causing-alarm-with-xenophobic-sentiment-6d917a50-69a4-46fe-9fbb-8a081452df61 [Accessed 12 July 2023].

Chenzi, V. (2020). 'Fake news, social media and xenophobia in South Africa'. *African Identities*, 19 (4), pp. 502-521.

Chong, D., and Druckman, J. N. (2007a). 'A Theory of Framing and Opinion Formation in Competitive Elite Environments'. *Journal of Communication*, 57 (1), pp. 99-118.

Chong, D., and Druckman, J. N. (2007b). 'Framing Theory'. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 10 (1), pp. 103-126.

Coats, S. (2017). 'Collecting Twitter Data', in C. Mallinson, B. Childs, and G. Van Herk (eds), *Data Collection in Sociolinguistics: Methods and Applications.* 2nd ed. (pp. 248–251). New York: Routledge.

Cohen, J. (1985). 'Strategy or Identity: New Theoretical Paradigms and Contemporary Social Movements'. *Social Research*, 52 (4), pp. 663-716.

Croucher, S.M. (2017). 'Integrated Threat Theory'. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication*, pp. 1–16. [online]. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228613.013.490 [Accessed 23 January 2023].

Crush, J., and Ramachandran, S. (2014). *SAMP Migration Policy Series No. 67: Migrant Entrepreneurship, Collective Violence and Xenophobia in South Africa Xenophobia in South Africa.* Waterloo, ON: Southern African Migration Programme.

Dahlberg, L. (2001). 'The Internet and Democratic Discourse: Exploring The Prospects of Online Deliberative Forums Extending the Public Sphere'. *Information, Communication & Society,* 4 (4), pp. 615–633.

Demirhan, K. (2014). 'Social Media Effects on the Gezi Park Movement in Turkey: Politics Under Hashtags', in B. Pătruţ and M. Pătruţ (eds), *Social Media in Politics: Case Studies on the Political Power of Social Media* (pp. 281-314). New York: Springer.

Desai, A. (2008). 'Xenophobia and the place of the refugee in the rainbow nation of human rights'. *African Sociological Review,* 12 (2), pp. 49-68.

Diani, M. (1992). 'The Concept of Social Movement'. *The Sociological Review,* 40 (1), pp. 1-25.

Digital Forensic Research Lab (DFRLab). (2020a). *Afrophobic South African Twitter account connected to nationalist political party.* [online]. Available at: https://medium.com/dfrlab/Afrophobic-south-african-twitter-account-connected-to-nationalist-political-party-7e7205cc8987 [Accessed 15 May 2022].

Digital Forensic Research Lab (DFRLab). (2020b). *Xenophobic Twitter campaigns orchestrated by former South African soldier*. [online]. Available at: https://medium.com/dfrlab/xenophobic-twitter-campaigns-orchestrated-by-former-south-african-soldier-9e7702433176 [Accessed 15 May 2022].

Dolata, U. (2017). *Social movements and the Internet: The sociotechnical constitution of collective action.* SOI Discussion Paper, No. 2017-02, Universität Stuttgart, Institut für Sozialwissenschaften, Abteilung für Organisations- und Innovationssoziologie, Stuttgart. [online]. Available at: https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Social-movements-and-the-Internet%3A-The-constitution-Dolata/aca7b1713d081d5643da832c7853253338f6cd8a [Accessed 23 January 2023].

Durokifa, A.A., and Ijeoma, E.O.C. (2017). 'The Post-Apartheid Xenophobic Attacks in South Africa: A Reflection on Government Interferences'. *African Population Studies*, 31 (1), pp. 3293-3306.

Evans, J. (2022). *Operation Dudula brings its campaign against foreign nationals to Cape Town.* [online]. Available at: https://www.news24.com/news24/southafrica/news/operation-dudula-brings-its-campaign-against-foreign-nationals-to-cape-town-20220514 [Accessed 23 January 2023].

Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and Social Change.* Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.

Fairclough, N. (1995a). *Critical Discourse Analysis.* London: Longman.

Fairclough, N. (1995b). *Media Discourse*. New York: Edward Arnold.

Fairclough, N., and Wodak, R. (1997). 'Critical Discourse Analysis', in T. van Dijk (ed), *Discourse as Social Interaction: Discourse Studies: A Multidisciplinary Introduction Volume 1* (pp. 258-284). London: SAGE Publications.

Gamson, W. (1975). *The Strategy of Social Protest*. Homewood, IL: Dorsey.

González, K.V., Verkuyten, M., Weesie, J., and Poppe, E. (2008). 'Prejudice towards Muslims in The Netherlands: testing integrated threat theory'. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 47 (4), pp. 667–685.

Goswami, M.P. (2018). 'Social Media and Hashtag Activism', in S. Bālā, M. Kaur, and D. Rastogi (eds), *Liberty, Dignity and Change in Journalism* (pp. 252-262). New Delhi: Kanishka Publisher.

Halliday, M. (1994). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. 2nd ed. London: Edward Arnold.

Harris, B. (2002). 'Xenophobia: A new pathology for a new South Africa?', in D. Hook and G. Eagle (eds), *Psychopathology and Social Prejudice* (pp. 169-184). Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press.

Hervik, P. (2015). 'Xenophobia and Nativism', in J.D. Wright (ed), *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences.* 2nd ed. (pp. 796-801). Amsterdam: Elsevier.

Ho, U. (2022). *Limpopo Health MEC Dr Phophi Ramathuba's xenophobic, dehumanising diatribe against Zimbabwean patient*. [online]. Available at: https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2022-08-24-limpopo-health-mec-ramathubas-xenophobic-rant-against-zimbabwean-patient-polarises-sa/# [Accessed 23 January 2023].

Human Rights Watch. (1998). *''Prohibited Persons'': Abuse of Undocumented Migrants, Asylum Seekers, and Refugees in South Africa*. New York: Human Rights Watch.

Islam, G. (2014). 'Social Identity Theory', in T. Teo (ed), *Encyclopedia of Critical Psychology* (pp. 1781-1783). New York: Springer.

Islam, M.R, and Hewstone, M. (1993). 'Dimensions of Contact as Predictors of Intergroup Anxiety, Perceived Out-Group Variability, and Out-Group Attitude: An Integrative Model'. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 19 (6), pp. 700–710.

Kamalu, I., and Osisanwo, A. (2015). 'Discourse Analysis', in I. Kamalu and I. Tamunobelema (eds), *Issues in the Study of Language and Literature: Theory & Practice* (pp. 169-195). Ibadan: Kraft Books Limited.

Karekwaivanane, G. H. (2016). *Digital Publics and Counterpublics in Africa*. [online]. Available at: https://networks.h-net.org/node/73374/announcements/104428/digital-publics-and-counterpublics-africa [Accessed 23 January 2023].

Kerr, P., and Dixon, J. (2021). 'Non-citizens' rights: Xenophobia, nationalism and struggle post-transition', in G. Elcheroth and N. de Mel (eds), *In the Shadow of Transitional Justice: Cross-national Perspectives on the Transformative Potential of Remembrance* (pp. 91-103). New York: Routledge.

Kerr, P., Durrheim, K., and Dixon, J. (2019). 'Xenophobic violence and struggle discourse in South Africa'. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 54 (7), pp. 995–1011.

Kersting, N. (2009). 'New Nationalism and xenophobia in Africa – a new inclination?'. *Africa Spectrum*, 44 (1), pp. 7–18.

Khan, P. (2021). 'South Africa: From apartheid to xenophobia'. *Race & Class*, 63 (1), pp. 3–22.

Khumalo, T. (2020). *South Africa: Hatred of migrants reaches new heights*. [online]. Available at: https://www.dw.com/en/south-africa-hatred-of-migrants-reaches-new-heights/a-55093941 [Accessed 15 May 2022].

Kietzmann, J.H., Hermkens, K., McCarthy, I.P., and Silvestre, B.S. (2011). 'Social media? Get serious! Understanding the functional building blocks of social media'. *Business Horizons,* 54 (3), pp. 241-251.

Kim, A.E., Hansen H.M., Murphy J., Richards A.K., Duke J., and Allen J.A. (2013). 'Methodological Considerations in Analyzing Twitter Data'. *JNCI Monographs*, 2013 (47), pp. 140-146.

Kim, Y. (2011). 'The contribution of social network sites to exposure to political difference: The relationships among SNSs, online political messaging, and exposure to cross-cutting perspectives'. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 27 (2), pp. 971–977.

Landau, L. B. (2011). *Exorcising the demons within: Xenophobia, violence and statecraft in contemporary South Africa*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.

Langa, M., and Kiguwa, P. (2016). 'Race-ing xenophobic violence: Engaging social representations of the black African body in post-apartheid South Africa'. *Agenda*, 30 (2), pp.75-85.

Linström, M., and Marais, W. (2012). 'Qualitative News Frame Analysis: A Methodology'. *Communitas,* 17, pp. 21-38.

Loader, B. D., and Mercea, D. (2011). 'Networking democracy?'. *Information, Communication, & Society*, 14 (6), pp.757–769.

Locke, T. (2004). *Critical Discourse Analysis*. London: Continuum.

Luo, X., He, M., and Yu, Z. (2021). 'An Ideological Analysis of the Former President Donald Trump's Tweets During COVID-19'. *Corpus Pragmatics*, 6 (1), pp. 23–38.

Machin, D., and Mayr, A. (2012). *How to Do Critical Discourse Analysis: A Multimodal Introduction.* London: SAGE Publications.

Mamabolo, M. (2015). 'Drivers of community xenophobic attacks in South Africa: poverty and unemployment'. *The Journal for Transdisciplinary Research in Southern Africa*, 11 (4), pp. 143-150.

Mare, A. (2014). 'Social Media: The New Protest Drums in Southern Africa?', in B. Pătruţ and M. Pătruţ (eds), *Social Media in Politics: Case Studies on the Political Power of Social Media* (pp. 315-336). New York: Springer.

Masweneng, K. (2022). *Seven suspects in the Krugersdorp mine dump attack charged with rape*. [online]. Available at: https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2022-08-10-seven-suspects-in-the-krugersdorp-mine-dump-attack-charged-with-rape/ [Accessed 23 January 2023].

Mathebula, C. (2019). *The torment of being a 'questionable' South African*. [online]. Available at: https://mg.co.za/article/2019-09-13-00-the-torment-of-being-a-questionable-south-african/ [Accessed: 23 January 2023].

Matheson, D. (2023). 'Discourse analysis after the computational turn: a mixed bag'. *Communication Research and Practice*, 9 (1), pp. 3-15.

Mesthrie, R., Swann, J., Deumert, A., and Leap, W. (2000). *Introducing Sociolinguistics.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Misago, J.P. (2019). 'Political Mobilisation as the Trigger of Xenophobic Violence in Post-Apartheid South Africa'. *International Journal of Conflict and Violence*, 13, pp. 1-10.

Misago, J.P., Landau, L.B., and Monson, T. (2009). *Towards Tolerance, Law, and Dignity: Addressing Violence against Foreign Nationals in South Africa.* Arcadia: International Organization for Migration (IOM).

Misago, J.P., Monson, T., Polzer, T., and Landau, L. (2010). *May 2008 Violence Against Foreign Nationals in South Africa: Understanding Causes and Evaluating Responses*. Johannesburg: Forced Migration Studies Programme (FMSP).

Morris, A. (1998). ''Our fellow Africans make our lives hell': the lives of Congolese and Nigerians living in Johannesburg'. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 21 (6), pp. 1116-1136.

MSF Southern Africa. (2022). *Intensifying xenophobic climate and politicisation of healthcare blocks patients from hospitals in Pretoria*. [online]. Available at: https://www.msf.org.za/news-and-resources/press-release/intensifying-xenophobic-climate-and-politicisation-healthcare [Accessed 23 January 2023].

Mupotsa, D., and Kreutzfeldt, D. (2016). 'Xenophobia, nationalism and techniques of difference'. *Agenda*, 30 (2), pp. 13–20.

Mutanda, D. (2022). 'Economic threat, new nationalism and xenophobia in South Africa: Some reflections'. *African Security Review*, 31 (3), pp. 332–350.

Muyanga, A. (2017). 'Nationalism and Othering in the Contemporary Era: The Non-South African Black and Xenophobia in South Africa'. *Global Africana Review*, 1 (1), pp. 30-43.

Myeni, T. (2022). *What is Operation Dudula, South Africa's anti-migration vigilante?*. [online]. Available at: https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2022/4/8/what-is-operation-dudula-s-africas-anti-immigration-vigilante [Accessed 2 June 2022].

Neocosmos, M. (2006). *From 'Foreign Natives' to 'Native Foreigners' Explaining Xenophobia in Post-apartheid South Africa Citizenship and Nationalism, Identity and Politics*. Dakar: Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA).

Neocosmos, M. (2008). 'The Politics of Fear and the Fear of Politics: Reflections on Xenophobic Violence in South Africa'. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 43 (6), pp. 586–594.

Neuman, W.R., Just, M.R., and Crigler, A.N. (1992). *Common Knowledge: News and the Construction of Political Meaning*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

News24. (2022). *Social media mobilises xenophobic sentiment.* [online]. Available at: https://www.news24.com/citypress/news/social-media-mobilises-xenophobic-sentiment-20220313 [Accessed 12 July 2023].

Nkabane, N.P., and Mutereko, S. (2021). 'Social Media and Nationalistic Influence on Xenophobia in Africa', in S.O. Abidde and E.K. Matambo (eds), *Xenophobia, Nativism and Pan-Africanism in 21st Century Africa: History, Concepts, Practice and Case Study* (pp. 255-267). Switzerland: Springer.

Nyamnjoh, F. B. (2006). *Insiders and Outsiders: Citizenship and Xenophobia in Contemporary Southern Africa*. Dakar: Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA).

OECD/ILO. (2018). *How Immigrants Contribute to South Africa's Economy*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

Olagunju, A., Frankish, T., and Wade, J.P. (2022). 'Beyond #FeesMustFall: Understanding the inclusion role of social media during students' protests in South Africa'. *Cogent Education*, 9 (1), pp. 1-12.

Onslow, S. (2021). *Social media's impact on political discourse in South Africa.* LSE Ideas London School of Economics and Political Science, London, UK Digital IR: Working Paper Series 05/2021. [online]. Available at: http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/110841/ [Accessed 23 January 2023].

O'Regan, V., and Banda, M. (2022). *Operation Dudula calls off protests at Kalafong hospital after 'fruitful' meeting with health minister.* [online]. Available at: https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2022-09-01-operation-dudula-calls-off-protests-at-kalafong-hospital-after-fruitful-meeting-with-health-minister/ [Accessed 23 January 2023].

Palmary, I. (2009). 'Migrations of theory, method and practice: a reflection on themes in migration studies (Review article)'. *Psychology in Society*, (37), pp. 55-66.

Peralta, E. (2022). *A movement gains force to 'put South Africans first', and to drive migrants out.* [online]. Available at: https://www.npr.org/transcripts/1103445432 [Accessed 23 January 2023].

Pineteh, E.A. (2017). 'Illegal aliens and demons that must be exorcised from South Africa: Framing African migrants and xenophobia in post-apartheid narratives'. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 3 (1), pp. 1-13.

Quinn, S., and Lamble, S. (2008). *Online Newsgathering: Research and Reporting for Journalism*. New York: Elsevier.

Rafapa, M. (2022). *Operation Dudula harasses immigrants outside Kalafong hospital*. [online]. Available at: https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2022-09-01-operation-dudula-harasses-immigrants-outside-kalafong-hospital/ [Accessed 23 January 2023].

Reese, S.D., Gandy, O.H., and Grant, A.E. (2001). *Framing Public Life: Perspectives on Media and Our Understanding of the Social World.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Riek, B. M., Mania, E. W., and Gaertner, S. L. (2006). 'Intergroup Threat and Outgroup Attitudes: A Meta-Analytic Review'. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 10 (4), pp. 336–353.

Rugunanan, P., and Xulu-Gama, N. (2022). *Migration in Southern Africa*. Switzerland: Springer.

Ruiz, J.R. (2009). 'Sociological Discourse Analysis: Methods and Logic'. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research,* 10 (2), pp. 1-30.

Saleh, I. (2015). 'Is it Really Xenophobia in South Africa or an Intentional Act of Prejudice?'. *Global Media Journal: African Edition*, 9 (2), pp. 298-313.

Scheufele, D. A. (1999). 'Framing as a Theory of Media Effects'. *Journal of Communication*, 49 (1), pp. 103–122.

Semetko, H.A., and Valkenburg, P.M. (2000). 'Framing European Politics: A Content Analysis of Press and Television News'. *Journal of Communication*, 50 (2), pp. 93 – 109.

Sikhwivhilu, P., and Zwane, E. (2018). 'The Perceived Effects of Foreign Migration on Service Delivery in a South African Local Municipality: A Case of Musina Local Municipality'. *The International Conference on Public Administration and Development Alternatives (IPADA)*, pp. 734-748.

Simelane, B.C. (2022). *Xenophobia-accused Operation Dudula returns to Hillbrow.* [online]. Available at: https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2022-02-21-xenophobia-accused-operation-dudula-returns-to-hillbrow/ [Accessed 23 January 2023].

Smelser, N. (1963). *Theory of Collective Behaviour*. New York: Free Press.

Sniderman, P., Hagendoorn, L., and Prior, M. (2004). 'Predisposing Factors and Situational Triggers: Exclusionary Reactions to Immigrant Minorities'. *American Political Science Review*, 98 (1), pp. 35–49.

Solomon, H., and Kosaka, H. (2014). 'Xenophobia in South Africa: Reflections, Narratives and Recommendations'. *Southern Africa Peace and Security Studies*, 2 (2), pp. 5–30.

Stalker, G. J., and Wood, L. J. (2012). 'Reaching Beyond the Net: Political Circuits and Participation in Toronto's G20 Protests'. *Social Movement Studies: Journal of Social, Cultural and Political Protest*, 12 (2), pp.178–198.

Stegmeier, J. (2012). 'Toward a computer-aided methodology for discourse analysis'. *Stellenbosch Papers in Linguistics*, 41 (1), pp. 91-114.

Stephan, W. G., and Stephan, C. W. (2000). 'An integrated threat theory of prejudice', in S. Oskamp (ed), *Reducing Prejudice and Discrimination* (pp. 225–246). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Stimmel, C. L. (2018). *Networks of Isolation: The Case of Donald J. Trump, Facebook, and the Limits of Social Movement Theory*. MA Thesis. Clark University.

Sugawara, Y., Narimatsu H., Hozawa A., Shao L., Otani K., and Fukao A. (2012). 'Cancer patients on Twitter: a novel patient community on social media'. *BMC Res Notes*, 5 (699), pp. 1-9.

Tajfel, H., and Turner, J. C. (1979). 'An integrative theory of intergroup conflict', in W.G. Austin and S. Worchel (eds), *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (pp. 33–47). Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Tajfel, H. (1981). *Introducing Social Psychology*. Middlesex: Penguin Books.

Tarrow, S. (2011). *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*. 3rd ed. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Tilly, C., and Tarrow, S. (2015). *Contentious Politics.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Touraine, A. (1985). 'An Introduction to the Study of Social Movements'. *Social Research*, 52 (4), pp. 749-787.

Tshitereke, C. (1999). 'Xenophobia and Relative Deprivation'. *Crossings*, 3 (2), pp. 12-16.

Tufekci, Z. (2017). *Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Umejei, E. (2021). 'Framing Xenophobia on Social Media: An Analysis of Xenophobic Attacks on Nigerians Living in South Africa', in J. Višňovský and J. Radošinská (eds), *Fake News Is Bad News: Hoaxes, Half-truths and the Nature of Today's Journalism* (pp. 221-236). London: IntechOpen.

UNESCO. (2017). *Xenophobia.* [online]. Available at: https://wayback.archive-it.org/10611/20171126022534/http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/international-migration/glossary/xenophobia/ [Accessed 15 May 2022].

van Dijk, T. (2001). 'Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis', in M. Wetherell, S. Taylor, and S. Yates (eds), *Discourse Theory and Practice* (pp. 300-317). London: SAGE Publications.

van Stekelenburg, J., and Klandermans, P. G. (2009). 'Social movement theory: Past, present and prospect', in I. van Kessel and S. Ellis (eds), *Movers and Shakers: Social Movements in Africa* (pp. 17-44). Leiden: Brill.

Warner, M. (2005). *Publics and Counterpublics*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Wicker, H.R. (2001). 'Xenophobia', in N.J. Smelser and P.B. Baltes (eds), *International Encyclopedia of Social & Behavioral Sciences.* 1st ed. (pp. 16649-16652). Oxford: Pergamon Press.

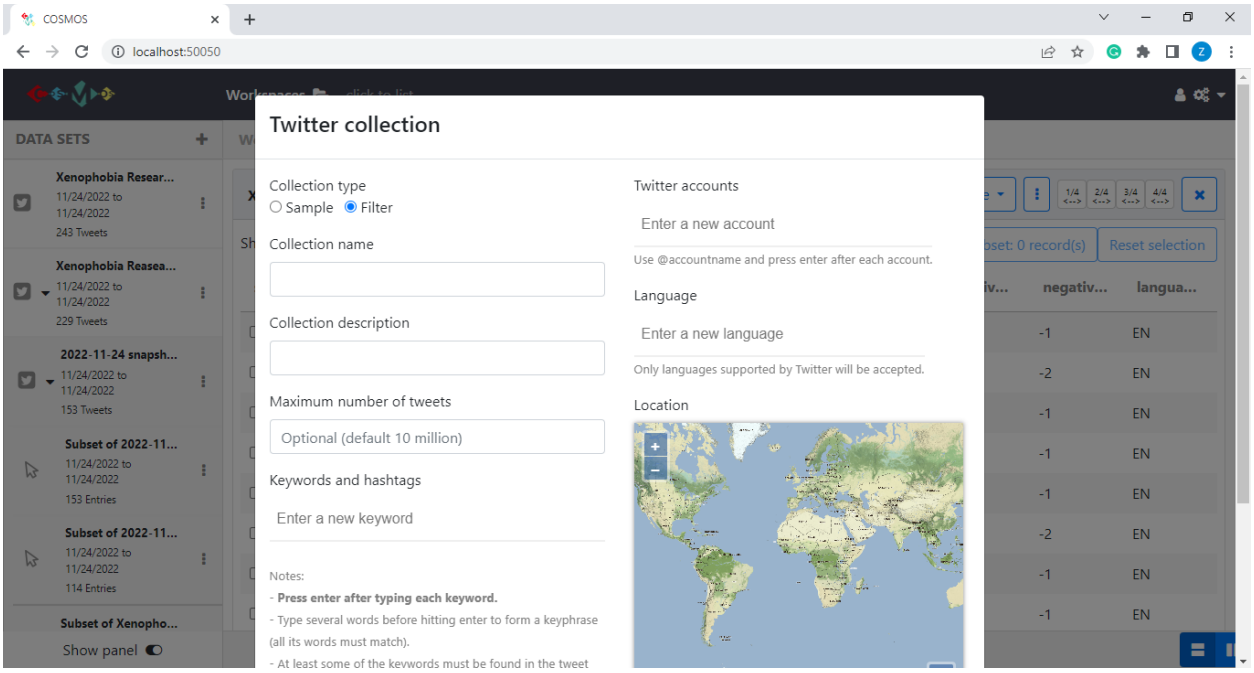
Wicks, B. (2022). *Justice proving to be illusive for Krugersdorp gang rape victims*. [online]. Available at: https://ewn.co.za/2022/12/29/justice-proving-to-be-illusive-for-krugersdorp-gang-rape-victims [Accessed 23 January 2023].

Wodak, R. (2001). 'What CDA Is about—A Summary of Its History, Important Concepts and Its Developments', in W.R. Wodak and M. Meyer (eds), *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (pp. 1-13). London: SAGE Publications.

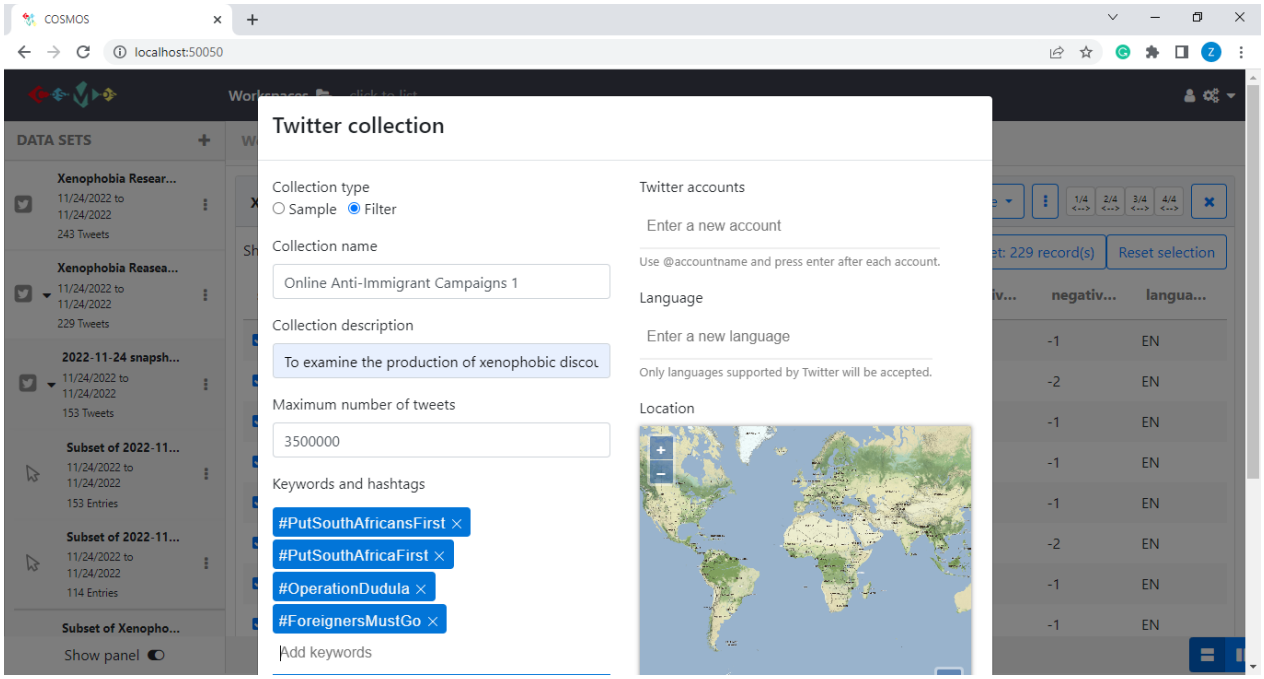
Woo-Young, C. (2005). 'Online civic participation, and political empowerment: online media and public opinion formation in Korea'. *Media Culture & Society*, 27 (6), pp. 925-935.

APPENDIX

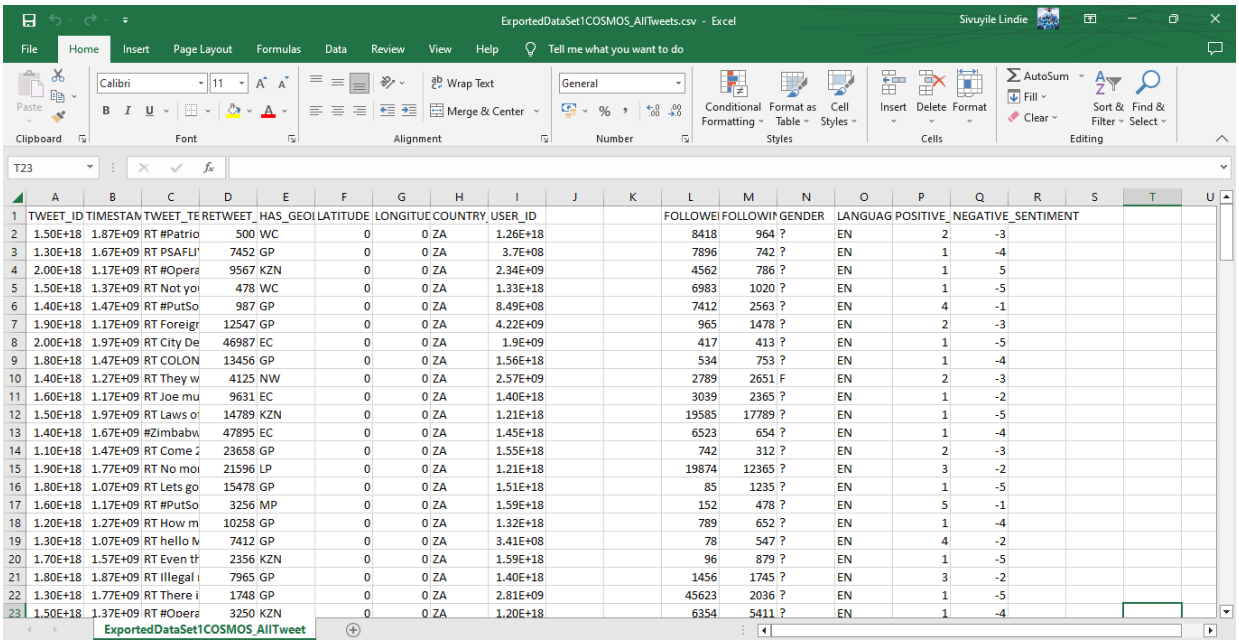
(A) COSMOS 'Twitter Collection' function



(B) Overview of filtering and querying features used on COSMOS

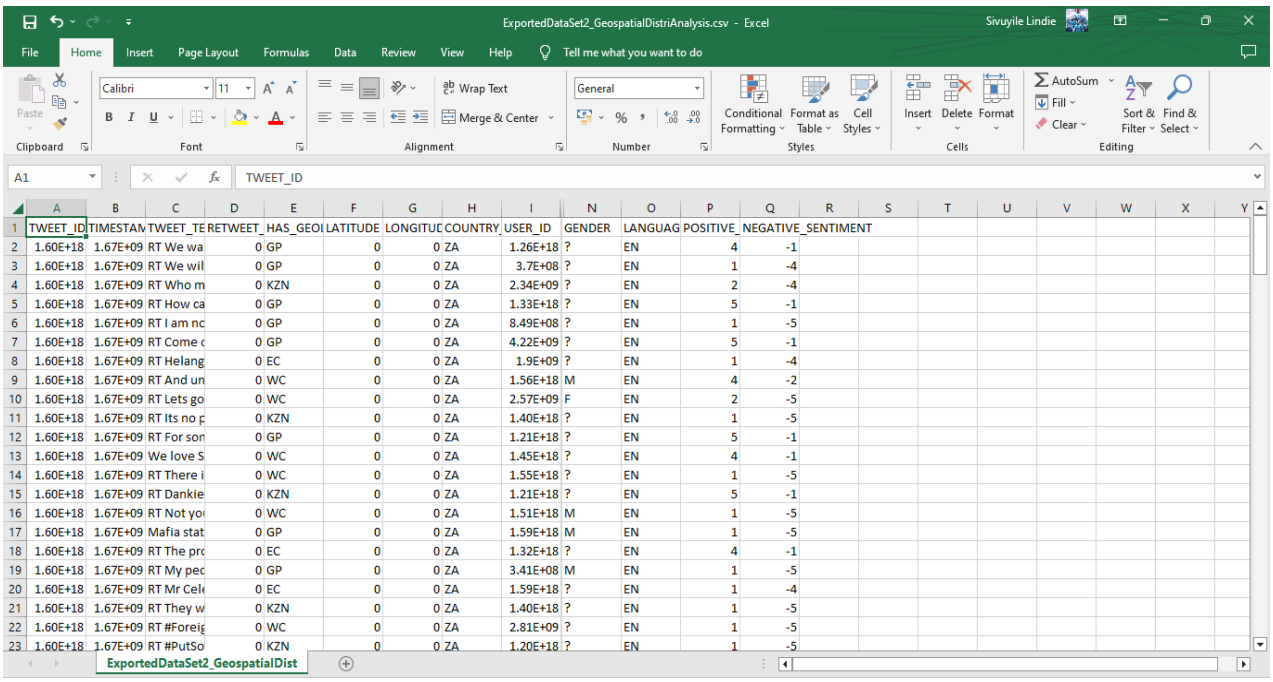


(C) Qualitative table overview – summary of four main socio-economic issues



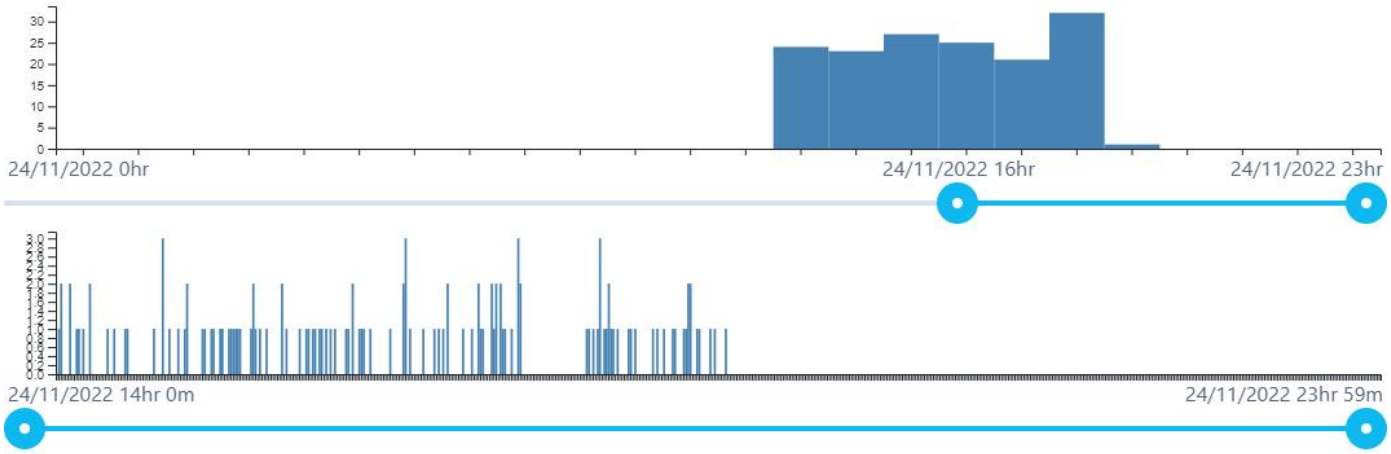
TWEET_ID	TIMESTAM	TWEET_TE	RETWEET_	HAS_GEO	LATITUDE	LONGITUD	COUNTRY	USER_ID		FOLLOWEI	FOLLOWI	GENDER	LANGUAG	POSITIVE_	NEGATIVE_SENTIMENT
1.50E+18	1.87E+09	RT #Patrio	500	WC	0	0	ZA	1.26E+18		8418	964	?	EN	2	-3
1.30E+18	1.67E+09	RT PSAFLI	7452	GP	0	0	ZA	3.7E+08		7896	742	?	EN	1	-4
2.00E+18	1.17E+09	RT #Opera	9567	KZN	0	0	ZA	2.34E+09		4562	786	?	EN	1	5
1.50E+18	1.37E+09	RT Not yo	478	WC	0	0	ZA	1.33E+18		6983	1020	?	EN	1	-5
1.40E+18	1.47E+09	RT #PutSo	987	GP	0	0	ZA	8.49E+08		7412	2563	?	EN	4	-1
1.90E+18	1.17E+09	RT Foreigr	12547	GP	0	0	ZA	4.22E+09		965	1478	?	EN	2	-3
2.00E+18	1.97E+09	RT City De	46987	EC	0	0	ZA	1.9E+09		417	413	?	EN	1	-5
1.80E+18	1.47E+09	RT COLON	13456	GP	0	0	ZA	1.56E+18		534	753	?	EN	1	-4
1.40E+18	1.27E+09	RT They w	4125	NW	0	0	ZA	2.57E+09		2789	2651	F	EN	2	-3
1.60E+18	1.17E+09	RT Joe mu	9631	EC	0	0	ZA	1.40E+18		3039	2365	?	EN	1	-2
1.50E+18	1.97E+09	RT Laws of	14789	KZN	0	0	ZA	1.21E+18		19585	17789	?	EN	1	-5
1.40E+18	1.67E+09	#Zimbabw	47895	EC	0	0	ZA	1.45E+18		6523	654	?	EN	1	-4
1.10E+18	1.47E+09	RT Come 2	23658	GP	0	0	ZA	1.55E+18		742	312	?	EN	2	-3
1.90E+18	1.77E+09	RT No mor	21596	LP	0	0	ZA	1.21E+18		19874	12365	?	EN	3	-2
1.80E+18	1.07E+09	RT Lets go	15478	GP	0	0	ZA	1.51E+18		85	1235	?	EN	1	-5
1.60E+18	1.17E+09	RT #PutSo	3256	MP	0	0	ZA	1.59E+18		152	478	?	EN	5	-1
1.20E+18	1.27E+09	RT How m	10258	GP	0	0	ZA	1.32E+18		789	652	?	EN	1	-4
1.30E+18	1.07E+09	RT hello M	7412	GP	0	0	ZA	3.41E+08		78	547	?	EN	4	-2
1.70E+18	1.57E+09	RT Even th	2356	KZN	0	0	ZA	1.59E+18		96	879	?	EN	1	-5
1.80E+18	1.87E+09	RT Illegal	7965	GP	0	0	ZA	1.40E+18		1456	1745	?	EN	3	-2
1.30E+18	1.77E+09	RT There i	1748	GP	0	0	ZA	2.81E+09		45623	2036	?	EN	1	-5
1.50E+18	1.37E+09	RT #Opera	3250	KZN	0	0	ZA	1.20E+18		6354	5411	?	EN	1	-4

(D) Qualitative table overview – geospatial distribution

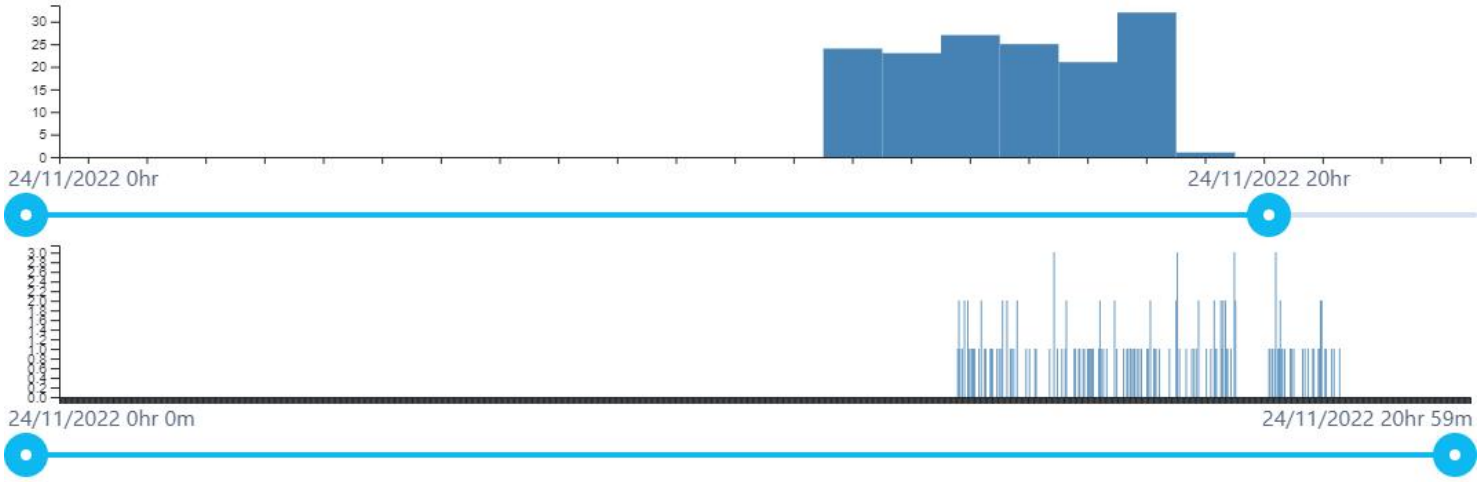


TWEET_ID	TIMESTAM	TWEET_TE	RETWEET_	HAS_GEO	LATITUDE	LONGITUD	COUNTRY	USER_ID	GENDER	LANGUAG	POSITIVE_	NEGATIVE_SENTIMENT
1.60E+18	1.67E+09	RT We wa	0	GP	0	0	ZA	1.26E+18	?	EN	4	-1
1.60E+18	1.67E+09	RT We wil	0	GP	0	0	ZA	3.7E+08	?	EN	1	-4
1.60E+18	1.67E+09	RT Who m	0	KZN	0	0	ZA	2.34E+09	?	EN	2	-4
1.60E+18	1.67E+09	RT How ca	0	GP	0	0	ZA	1.33E+18	?	EN	5	-1
1.60E+18	1.67E+09	RT I am nc	0	GP	0	0	ZA	8.49E+08	?	EN	1	-5
1.60E+18	1.67E+09	RT Come c	0	GP	0	0	ZA	4.22E+09	?	EN	5	-1
1.60E+18	1.67E+09	RT Helang	0	EC	0	0	ZA	1.9E+09	?	EN	1	-4
1.60E+18	1.67E+09	RT And un	0	WC	0	0	ZA	1.56E+18	M	EN	4	-2
1.60E+18	1.67E+09	RT Lets go	0	WC	0	0	ZA	2.57E+09	F	EN	2	-5
1.60E+18	1.67E+09	RT Its no p	0	KZN	0	0	ZA	1.40E+18	?	EN	1	-5
1.60E+18	1.67E+09	RT For son	0	GP	0	0	ZA	1.21E+18	?	EN	5	-1
1.60E+18	1.67E+09	We love S	0	WC	0	0	ZA	1.45E+18	?	EN	4	-1
1.60E+18	1.67E+09	RT There i	0	WC	0	0	ZA	1.55E+18	?	EN	1	-5
1.60E+18	1.67E+09	RT Dankie	0	KZN	0	0	ZA	1.21E+18	?	EN	5	-1
1.60E+18	1.67E+09	RT Not yo	0	WC	0	0	ZA	1.51E+18	M	EN	1	-5
1.60E+18	1.67E+09	Mafia stat	0	GP	0	0	ZA	1.59E+18	M	EN	1	-5
1.60E+18	1.67E+09	RT The pro	0	EC	0	0	ZA	1.32E+18	?	EN	4	-1
1.60E+18	1.67E+09	RT My pec	0	GP	0	0	ZA	3.41E+08	M	EN	1	-5
1.60E+18	1.67E+09	RT Mr Cele	0	EC	0	0	ZA	1.59E+18	?	EN	1	-4
1.60E+18	1.67E+09	RT They w	0	KZN	0	0	ZA	1.40E+18	?	EN	1	-5
1.60E+18	1.67E+09	RT #Foreig	0	WC	0	0	ZA	2.81E+09	?	EN	1	-5
1.60E+18	1.67E+09	RT #PutSo	0	KZN	0	0	ZA	1.20E+18	?	EN	1	-5

(E) Daily frequency analysis of top four hashtags



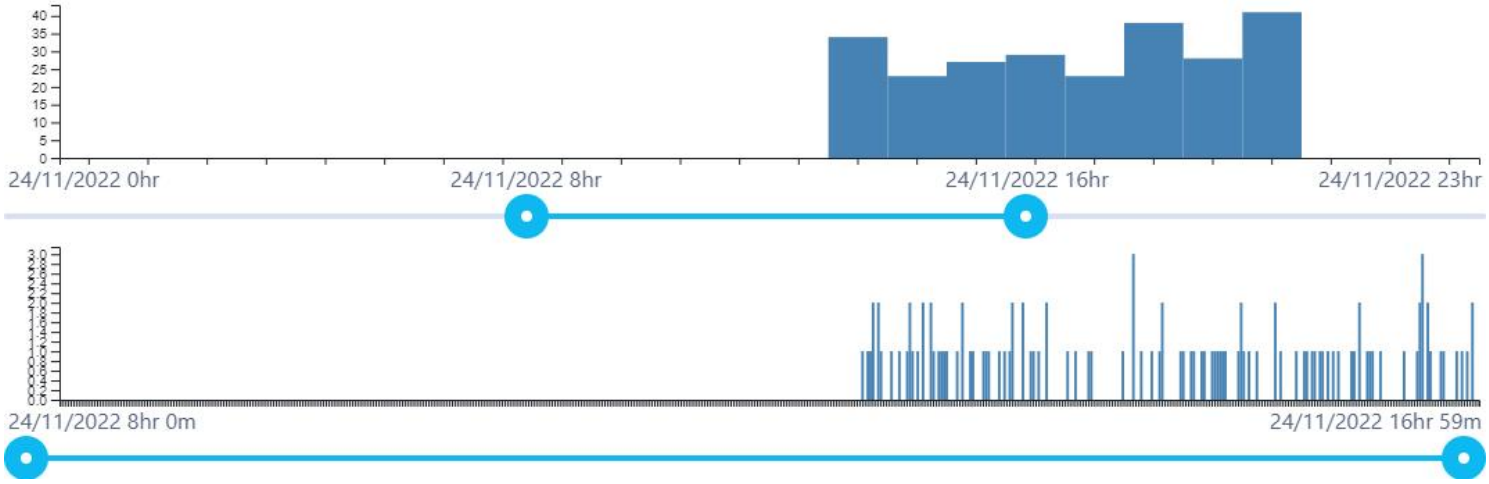
(F) Daily frequency analysis of significant public holidays



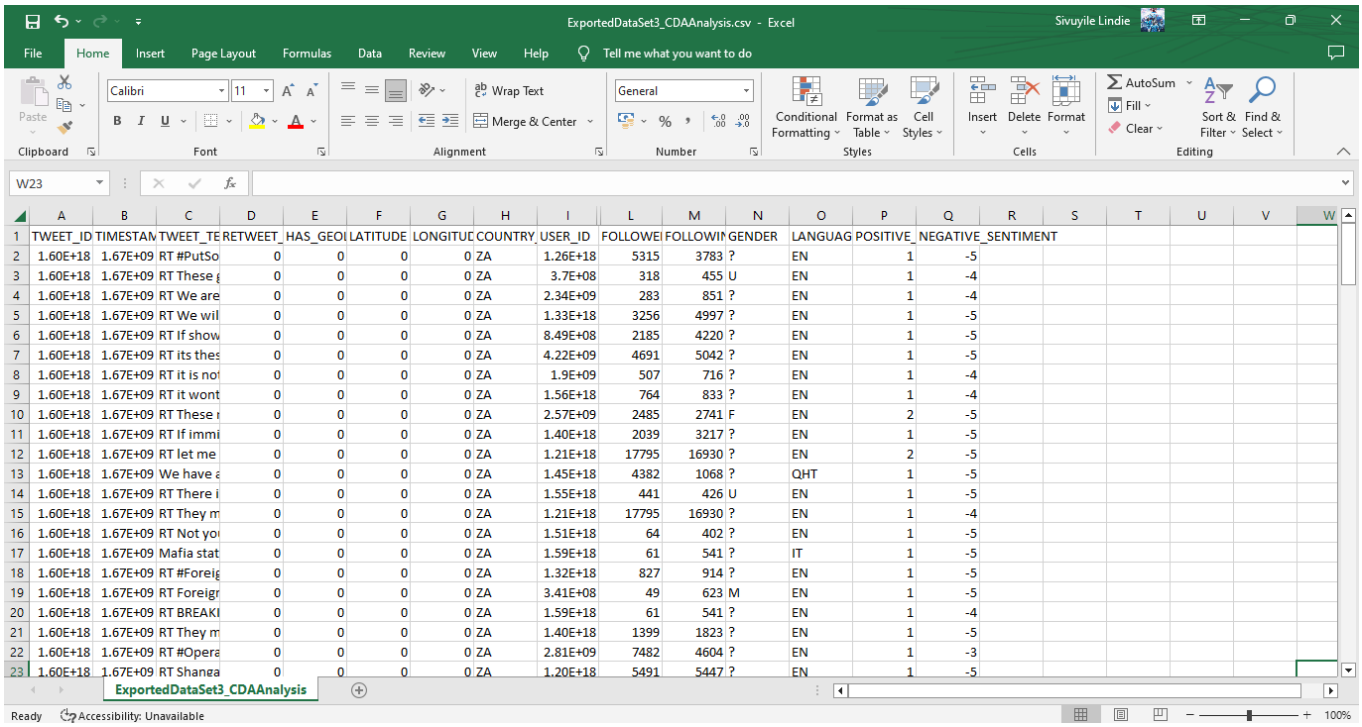
(G) Daily frequency analysis of significant protest events



(H) Weekly and daily frequency analysis of Kalafong Hospital protests



(I) Qualitative table overview – CDA sample of tweets used in Table 2



ExportedDataSet3_CDAAnalysis.csv - Excel

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	L	M	N	O	P	Q
1	TWEET_ID	TIMESTAM	TWEET_TE	RETWEET_	HAS_GEO	LATITUDE	LONGITUD	COUNTRY	USER_ID	FOLLOWE	FOLLOWIN	GENDER	LANGUAG	POSITIVE_	NEGATIVE_SENTIMENT
2	1.60E+18	1.67E+09	RT #PutSo	0	0	0	0	ZA	1.26E+18	5315	3783	?	EN	1	-5
3	1.60E+18	1.67E+09	RT These	0	0	0	0	ZA	3.7E+08	318	455	U	EN	1	-4
4	1.60E+18	1.67E+09	RT We are	0	0	0	0	ZA	2.34E+09	283	851	?	EN	1	-4
5	1.60E+18	1.67E+09	RT We wil	0	0	0	0	ZA	1.33E+18	3256	4997	?	EN	1	-5
6	1.60E+18	1.67E+09	RT If show	0	0	0	0	ZA	8.49E+08	2185	4220	?	EN	1	-5
7	1.60E+18	1.67E+09	RT its thes	0	0	0	0	ZA	4.22E+09	4691	5042	?	EN	1	-5
8	1.60E+18	1.67E+09	RT it is not	0	0	0	0	ZA	1.9E+09	507	716	?	EN	1	-4
9	1.60E+18	1.67E+09	RT it wont	0	0	0	0	ZA	1.56E+18	764	833	?	EN	1	-4
10	1.60E+18	1.67E+09	RT These	0	0	0	0	ZA	2.57E+09	2485	2741	F	EN	2	-5
11	1.60E+18	1.67E+09	RT If immi	0	0	0	0	ZA	1.40E+18	2039	3217	?	EN	1	-5
12	1.60E+18	1.67E+09	RT let me	0	0	0	0	ZA	1.21E+18	17795	16930	?	EN	2	-5
13	1.60E+18	1.67E+09	We have a	0	0	0	0	ZA	1.45E+18	4382	1068	?	QHT	1	-5
14	1.60E+18	1.67E+09	RT There i	0	0	0	0	ZA	1.55E+18	441	426	U	EN	1	-5
15	1.60E+18	1.67E+09	RT They m	0	0	0	0	ZA	1.21E+18	17795	16930	?	EN	1	-4
16	1.60E+18	1.67E+09	RT Not yo	0	0	0	0	ZA	1.51E+18	64	402	?	EN	1	-5
17	1.60E+18	1.67E+09	Mafia stat	0	0	0	0	ZA	1.59E+18	61	541	?	IT	1	-5
18	1.60E+18	1.67E+09	RT #Foreig	0	0	0	0	ZA	1.32E+18	827	914	?	EN	1	-5
19	1.60E+18	1.67E+09	RT Foreigr	0	0	0	0	ZA	3.41E+08	49	623	M	EN	1	-5
20	1.60E+18	1.67E+09	RT BREAKI	0	0	0	0	ZA	1.59E+18	61	541	?	EN	1	-4
21	1.60E+18	1.67E+09	RT They m	0	0	0	0	ZA	1.40E+18	1399	1823	?	EN	1	-5
22	1.60E+18	1.67E+09	RT #Opera	0	0	0	0	ZA	2.81E+09	7482	4604	?	EN	1	-3
23	1.60E+18	1.67E+09	RT Shanga	0	0	0	0	ZA	1.20E+18	5491	5447	?	EN	1	-5