

Xenophobia and Violence in South Africa :
a desktop study of the trends and a scan
of explanations offered.

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Preface.

African Dawn, a South African public sector consultant and development facilitating organisation, requested that this rapid desk-top project be done over a three month period.

The aim of the project is given in the Introduction.

The team that conducted the desktop (and supplementary focus group) research comprised:

- Simon Bekker, as project leader;
- Ilse Eigelaar-Meets and Gary Eva as senior researchers;
- Caroline Poole as fieldwork coordinator;
- Lennox Olivier and Pierre Du Plessis as research assistants and
- Marius Tredoux as administrative officer

The host Department at the University of Stellenbosch was the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology and all team members are affiliated in different ways to this Department.

The team would like to thank Louis Scheepers of African Dawn for selecting our team to undertake this research, and to express our gratitude to those residents who agreed to participate in the four focus group sessions and interviews we organized to supplement the secondary information we gathered on the xenophobic violence.

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A **compact disc** entitled “*Diffusion of violent xenophobic events in South Africa from 10 May to 30 June 2008: data assembled from the South African print media*” accompanies this report.

Section 1 Introduction

'(P)olitical histories of anti-colonial resistance (in South Africa) ...are about an almost angelic dignity... It is as if the South African masses rose above their wretched circumstances and found an essential nobility which transcended time and place... Prison gangs (on the other hand) ...get too close to the bone. They show us why generations of young black men lived violent lives under apartheid, and why generations more will live violently under democracy.'

*Jonny Steinberg **The Number***

The purpose of this report is to develop an historical account of the run-up to, and current process of, xenophobic violence in South Africa. This will be done by

- Establishing a conceptual framework within which to place this account and by using data from secondary sources to flesh it out;
- Conducting a scan of explanations for outbreaks of xenophobic violence in general, and the 2008 series of South African events, in particular; and
- Conducting preliminary qualitative fieldwork comprising focus group discussions with Western Cape residents in four residential neighbourhoods (four case studies) where such outbreaks occurred as well as interviews with selected individuals in the Northern Cape and adding these data to secondary data that have been assembled.

Accordingly, research conducted by the small project team has been predominantly desktop – collecting information from secondary sources rather than from fieldwork. In addition, since the project was of a short three-month duration, the focus is exclusively on the perpetrators of the violent xenophobic outbursts and on their actions, not on the victims and refugees during and after the series of outbursts. Xenophobia is commonly defined as “the hatred or fear of foreigners or strangers” and it is worth noting at this stage that it is the definitions by those South Africans whose sentiments may become xenophobic of ‘foreigner’ and ‘stranger’ that are pertinent (not technical definitions of intellectuals and of the state). Accordingly, a minority in a South African informal settlement may well be defined by residents as ‘strangers’ even though they (or some of them) may be South African nationals. Equally, the targets of this hatred need not be African or solely African, but could include foreigners from other continents residing in such an informal settlement.

During the second half of May 2008 (and continuing through the month of June), a series of short violent outbursts took place in neighbourhoods of numerous South African cities and towns. The violence during these outbursts was perpetrated by civilians, and was inflicted on the property and the person of civilians. The perpetrators were largely young poor black

South African men, the targets largely the property and businesses of foreign African nationals as well as these civilians themselves. The series of outbursts began in Gauteng and spread about a week after the first serious event to other urban areas of the country, Cape Town and the Western Cape in particular. Initial state reaction was evasive, essentially denying the scope and seriousness of these events. Subsequently, as the series of events spread across the country, the state sought explanations in criminal and mob behaviour. This geographic spread of outbursts was accompanied by (and probably associated with) widespread coverage by the mass media – television, radio and newspapers – of these events and their possible causes. Since the reaction of many of the victims was flight from their residential areas, a series of temporary refugee camps were established (Gauteng and Cape Town in particular). During the aftermath of these outbursts, more than 20 000 refugees were accommodated in this way, numerous African foreign nationals were reported to have left the country, and government urged refugees in camps to return to the residential areas from which they had fled since these were said to have calmed down. The run-up to this series of outbursts moreover was framed by a number of parallel processes:

- Large sustained migration streams of foreign African nationals entering South Africa after 1994
- Large sustained rural-urban migration streams of rural black South Africans entering South African urban areas
- Numerous reported xenophobic events in various urban settlements in the country
- Incoherence and in-fighting over the establishment of a national immigration policy, and
- Recent price increases in the costs of basic foods and of transport.

Explanations offered in the media and in other published documents for the series of outbursts between May and June 2008 are diverse. They vary from common and popular one-factor reductionist explanations (particularly in the early period) to more complex explanations of collective action drawing on relative deprivation or resource mobilization theories. The major factors in these latter explanations included

- failure of government policies, such as service delivery, failure to address crime, collapse of border controls and unsuccessful diplomacy toward Zimbabwe;
- the high unemployment rate particularly for young urban black men; and
- the failings of the police (whether from lack of resources or poor training).

What the vast majority of these explanations share, on the other hand, is the predominance of external structural causes in the explanations. Little attention is given to internal factors directly related to individual outbursts themselves and to the shared meaning residents give to local issues. Accordingly, explanations tend to be given not for individual outbursts but for the series of events as a single phenomenon. Little attention equally appears to have been

given to the diffusion in terms of both location and time of events during this period. Such an approach renders virtually invisible possible immediate causes for an individual outburst, rooted in local history and local identities – in other words, local causes for the particular event understood in terms of the meanings given by local residents to local issues remain hidden and largely undetectable. Such structural explanations moreover are able adequately to explain neither the emergence and particular diffusion of violence nor the selection of particular targets in individual events. Finally, since they tend to treat the activities of the police as a factual reactive element (either present or absent), they are able to establish neither the perceptions that local residents develop of police activity nor the possible proactive role the police may have played in the outburst.

Given this weakness in explanation, a more appropriate conceptual framework for violent collective behaviour and for the series of outbursts that are the focus of this report is developed. It embraces four parts:

- Explanations focused on external structural causes,
- Explanations focused on factors directly related to specific outbursts,
- Explanations for the diffusion of outburst events, and
- Explanations for perceptions concerning the forces of safety and security and concerning government.

Since explanations focused on specific outbursts are new and important, the sequence – or ‘rhythm’ – of phases through which a violent outburst moves, are listed here

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| ➤ Precipitant | violence |
| ➤ Unsettling event | ➤ Strong concentration on male victims. |
| ➤ Dissemination of rumours | |
| ➤ Lull | ➤ Broadening of participation |
| ➤ More deliberate acts of | |

The potential advantage of employing this framework is that the unit of analysis is the outburst, not the diffusion of violent events. This implies a focus both on general structural factors in the environment of the location of the outburst as well as on factors specific to that particular event, rendered largely invisible by other models. In addition, sentiments, perceptions and local conditions – as understood by local perpetrators of violence – are central to the explanations given for the events.

The research method employed by the project team began with a scan of secondary sources dealing with violent collective behaviour involving civilians (rather than state agents). Subsequently, secondary sources relating to the run-up to, and the May and June spread of, xenophobic violence in South Africa were assembled and scrutinised. In particular, daily and weekly national and provincial newspapers were consulted by employing key word scans within two separate electronic search engines and a comprehensive set of (some 4 000) news articles relating to reports on xenophobic sentiment and to events of xenophobic behaviour were assembled. These articles were subsequently sorted into files relating to cross-border migration after 1994, pre-May xenophobic sentiment, pre-May events of xenophobic violence, information on specific outbursts during the May-June period ('event data'), and explanations offered by various commentators. Copies of news articles that required multiple filing were made. A list of newspapers scanned is included in the Appendices. The four case studies in the Western Cape were completed by merging event data on those particular outbursts identified in these scans with data assembled from outburst participants and observers during focus group discussions. A copy of the focus group schedule is included in the Appendices.

The validity of information on event data gathered through the print media requires comment. It is clear that there are issues relating to selection bias (the nature of the sampling made). We selected the print rather than the electronic media, national and regional rather than local or country papers, two search engines, and specific keywords. There are also issues relating to description bias (the veracity with which selected events are reported in the press). Recent research on the use of newspaper data in the study of collective behaviour

(Earl *et al.* 2004) argues that:

Although newspaper data may ignore key dimensions of a protest (e.g., its purpose), when event characteristics are included, especially hard news items (i.e., the who, what, when, where, and why of the event), the reports are, in general, accurate, indicating that *missing data may be the most serious form of description bias.* (emphasis added)

This research concludes that

researchers can effectively use such data and that newspaper data does not deviate markedly from accepted standards of quality.

The preliminary results of this research were presented in November 2008 to a small group of invited experts (from the South African Institute of Race Relations and the University of the Witwatersrand in Gauteng and the Universities of Cape Town, Stellenbosch and the Western Cape in Cape Town) to obtain feedback regarding the soundness of the draft project results.

The draft report was subsequently amended.

The report opens with a section on cross-border migration of Africans into South Africa after 1994 (Section 2) and is followed by two short sections (3.1 & 3.2) on associated xenophobic sentiments that have developed among South Africans and on events of xenophobic violence that have taken place before the commencement in May 2008 of the series which forms the focus of this report. Subsequently, a conceptual framework within which to analyse violent collective behaviour is developed (Section 4) before an overview of explanations for the May and June series of outbursts found in the media and in other secondary sources is presented (Section 5). The main empirical section of the report (Section 6) comprises the development of a chronology of xenophobic outbursts during the period mid-May to mid-June 2008. The unit of analysis here is the individual outburst and secondary information is used to track the spread of outbursts and changes in their 'rhythms'. A Compact Disc (CD) which records electronically this chronology and maps each event by province accompanies this report. The four case studies supplement the more quantitative analysis by shedding more detailed light on individual outbursts (Section 7). Interviews with individuals in the Northern Cape moreover identify possible reasons for the virtual absence of violent outbursts in that province. The conclusion (Section 8) discusses the usefulness of the Horowitz model in explaining outbursts and the spread of these outbursts, gaps – missing data -- in assembled information about what took place, and what additional research is needed to improve our understanding of these types of xenophobic outbursts in the country. It closes with an outline of an overarching explanation for the May and June 2008 outbursts, an outline comprising hypotheses that need empirical validation. A bibliography and other appendices are appended to the report (Section 9).

The Compact Disc entitled '*Diffusion of violent xenophobic events in South Africa from 10 May to 30 June 2008: data assembled from the South African print media*' is an electronic supplement to this written report. It employs PowerPoint as a mapping tool and displays the names, locations and dates of xenophobic events before 10 May 2008 as well as during the first, middle and final phases of the May-June series under scrutiny.

Section 2 **Cross-border migration of Africans into South Africa post 1994**

Introduction

Drawing on various secondary sources, the aim of this section is to present a brief overview of international migration into and within South Africa. The section briefly sketches the history of migration in South Africa as part of the Southern African region, noting major restructuring in cross-border migration patterns over the past two decades. The section then continues briefly to discuss the contested issue of migration figures for three migrant populations, a) documented immigrants and b) refugees and asylum seekers and c) undocumented immigrants.

Background

The choice to migrate is essentially an individual response to real and/or perceived disequilibria between and within sectors of an economy, or between countries. Although the choice to migrate is a result of both complex social and economic factors, the primary push factor is the migrant's search for greater economic well-being. Wherever significant differentials exist, migratory flows are directed from poorer impoverished countries to the core, toward attractive nodes (Oucho, 2006). This search for greater economic well-being has long marked migration movements within the Southern Africa region dating back to the mid-nineteenth century with mines (in South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe) and commercial farms (in South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Swaziland) constituting the most enduring magnets for legal labour migration within the region (Crush *et.al.* 2006). The founding of the South African diamond and gold mining industries ushered in the development of a modern industrial economy giving rise to the infamous South African migrant labour system, still very much in place today (Crush, 2008). Later, when addressing the reform of migration policy in South Africa, Wa Kabwe-Segatti (2008) analyses post-apartheid international migration movements towards South Africa as characterised by three major demographic features that distinguish them from the earlier situation in the late 1980s: the diversification of migrants' origins, younger migrants and the feminisation of migration.

The issue of numbers and international migration

In popular discourse on migration figures, discussions often seem to be constructed along two categories of migrants - legal/documented migrants and illegal/undocumented migrants with nearly all migrants being lumped into the latter category. Accompanying words such as "flooding", 'swamping' and 'uncontrolled influx' also do little to add value to the migration debate other than to create an ill-informed, moral panic among citizens, political leaders and

policy makers.

When discussing international migration into South Africa, it is important to acknowledge the different types/categories of migrants that enter the country. A brief discussion of three migrant categories a) documented migrants, b) refugees and asylum seekers and c) undocumented migrants is given below.

a) Documented migrants

Documented migrants are essentially those that can be accounted for by the Department of Home Affairs and include migrants that have been granted permanent residency, work permits, study permits and visitors' permits. Up to 1998, permanent migration was dominated by European immigrants. As of 2000 however the majority of migrants have been coming from Africa, with approximately 50% of legal permanent resident permits issued to Africans today, with Asians and Europeans now sharing the rest of permanent resident permits (Wa Kabwe-Segatti, 2008).

Given limitations of both 2001 Census and 2007 Community Survey data, this information does serve to give an indication of international migration trends for South Africa. Both these data sources suggest that the total number of foreign born individuals comprise a very small percentage of the total population [2.3% and 2.7% respectively]. When compared to the world's highest immigration countries, these percentages are very low with South Africa located at the bottom of the list and Australia at the top with 23% of its population classified as foreign-born (Marindo, 2008). Consistent with Census data suggesting a slight increase in the number of foreign born individuals after 2000, official figures from the Department of Home Affairs show a slowdown in cross-border migration in the 1990s followed by a slight increase in the 2000s. Data on temporary legal migration to South Africa show a consistent drop from 1990 to 1999 [2000], a drop also found in mine labour recruitment data for the period 1990 to 2000 (Crush *et.al.* 2006).

b) Refugees and asylum seekers

The history of refugees and asylum seekers in South Africa dates back to the 1980s when the country was home to a significant number of Mozambican refugees (an estimated 350,000), of whom approximately 20% have since returned home. Officially however South Africa did not recognize refugees until 1993 and only became a signatory to the United Nations and Organisation of African Unity Conventions on Refugees in 1994. Landau (2006), in acknowledging that the number of refugees and asylum seekers in South Africa has undoubtedly increased in the past years, puts the total number of cross-border migrants in this category at not more than 150 000. With an approximate population size of 44 million,

this is a rather small number.

s) Undocumented migrants

The issue regarding the number of undocumented migrants in the country has proved to be a contentious one in recent public, political and academic debate in South Africa. Central to this debate is the unquantifiable nature of this group of migrants together with a number of credible myths widely accepted as reality in South African society. As Solomon puts it when writing on the issue "...the illegal and clandestine nature of this form of population movement provides an inadequate basis for its quantification" (Solomon, 2001:1). Regarding general accepted myths on this migrant group the most prominent worth mentioning here are:

- That illegal migration began after the end of Apartheid;
- That there are many millions of undocumented migrants in South Africa; and
- That illegals tend to increase crime. (Vigneswaran, 2008)

Credible myths are typically informed by real events and observations and are often circulated by way of reputable reporting practices.

"The myths function like public rumours. They are created by a variety of relatively diffuse discursive practices that are often difficult to interrogate, or displace. A variety of sources, and particularly the media, tends to regularly reinforce, or lend credence to these ideas in their reporting of migration. Over time, often regardless of repeated contestation, these myths become the benchmarks of public debate"(Vigneswaran. 2008:142).

Although South Africa has indeed seen a jump in the numbers of undocumented migrants, in particular from countries within the African continent, clandestine movements across South African borders are not new. An important concern for the Apartheid government was the management of international movements which they sought to accomplish via the same enforcement structures it had designed for limiting the 'influx' of black South Africans to white areas (Vigneswaran, 2008:142).

In spite of the characteristically invisible character of this migrant group, various efforts have been made to get some estimate of their population size. Official numbers from Statistics South Africa place the number of undocumented migrants within the range of 500,000 to 1 million. Although the figure of 4 to 8 million undocumented migrants calculated by the Human Science Research Council was officially withdrawn, this figure continues to be used by the press when reflecting on the 'influx' of undocumented migrants into the country (Crush, 2008). Building on the notion of migrants as opportunists, the number does nothing more

than to create the image of a subtle invasion of South African territory that requires an immediate and direct response (Vigneswaran. 2008).

Primary sending and receiving areas

In 1998, Europeans comprised the majority of documented foreign persons in South Africa. It was only in the 2000s that immigration of Africans increased, resulting today in approximately 50% of legal permanent permits being issued to Africans (Wa Kabwe-Segatti, 2008). This is confirmed in the 2001 Census data where a majority of foreign born persons were born in Africa (Marindo, 2008). The majority of these African migrants are reported to be from South Africa's immediate neighbours, Mozambique, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Swaziland and Botswana (SAMP Migration Policy Brief No.10). Annual deportation data kept by the Department of Home Affairs supports this finding by indicating that Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Lesotho topped the sending country deportation list (see Appendix 9d). Regarding the primary receiving areas in South Africa, 2001 Census data show the largest share (46.2%) of the foreign born population to be resident in Gauteng. 10.6% in the Western Cape, 9% in KwaZulu Natal, 8.6% in the North West and 7.8% in Limpopo, with the rest distributed between the Free State, Mpumalanga and the Eastern Cape (Marindo, 2008).

The choice of Gauteng, Johannesburg in particular, as primary destination area for cross-border migrants entering South Africa, seems to be based upon convenience (regarding travel) as well as the fact that there is limited knowledge of other cities. Johannesburg's history as host city for migrant labour since 1886 together with the presence of strong international social networks has established the city as the primary entry point for migrants into the country. Increasing economic and social obstacles experienced by migrants when trying to make a living in Johannesburg however have resulted in migration flows to alternative destination areas as their knowledge of the country and their social networks expands (Lekogo, 2007).

In contrast to previous migrant residential spaces [such as hostels and compounds] which sought to insulate migrants from their surrounding residential areas, poor African migrants appear increasingly to select or to be forced through circumstances to seek out residences in urban informal settlements. With urbanization resulting in increasing numbers of South Africans residing in such urban informal settlements, the identification of these as new migrant spaces is of great significance (Landau, 2005) and leads to the cohabitation of South Africans with migrants in essentially low resourced spaces. (SAMP Migration Policy, No.9).

South Africa Migration policy since 1994

The South African government has been slow, over the past decade and a half, in developing a structural response to migration. Inheriting an immigration policy from the apartheid government that did nothing more than to underpin the machine of racial domination, the new government struggled to formulate a policy reflective of its new role in changing regional, continental, and global migration regimes (Crush, 2008). On 1 April 1999, a draft White Paper on International Migration was gazetted, and was later criticized as reflecting a “partial understanding of the volumes, causes and impacts of migration” (SAMP Migration Policy Brief No.1). Following a review process, the South African Immigration Act was produced in 2002 and came in full effect in 2005, with immigration continuing to fall under the authority of the Minister of Home Affairs (Crush, 2008).

In reaction to continuing criticism of this Act, a newly appointed ANC Minister of Home Affairs in 2004 promised to set in motion a policy review that would lead to a new policy framework and new legislation. This process which was guided by the Department of Home Affairs, began in 2008, and a new policy approach to immigration is expected in 2009 (Crush, 2008). An indication of what this new approach may be can be found in the apparent change in government thinking on migration policy away from exclusion and control toward a more receptive and development-oriented stance.

In spite of new legislation on both refugees and on migration more generally, a number of analysts note that twelve years of public debate has done little to transform the apartheid migration management model into a more efficient and ethically acceptable system (Wa Kabwe-Segatti, 2008). While acknowledging these practices, Wa Kabwe-Segatti argues that the situation for foreigners after 1994 has changed in three respects: on refugee matters, on public accountability and due process of migration policy, as well as via an official condemnation of xenophobia. Simultaneously however coercive practices regarding foreigners, the hardening of entry and control measures and the failure to transform the Department of Home Affairs and other public services in charge of immigrants into effective and responsible bodies continue to damage state policy and practice regarding immigration. (Wa Kabwe-Segatti, 2008).

Conclusion

This section has argued that migration in the Southern African region, whilst being an integral part of developments since the mid-19th century, has changed in character over the past

decade and a half. International migration streams specifically from the African continent have increased – though not to levels commonly found in the popular South African imagination – and a majority of these migrants are undocumented. Arriving as many do in Gauteng in the first place, they seek out accommodation in urban informal settlements and live accordingly in urban neighbourhoods which they share with poorer South Africans, many themselves (internal) migrants. While identifying a probable positive shift in the government's thinking on migration policy, this section also notes that there remains an important gap between policy and practice in this domain, a gap associated with public prejudice that remains extremely hostile to immigration as a principle and to migrants in particular.

Section 3 Xenophobia in South Africa before the May and June series of violent events.

A common interpretation of the May and June series of violent events was that these represented a new phenomenon in the country. The aim of the two subsections below are to demonstrate that neither xenophobic sentiments nor xenophobic violence is something new in *post-apartheid* South Africa.

Section 3.1 – Xenophobic sentiments among South Africans post 1994

The purpose of this sub-section is to show that xenophobic sentiments, as reported in the media, were present before 2008, and that it appears that these sentiments increased significantly after 2000. Xenophobic sentiments, or sentiments that have been construed to be xenophobic, were reported as being held, with examples given, by government elites, politicians, journalists, home affairs officials, police officers and ordinary people.

3.1.1 Xenophobic sentiments 1994-1999

According to SAMP, South Africans were xenophobic even before 1994, have become increasingly xenophobic after 1994, and that xenophobia flourished between 1994 and 2002 while South Africa agonized over an immigration policy (SAMP, 2008).

In March 1998 the Human Rights Watch in New York criticised South Africa for serious human rights abuses in its handling of immigration. In October, the SA Human Rights Commission undertook to tackle racism aimed at foreigners. Wallace Neil-Ross, of the *Eastern Province Herald* wrote in August 1998, that “despite the emphasis on equal opportunity, a rising tide of virulent xenophobia now laps at the foundations of the nation claiming the most enlightened constitution in the world”. In April 1999 the Human Rights Commission (HRC) argued that as the election campaign continued, leaders of various political parties had attempted to capitalize on the suffering of ordinary people by blaming our problems on foreigners. The HRC released a report in March that year on the treatment of suspected migrants in South Africa. The report uncovered widespread human rights violations during arrest and detention at the Lindela Repatriation Centre in Krugersdorp in 1998; and that far from reacting with outrage, many South Africans welcomed the news that “someone is giving these foreigners what they deserve”.

3.1.2 Xenophobic sentiments 2000-2008

The editorial of the *Argus* in 26 September 2000 was titled “Xenophobia's glowing embers”. In July 2001, Jonathan Crush investigated this sentiment in a paper titled “South Africa Dogged by Racism and Xenophobia” through the SAMP. Research by SAMP, including two nationally representative surveys of South African attitudes towards non-citizens, painted,

according to Crush, “a disturbing picture”.

An August 2001 report by the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation argued that a new form of racism, xenophobia, was threatening to undermine the brittle culture of human rights. It was argued that xenophobia was more than an attitude, but rather a hostile practice of violence, blackmail, taunting and abuse. Jonathan (2001) found that 50% of South Africans would be prepared personally to prevent refugees from entering the areas they live in and would not accept immigrants operating businesses in their neighbourhoods. A study on municipal police trainees and police officers' attitudes towards foreigners, conducted in 2001, (*Refugees, Safety and Xenophobia in South African Cities – The Role of Local Government*, by the Centre for the study of Violence and Reconciliation) showed that 30% believed that foreigners cause crimes.

In November 2004 the SA Human Rights commission began three days of hearings on xenophobia in Johannesburg. According to the Roll back Xenophobia Campaign, at the time South Africa showed one of the highest levels of xenophobia in the world. Florencia Belvedere of the Agency for Social Enquiry argued that the ethos of most officials dealing with refugees and asylum seekers on a daily basis was that they were guilty until proven innocent. The starting point of a xenophobia conference in Gauteng, August 2005, organized by the Gauteng department of community safety, was that xenophobia had taken on institutional proportions, with civil service officials mirroring the stereotypes of society.

A survey conducted in 2006 by the SA Immigration Project, a government-funded programme aimed at establishing the extent of the immigration problems, found that 60% of South Africans believe that immigrants weaken society, with 60% believing that immigrants put pressure on the economy. SAMP findings that “South Africa has become a deeply xenophobic society” (SAMP, 2008) accompanied by a steady increase in xenophobic sentiment are supported by those of two surveys carried out in 1999 and 2006. A poll of 3600 people in 2006 found that attitudes had continued to harden, with 85% of respondents saying that foreigners were an economic burden and “stealing jobs”. This view was not based on personal experience. The proportion arguing that foreigners use up resources grew from 59% in 1999 to 67% in 2006; while those who associated foreigners with crime rose from 45% to 67%. Only 6% believed that African expatriates had skills that were needed in the country. One of the findings of an HSRC social attitudes survey was that between 2003 and 2007, attitudes towards foreigners became markedly more negative. The proportion of people living in formal urban settlements who said they wanted no foreigners in SA increased from 28% to 39%; those by people living in rural informal settlements remained the same; and those by people living in urban informal settlements increased from 33% to 47%. Roger-Claude Liwanga, Project Co-ordinator of Monitoring Xenophobia argued in September 2007 that migrants, especially from other African countries, were facing a rising tide of xenophobia.

“Sadly, this situation is often made worse by certain people in the media and some politicians, who portray migrants as job-stealers or criminals or prostitutes.”

In March 2008, a study conducted by the Forced Migration Studies Programme of Wits University reported that migrants, asylum seekers and refugees were being denied housing. The study found, in a survey of our major cities, that 44% of migrants complained of overcrowding, 31% of bad services, 17% of bad treatment by neighbours for being a foreigner, 15% of ill-treatment by a landlord, 15% of being threatened with eviction, and 7% of being threatened with eviction for having no documents.

As xenophobic sentiments became more a public issue, a number of artists, writers and playwrights started featuring it in their work. Numerous conferences and workshops on the subject were held after 2000. Adekeye Adebajo of the Centre for Conflict Resolution said at a June 2008 panel discussion that festering xenophobia had been a reality over the years among the elite, academic circles and the media. In early July 2008 the SAMP released its report, *The Perfect Storm: The Realities of Xenophobia in Contemporary South Africa*.

3.1.3 The youth and poor

When disaggregating general sentiments, it appears that negative sentiments are most pronounced among the urban poor, and particularly among the young male urban poor (HSRC 2008). The HSRC report shows that negative sentiments are higher among young males, and rose fastest in the 'urban informal' settlement category. The 2006 SAMP survey found that average xenophobia scores were highest in the lowest income categories, and those with the least amount of education.

3.1.4 Conclusion

Xenophobic sentiments were present before 1994, and, it appears from press reports, increased after 1994, and particularly after 2000. South Africans who freely admit xenophobic sentiments mainly appeared to link the sentiment to the issue of 'taking jobs', and it appears that 'service delivery' became a frequently cited issue later, after 2000, and particularly after 2006. It appears that xenophobic sentiments are more pronounced, and have increased faster, among young males, and among poor residents of informal settlements. Since 1994, numerous conferences, workshops, and initiatives occurred, more organizations became involved with the issue, and the government was repeatedly warned about this phenomenon, by political and community leaders – in other words, people interviewed in the press were concerned about it, and the general public could not but have been aware of the fact that xenophobia has been a significant problem in South Africa over the past decade.

Section 3.2 Incidents of xenophobic violence before May 2008

The purpose of this sub-section is to show, as reported in the media, that xenophobic violence has been occurring in South Africa for over ten years.

3.2.1 1994-1999

According to Kevin Ritchie of the Sunday Star, "Somalis in Port Elizabeth hold the dubious honour of being the first victims of xenophobic attack, in 1997". However, sources other than press reports indicate earlier fatalities: 2 Namibians having been killed in Mizamoyethu in 1996 and Sotho miners killed in the Free State in 1995. Historians have documented violence on the mines, in particular between SA miners and Basothos, Mozambicans and Zimbabweans. Several protest marches organised in Gauteng in particular as from 1992 by different organisations (in particular Hawkers' associations, and the Unemployed Masses of South Africa) that mobilised very explicitly around anti-foreigner sentiment. Minor violence was regularly reported as having accompanied these protest marches. In December 1997, The Cape Town Refugee Forum gave as 20 the number of African immigrants killed in Cape Town in 1997 as a result of xenophobia (22 according to Obusegun Absulrasaq, a fieldworker for the Cape Town Refugee Forum). *Cape Times* Special Assignments team reported in August 1998 that 22 refugees or asylum-seekers had been murdered in Cape Town in 1998. Absulrasq claimed that the Refugee Forum dealt with assault cases nearly every day. According to Judy Damon and Shawn Uys (*Cape Times*), most of the attacks were at weekends and carried out by youths. According to Bea Abrahams, Cape Town Refugee Forum, 22 refugees were killed in the 18 months to August 1999 in the W Cape alone; while the *Natal Witness* put the figure of refugees and asylum seekers killed in the two years up to March 1999 at 30.

3.2.2 2000-2008

Below are listed some of the incidents reported in the press, followed by the total number of incidents reported per province.

2000. In late 2000 there was a spate of xenophobic murders in Langa, Nyanga and Gugulethu, followed by attacks in Milnerton and Bellville South, and a total of 12 such murders were reported for 2000.

2001. Nine Angolans were murdered in Cape Town January - April 2001, including two Angolan brothers who were burned to death in a shack in Langa. Later in the year, locals in Du Noon, Western Cape, drove foreigners out of the settlement; and a mob of locals violently chased Zimbabweans from Zandspruit informal settlement, Gauteng, before torching their homes and businesses, with more than 800 Zimbabweans fleeing their homes – 112 shacks were gutted and 126 dwellings looted.

2002. In January, police backed by soldiers descended on Milnerton, W Cape, where violent clashes between locals and Angolan refugees left 3 Angolans and a South African dead, and a house gutted by fire.

2003. In August, Father Mario Tessarotto, from the Catholic Welfare Dept in Cape Town said that he had buried 28 refugees in 18 months “because of jealousy and xenophobia”.

2004. In December, four whistle-blowing guards at the Lindela Repatriation Centre in Krugersdorp described the treatment they claimed to mete out to immigrants.

2005. In June, the African Communities Network, a refugee organization in the W Cape, claimed that there was a disturbing increase in xenophobic violence leading to the deaths of 8 refugees in the preceding nine months.

2006. In August, news reports claimed that 27 Somalis had been killed in Cape Town so far that year, while the editorials of *The Argus* and *Cape Times* reported figures of 26 Somali deaths in August alone. A group of South African businessmen, taxi owners and landlords looted, torched and broke down 14 Somali-owned shops, and vandalized and looted 27, in Masiphumelele. In September, a Somali shop worker was killed in Delft South, with nothing taken from the shop; a Somali stabbed to death, and a Somali shop-owner shot and killed, and his assistant wounded, in Du Noon informal settlement. In September, Somali traders claimed that they were being targeted in an organized attempt to chase them out of the townships in the Western Cape, claiming further that in August, 38 Somali business people had been killed, the majority of attacks happening in Khayelitsha. In September, the SA Police Services announced Khayelitsha in Cape Town, and Port Elizabeth's Njoli, New Brighton and Motherwell townships as the country's four hotspots. In September, Ahmed Dwalo, the Somali Association of South Africa director said the official number of Somalis killed in the country since 1997 stood at 85, but because of a lack of communication, that figure could be as high as 300. The Western Cape had the highest official number of deaths at 38, followed by the Eastern Cape with 30, Gauteng 11, KZN 1, Mpumalanga 2, the N Cape 2, and the Free State 1. By Oct the growing number of brutal attacks on the Somali community in the Western Cape forced local police to admit that xenophobia, and not criminality, was the main motivating factor in the attacks – two Somali businessmen with shops in Delft and Kuilsrivier were killed; a Somali trader in Paarl was killed, followed by one in Khayelitsha being shot and injured; and the entire Somali population of Masiphumelele being chased away and their businesses ransacked.

2007. In October, following a service delivery protest by residents, shops owned and staffed by non-nationals were attacked and looted in Delmas, Mpumalanga, causing 40 non-nationals to flee. In December, minor clashes between SA and Zimbabwean nationals in Mooiplaas, Gauteng, led to citizens engaging in retaliatory attacks and more than 100 shacks being burned.

2008. In January, two Somalis were found burned to death in their shop in Duncan Village, East London; in Jeffrey's Bay, Somali-owned shops were attacked after a Somali shop-owner allegedly shot dead a suspected thief; in Soshanguve, Gauteng, attacks started, leading to one non-national being burned to death, shacks being burned and looted, and non-nationals fleeing; in Albert Park, KZN, the community forum indicated that they wanted non-nationals to leave; and a Somali barber was murdered in Laudium, Gauteng. In February, members at a community meeting in the informal settlement of Itireleng, Gauteng, encouraged residents to chase non-nationals out, leading to the burning and looting of shacks and shops belonging to non-nationals; and residents forcibly evicted five Somali shop-owners in Valhalla Park, W Cape. In March, in the Choba informal settlement in Olievenhoutbosch, Gauteng, two Zimbabweans were beaten to death; and in Brazzaville informal settlement, Atteridgeville, Gauteng, at least seven lives were lost in a series of attacks that took place over a week. The dead included Zimbabwean, Pakistani and Somali nationals, as well as a South African who was mistaken for a foreign national. Approximately 150 shacks and shops were burned down, destroyed or vandalized, with approximately 500 people seeking refuge elsewhere. During the same month, a large group of residents of Zwelethemba informal settlement, Worcester, W Cape, destroyed foreign-run shops. In April, Gabriel Shumba of the Zimbabwe Exiles Forum claimed that xenophobic attacks on Zimbabweans were increasing, particularly in Denneboom, Mamelodi, Soshanguve and Atteridgeville. In April, in Mamelodi, Gauteng, the first sign of attacks being coordinated across multiple sites by a single organization was reported. Fifteen shacks and spaza shops were burned down in the area, with one girl of 9 being burned to death in her shack. Gauteng community safety departments' Sam Mangena said they had "received reports...that these incidents are linked to other xenophobic incidents in Tshwane...that this violence is about to explode and spread to other informal settlements..."

Before 10 May 2008, the number of violent xenophobic incidents reported in the press were: Western Cape 18, Gauteng 54, Eastern Cape 13, North West 6, Free State 2, Limpopo 1, Northern Cape 2, KZN 1.

3.2.3 Conclusion

During the ten years leading up to the series of outbursts in May and June 2008, in terms of reports identified in the print media, Gauteng, the Western Cape and the Eastern Cape had the largest number of incidents in the most number of places. In Gauteng, incidents occurred in 28 places, the Western Cape in 14 places, and in the Eastern Cape in 10 places. Reported incidents included shack burnings, shop burnings, and killings. Before 2008, most reported deaths occurred in the Western Cape, and most of these were of Somalis. Reported incidents increased from the late 1990s, accumulating sharply during the years 2005, 2006,

2007 and the first four months of 2008, where frequencies of reported xenophobic violence were 9, 17, 26 and 15 (for the period January to 19 May) respectively. It is appropriate to point out that these incidents were not all events involving the mobilisation of groups of residents since they included a number of murders.

Section 4. **The development of a conceptual framework within which to analyse violent collective behaviour.**

Explanations for violent collective behaviour may first be divided into

1. one set that *focuses on external structural causes*, and
2. a second set that *focuses on factors directly related to the nature of the outburst itself*.

After a short overview of external structural explanations, significantly more attention will be paid to the second set of explanations. This section will conclude by summarise two other explanatory factors that need attention:

- Explanations for the diffusion of outburst events, and
- Explanations for perceptions by local residents of the police

External structural explanations.

These types of explanations are associated with two theoretical approaches:

First is the relative deprivation approach that argues that individuals in pursuit of their goals are frustrated by one or more of these causes and this frustration is converted into aggression. This is a common and popular explanation and may portray perpetrators as victims since they may be considered to have been frustrated in pursuit of their (possibly fair) aims.

Second is the resource mobilization approach that argues that violence is used as strategy employed to extract benefits from those who control or own resources. The focus here is more instrumental and may portray perpetrators as followers of a political entrepreneur who mobilises for a material or political goal or alternatively as criminals.

The first set of explanations accordingly could offer (some of) the following (macro and long-term) causes -

- ❖ relative poverty of the perpetrator group in a climate of rising prices and falling employment;
- ❖ male competition over employment, housing, and women – in short, over ‘turf’;
- ❖ family weaknesses (fatherless youth, broken homes, etc), and
- ❖ inadequate or failed state actions (coupled with corrupt practices) regarding service delivery, immigration policy, and policing.

Since a number of causes (rather than just one) are typically raised in the explanation, many explanations apportion guilt on a proportional basis (such as ‘it was the economic situation in informal settlements that contributed to the outbursts but the main underlying cause was the

failure of government...') This mode of explanation has been called recipe analysis (as in rival cooks proposing the superiority of their recipe of causes).

It is important to note that these structural explanations *do not address the causes of the violent outbursts themselves* (but rather contextual issues).

Explanations focusing on factors directly related to the nature of the outburst itself

The second set offers (micro and immediate) causes of the outbursts themselves, such as, –

- widespread shared antipathy - anger - against 'outsiders';
- selection of targets in a context of risk aversion;
- justification of mobilization in terms of local history, local identities and local issues, that is, in terms of the *meaning local residents give to local issues*; and
- the reversal of humiliation through collective action.

Since these immediate causes point to local and short-term issues, they imply a measure of spontaneity as well as deep emotion associated with the outburst – they imply both passion and calculation.

Donald Horowitz (2001) develops a framework of explanation for such outbursts. In the first place, he argues that each outburst has a 'rhythm' – a series of steps in a sequence to which outbursts (he calls them 'riots') often conform. It is important to point out that these steps need not be present in all cases. Let us first, before looking at each in more detail, list these seven steps:

1. Precipitant
2. Unsettling event
3. Dissemination of rumours
4. Lull
5. More deliberate acts of violence
6. Strong concentration on male victims.
7. Broadening of participation

What follows here are comments on these separate steps made by Horowitz:

Generalized apprehension is not sufficient to arouse people to violence. People seek information about the aims of their adversaries. For rioters, the precipitating event constitutes the most recent source of information about the intentions of the target group. Virtually every precipitant of an (outburst) is interpreted as a challenge to domination, a warning of subordination, a confirmation of hostile intentions, or a demonstration of target-group cohesion. The targets are imagined to be very

dangerous... It is a short step from apprehension to the imputation of hostile intentions to the targets...

'(An) unsettling event - perhaps a scuffle or a fight, conceivably a bit of burning.. (Q)uite possibly, no one will be killed (at this point)... Then, the violence may be interrupted for a period' – the "lull"

Rumours justify the violence that is about to occur; they usually contain concealed threats and outrages committed in secret; they are satisfying and useful to rioters and their leaders and they tend to be evolutionist (found in widely different settings) rather than creationist (in one particular place). A belief in the hostile intentions of the target group is an important facilitator of riot activity. Horowitz writes that '..the rumour is indestructible, because its function is not to inform action but to help it along'

The lull is a time for assessment of the precipitant...Authoritative approval or disapproval can push incipient violence in one direction or the other. It may be interpreted therefore as 'a time for precautions by the authorities and for organization by the initiators.'

'The first acts of violence that follow the lull are typically somewhat more deliberate than those that preceded it... If they are uncontrolled, they soon develop into a massive deadly attack. A common pattern is the progression from attacks on property, usually including burning of houses or shops, to vicious attacks on people, perhaps beginning with a bystander or passerby of the target group.

'..there is a strong, though not exclusive, concentration on male victims of a particular ethnic group. The elderly are often left aside, and sometimes, though less frequently, so are children. Rapes certainly occur ..., but the killing and mutilation of men is much more common than is the murder or rape of women.

'...core participants are joined by others interested in attacking hapless victims. There is a tendency toward broadening participation once it feels safe to participate'.

The unit of analysis in these explanations is the outburst, not the diffusion of violent incidents. This implies a focus both on general structural factors in the environment of the location of the event as well as on factors specific to that particular event.

Despite its suddenness and intensity, the outburst is not necessarily wholly unplanned. Passion is the key element, yet it is a highly patterned event. These patterns involve timing,

targeting and location. Outbursts are preceded by precipitating incidents. Selective targeting appears practically universal, but the identification of the targets precedes the precipitating event.

One of the key points, in addition to the role of emotion, is the importance of the perception of impunity (that is, immunity from punishment or incrimination) on the part of those who eventually engage in the event. Fear of retribution tends to inhibit violence and accordingly, there may be a mix of direct and displaced aggression at play during an outburst. Aggression against superiors may be converted into aggression against unranked groups.

‘..the violence that aims to thwart domination, particularly the violence of so-called backward groups, is suffused with affect born of humiliation. Much of the pleasure that violence brings springs from the mastery that reverses dishonor...’

Once the outburst begins, it takes on an impersonal and brutal form. Members of one group search out members of another. The search is conducted with considerable care, for this is violence directed against an identifiable target group.

‘Rioters do not define a riot episode as beginning sometime after the precipitant... For them, the violence inflicted on the target group is indissolubly linked to the antecedent behaviour of the target group... The tight compression of the riot with precipitating events and target-group behaviour in general into what rioters construe as a single transaction is essential to externalizing responsibility for the violence.’

The outburst has a structure and a natural history. In fact, violent events in general are structured by implicit rules governing *provocation, initiation, choice of targets, intensity of violence, and termination...*’

The outburst involves passion and calculation.

Explanations focused on factors directly related to the nature of the outburst may also be one-factor and reductionist. The following two are common and popular (Waddington and King 2005):

The riff-raff explanation: “disorderly behaviour is primarily the preserve of the more deviant, transient or criminal-minded sections of society with predilections for anti-social or violent behaviour”

The common claim that “criminals”, the “mob”, or the “gang” are responsible for outbursts falls under this reductionist explanation

The agitator explanation: “crowd members are mindless, anyone can persuade them to do anything. They are especially vulnerable to unscrupulous individuals who want to use crowds to foment disorder... The bad leading the mad.”

The common claim that “a third force”, or “sinister forces” are responsible for outbursts falls under this reductionist explanation

It is important to note that these directly outburst-related explanations *do not address the diffusion of events since their unit of analysis is the individual event.*

The Diffusion or Spread of Violence.

Horowitz’s framework of explanation is again useful. He argues that the diffusion of violence embraces three questions:

- whether (it diffuses)?,
- how fast?, and
- where?

There are according to Horowitz, two species of what he calls *contagion*:

- imitation, on the one hand;
- common responses to a single precipitant, on the other.

Contagion rarely explains entire waves of violence. Contagion does, however, help explain why violence can spread from one place to another when precipitants at the subsequent location are far less significant than they were at the first. Certain cultural or political issues are of such high saliency across a whole territory that a single precipitating event at one place can produce violent reactions at many locations almost simultaneously. Violence does not occur in isolation; it derives intellectual impetus and succor from events regarded as comparable elsewhere. Actors judge the plausibility of their conduct by the fact that others have carried out similar plans. Sheer prudence requires as much, and perpetrators are, in such respects, prudent, as their site selection shows.

When word of mouth is the method (of communication), diffusion *contiguous* to those areas is the most likely pattern.

Noncontiguous spread appears to be accounted for by either

- (1) what is essentially a new precipitant arising out of the earlier violence but occurring in the new location, or
- (2) authoritative ratification of the violence, or
- (3) mass media methods of communication of the first violent events.

In other words, diffusion to localities close by often takes place by word-of-mouth

communication whereas diffusion to distant places typically takes place by way of mass media (radio, newspaper and TV) communication. In both cases, what Waddington and King call the copycat explanation is suggested - the idea of disorder as contagious, diffusing through copycatting.

Explanations for perceptions by local residents of the police

Waddington and King (2005) argue that there is an incorrect and widespread perception in explanations that 'police action is simply reactive' during outbursts. They argue that 'members of a crowd do not necessarily get carried away by "crowd hysteria"' and that 'causation and escalation (of an outburst) may be linked to community issues and to police activity'. In short, the role of the police during outbursts ought to be treated separately and analysed in terms both of the actions police take or do not take as well as the perceptions that have developed regarding such actions.

The following three quotes from Horowitz (2001) reflect similar observations

'...the vast majority of ethnic riots are preceded in some significant way by governmental, political-party, military, or ethnic-group action that appears or promises to affect group access to the political process or the distribution of collective status by government.'

"If the police force is biased to begin with, recurrent riots will soon test its restraint, likely beyond the breaking point.

'...if the police were biased in the riot, the bias may be expressed again after the riot, now in the form of raids or assaults on members of the target group.'

Conclusion.

This brief overview of explanations offered for violent collective behaviour and for the series of outbursts that are the focus of this report suggest that the most appropriate framework for analysis at the very least needs to embrace four parts:

- Explanations focused on external structural causes,
- Explanations focused on factors directly related to specific outbursts,
- Explanations for the diffusion of outburst events, and
- Explanations for perceptions concerning the forces of law and order and concerning government.

In the next section, a scan of explanations given for the series of May and June 2008 events

as identified in the print media will be undertaken.

Section 5. ***Identification and summary of explanations offered for xenophobic behaviour in South Africa during the May and June 2008 series of violent outbursts.***

The discussion in this section is based on a close reading of press coverage of the May-June series of violent outbursts, and on explanations reported on or given by journalists, experts and other persons. The survey of the South African press during this period was comprehensive.

5.1 Explanations during the first ten days of the series of violent outbursts.

5.1.1 Government and state official reaction.

Reports of official reactions underline denial of both the extent and the serious nature of the outbursts. Ministers and officials denied that the outbursts (in Alexandra and then Diepsloot and elsewhere in Gauteng) were of a xenophobic nature and that they were related to one another. Two alternative explanations were offered. The first was that the perpetrators were 'criminals' and the second that there was a 'third force' at work. A national minister was quoted as stating that the violence would be over within a week.

5.1.2 Other early explanations found in the press.

Structural causes raised repeatedly included

- failure of government policies, such as service delivery, failure to address crime, collapse of border controls and unsuccessful diplomacy toward Zimbabwe;
- the high unemployment rate particularly for young urban black men; and
- the failings of the police (whether from lack of resources or poor training).

In addition, evidence for widespread sentiments of xenophobia among poor urban residents was reported on often.

More sophisticated analyses were made by certain officials and experts:

'residents of Alex have been living in inadequate housing...- a veritable pressure cooker. The tipping point: perceptions of foreigners jumping the housing queue...Dissatisfaction ... has taken on the face of immigrants...' (BD 20.5.08)

Two commentators in the press moreover made known their concern about the silence of resident organizations in outburst localities and the silence of commentators about the actions of residents (rather than of "criminals")

'the silence from community organizations such as civic structures, local churches and other grassroots bodies in the wake of the attacks is simply deafening' (BD 20.5.08)

'What I find (deeply) baffling is the argument that we should not condemn the people of Alexandra...' (BD 16.5.08)

5.2 *Explanations later during the May-June series of outbursts.*

The terminology used by many commentators now included terms such as 'madness', 'pogrom', 'mob', 'barbarism', 'gang' 'a culture of violence' and 'hate' as the scope and depth of the series of violent outbursts became apparent to all.

5.2.1 Government and state official reaction.

Government politicians were quoted as admitting that this form of 'mob' behaviour needed an effective and immediate response (which took the form of the mobilization of the SANDF late in May). Simultaneously, they continued to state that 'most' of the violence was criminal in nature and that since it was 'well-coordinated', it was probably organized. The Intelligence Minister was quoted as stating "we cannot ignore ... that there were reportedly meetings held in hostels, that this prairie fire of hate seemed to move fast as if planned, and that there were printed pamphlets'. (S Trb 25.5.08). Subsequently, in early June, President Mbeki was cited as stating that the recent attacks were not driven by xenophobia but by criminals.

5.2.2 Other later explanations found in the press.

Similar structural causes to those reported above (5.1.2) were regularly raised, with the housing demand in informal settlements remaining prominent. Three additional factors also appeared. In the first place, the continuation of outburst incidents, now in the Western Cape and many other provinces, elicited the explanation that a 'lack of leadership' should be raised both for the start as well as continuation of the series of outbursts. In the second place, some commentators started characterizing the perpetrators (now sometimes called 'marauders') as putting up 'a rugged disdainful resistance' to the government and the police through their violent actions.

The third factor increasingly raised was the role of the mass media, television and newspapers in particular, in the diffusion of violence.

'The scenes of mobs indulging freely in acts of xenophobic crime while the police looked on helplessly... perpetrators (who) declare their murderous intent on national television without fear of prosecution.'"(CT 4.6.08)

'The Daily Sun will stand accused of reporting uncritically on ... xenophobia...They sank to terrible depths with an.. editorial which proclaimed (to give the reader) "THE TRUTH" about "ALIENS"' (BD 28.5.08)

5.3 *Professional explanations offered after the period*

The HSRC completed a study of the May-June series of xenophobic outbursts soon after their termination. The aim of the study was 'to investigate the causes underlying the outbreak of xenophobic violence'. The main results are summarized here.

The main structural set of factors was named A context of 'siege' and lack of communication.

"South African citizens literally feel 'besieged' by a range of socio-economic challenges. This feeling is particularly acute for men of working age who are struggling to find employment or make a living and feel most directly threatened by the migration of large numbers of 'working men' from other parts of the continent. In this context, the 'foreigner' is the nearest 'other', against which this sentiment can be expressed "45

Three additional issues and caveats should be added:

Settlements that have recently experienced the expression of 'xenophobic' violence have also been the site of violent and other forms of protest around other issues, most notably service delivery.' (6)

One of the most important triggers of the recent violence has been the occupation of national housing stock by non-South African citizens. RDP houses were constructed to enable South African citizens to residents in them. The sale or rent of RDP houses to non-South African citizens exacerbates the housing shortage, compounds the pressure on informal settlements and foments community tensions around housing.' (9)

..while most of the attacks were directed against foreign, primarily African migrants, ... this was not the rule. Attacks were also noted against Chinese-speakers, Pakistani migrants as well as against South Africans from minority language groups (in the conflict areas) such as those who speak sePedi and isiTsonga.' (5)

5.4 General conclusions

The main result of this press scan of explanations is the predominance of external structural causes in the explanations. Little attention was given to factors directly related to individual outbursts themselves and equally little to the meaning residents gave to local issues. No explanation that raised the issue of risk aversion as a factor in target selection nor the reversal of humiliation through collective action was found in the scan.

Explanations using external structural causes as their main thrust fell overwhelmingly within the relative deprivation approach. Here, perpetrators are viewed as frustrated individuals

(due to unemployment, poverty, lack of services, perceived unfair competition, etc) who convert this frustration into aggression. There is a tendency accordingly to view these perpetrators more as victims than as antagonists. One example falling within the resource mobilization approach – where perpetrators were perceived to be putting up ‘a rugged disdainful resistance’ to government - was identified above.

During the initial period of the series of outbursts, government (and others) tended to give reductionist one-factor causes we have called ‘riff-raff’ and ‘agitator’ explanations. Later, explanations became more complex and sophisticated and the role that mass media played in the spread of the outbursts became an issue. Most later explanations however employed ‘recipe analysis’ –apportioning guilt on a proportional basis – and the main reason for this is probably the fact that explanations remain at the structural contextual level, external to the local circumstances of each individual outburst and accordingly lacking any understanding of local conditions and how local residents themselves understand their situation.

Section 6 **Chronology of xenophobic outbursts during May and June 2008.**

Some 135 separate events were identified in the printed media. Articles were filed under an event name (typically the locality where the outburst took place) and a standardized set of event data was assembled for each. These data comprised date, duration, type of settlement, nature of violence, earlier xenophobic events in the same locality, nature of police intervention, as well as data relating to each phase in Horowitz’s “rhythm” of an event. Since sources are secondary and drawn from the print media and other published material, there are substantial gaps in the data relating to most variables mentioned above.

After a first scan of these data, a four-way classification of events was developed. Each event was placed in either the major or minor class of outburst, and into either a class including assaults on individuals or a class where violence was exclusively directed at property. The following table summarizes both the name of each class and the criteria used.

Classification of violent outbursts

| Violent outbursts as separate events | MAJOR | MINOR |
|---|---|---|
| With assault on individuals <i>(classification via two or more criteria, data permitting)</i> | <i>(Major with assault)</i> Event of longer duration Violence wider in scope Assaults including attacks, rapes, murder Significant police presence | <i>(Minor with assault)</i> Event of shorter duration Violence narrower in scope Few assaults mentioned, no deaths Insignificant or no police presence |
| Without assault on individuals <i>(classification via two or more criteria, data permitting)</i> | <i>(Major on property only)</i> Event of longer duration Violence wider in scope Actions including looting, fire-raising, vandalization of residences and businesses Significant police intervention | <i>(Minor on property only)</i> Event of shorter duration Violence narrower in scope Few actions including looting, fire-raising, vandalization of residences and businesses Insignificant or no police presence |

One further classification was made. The period 10 May to 15 June was divided into three intervals: *the first phase* from 10 to 20 May (on which latter date events spread rapidly beyond Gauteng to other provinces), *the middle phase* from 21 May to 31 May (during which most documented events outside Gauteng took place), and *the final phase* from 1 to 30 June (when the frequency of events dropped and the series of outbursts appeared to peter out). Below, event data for each of these three phases is analysed separately before aggregation.

In each case, analysis will cover

- the frequency, location and sequencing of events and of classes of events
- the particularity or generality of both precipitants and rumours of events and of classes.
- The role police were reported to have played.

After this phase analysis, the degree to which events succeed earlier reported xenophobic activity will be discussed. Since there are significant gaps in the event datasets, it is apparent that conclusions drawn must remain tentative and suggestive of trends rather than definitive.

6.1 Period from May 10-May 20 First Phase.

Where the events took place, and their sequencing

During the first period of ten days, starting on 10 May 2008, 61 violent events took place. 50 of these 61 events took place in Gauteng:

- Gauteng: Actonville, Alexandra township, Amakauwusi informal settlement, Benoni, Berea, Central Johannesburg, Choba informal settlement, Cleaveland informal settlement, Daveyton, Diepsloot informal settlement, Dikathole informal settlement, Dukathole informal settlement, Ext 5 informal settlement in Germiston, Ext 9 informal settlement in Germiston, Hillbrow, Jeppe, Jerusalem informal settlement, Joe Slovo informal settlement, Katlehong, Klipfontein View, Kopanong, Kya Sands informal settlement, Lusaka informal settlement, Makausi informal settlement, Malvern, Mandleni informal settlement, Marathon, Mashimong, Mayabuye, Mpilisweni, Olifantsfontein, Phiri, Ramaphosa, Reigerpark, Siyhalala informal settlement, Tedstoneville, Tembisa, Tshiavelo, Vosloorus, Vusimusi, Zamimpilo, Zandspruit informal settlement, Zenzele informal settlement .
- W Cape: Fisantekraal, Malmesbury.
- E Cape: Motherwell township, Walmer township.
- N Cape: Mafikeng.
- KZN: Embalenhle, Cato Crest, Dalton.
- N West: Kanana [*in Gauteng on the filing system list (at Tembisa Township, Jhb)*].
- Mpumalanga: Lebohang [*'Lebogang' on filing system list*].

The first outbreak of this period was on **Saturday 10th** in Siyhalala. The next and most well publicized and studied event occurred in Alexandra, on **Sunday 11th May**. This was preceded on the previous day by a meeting held by the renegade Alexandra residents Assoc (ARA) with taxi drivers to discuss concerns that foreigners were taking over the taxi industry. Drivers were unhappy about growing number of foreigners working in the industry, stating that foreigners were taking away their jobs and were willing to work for lower wages. Chairperson of the Zimbabwe Diaspora Forum, Sox Chikowero, who attended the meeting, says people accused Zimbabweans of driving crime in the area and 'taking away our jobs and our women'. Chikowero said it was agreed that non-nationals would be driven from the township. The violence spilled over to Zandspruit on the same day, as well as Kew [*not on SPSS*], Kopanong, Vusimusi, Mashimong, Mayabuye in Tembisa, Berea and Klipfontein View on the East Rand. On **Monday, 12th** Phomolong in Mamelodi East [*not on SPSS*] erupted. On **Wed 14th**, immigrants who escaped Alex to stay with friends and relatives in Diepsloot, were attacked again and their homes looted, shacks were burnt down and shops

looted. On **Thursday 15th**, the violence spread to Olifantsfontein on the E Rand. On **Friday 16th**, the violent events spread further, to Benoni, Fisantekral in Durbanville in the W Cape, Ext 5 and Ext 9 informal settlements in Germiston, Marathon and Tedstoneville in Germiston, Zandspruit in Honeydew, Walmer township in Port Elizabeth, Makausi in Primrose and Mandleni in Wattville. On **Sat 17th** the spread included Cleveland informal settlement, (and continued on Sunday), Actonville, Central Johannesburg, Kanana, Choba, Mpilisweni, Lebohang, Vosloorus, Dukathole, Thokoza [*not on SPSS*] and Tembisa [*not on SPSS*]. On **Sunday 18th**, violence erupted in Daveyton, Jerusalem, Ramaphosa, Tedstoneville in Germiston, Cleaveland, Jeppe, Tembisa, Kya Sands in Randburg, Zenzele in Randfontein, and Cato Crest in Durban. Police came under fire in the Jerusalem informal settlement outside Boksburg on **Monday, 19th** as they tried to stop a group of about 500 people from looting shops there, two people were killed in Tembisa attacks, and events occurred in Kanana, Joe Slovo, Zamimpilo, Malvern, Phiri, Dalton in Umbilo, KZN, and Malmesbury in the W Cape. Reigerpark, Embalenhle in Durban, Motherwell, PE followed on **Tuesday 20th** .

Which class of events took place and variations within the phase by space and time

Fourteen of these sixty-one were major violent events, involving assault and or death; four were major events involving attacks on property; fourteen were minor events involving assault, and twenty-nine were minor events without assaults. All fourteen major violent events involving assault occurred in Gauteng.

Generality/particularity of precipitant and of rumour

Four events had precipitants recorded in the press. The most detailed in press reports was that in Alexandra, stated above. Nine events had the dissemination of rumours during the attacks recorded in the press. For a comprehensive understanding of the role and nature of both precipitants and rumour, further research is required, as this represents a gap in the findings from scrutinizing media reports.

Nature of police action/inaction

In five of these events the police were reported to have used force to disperse the crowd, while in a further three they used force to disperse the crowd and also made arrests. In two events the police were reported to approach the situation without using force. Of these ten events where police action was reported in the press, six were major events involving assault, one a major event without assault, and three a minor event without assault. As with trying to find detail about precipitants and the role of rumour as reported in the press, the nature of police action during these events constitutes a gap in the findings that requires further research.

6.2 Period from May 21 – 31 May 2008 Middle Phase.

Where the events took place, and their sequencing

During the second period of 10 days (21 -31 May 2008) a total of 63 events were reported by the print media. Thirty-two of these events took place in the Western Cape, thirteen in KwaZulu Natal, seven in Gauteng, and eleven in other provinces.

Western Cape:

20/05 Gugulethu,

22/05 Khayelitsha, Nyanga, Masiphumelele (Ocean View), Oudtshoorn, Knysna (Witlokasie)

23/05 Nomzamo (Strand), Du Noon (Milnerton), Phillippi, Samora Machel, Crossroads, Houtbay, Pacaltsdorp (George), Thembalethu (George), Imizamo Yethu,

24/05 Zwelihle (Hermanus), Kwanonqaba (Mosselbay)

26/05 Sizamile (Sedgefield)

27/05 Smutsville (Sedgefield)

KwaZulu Natal

20/05 Warwick

21/05 Bottlebrush (Durban), Cata Manor (Durban), Malukazi (Isipingo), Kenville (KwaMashu)

22/05 1102 Informal settlement in Chatsworth

23/05 Greenwood Park & Quarry Heights (Durban), Phoenix (Inanda), Amaoti (KwaMashu)

29/05 Groutville

Gauteng

21/05 Sebokeng (Van Der Bijl Park)

24/05 Madelakufa (Tembisa), Welkom

25/05 Kokosi (Fochville)

27/05 Soshanguve

29/05 Delmore (Boksburg)

30/05 Pretoria Prison

Northern Cape (2)

23/05 Kimberley

24/05 Batlharos (Kuruman)

North West Province (2)

21/05 Oukasie Phase 2&3 (Brits)

22/05 Maboloka (Brits)

Eastern Cape (1)

24/05 New Brighton (Port Elizabeth)

Free State (1)

21/05 Qalobotjha (Villiers)

The fourteen places where events were reported for this period with no specific dates are:

Gauteng: Garankuwa, Honeydew, Spring Vallei (Witbank) and Thabong (Welkom)
Western Cape: Conville (George) Delft (Cape Town), Fairyland (Paarl), Joe Slovo (Langa, Cape Town), Kayamandi (Stellenbosch), KwaNokuthula (Plettenberg Bay)
Free State: Namahadi

Classification of violent outbursts

From the media reports it would seem that the xenophobic violence in this phase was not as violent with acts aimed at property rather than persons. The greater majority (N=39) of events in this phase seemed to be minor events with no reports of assaults. Twelve of the events were reported as minor events involving some form of assault, with seven events classified as major events involving assault and five as major events without assaults.

Nature of police action/inaction

In media reports where reference was made to police action (N=19 for events within this time period) police were reported to mainly act by arresting perpetrators (N=8). In three cases police were reported to have used force to disperse the crowds and in another three the use of force and arresting of perpetrators was reported. Of these nineteen events police action was reported on by the press, ten were minor events without assault, three minor events involving assault, three major events without assault and a further three major events involving assaults.

6.3 Period from 31 May – June Final Phase

In this final phase of the wave of xenophobic violence that swept the country, 11 events were reported. Exact event dates were only reported for five of the areas.

Gauteng: Acacia Shelter , New Doornfontein, Ramaphosa

Eastern Cape: Mtatha Zwide (06/06)

Free State: Bloemfontein Town Centre (3/06), Bloemspruit (29/06), Heidedal (30/06), Kopanong (30/06)

Limpopo: Mohlaletse

Mpumalanga: Hammerdale

Classification of violent outbursts

Ten of the eleven events were minor events with five involving assault. In one place alone (Bloemspruit in Bloemfontein) was the event described as major involving assault on foreigners.

Nature of police action/inaction

The nature of police action was only reported on for two events. Of which the one event was

described as a major event involving assault where the police had to make use of force to disperse the crowd. The other event described as a minor event without any form of assault police action was only described as “nipping the protest in the bud”.

6.4 The extent to which events succeed earlier reported xenophobic activity.

There is a surprisingly high occurrence of a previous xenophobic violent incident in the same place as an event during the May and June period under scrutiny.

In Gauteng, there were fifteen places where outbursts took place during this period in which previous recorded incidents occurred during the past decade. In the Western Cape, there were eight such places, and in the rest of the country, five. It would appear accordingly that a large proportion of the violence that occurred during May and June builds upon the experience of previous violent incidents in the same place, probably involving some of the same perpetrators.

6.5 Conclusion

Though data from the print media regarding precipitants, rumours, police action and reasons for the spread of events are scant, the following trends appear to be significant. Rumours, in most reported cases, included accusations that foreigners were involved in criminal activities, were responsible for high food prices, for taking jobs from locals, for seducing local women, and for occupying local RDP houses. A rumour repeated in different areas referred to foreigners’ supernatural powers reflected in their ability to make money. Reports on precipitants included community meetings called to discuss dissatisfaction with the local presence of foreigners as well as the issue of letters sent to foreigners demanding that they leave the area. Little detailed information on police action was found in the print media. There were reports of police monitoring actions before and after events, as well as of arrests and of the use of force. No reporting on local perceptions of the police or police action was found.

The series of early events in Gauteng was reported to be generally more violent and to include more assaults on persons than was the case with events in later phases. Events in the first phase – assessed in terms of rumour, precipitant and nature of the event – point to deeper anger and aggression than in later phases (and in other parts of the country). These later events appear to be more opportunistic since media coverage and rumour of earlier events led to the departure of many foreigners from their residences and the abandonment of their property. This anticipation of possible attacks created a context in which locals could vandalize and loot homes and shops belonging to those who had fled.

Given extensive gaps in information gathered from the print media, the occurrence of events in close to one half of the places in which recorded events of earlier pre-May xenophobic

activity points to *continuity* in the process of the perpetration of violence against strangers in underprivileged urban residential areas. A local history of violence against strangers (during which immunity from punishment could be learnt) mixed with media coverage of such recent violence elsewhere in the country appears to have been a potent combination.

In the next section – ‘Case studies of four outburst events in the Western Cape’ - greater detail on the ‘rhythm’ of four selected violent xenophobic events is discussed.

Section 7: Case studies of four outburst events in the Western Cape

This section presents a brief discussion on focus group discussions and in-depth interviews conducted in both the Western and Northern Cape. Focus group discussions were conducted in four areas in the Western Cape where xenophobic violence during May and June 2008 had been reported in the print media. Given a limited time frame, areas were selected where it was possible to organise focus groups in a short space of time. The areas where focus groups were conducted were Du Noon, Khayelithsa, Masiphumelele and Mbekweni. The primary objective of these focus group discussions was to establish the factors that underpinned the unfolding of the xenophobic attacks in these areas. Group discussants were young men who had either been present or had taken part in the respective event. Since the series of xenophobic events appeared to have completely missed the Northern Cape, the primary objective of discussions in that province was to research this phenomenon. Being led by reports in the print media on two alleged xenophobic-related attacks in Kimberley and in Kuruman, a number of depth interviews were conducted with youth, councillors and police officials in these towns.

In discussing these outbursts, an attempt is made to fit each within the seven phases through which a violent outburst moves, describing how Horowitz claims the event unfolds (see Section 4). The seven steps in sequence are 1) precipitant, 2) unsettling event, 3) dissemination of rumours, 4) lull, 5) more deliberate acts of violence, 6) strong concentration on male victims and 7) broadening of participation. No information from focus group transcripts was found for steps 4, 5, and 7. For step 6 reference to attacks on Somali shop keepers (rather than on males) emerged.

1) Du Noon

According to media reports, the first incident of xenophobic violence that set up a chain of violent incidents in the greater Cape Town region was in the Du Noon area. Du Noon is a mixed residential area in that it consists of both formal and informal residential sections and is situated in Milnerton in close proximity to the City Bowl. On the evening of 22 May, what was described as an initiative by Western Cape politicians and Milnerton police to prevent xenophobic violence in Du Noon appears to have become a precipitant not only for the outbreak of xenophobic violence in Du Noon but also for its spread to other areas within the region.

In analysing discussants' perceptions of the event, it is clear, to them, that the precipitating event leading to the outbreak of violence in Du Noon was the preceding set of violent events that took place in Johannesburg, as broadly reported on by the media. Reference was also made to the ANC presidential candidate, Jacob Zuma, and his purported remarks regarding illegal immigrants.

“After Polokwane Conference, Jacob Zuma when he was canvassing for

presidency, he talked about service delivery to be active to the community, to chase away foreigners entering the country illegally, about crime, traditions, culture, our origin, our roots.”

On the day of the outbreak, according to discussants, the police called a community meeting as a preventative measure to ensure that the events in Johannesburg did not repeat themselves in Du Noon. This meeting however proved to be the unsettling event, leading toward actual violence.

“People saw what happened on TV, and they were not even interested of doing it, but the meeting provoked them.”

An overwhelming response to the invitation by the community, resulting in the meeting first being moved to another venue and finally being cancelled, together with inadequate means to address and to organise the crowd all contributed to increasing confusion among those gathered at the meeting.

“There were lot of people in different groups talking about different things. Others talking about starting attacks, others say no.”

Once the meeting was cancelled, participants began toyi-toying in the streets. A stone thrown by a young boy through the window of a Somali shop then functioned as the final precipitant, according to discussants.

The impact of rumours on the creation of an anti-foreigner sentiment became evident during focus group discussions. Four examples that emerged are listed below:

1. All the foreigners living in the Du Noon area are in the country illegally.

“All foreigners who are here in Du Noon, they come by trespass [illegally].”

2. The country is currently experiencing an uncontrolled influx of foreigners - the country cannot carry the foreigners associated with this influx.

“What happens is that we get more, more hungry and more poor.”

“...now when they [foreigners] are here in South Africa we don't have work, we don't have houses.”

3. Foreigners rob locals of jobs since they can afford to work for low wages.

“Somali's don't mind about making interest [keeping prices low] because they know when they go back to Somalia, they will make more money in exchange.”

“.....I will say R150 and this guy from Mozambique will say R50 is fine for me, and the one from Zimbabwe R30 is fine for me, because he knows when he goes back to his country he will change the money, you know Zim dollar versus Rand, so this is killing us.”

4. Preferential treatment of foreigners in providing start up money for businesses.

“... on the other side, the immigration fund also assists them.”

From both media reports and discussants, it appears that there was a strong concentration

on Somali victims.

“Somali’s were attacked and not Nigerians..... Because they have shops, they have food.....They’ve [Nigerians] got drugs. They sell drugs, they have salons, barber shops, so we don’t need machines and dryers, no we need food.”

2. Khayelitsha

Khayelitsha situated to the east of the City of Cape Town, is a large township comprising both formal and informal residential areas. Known as one of four hotspots in South Africa regarding violence towards foreigners, xenophobic violence is nothing new to the area. With media reports on xenophobic violence dating back to as far as October 2000, 2006 appears to have been the worst period with over 30 deaths of Somalis reported during a two month period. During the May 2008 period however, as was the case for Du Noon, the violence was predominantly directed toward property rather than persons.

Two precipitating events in the run-up to the violence in Khayelitsha were identified by discussants. The first was, once again, mass media coverage on xenophobic violence in Johannesburg. The second was an event the previous week during which local business men were reported to have threatened Somali shopkeepers and demanded they close their shops.

An important unsettling event, reported by the discussants, was the decisions by a number of Somali shopkeepers not to sleep in their shops (which they normally did) and to request police protection. This they did in anticipation of attacks in the highly emotional climate of the time. As local residents became aware of empty shops, looting and vandalism of property began.

“I received a call at 06h45 by one of the members in 22 Block Mandela Park, saying that the Somali shops were being looted and the guys have been taken away by the police,...because there were rumours going around you know, then some of the Somali’s decided not sleep within the premises of in the buildings [their shops].”

The impact of rumours on the creation of an anti-foreigner sentiment became evident during focus group discussions. Three examples that emerged are listed below:

1. A strong perception of an uncontrolled influx of foreigners to South Africa. In this case, the inability of government to control this influx was attributed to widespread corruption in the police and by government officials who accept bribes from illegal immigrants and then assist them to get access to the country.

“There are laws in this country that protects the influx of peoplethe police are also involved in corruption, government officials are involved in corruption you know, that is why when you check the influx of foreigners in our country, it is more than what it is supposed to be.....they come in through illegal ways and some of them are being

assisted by government officials, placed in these borders to control the influx of people.”

2. As in the Du Noon case study, the perception appears widespread that foreigners take employment opportunities from locals as they are willing to work for lower wages.

“They go to looking for jobs and they are told, Ok if you want this job we are going to pay you R70, while we South Africans are looking to be paid more than the R70, maybe we want R100. But they (foreigners) are taking the R70.”

3. Because foreigners have lots of money (a specific reference to Nigerians in this case), they are accused of ‘getting’ local girls as they prefer guys with money.

The xenophobic violence in Khayelitsha was again characterised by a strong concentration on Somali victims. As explained by discussants, the main precipitating factor resulting in the attacks was hostility from local businessmen towards Somali shopkeepers due to the latter selling their goods at cheaper prices and thus taking customers away from the local businessmen. Since foreign shopkeepers are said to be predominantly Somali’s, their property were perceived to be the main targets of the violence.

3. Masiphumelele

Masiphumemele is an informal settlement on the west coast of the Cape Peninsula close to the town of Fish Hoek. As was the case in Khayelitsha, media reports revealed a history of anti-foreigner sentiment in this area. Past xenophobic violence in this area was reported to have been primarily looting of shops.

Once again, focus group discussants pointed to mass media coverage of violence in Johannesburg as the *precipitating event*.

“Because of what they saw on TV, because they were not complaining but when they saw what happened on TV they decided to open their mouths and complain.”

The unsettling event sparking the xenophobic violence too was identified as the exodus of foreigners from the informal settlement in anticipation of attacks.

When asked why the community attacked the foreigners, the discussants replied that there was a rumour that people from Khayelitsha were going to come and evict the foreigners from the area, if they [the locals] did not do so. Other rumours mentioned were:

1. A perception that all foreigners are dishonest people-

“Because some of the foreigners are not honest,... and some of these people like Zimbabweans, Malawians, Nigerians they are taking our wives, and our jobs.”

2. A perception of unfair competition on the labour market:

“Because of hunger and starvation ... in their countries, they can work for any price even if it is little, unlike South Africans who do not want to work for small salaries.”

4. Mbekweni

Mbekweni township extends from Paarl to Wellington and falls within the Cape Winelands District Municipality. Although the exact date for the outbreak of xenophobic violence was not reported in the print media, events took place during the period of 21 – 31 May 2008 and seem to have lasted for one day. Attacks were aimed at property rather than at persons.

The *precipitating event* resulting in violence in Mbekweni was again identified as being mass media reports of violence in the rest of the country. In addition however, the selling of food stuff by foreigners at lower prices than sold by local businessmen was also identified as a factor.

As were the cases in Khayelitsha and Masiphumelele, discussants indicated that the exodus of foreigners from the area led to looting and vandalism of shops (*unsettling event*).

“They (foreigners) saw what happened on TV and they decided to leave, they panicked.

There were no groups fighting them, when they left we then took food from their shops.”

Focus group discussions reveal the strong influence of *rumours* in creating anti-foreigner sentiment and establishing a rationale for the justification of the violence.

1. Labour market issues:

“... in South Africa they get R90 a day, but because of foreigners the bosses give R30 a labour.”

2. Foreigners stealing the girlfriends of locals.

“Because they’ve got money, they buy them nice clothes, cell phones, that’s why we want them out of this country.”

3. A strong sentiment in Mbekweni that foreigners are only in South Africa to take as much as they can back to their own countries.

“...these people are killing our economy, because they are not banking, they are not taxed. They are putting their money under their mattresses, that is not on. When they go to their own countries they will be millionaires.”

4. A sentiment regarding the criminal element among foreigners.

“... these people are stealing our IDs.”

“ they get houses, they use our IDs, all these fake, and all these come from foreigners.”

As in the other case studies, discussants pointed to the concentration of attacks on Somali’s properties, for the sole reason that they were shop owners.

“Somali’s are the problem, because they are selling food cheaper.”

5. Northern Cape

The Northern Cape Province emerged from the print media as the only province in which no violent xenophobic outbursts took place during May and June 2008. Although

reports on two minor incidents were later found in local newspapers in Kimberley and Kuruman respectively, these incidents were interpreted by police as being criminal rather than xenophobic in nature.

In an effort to establish why the series of xenophobic events passed the Northern Cape by, a focus group was conducted with young working class residents in Kimberley and a number of in-depth interviews were conducted with ward councillors, foreigners, a police inspector and community members in both Kimberley and Kuruman. In contrast to focus group discussions in the four Western Cape case studies, discussions and interviews in the Northern Cape did not characterise foreigners as unfair competitors on the labour market, as exploitative shopkeepers or as criminals. Rather, a number of interviewees claimed that foreigners were perceived as being part of the community. When ward councillors were asked why they thought violent xenophobic outbursts had not spread to the Northern Cape, the response in both Kimberley and Kuruman related to a strong political stance that, they claimed, had been taken against any such action. "We explained to the community that we did not condone it and they respected us."

Conclusion

The four Western Cape case studies point to the importance of local interpretations of media coverage, both by perpetrators of violence as well as by victims in anticipation of attacks on their persons. They also point to both the importance as well as the similarity of rumours perpetrators accept as both credible and as a rationale for collective violent mobilisation. In three of the four cases moreover violence comprised the looting and vandalism of shops that had been left untended by shopkeepers (predominantly defined as Somali's) and that took place after foreigners had fled the settlements. It is apparent that perpetrators believe their actions to be immune from punishment or incrimination:

"Like he said, because of hunger, I wanted to eat meat and drink, just to eat for free, like Christmas"

"They saw an opportunity not to pay for it, . . . some of them really needed the stuff, maybe because there is no one working at home."

The case studies also reveal a perception of foreigners as competitors, competitors on the labour market, in local commerce, for government support and with regarding to female companions. The underlying sentiment of marginality appears to have been translated into a sentiment of xenophobia.

"...we want to clean our house we don't need visitors, let us clean our houses first, then we can call the visitors to visit us, because if you see us, we are exactly foreigners here in our country."

In contrast to these case studies in the Western Cape, discussions in the Northern Cape appear to define foreigners as part of the 'community' and as making a positive contribution by providing cheaper food and other consumables to the community.

As a Northern Cape community member put it:

“The people of the Northern Cape are not like herd animals, we make decisions for ourselves. We will not just follow [doing] what happens in the news..... We had a peace march in our area to show the foreigners that we are sorry for what happened in the rest of the country, but that they do not have to worry. They are safe here.” (our translation)

Section 8. **Conclusion**

By using secondary sources, this report has aimed to show that cross-border migration whilst no new national phenomenon, has shifted in nature over the past decade. This shift has to do both with regime change in South Africa as well as with less than coherent national policy on the phenomenon. Since 1994 moreover xenophobia as sentiment as well as outbreaks of xenophobic violence have taken place in a number of places, arguably at an increasing pace. The targets of these prejudices and violent events have chiefly been African migrants living in urban areas, most often in informal settlements. Accordingly, events that took place during the period mid-May to mid-June 2008 – the focus of this report – are new in their display neither of xenophobic sentiment nor of violence against the persons and property of African migrant families and communities. What appears to be new is the intensity and the spatial spread of xenophobic violent outbursts during a short period of time – effectively one month.

If visualised as a series of events, the trigger event took place in Alexandria on the weekend of 10 and 11 May. During the next week, essentially confined to informal settlements and townships in Gauteng, some fifty discrete violent outbursts targeting foreign African (as well as South African) strangers and their property took place. If the some 135 events of the month period are classified as major events (with or without assault on persons) or as minor events (with or without assault on persons), more than half the serious events took place in Gauteng during this first week. During the middle phase – effectively the last ten days of May – the series of outbursts spread to other provinces, the Western Cape in particular. The vast majority of these events however were minor outbursts involving attacks on property rather than on persons. The final phase – the first half of the month of June – reflected a diminishment in the frequency of events in all four classes as well as a (late) diffusion to new provinces and may be seen, at least in terms of print media coverage, as the petering out of the intense series of events country-wide. All events moreover were located in urban areas.

Once the series of events began, precipitants of events were often associated with earlier events in this series, as reported on in the media or by word of mouth. Similarly, where information was available, it is probable that rumours too were spread in these ways since they appeared to be similar across both space and time. In short, there does appear to have been what may be called ‘copycatting’, a form of transmission of violent xenophobic events that is rooted in the diffusion by the media of credible rumours associated not only with the events themselves but also with official and police reports and with politicians’ pronouncements. One further reflection on the sites of these violent events is pertinent. Given the extensive gaps in information we could gather from the print media, the recurrence of events during May and June in approximately one half of all recorded places where an earlier xenophobic event took place points to *continuity* in the process of the perpetration of

violence against strangers in underprivileged urban residential areas. A local history of violence against strangers (during which immunity from punishment could be learnt) mixed with media coverage of such recent violence elsewhere in the country appears to have been a potent combination. An important aspect of the spread from Gauteng in the first phase to the Western Cape and elsewhere in the country in the middle and final phases appears to be related to earlier xenophobic attacks, particularly those involving foreign shop-owners (particularly Somalis in the Western Cape). As news of the violent assaults and attacks in Gauteng spread, many foreigners including shop-owners decided to flee their settlements and shops in anticipation of possible attacks, leaving properties that were subsequently vandalised and looted.

As mentioned earlier, whilst explanations offered in the printed media for outbursts between May and June 2008 are diverse, the vast majority of these explanations share an emphasis on external structural causes. During the initial period of the series of outbursts, government (and others) tended to give reductionist one-factor causes such as claiming that “criminals” and the “mob”, on the one hand, or “a third force” and “sinister forces”, on the other, were responsible. Later, explanations became more complex and sophisticated and the role that mass media played in the spread of the outbursts became an issue. Structural factors included most often

- failure of government policies, such as service delivery, failure to address crime, collapse of border controls and unsuccessful diplomacy toward Zimbabwe;
- the high unemployment rate particularly for young urban black men; and
- the failings of the police (whether from lack of resources or poor training).

The emphasis on structural factors led to explanations not for individual outbursts but for the series of events as a single phenomenon, and to the spread of violence within this unit of analysis. Little attention was given to factors directly related to individual outbursts themselves and equally little to the meaning residents gave to local issues.

In this report, the unit of analysis was the violent event, not their diffusion. This implies a focus both on general structural factors in the environment as well as on factors specific to that particular event. This also implies that explanations suggested here were rarely if ever raised by the print media or by research bodies concerned by these phenomena. Simultaneously, however, given the nature of issues that need research – the meaning given to events by perpetrators on the ground, risk aversion in the selection of their targets, their perception of police activities, and the reversal of humiliation through violent action, for example – data are difficult to assemble and are rarely found in the print media. In our research, it was only during focus group discussions with perpetrators and eyewitnesses that evidence of some of these sentiments and calculations emerged.

How does this analysis contribute toward an overarching explanation of the May and June 2008 outbursts?

In the first place, such an overarching explanation embraces four parts :

- Explanations focused on external structural causes,
- Explanations focused on factors directly related to specific outbursts,
- Explanations for the diffusion of outburst events, and
- Explanations for perceptions concerning the forces of law and order and concerning government.

In the second place, before such an explanation can be presented with confidence, more information needs to be assembled, particularly about the nature and scope of both the aggression and the humiliation carried by young informal settlement South African men who appear to have been the force behind this series of xenophobic violent events.

It is clear that a mix of external structural causes establish an important explanatory context. As the HSRC report stated:

“South African citizens literally feel ‘besieged’ by a range of socio-economic challenges. This feeling is particularly acute for men of working age who are struggling to find employment or make a living and feel most directly threatened by the migration of large numbers of ‘working men’ from other parts of the continent...”

Three points however need to be made about such structural causes. In the first place, they need not universally be understood as frustrations leading to aggression but may well be used as a strategy to extract benefits from those who possess or control resources (through political mobilization or looting, for instance). In the second place, apportioning guilt or blame to one cause more than to another (such as ‘it is government failure rather than economic downturn’) does not advance explanation because it is the interpretation of the mix of these causes at grass-roots level that is the critical issue, not indicators at macro level. In the third place, popular reductionist one-factor explanations (blame on the ‘mob’, ‘criminals’, or ‘a third force’) reflect the bewilderment and panic of those seeking explanations rather than greater clarity.

Explanations focused on factors directly related to specific outbursts shift attention to the perpetrators themselves, and their perceptions and beliefs. By using the conceptual framework developed here, the following explanations may be put forward:

Young informal settlement South African men share deep anger about a range of issues:

unemployment, perceptions of relative deprivation, inadequate service delivery (including shelter) and so on. This anger is generalised, often directed at government (the municipality), and sometimes aimed at local strangers. In a particular setting, a precipitant followed by the spread of rumour leads to a perception that local strangers are dangerous, possess hostile intentions and accordingly that community mobilisation to eliminate these threats is required. These targets are then selected for attack once the young men have concluded that they will be immune from punishment or recrimination during and after the attacks. Once the attacks begin, they become impersonal and brutal and perpetrators act outside the bounds of the inhibitions they usually carry. Perpetrators justify their actions in terms of rumours about the hostile intentions of the victim community and accordingly do not share a sentiment of guilt or wrong-doing during the outburst. In certain cases moreover this violence is experienced as pleasure since it represents a reversal of humiliation, a turnabout from dishonour to triumph and conquest.

It is clear that this explanation is not based on empirical data and needs to be tested through rigorous research at grass roots level before being accepted as reliable.

Explanations for the diffusion of outburst events also need a focus on the grassroots level: rumours regarding local strangers based on previous local incidents as well as mass media reports on recent incidents elsewhere together with perceptions of immunity from police and from community sanction in the event of violence lead rapidly to a series of copycatting outbursts. In addition, once the diffusion and accompanying mass-media coverage began, many foreigners anticipating possible attacks fled their settlements and shops, thereby facilitating the vandalism and looting of their properties in their absence.

Finally then, what of perceptions regarding the role of the police and of government during the series of outbursts? When faced with violence, police appear to have been perceived both as incompetent (rather than weak) and as passive (if not supportive) by the perpetrators. This goes far in explaining both the selection of local strangers (rather than more powerful actors) as targets as well as the fact that – at least during the first phase - violent assaults, looting and vandalism took place in public and almost at will. Government's early public vacillation on the outbursts and its early unwillingness to act against perpetrators contributed to the establishment of a context in which perpetrators could act in a risk-free environment. Later government mobilization of the army and heightened police awareness of the spreading violence took some time to change this context. Violent injuries and deaths waned earlier than vandalism and looting of properties.

Once again, it is clear that this explanation is not based on sufficient empirical data and

needs to be tested through rigorous research at grass roots level before being accepted as reliable.

Finally, though this report was not written with the intention of making recommendations, it is appropriate to close with the following thoughts of Staub, a researcher with experience of violent collective behaviour in settings as different as Rwanda & Burundi and the Netherlands

'As individuals or groups harm others, they change. Human beings have a need to see the world as just. Perpetrators justify their actions by further devaluing those they harm. Witnesses, if they remain passive, have a strong need to distance themselves from those who are harmed. Otherwise, feeling empathy, they themselves suffer. They distance themselves by seeing those who suffer as deserving of their suffering—due to their bad character, or to their bad actions.'

It should be apparent that dehumanization of this kind by witnesses (potentially including news reporters, police, politicians, NGOs and religious bodies) is an issue of significant proportion within the state and civil society in South Africa today.

Appendix 9a: Bibliography

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Appendix 9 b: List of printed media consulted

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Burger
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Cape Argus
Cape Times
Citizen
City Press
Daily Dispatch
Daily News
Diamond Fields Advertiser
Express
Financial Mail
Finansies en Tegniek
Herald Times Eastern Cape
Independent on Saturday(Natal)
Joernaal vir eietydse geskiedenis
Kerkblad
Kerkbode
Kwana- Voorheen Vrydag
Landbou Weekblad
Leader
Mail & Gaurdian, Weekly M&G
Natal Witness
New Era
Patriot, (Now) Impak
Pretoria News
Rapport
Sa Jounal on Human Rights
Saturday Paper
Saturday Star
Saturday Weekend Argus
Servamus
Sowetan
Sowetan Sunday World
Star
Sunday Independent
Sunday Times
Sunday Tribune
Sunday World
Teacher
This Day
Time
Volksblad
Weekend Post
Weekly Mail and Guardian

Appendix 9c: Focus group schedule

| The Incident | Questions |
|---|---|
| Dates | When did 'it' happen? Why did it happen at this time? |
| The place | Where did it happen? (town and suburb (township)) |
| Precipitants | Who was involved? Age/gender |
| First outbreak of violence or unsettling event | <p>What do you think led to the violence happening in your area? What was the causes of the violence: e.g. housing, crime, lack of service delivery, employment Unpack the category 'foreigner' to understand exactly who people think is the problem. Are there some foreigners people think are more of a problem than others: e.g. Nigerians, Zimbabweans, etc. What about people from SA who have been attacked? Or is there generally a problem with 'outsiders' coming into the township/</p> <p>Has there always been animosity towards the foreigners living in this community?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has this always been the case or had you lived peacefully before? • When did people start seeing foreigners as the enemy? |
| Rumours | <p>Why did it start? Who started rumours? Why?</p> <p><i>Specific issues to look out for include¹</i></p> <p>Housing ('foreigners have taken our houses').</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need to understand why people think this, is it just an impression, did they hear a rumour, do they have an actual example where this took place? • What are their experiences of trying to access housing, do they feel they have been prevented from getting houses because of foreigners. • How do they think foreigners get access to houses illegally e.g. bribery, corruption, other? <p>Jobs ('foreigners are taking our jobs').</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is this a general impression or do they have direct experience of this? • Why do they think foreigners get the jobs they want? • Are they prepared to accept lower pay, are they more skilled, are they corrupt? <p>Competition for resources including water, sanitation and health. E.g. there is only one water tap for so many people and we run out of water because of foreigner using it up.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health-issues around foreigners accessing free health care, the local clinic runs out of medicines because the supplies are being used by foreigners who come to the clinic • Providing goods and services: are foreigners selling things cheaper than locals or are they seen to have an unfair advantage in pricing their goods? <p>Crime-'foreigners are responsible for crime'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need to probe a bit beneath this perception. • Are there some foreigners that people believe are the most |

¹ All the text in red is taken directly from the HSRC Report 2807: *Citizenship, Violence and Xenophobia in South Africa*

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| | <p>responsible for crime? Or is it all foreigners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What types of crime are they usually involved in? • Is this just a general impression or have people had direct experiences? <p>Migration-have a lot of new people moved into this area recently?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where are they from? • Do they have a good or bad relationship with them? • Is this causing conflict? |
| Lull | Organised 'attacks'? |
| State police reaction | <p>What was the role of the police in all of this? Could they have prevented the attacks?</p> <p>Policing issues-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do they feel that the actions of the police have anything to do with how bad the situation has got, i.e. colluded with or not acted against foreigners who do 'wrong things', crime etc. <p>Government-local especially and national</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do they feel that the actions of the government at local level (councillors, local MPs) etc have anything to do with the situation e.g. giving jobs or houses 'unfairly' to foreigners. • What about local politicians, local civic leaders, other leaders? |
| More violence | <p>What do you feel about the violence which has been happening in your area? (Looking for attitudes towards violence, either negative or positive.) Do people maybe agree that foreigners are 'a problem' but feel there <i>shouldn't</i> be violence against them? Do they think they 'deserve' the violence, that violence has been effective in dealing with other 'criminals' and should now be used against foreigners?</p> <p>Is there anything that should or could be done about this violence? Also trying to draw out possible ways to intervene in the violence, how people think it could be addressed in terms of community or government initiatives, or is it a matter of the government simply addressing the problematic underlying issues outlined in the discussion, or is it a matter of arresting and deporting</p> <p>Will violence continue or is it resolved?</p> |
| Categories of violent acts | What happened here? |
| Broadening of participation | How did the attacks spread in the community? Why did more people join in the attacks? |

Appendix 9d: Tables

Section 2

Table 1: Foreign-born population in the highest immigration countries in the world (1990's-2000s rounds of censuses)

| Country | Foreign born population | |
|----------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| | 1990s round of censuses | 2000s round of censuses |
| Australia | 23.0 | 23.0 |
| Canada | 16.6 | 17.4 |
| Germany | 11.5 | 12.5 |
| United States | 9.3 | 11.0 |
| United Kingdom | 6.9 | 7.9 |
| South Africa | 4.2 | 2.3 ² (2.7) CS |

Source: Marindo (2008:158)

Table 2: Legal Immigration to South Africa, 1990-1999

| Year | Legal immigrants | African Immigrants |
|------|------------------|--------------------|
| 1990 | 14,499 | 1,628 |
| 1991 | 12,379 | 2,065 |
| 1992 | 8,686 | 1,266 |
| 1993 | 9,824 | 1,701 |
| 1994 | 6,398 | 1,628 |
| 1995 | 5,064 | 1,343 |
| 1996 | 5,407 | 1,601 |
| 1997 | 4,102 | 1,281 |
| 1998 | 4,371 | 1,169 |
| 1999 | 3,669 | 980 |

Source: SAMP Migration Policy Brief No.17

² The percentage of foreign-born population in 2001 was 2.3% and that from the Community Survey 2007 was 2.7%. Both are included as both fall within the 2000s round of censuses.

Table 3: Temporary Legal Labour Migration to South Africa, 1990-2000

| Year | New Work Permits | Renewals | Total |
|------|------------------|----------|--------|
| 1990 | 7,657 | 30,915 | 38,571 |
| 1991 | 4,117 | 32,763 | 36,880 |
| 1992 | 5,581 | 33,318 | 38,899 |
| 1993 | 5,741 | 30,810 | 36,551 |
| 1994 | 8,714 | 29,352 | 38,066 |
| 1995 | 11,053 | 32,838 | 43,891 |
| 1996 | 19,498 | 33,206 | 52,704 |
| 1997 | 11,361 | 17,129 | 28,490 |
| 1998 | 10,828 | 11,207 | 22,035 |
| 1999 | 13,163 | 10,136 | 23,299 |
| 2000 | 6,643 | 9,191 | 15,834 |

Source: SAMP Migration Policy Brief No.17

Table 4: Mine Labour Recruitment, 1990-2000

| Year | 1990 | 1991 | 1992 | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 |
|--------------|----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| South Africa | 199, 810 | 182,226 | 166,261 | 149,148 | 142,839 | 122,562 | 122,104 | 108,163 | 97,620 | 99,387 | 99,575 |

Source: SAMP Migration Policy Brief No.10

Table 5: Number of deportations per year and top three countries of origin (1999-2004)

| Country | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 |
|--------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Mozambique | 123,961 | 84,738 | 94,404 | 83,695 | 82,067 | 81,619 |
| Zimbabwe | 42,769 | 45,922 | 47,697 | 38,118 | 55,753 | 72,112 |
| Lesotho | 6,003 | 5,871 | 5,977 | 5,275 | 7,447 | 7,468 |
| Other | 11,128 | 9,044 | 8,045 | 8,779 | 9,541 | 5,938 |
| Total | 183,861 | 145,575 | 156,123 | 135,870 | 154,808 | 167,137 |

Source: Waller, 2006 (Data from 1994-2000, Annual Reports, Department of Home Affairs, 2001-2004, Department of Home Affairs: Head Office)