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JEAN PIERRE MISAGO

Introduction

Although South Africa has always been a major hub within a historically entrenched system of regional labor mobility, migration has diversified and increased since the country's transition to democracy and reintegration into the global economy in 1994. Indeed, due to its perceived economic prosperity, political stability and human rights record, post-apartheid South Africa has become a preferred destination for increasing numbers of immigrants (predominantly from African countries, but also increasingly from Eastern Europe and Asia) seeking a better socio-economic future but also protection from civil wars or political persecution. Once in South Africa, however, immigrants (particularly the poor or the less wealthy) are often met with discrimination, hostility and violent exclusion by local communities and institutions. Attitudinal surveys conducted since the 1990s consistently show that South Africans display high levels of hostility toward immigration and immigrants.[1] This anti-foreign sentiment is pervasive across virtually all strata of society[2] and manifests in various forms, ranging from everyday street-level abuse to discrimination by government officials and recurring bouts of communal xenophobic violence in varying intensity and scale.[3]

Xenophobic violence in particular has become a longstanding feature in post-apartheid South Africa. Xenophobic violence generally refers to any acts of violence (by local communities, groups or crowds) targeted at foreign nationals or "when outsiders" because of their being foreign or strangers. It is a clear and explicit targeting of foreign nationals or outsiders for violent attacks whatever other material, political, cultural or social forces might be at work.[4] Its main characteristics include murder, assaults causing grievous bodily harm, looting, robbery, arson attacks (burning of people alive and property), displacement, intimidation and threats, harassment, eviction notices, and so on. Since 1994, tens of thousands of people have been harassed, attacked, or killed because of their status as outsiders or foreign nationals.[5] During this period, xenophobic violence has increased in townships and informal settlements across the country and the situation became so alarming that the African Peer Review Mechanism's[6] country report on South Africa warned that xenophobia against other Africans is currently on the rise and must be nipped in the bud.[7]

While the violence was most intense and widely scrutinized in May 2008 when attacks across the country left at least 62 dead, 670 wounded, dozens raped, more than 100,000 displaced, and millions of Rand worth of property was also looted, destroyed or appropriated by local residents in just over two weeks,[8] it did not end then. Indeed, despite official claims that the South African society had "moved on,"[9] the violence did not end in June 2008 when the massive outbreak that started a month earlier finally subsided. Although the country has not witnessed violence of the intensity seen in May 2008, the incidence of violence has not

decreased. Rather, there is a growing recognition, even among some government officials, that violent attacks on foreign nationals have taken on disturbing proportions.[10] Since May 2008, attacks against outsiders—most notably foreign shopkeepers and workers—have resulted in an ever-growing number of murders and injuries at the hands of members of their host communities.[11]

Perhaps not surprisingly, the unprecedented nature of the May 2008 violence and ongoing violent attacks on foreign nationals have triggered a frenzy of analyses and commentary as scholars, policy analysts and government officials attempted to make sense of what is happening in the multiracial "rainbow" nation.[12] Debates have led to several competing causal explanations that detail broad economic, political, historical, structural and attitudinal factors.[13] As an example, economic and material explanations of xenophobic violence in South Africa emphasize competition between citizens and the increasing number of poor African migrants over scarce resources and opportunities, particularly at a time of high unemployment; poor service delivery; and record food and basic commodity price hikes as the main cause of the violence.[14] These explanations are in line with Tilly's observation that "analysts often refer to large-scale causes (poverty, widespread frustration, extremism, resource competition and so on) proposing them as necessary and sufficient conditions for whole episodes of collective violence."[15]

Underlying almost all these offerings is a presumption that "the failures of the government to deal with endemic poverty, joblessness, lack of shelter and basic services had led to the scapegoating of foreign migrants by frustrated citizens."[16] Similarly,

Pillay observes that "legitimate expectations and unmet basic needs create that specific type of frustration conducive to identifying immediate soft targets in foreigners whenever service delivery issues emerge."[17]

While there is an understandable reductionist tendency to view anti-foreign violence as a direct product of the material deprivation and competition between poor South Africans and foreigners, this does not explain why all poor communities in the country did not mobilize to attack foreign nationals in May 2008.[18] Despite the lack of definitive empirical backing, however, economic explanations for collective violence persist because the connection between poverty and group violence seems obvious particularly when violence occurs in poor and unequal societies as it often does. As Sen puts it ,

> the connection has appeared to be so obviously credible that the paucity of definitive empirical evidence has not discouraged the frequent invoking of this way of understanding the recurrence of violence in countries with much poverty and inequality. … The claim that poverty is responsible for group violence draws on an oversimplification of empirical connections that are far from universal. The relationship is also contingent on many other factors, including political, social and cultural circumstances.[19]

Though valuable in providing the historical, political and socio-economic context in which the violence occurs, these explanations "falter when faced with empirical or logical interrogation"[20] as they fail to identity proximate and specific causal factors that account for the appearance of violence in

some areas while others with similar socio-economic conditions remained calm. While there can be no doubt that the causes of the violence "lie in a complex of economic, political, social, and cultural factors, both contemporary and historical,"[21] the main weakness of these explanations lies in their inability to establish a direct empirical link between these common structural factors and the occurrence of the violence in specific communities at specific times.

With the above in mind, this paper argues that one such proximate causal factor is the localized political economy of the violence. Drawing on extensive empirical data, it specifically argues that xenophobic violence in post-apartheid South Africa is primarily "politics by other means"[22] as its instrumental motives are located in the localized political economy and micro-political processes at play in many of the country's towns, townships and informal settlements.

After this introduction, this paper directly begins discussing the political economy of xenophobic violence in South Africa. It does by identifying the main instigators of the violence or violence entrepreneurs and providing a detailed account of their motives. The paper concludes by summarizing its main points and sharing reflections on its implications for the understanding not only of xenophobic violence, but also of collective violence generally.

The Political Economy of Xenophobic Violence: Violence Entrepreneurs, their Roles and Motivations

This research provides ample evidence that xenophobic violence in South Africa is carried out in most areas by large crowds of ordinary members of the public, men and women, young and old. This leads most commentators to attribute the violence to "faceless" or "anonymous" mobs or criminals. As the discussion below shows, however, this research finds that, behind the masses, there are identifiable groups or individuals who act as masterminds or instigators of the violence for specific interests. It confirms Monson et al.'s argument that the reference to a faceless collective perpetrator is an attempt to erase agency and responsibility of key actors behind the violence.[23] Indeed, this research finds that the reference to "faceless mobs" or "anonymous community members" as perpetrators of the violence is often made by instigators themselves or their complicit local leaders as a strategy to shield themselves from accountability. This section first discusses the identities of these instigators or entrepreneurs of the violence before discussing their motivations.

Identifying Violence Entrepreneurs

This research finds that, in all affected areas, the xenophobic violence attacks are carefully organized and led by different local community leadership structures (formal or informal[24]) or known influential groups such as local business associations. In Alexandra Sector II, for example, the study showed that the attacks were planned and led by local leaders, particularly "Indunas"[25] and the local Community Policing Forum (CPF). Asked whether the community leaders were involved, a news editor at a local radio station responded:

They were involved, even if they can't come out and admit it openly; they were not surprised, they were happy; they were also saying: "they [foreigners] should go." … There were secret meetings at Madala Hostel where attacks were planned.

Similarly, a worker at a local South African Police Service (SAPS) Victims Support Unit also reported that planning meetings were organized by community leaders:

Meetings were held that side … from 1st to 8th Street. It's in those meetings where attacks were organized; but in the end, the whole town bought in. Apparently, meetings were organized by Indunas and CPF. The CPF chairperson is still being investigated by NIA: the National Intelligence Agency.

The community leaders' role was not only limited to the planning of the violence: they led and were actively involved in the actual carrying out of the attacks. The members of the men focus group were surprised when we asked what leaders did to stop the violence. They said: "No, you are missing the point. Leaders were with us at all times. They directed us on where to go and when."

Attacks on foreign nationals in Ramaphosa were organized and led by the local ward committee. It is indeed the committee that called the meeting and called upon the residents to start fighting all foreign nationals in the name of self-defense. A man who participated in the attacks stated: "It was a normal community meeting called by our leaders. It was said we must approach *amashangane* because they are fighting us. We must go and fight them also. We went to them straight

and war broke out. We killed some and some of our people were killed." A ward committee member confirmed:

On Friday, they [foreigners] started beating locals, they killed one person. On Saturday evening the killers who had disappeared came back to continue their job; they were beating up locals because they were beaten in Alex. On Sunday morning, we tried to defend ourselves; we came together to decide to chase them away because they were killing us. … What happened? We beat them; we were not going to talk to them nicely; we went where they were gathered; we went to their shacks and burnt them.

In De Doorns, respondents reported that violent attacks on Zimbabwean farm workers were organized and led by the local ward councillor, ward committee members and local labor brokers to fend off competition from Zimbabwean groups or labor brokers or contractors. One respondent, for example, stated when asked who was behind the violence:

It was community leaders and labor brokers. Dissatisfied local labor brokers pressured local leaders and incited local residents to attack and chase Zimbabweans away. Such mobilization was facilitated by the fact that some labor brokers or contractors are also ward committee members.

In sum, these examples[26] show that, although the violent attacks on foreign nationals attract massive and relatively voluntary public participation, they are instigated by known leadership groups (formal or

informal) or individuals often referred to in the literature as "violence entrepreneurs"[27] or "violence specialists."[28] The research finds that violence entrepreneurs have little difficulty co-opting or getting acquiescence and support from participating masses that already hold deep-seated negative attitudes and resentment toward foreign nationals. As the discussion that follows shows, however, instigators' actions were rather motivated by their own political and economic interests than the greater public good or the general welfare of their respective communities.

The Political Economy of Violence

The interests behind attacking and removing foreigners from communities are diverse and not always immediately evident. However, by closely looking at—and analyzing—the motivations of instigators discussed above, this research finds that xenophobic violence is primarily "politics by other means": instigators organize the attacks as an attempt to claim or consolidate the authority and power needed to further their political and economic interests. Indeed, organizing attacks on and removing "unwanted" outsiders has proved to be a highly effective strategy for earning people's trust, gaining legitimacy and expanding a client base and the revenues associated with it. The finding is in line with the "elite manipulation theory" stipulating that elites often strategically mobilize existing—or purposely created—popular discontent into collective action for maximum political and economic gain.[29] The following paragraphs illustrate this point by showing that instigators' instrumental motives influence violent attacks on foreign nationals in most affected areas.

Power Struggles Over Community Leadership
This research finds that areas affected by the xenophobic violence are usually battle grounds for power struggles among numerous formal and informal groups for community leadership supremacy. The areas are characterized by fierce competition for the control of the community leadership and the ensuing economic gains. As the discussion below shows, understanding the motives behind the violence against foreign nationals in South Africa requires an equally clear understanding of the political economy of community leadership in most poor townships and informal settlements across the country. In an environment of general deprivation and unemployment, community leadership—in its formal and informal manifestations—is an attractive alternative vocation. Indeed, it is one of the few forms of paid employment or income-generating activities available to low-skilled, poorly educated residents. According to respondents, it is common knowledge that ostensibly voluntary leaders often charge for services, levy protection fees, and sell or let land and buildings, and take bribes in exchange for solving problems or influencing tender processes.

In Atteridgeville, for example, respondents reported that the leading leadership group, the Gauteng Civic Organization (GACA), charges for services—and charges can be substantial, depending on the nature of the case. One respondent stated:

> The other issue is that, when you have a problem and you go to the office down there, they will ask you how much you have and when you go to the police station, they don't charge you anything. So

that is totally wrong, and we are being robbed in this place by these committees. Let's say I fought with my neighbor; then I feel that the only people who can bring a solution are committee members. When you get there, they will ask you to give them R20 first, before you can talk.

Another respondent confirmed and added that charges are case dependent and can be a substantial amount of money: "It all depends upon the severity of the case; let's say I sold you my space and you want to pay half; then we have to go there to sign and make payment arrangements and the office may charge 10% of the deal."

In Itireleng the "Comrades" (a self-selected leadership group that was behind the violence) claimed to be volunteers, but they rarely did anything for free. All respondents reported that comrades charged for their services and even demand protection fees from all residents. One respondent stated:

> They claim to be volunteers, but they sometimes charge for their services and demand bribes from people. They also demand people to pay a protection fee of R5 each shack, which some community members refuse to pay. You see, when you go to them and tell them about any problem that you have, they normally want a bribe from you before they can help you. … We report to them issues like crime … I can say, mostly crime; or if we have problems with running water. When you go to them before they can go and hunt those thugs, they want a bribe from you before they can help.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the profitability of community leadership positions not only leads to a deliberate confusion of roles and mandates but also attracts considerable infighting and competition for power and legitimacy among different groups present in affected areas. According to respondents, the same individuals hold positions in different leadership groups and even those groups with specific mandates involve themselves in solving all sorts of problems community members brought to them. In Diepsloot, for example, the distinction between different leadership structures including Block committees, CPF and South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO) did not seem clear to most respondents, as some individuals were simultaneously members of different structures. "We had SANCO, but I do not know where it ended, but now it merged with CPF. CPF and SANCO are one thing," reported one respondent. In Madelakufa II, some street committee members were also members of the CPF and vice versa, and the roles and mandate of the two structures were not clearly defined. Respondents reported that CPF, whose mandate is—according to the local CPF leaders—"exclusively fighting crime," got also involved in solving socio-economic issues.

In sum, this discussion shows that areas affected by xenophobic violence are characterized by fierce infighting for power and legitimacy among different formal and informal leadership groups. Given economic gains and revenues associated with such political power and authority, these struggles are perhaps not surprising. The discussion also shows that struggles to control leadership positions can and indeed often lead to popular mobilization and conflict. Further, as evidenced in the next section, mobilization

based on anti-outsider sentiments often leads to xenophobic violence.

Violence Against Foreign Nationals as a Leadership Consolidation Tool

For the above-mentioned local political players, organizing attacks on—and removing—the "unwanted" foreigners from affected communities has proven one of the most successful strategies for earning people's trust while gaining additional legitimacy, clients and revenues. Indeed, groups wanting to win the leadership competition—and claim or consolidate monopoly of local power and authority—capitalized on residents' feelings, fears, negative attitudes and resentment toward the presence of foreign nationals in their areas by offering their services in "resolving" a bitterly felt problem. Whereas the police and the official local authority had evidently—at least in the popular imagination—proved unable to address crime and other community problems, community leaders (current or aspiring) were able to demonstrate superior efficacy in "crime"-fighting and greater empathy with community concerns with their swift and strategic strikes.[30] Demonstrating solidarity with the masses feeling neglected or abandoned by the local authority or other leadership groups earned them popular legitimacy as the only "true" leaders of the polity. The case of Itireleng illustrates this point.

According to respondents, the comrades, the informal leadership group in Itireleng, were a group of unemployed youth who saw community leadership as employment opportunity and income-generating activity. Not only did they charge local residents for services (see earlier discussion); they also organized and led attacks on foreign nationals for direct and indirect personal economic interests. Given the lack of public trust in the local authority and pervasive resentment toward foreign nationals living in the area, the comrades used the removal of foreign nationals to earn popular legitimacy as community leaders. Consequently, by helping them consolidate their community leadership monopoly, the violence was indirectly a useful tool to expand their client base and the economic revenues it represents. One respondent, for example, when asked who the comrades were, answered:

> We don't know. They are unemployed youth. At times they came and said they helped us to remove foreigners and therefore we must contribute R5. Look, we are suffering; why should we support people who left their homes in Johannesburg? When they left their homes, they said they are coming here to work, so why should we support them?

In addition to benefiting from the consolidated leadership monopoly, the comrades acquired direct financial gains from chasing foreigners away from the location. Indeed, respondents reported that the comrades sold houses/shacks and property, evicted foreigners left behind, and charged them R20–R30 for family visits. "They [comrades] sold migrants' shacks and property; they took the money for themselves. Migrants are allowed to visit their families, but they must pay between R20–R30 to them to visit their families," one respondent stated.

Events that preceded the violence show that organizing the attacks was a strategic

move for the comrades. Respondents unanimously reported that violence against foreigners in Itireleng immediately followed a community meeting organized by comrades in the night of February 17, 2008. This meeting had, however, been preceded by a series of other meetings in which the issue of foreigners was discussed. One respondent narrated what she remembered about the events:

> In the third week of January 2008, there was a meeting with the MEC,[31] Metro Police, SAPS and Department of Home Affairs (DHA). The meeting was to address the concerns and complaints about security and safety. The comrades said the community is complaining about the influx of migrants in the community; that they are used as cheap labor and are responsible for the crime in the area. They complained that some of the migrants are illegal and do not have IDs or papers.

On January 30, another meeting was held with SAPS, DHA, MEC and the comrades. The MEC made a commitment that 20 people would be trained as wardens to deal with safety and security in the area, and;confirmed that SAPS and DHA would raid the area at night to check for the illegal migrants. Two weeks later, on February 17, while the police were still preparing for the raids, the comrades convened a meeting without informing the councillor or the police. In the meeting, people were asked what their views were about foreigners in the area; it was decided that the foreigners should be driven out of the community. The attacks then started.

Why did the comrades anticipate the raids that were being prepared by the police and the DHA? To this question, the comrades, who did not want to admit any involvement, responded that maybe the community members decided to remove foreigners themselves because they did not trust the police and did not believe the raids were actually going to be carried out. However, judging from how they greatly benefited from the attacks and how they behaved after the violence (such as asking for community recompense for their help in removing foreigners), it is clear that the comrades did not want to let this opportunity to officially appropriate the community leadership pass them by. Organizing attacks that removed foreigners from the location was a comrades' strategic move to consolidate their community leadership monopoly, which probably could not have been achieved had the foreigner-related issues been handled by the usual institutions with the relevant mandate.

Like in Itireleng, attacking and removing foreigners in Atteridgeville was not only a source of great economic benefits for the instigators (GACA) but also a brutal show of force demonstrating and consolidating their supreme and undisputed authority and power. GACA's actions were another clear example that leadership groups organized violence against foreign nationals for their own specific interests. Indeed, GACA orchestrated the removal of foreign nationals but later organized their return for a fee. At the time of the research field work, it was visible that some of the displaced foreign nationals had returned to the area but according to respondents, GACA was charging them money for return and protection. A local

CPF chairperson for example stated: "The organization called GACA; they are community leaders. After the xenophobic violence, foreigners are paying them money to reintegrate into community and are also paying protection fees." GACA committee members admitted that they organized their own "reintegration" program after they realized that the local council was not effective and was just misusing funds allocated by government in this regard. Orchestrating attacks on foreigners and organizing their return—and in the process, thwarting state-sanctioned processes—not only earned the instigators money but also, and most importantly, demonstrated and consolidated their undisputed authority and community leadership supremacy. The group's actions were a clear statement to community members and other rival groups that they were in charge; that they had the power and authority to decide who lives or dies, and who resides in or leaves that specific location.

Informal community leadership structures' involvement in violent exclusion is not a new phenomenon in South Africa's townships and informal settlements. Since the early 1940s, these structures (including various civic organizations, street committees, community policing committees, comrades, etc.) have existed to protect communities against criminals but also as social movements to fight against the apartheid regime.[32] However, these structures often exploited the context and used violence for personal gains.[33] As is evident now, the end of the political struggle did not necessarily signal the end of these personal empires,[34] the legacies of which form part of the violence that has continued to characterize South African townships. Using

Alexandra as an example, Nieftagodien shows how in the recent past local leaders have always evoked the discourse of outsider exclusion and removal as "an appropriate means of effecting development."[35] He reminds us that at the beginning of Alexandra renewal project (in 2001), some 3500 families were forcibly relocated to places far away from Alexandra and consequently prevented from benefiting from the anticipated development. As Nieftagodien further notes,

> When they make claims on already scarce resources, they [outsiders] are regarded as a threat to the interests of insiders. Understood in these terms, African foreigners are defined as the quintessential outsider and as an immediate threat to the insiders. Consequently, they are subject to exclusion, even violently so.[36]

The empirical findings outlined in the discussion above are in line with some of the well-known and time-honored theoretical explanations for collective violence, particularly the rational choice and elite manipulation theories. Indeed, these findings show that the rational choice theory finds a valid and direct application to xenophobic violence in South Africa. According to this theory, instead of being an irrational outburst, collective violence represents the outcome of a rational choice. Collective violence is instrumental to a goal, however vaguely formulated that goal may be.[37] It is simply one option among a continuum of political actions,[38] a deliberate effort undertaken for discernible reasons.[39] It conceives of collective violence as an act of collective and rational decision makers that mobilize their

followers and promote their causes with the best available strategies informed by cognitive material and socio-political resources at their disposal.[40] Instigators and participants engage in collective violent action only when they expect the benefits of their participation to exceed the costs; "when the net value of doing so is positive—that is, when benefits [collective and/or individual] of such activity outweigh costs."[41] The benefits ought not only to be material or economic rewards. Social, political or "identitive" or emotive incentives are equally important.[42] Cleary, the discussion above indicates that, due to its organizational nature and its instrumental logics and calculations, xenophobic violence in South Africa adheres to the tenets of this theory.

Similarly, as alluded to earlier, the elite manipulation theory is readily applicable to the context of xenophobic violence in South Africa. The central argument of this theory is that collective violence often results from the manipulation of masses by the elites for their (elites') economic and political interests. Understanding that "groups rarely organize themselves without some sort of political leader that is able to harness and bring critical issues to the forefront of individual consciousness,"[43] elites often strategically mobilize existing or purposely created popular discontent into collective action for maximum political gain.[44] Elites "create opportunities with issues and crises to advance their interests and goals."[45] Elites can be elected or self-appointed leaders, political party leaders or specific interest groups. Tilly refers to them as "political entrepreneurs" or "violence specialists."[46] As with other types of collective violence, the search for causal explanations for xenophobic violence in South Africa needs to include the understanding of instrumental motives of local elites or political entrepreneurs.

The salience of localized political economy as a key driver of xenophobic violence in South Africa is further demonstrated by the absence of violence in potentially volatile communities. Indeed, as indicated earlier, in an attempt to understand why violence broke out in some communities and not in others with geographic proximity and relatively similar socio-economic conditions, the study looked at two non-affected locations in Alexandra (Sector V) and Tembisa (Madelakufa I), two of the most affected townships in Gauteng province. At first glance, these areas looked prime for violence. Apart from their close proximity to affected areas, violent elements from neighboring locations attempted to start or influence attacks on foreign nationals there. However, their attempts were thwarted by resistance from communities and their leadership. Such resistance was rarely shaped by altruism or solidarity, but rather was driven by interests and self-protection. An Alexandra Sector V respondent attested that:

> People from outside came but the block committees went up there next to the river to stop them from entering this area. The fear was that people from outside will even attack South Africans, as they do not know the difference. People were afraid that if Zulus come here to remove foreigners, they won't be able to know the difference. Even South Africans may get affected.

Similarly, the resistance to xenophobic incursions in Madelakufa I was also organized as a

form of self-protection. As in Alexandra Sector V, there were fears that attackers would not be able to differentiate foreign nationals from South Africans, meaning that the whole community would have been affected. A Madela-kufa I respondent stated: "We asked them how they will differentiate between migrants' shacks and South Africans' shacks. We also reminded them that this is an informal settlement and the shacks are close to each other; if they burn one shack, the whole place catches fire."

From this discussion, it is clear that in these two communities (and arguably in other potentially volatile areas that resisted the violence), the critical factor preventing violence was the ability of the community leadership to represent and look out for the interests and safety of all residents. In other words, the absence of the violence is explained by the absence of powerful and influential violence entrepreneurs or self-serving leaders who, in affected communities, either underestimated the security risks attacks on foreigners posed for their entire communities or determined that their interests would be served by the violence.

Conclusions

This paper argues for the centrality of political economy as a causal explanation for xenophobic violence in post-apartheid South Africa. Through the identification of micro-politics and localized political economy as key drivers of the xenophobic violence in areas where such violence occurs, the paper specifically argues that xenophobic violence in South Africa is primarily "politics by other means" as its instrumental motives are located in the local

political economy and micro-political processes at play in many of the country's towns, townships and informal settlements. The paper illustrates this point by providing ample empirical evidence that the violence is organized and led by local "violence entrepreneurs" attempting to claim or consolidate power and authority needed to further their political and economic interests. Indeed, while they attracted participation of large crowds, violent attacks on foreign nationals are usually carefully planned and executed by known local leadership groups (formal or informal) for their own interests. For these groups, attacking and chasing away foreigners is not only a direct source of great economic benefit but also a brutal show of force, demonstrating and consolidating their supreme and undisputed authority and power over community residents and rival leadership groups. By helping them consolidate their community leadership monopoly, the violence is also, if indirectly, a useful tool to expand their client base and the economic revenues it represents. Clearly, for these groups, violence against foreign nationals is essentially "politics by other means."

By showing that local politics and localized political economy provided both the opportunities and incentives for the violence, this paper challenges and addresses the weaknesses of the commonly used macro-economic explanations that emphasize structural factors such as poverty, unemployment and inequality as the necessary and sufficient conditions for the occurrence of xenophobic violence in South Africa. The paper further challenges many decontextualizing, depoliticizing and agency-erasing explanations that (1) obscure important historical continuities

and the political economy of the violence and (2) portray xenophobic violence as a spontaneous, chaotic mob and collective action from which individuals or rational agendas cannot be distinguished.[47]

Finally, while the "political economy" is not a new concept in the literature on collective violence,[48] this paper brings to the fore the often overlooked centrality of micro-politics and localized political economy factors as key drivers of collective violence, particularly community or group-based violent conflicts. At its heart, it confirms the adage that "all politics is local"[49] and challenges those who continue to speak of politics as a fundamentally a set of national processes.[50] A comprehensive understanding of xenophobic violence and collective violence generally needs to be able to account "for the interplay between macro and micro factors, as well as the transitional processes from individual thought and feeling to collective action."[51] Further, just as other analysts have urged researchers and policymakers to consider micro-level agendas and dynamics in their quest to understand conflicts or construct effective peace-building processes,[52] there is a compelling need to pay a sustained attention to micro-politics and subnational dynamics when analyzing xenophobia and related violence in South Africa and certainly elsewhere.

Endnotes

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2. Ibid.

3. Jean Pierre Misago, Iriann Freemantle. and Loren Landau. "Protection from Xenophobia: An Evaluation of Unhcr's Regional Office for Southern Africa's Xenophobia Related Programmes," University of Witwatersrand, 2015.

4. Belinda Dodson, "Locating Xenophobia: Debate, Discourse, and Everyday Experience in Cape Town, South Africa," *Africa Today* 56, no. 3 (2010): 2–22.

5. Loren Landau, ed., Exorcising the Demons Within: Xenophobia, Violence and Statecraft in Contemporary South Africa (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2011).

6. The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) is a self-monitoring instrument voluntarily agreed to by member states of the African Union. It is used by member countries to self-monitor all aspects of their governance and socio-economic development.

7. Wilson Johwa, "South Africa: Warning on Xenophobia Ignored," *Business Day*, July 11, 2008.

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9. Black Sash, "*Khumbula Ekhaya* (Remember Your Home)," May 11, 2009, www.blacksash.org.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=582.

10. Department of Arts and Culture, *Discussion Document: A National Strategy for Developing an Inclusive and a Cohesive South African Society* (2012), http://www.dac.gov.za/publications/reports/National-Strategy-Social-Cohesion-2012.pdf.

11. See details on this in Misago et al., "Protection from Xenophobia."

12. Christine Fauvelle-Aymar and Aurelia Segatti, "People, Space and Politics: An Exploration of Factors Explaining the 2008 Anti-foreigner Violence in South Africa," in *Exorcising the Demons Within: Xenophobia, Violence, and Statecraft in Contemporary South Africa*, ed. Loren

Landau (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2011), 56.

13. See for example Devan Pillay, "Relative Deprivation, Social Instability and Cultures of Entitlement," in *Go Home or Die Here: Violence, Xenophobia and the Reinvention of Difference in South Africa*, eds. Shireen Hassim, Tawana Kupe, and Eric Worby (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2008), 93–103.

14. See for example Dodson, "Locating Xenophobia."

15. Charles Tilly, *The Politics of Collective Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 20.

16. Jonathan Crush and Sujata Ramachandran, *Xenophobia, International Migration and Human Development*. Research Paper 2009/47, September 2009. United Nations Development Programme Human Development Reports, hdr. undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2009/ … /HDRP_2009_47.pdf.

17. Fauvelle-Aymar and Segatti, "People, Space and Politics," 59.

18. Crush and Ramachandran, *Xenophobia*, 16.

19. Amartya Sen, "Violence, Identity and Poverty," *Journal of Peace Research* 45, no. 1 (2008): 5–15.

20. Landau, Exorcising the Demons Within, 1.

21. Ibid.

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

23. Tamlyn Monson and Rebecca Arian, "Media Memory: A Critical Reconstruction of the May 2008 Violence," in Landau, *Exorcising the Demons Within*, 26.

24. Informal leadership structures refer to self-appointed community leadership groups who, even without official mandate, yield significant power and authority in their respective communities.

25. Zulu leaders who exercise authority over hostels, drawing on a traditional tribal leadership model which in Alexandra appears to be networked into traditional leadership structures in KwaZulu-Natal.

26. See other case study examples in Jean Pierre Misago, Loren Landau, and Tamlyn Monson, "Towards Tolerance, Law and Dignity: Addressing Violence against Foreign Nationals in South Afric," IOM Regional Office for Southern Africa, February 2009.

27. Yvan Guichaoua, "Processes of Violent Political Mobilisation: An Overview of Contemporary Debates and CRISE Findings," Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity (CRISE), June 2010.

28. Tilly, *Politics of Collective Violence*.

29. Anthony Oberschall, "Conflict Theory," in *Handbook of Politics: State and Society in Global Perspective*, eds. Kevin T. Leicht and J. Craig Jenkins (New York: Springer, 2010), 177–93.

30. See also Monson and Arian, "Media Memory."

31. MEC: Member of the Executive Committee.

32. Gary Kynoch, "Crime, Conflict and Politics in Transition-era South Africa," *African Affairs* 104 (2005): 404, 416.

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37. See for example Oberschall, "Conflict Theory."

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52. See for example Severine Autesserre, "Peacetime Violence. Post-Conflict Violence and Peacebuilding Strategies" (2009), https://academiccommons.columbia.edu/catalog/ac:138941.

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