CHAPTER 4
Migrants in the Face of Growing Nativism and Xenophobia: South African Experiences

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Abstract
Globalists are slowly being replaced by nativists in many parts of the world. In the face of dwindling resources and diminishing service delivery, many believe nation-states should prioritise their citizens over international migrants. These sentiments have often resulted in violent attacks on international migrants. The problem is compounded by reduced economic growth and a high unemployment rate in post-colonial Africa. This chapter employs Fanon's analysis of the pitfalls of national consciousness and Harris's (2002) three hypotheses of xenophobia to understand the recent attacks on African international migrants in South Africa. A well-organised militant group, Operation Dudula targets African immigrants, identifying them through physical and biological factors and cultural differences, demanding that they leave the country. In the chapter, by applying the Fanonnian lenses, the author argues that these attacks are not unique to South Africa but are common across most independent African countries such as Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire. South African citizens often attack black African migrants based on allegations that they are causing unemployment or a high crime rate. Drawing on Fanon, it is illustrated that such problems exist but are not caused by African migrants. The chapter contributes to the growing literature on international migration, xenophobia and nativism using data from scholarly sources, newspapers and social media. The insights gained here may assist international migration practitioners and policymakers in South Africa in crafting strategies that consider natives' needs without compromising the security and livelihoods of international migrants.

Keywords: xenophobia, South Africa, nativism, Operation Dudula, migrants.

1 Introduction

The pincer movement of push and pull factors conspire to dislodge people from their countries of origin and induce them to settle in foreign lands. While this is not an entirely new phenomenon, the recent violent outburst of negative reactions to immigrants in post-colonial Africa, driven by nativist attitudes, seems to be a significant concern. In South Africa, nativist-driven xenophobia has led to the destruction of property and the loss of lives. According to Fuo (2020), since the dawn of South African democracy, foreign nationals have made up about 7% of the population. Invariably, most of these people seek economic opportunities or are refugees fleeing their home countries for various reasons. While this proportion is comparatively large, it is significantly lower than the United States, which is 13% – but there are no such violent outbursts in the United States (Batalova, Hanna & Levesque 2021). The convergence of foreigners and South African citizens is unique to South Africa and a source of conflict due to competition over limited services, space and resources. Fuo (2020) argues that some government officials and cabinet ministers have resorted to nativist-informed strategies to reduce this competition and shield themselves from their failure to achieve the aspirations expressed in the 1955 Freedom Charter and the 1996 Constitution. Drawing on an analysis of the implementation of the policies relating to the indigent, Fuo (2020) demonstrates that foreigners have been excluded from accessing free essential services even when they could satisfy all the other criteria for accessing such essential services, such as being indigent. Based on the nativist overtones of the indigent policies, indigent foreigners are virtually excluded from receiving essential services regardless of their residential status.

Nativism, defined as 'the belief that an internal minority with foreign connections is a threat to the nation' (Arraiza, Aye & Shakirova 2020:195), has been a driving force behind anti-migration attitudes and attacks. In one study, Kim and Kim (2021) establish that at the individual level, national pride is positively related to cultural nativism among citizens of East and Southeast Asian countries. Their study also shows regional pride and anti-migration attitudes related to subnational regions and other contextual factors. It drew on the Asian Barometer Survey (2014 – 2016) to explain why certain people reject foreign cultural influences while others embrace them. The former they name 'cultural nativist'; the latter 'cultural globalist'. Their explanation for the variation is based mainly on subnational regional residency.

Some scholars, particularly those with Fanonian leanings, trace the gen-

esis of nativism and xenophobia to the liberation period. For instance, drawing on South Africa's and Zimbabwe's history, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009) argues that the genesis of Afro-radicalism and nativism in post-colonial Africa can be traced back to the antinomies of black liberation discourse. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009) asserts that nativism provides a practical approach to grasping and thinking through the African national project in South Africa and Zimbabwe. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009) uses Frantz Fanon's arguments to assert that first, there would be competition between Europeans and the native *bourgeoisie*, followed by competition between the poor majority in each country, that would fight non-national Africans. This Fanonian view illuminates what has played out in most xenophobic attacks in South Africa, which has led some to argue that the source of the events was mainly 'Afrophobia'.

While these studies (Landau *et al.* 2005; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2010; Nenjerama 2021; Nkabane & Mutereko 2021) provide valuable insights into the xenophobic outbursts in South Africa, they fall short of providing the information needed to understand the causes of, the nature of, and possible solutions to the problem. Our understanding of these issues is primarily based on anecdotal evidence. In this chapter, the author aims to describe the causes and nature of violent attacks on African migrants in South Africa. Using the Fanonian lenses in the broad scope of this book, *The Diasporean: The South African Perspectives*, this chapter contributes to the growing corpus of literature on the African Diaspora by exploring the history, causes and nature of nativist-driven xenophobia with a specific focus on Operation Dudula and *#PutSouthAfricansFirst*. Data for this chapter were drawn from scholarly literature, government documents, newspaper articles and social media, which were selected for convenience and relevance. The chapter draws parallels between Fanon's (1961:125) examples of how foreigners in the Ivory Coast were called on to leave their homes while their shops were being burnt and their street vending stalls wrecked and what is happening in South Africa in the 21st century. These understandings have pro-found implications for migration policymakers, practitioners and scholars alike. Lessons from such cases could be used to respond to the current xenophobic crises and reduce the likelihood of their future occurrence.

Beyond this introduction, the next section presents the Fanonian views on migration and xenophobia as a theoretical prism to understand the current immigration and xenophobia in sub-Saharan Africa. It is followed by an analysis of Harris' (2002) three hypotheses on xenophobia in South Africa. The third section presents Operation Dudula as a classic case of the 'pitfalls of

national consciousness' and shows why and how international immigrants are targeted. The chapter ends on a positive note by demonstrating that policy-makers can play an essential role in integrating international migrants into their host communities if they understand the causes of xenophobia.

2 Nativism and Xenophobia through the Fanonian Prism

In his seminal 1963 work, Fanon proposes that one of the causes of xenophobia and xenophobic attacks is the failure of the national middle class to grow the economy in newly independent African countries. In Chapter 3 of his influential book, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon presents a polemical attack on what he foresaw as the pitfalls of national consciousness and the struggle for the liberation of African countries. This section attempts to draw parallels between Fanon's arguments and the lived experiences of the migration and migrant phenomenon in South Africa. As the section will illustrate, Fanon's assertions portray what is happening in South Africa and Africa.

Fanon begins his polemic by describing and explaining how nationalist parties mobilise masses to overthrow colonialism. He argues that the struggle to overthrow colonialism would leave the confusion of universal neo-liberalism alongside an unprepared educated class with little to no practical links between them and the masses of the people. Fanon (1963:119) argues that the tragic mishaps of the national consciousness would emerge from the laziness and the cowardice of the educated class. Because of this, he asserts that national consciousness or freedom would be 'an empty shell, a crude and fragile travesty of what might have been' (1963:19). Interestingly, Fanon attributes this to the weaknesses and incapacity of the middle class, the national middle class, to think through popular action. He argues that the national middle class takes power from the former colonial masters but lacks economic power. It then finds itself in an unenviable position to seek assistance from the former colonial masters. Members of the national middle class are characterised by being few, being concentrated in urban centres, and participating in business, agriculture and the liberal professions, with few to none of them in industry or finance. This national middle class does not participate in production or invention. Their efforts are 'canalised into activities of an intermediary nature' (Fanon 1963:120). These characteristics would be an essential catalyst for nativism and xenophobia or, more specifically, Afrophobia, as will be illustrated in later sections of this chapter.

In the struggle for independence, Fanon (1963) sees the objective of the nationalist parties as being to mobilise the masses with slogans for independence without any thorough planning about post-colonialism. This approach is understandable, but intriguingly, Fanon claims that such nationalists lack a proper understanding of the economic programmes or the regime they would like to install. The evidence for such a paucity of understanding of economic and political processes would emerge in newly independent countries where the bookish understanding of the economy is soon exposed. Fanon argues that this middle class then agitates for the nationalisation of the economy. Although Fanon agrees with nationalisation, he bemoans the nationalist middle class' conceptualisation of such. Rather than placing the whole economy at the nation's service, the national middle class sees nationalisation as a process of transferring into the natives' hands all the unfair advantages characteristic of the colonial masters. At the same time, the 'native *bourgeoisie* which comes to power uses its class aggressiveness to corner the positions formerly kept for foreigners' (Fanon 1963:155) while making a minimal effort to grow the economy.

The negative attitude of the native *bourgeoisie* towards what he calls colonial personalities is central to the xenophobic attacks on fellow Africans. For instance, Fanon argues that the native middle class or native *bourgeoisie*, as he calls them, attacks colonial personalities to lend credence to nationalisation and Africanisation. This same attitude is adopted by the unemployed masses, small artisans and artisans who target non-national Africans. Citing West African cases, Fanon states that when 'the national *bourgeoisie* competes with the Europeans, the artisans and craftsmen start a fight against *non-national* Africans' (1963:156). In the Ivory Coast, Fanon points out that 'the Dahoman [from Benin] and Voltaic peoples [Mali and Burkina Faso], who control the greater part of the petty trade, are, once independence is declared, the object of hostile' and xenophobic attacks. Their shops were burnt, street stalls wrecked, and the newly independent country commanded the foreigners to leave to satisfy their nationals' demands. Fanon then concludes that:

> As we see it, the mechanism is identical in the two sets of circumstances. If the Europeans get in the way of the intellectuals and business *bourgeoisie* of the young nation, for the mass of the people in the towns competition is represented principally by Africans of another nation (Fanon 1963:156).

The parallels Fanon draws between the native *bourgeoisie's* antagonism against

colonial personalities and the masses' antagonism against non-national Africans are central to understanding xenophobia through a post-colonial prism. His work provides essential theoretical tools to think through xenophobic attacks against migrants in post-apartheid South Africa. As an analytic tool, it helps even to understand the current situation of migrants in South Africa in the wave of Operation Dudula targeting foreigners.

Some scholars in post-colonial discourse have employed Fanon's perspectives to understand nativism and xenophobia, nativism and racism in Zimbabwe and South Africa (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2010). For instance, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009) draws on Fanon to argue that the highly anticipated African unity faded quicker and quicker into oblivion. Through the Fanonian prism, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2010) interrogates the notion of African identities in the context of nativism and xenophobia. He concludes that there is a challenge in forging stable African identities in the face of the diversities of nationality, race, ethnicity, religion and other cultural forms.

However, the Fanonian views on xenophobia and its causes cannot be accepted without reservation, particularly concerning its relevance to the South African situation. Fanon's characterisation of the middle class or the native *bourgeoisie* is arguably spot on, but to argue that the masses mimic the attitude of the middle class could be misleading. There could be different reasons for xenophobia that Fanon ignored or did not exist in the West African post-colonial period. In the next section, Harris (2002) proposes three hypotheses to explore xenophobia in the South African context further.

3 Attacks on Migrants in South Africa: Harris' Three Hypotheses

On the one hand, conflicts and economic hardships in other parts of Africa have resulted in one-way migration and long-standing labour migration patterns south towards South Africa. On the other hand, South Africa's peace and prosperity have made it a strong magnet for immigrants from Africa and some parts of Asia (Landau *et al*. 2005). However, the recent shortages of resources, particularly employment opportunities, seem to have led to a deep-seated dislike of foreigners by South African natives. The hatred becomes an everyday reality in various ways, from the mere development of negative attitudes to actual physical attacks resulting in death. Landau *et al*. (2005:2), this, controversially claim that 'South Africa is a highly xenophobic society, which out of fear of foreign-

ers, does not naturally value the human rights of non-nationals'. This characterrisation of xenophobia has been primarily concerned with the attitudes of black South Africans towards Africans from elsewhere on the continent, a feature Fanon underscores. White immigrants do not seem to face the same xenophobia as African non-nationals. This discriminative nature of xenophobia in South Africa begs one question: What are the causes of xenophobia in South Africa?

There are many causes of xenophobia, but few are dominant in South Africa. The first one is based on scapegoating theory (Harris 2002). Drawing on Harris (2002), Hewitt *et al.* (2020) assert that foreigners are vulnerable, and locals and powerful groups often blame them for the economic and social ills they may not be responsible for. They argue that black non-nationals in South Africa are often blamed for housing shortages, unemployment, crime and economic hardships. However, no empirical evidence suggests that such ills result from African non-nationals residing in South Africa. This scapegoating may be a result of ignorance. Building upon the concept of scapegoating, Tella and Ogunnubi (2014:3) state that 'scapegoating is a shift of aggression to another target when the original target becomes inaccessible or difficult'. Unsurprisingly, many South African groups do not understand the real causes of the ills plaguing South African society. For instance, the economic and unemployment problems South Africa faces result from multifaceted causes that do not include the presence of immigrants. The literature indicates that unemployment and other economic challenges have been attributed to poor economic growth (Banda *et al*. 2016). Many people seem to lack this understanding or choose to ignore it. Alternatively, in Tella and Ogunnubi's (2014) words, they choose to shift their aggression to those they have othered [foreigners] when the original target [economic growth] becomes inaccessible or difficult to attack. Other problems cited, such as crime and infrastructure shortages, can be easily traced to slow economic growth. No matter that these perceptions may be unfounded, their impact on xenophobic attitudes and attacks is quite profound.

Historical isolation is the second cause of xenophobia in South Africa (Harris 2002). According to this view, the long isolation of South Africa from the rest of the continent and the world during Apartheid deprived locals of the knowledge and understanding of African foreigners (Tella & Ogunnubi 2014). Consequently, Africans were virtually unknown to South Africans during the isolation period except for those who struggled to dislodge the regime. However, the isolation hypothesis should be treated with caution as it is common knowledge that many non-native African nationals worked in the

mines and other South African sectors during Apartheid. However, some perceptions held by nationals, such as that some foreigners are cannibals, seem to strengthen the isolation hypothesis. The bottom line is that it is human nature to fear people one does not fully understand, leading to hostility. Drawing on Morris' (1998) works, Harris (2002) concludes that any society that lacks a history of staying with strangers is unlikely to find it easy to welcome them.

The third cause of xenophobia is based on Harris' (2002) biocultural hypothesis of xenophobia. Unlike the scapegoating and isolation hypotheses, the biocultural hypothesis explains the asymmetrical characteristics of xenophobia targeting non-citizen Africans. This view is consistent with Fanon's description of xenophobia as targeting black African foreigners but not Europeans or other races. Research has consistently demonstrated that xenophobia in South Africa is not homogenous among foreigners in South Africa (Harris 2002; Hewitt *et al.* 2020; Tella and Ogunnubi 2014). The biocultural hypothesis explains the selective nature of xenophobia based on 'visible difference, or otherness, i.e. in terms of physical and biological factors and cultural differrences exhibited by African foreigners in the country' (Harris 2002:6). For instance, Morris (1998) suggests that certain African foreigners are easily identifiable based on their physical features, clothing style, inability to speak indigenous languages, vaccination marks and accent. The biocultural hypothesis of xenophobia provides a powerful tool for understanding a foreigner's identifycation but fails to explain why such a foreigner is hated or attacked. Perhaps the argument is based on differences as a cause of xenophobia. However, that also does not hold as South Africa has many indigenous languages, and its people do not necessarily have similar physical features or dress codes. It could be a fallacy to treat native South Africans as a homogenous group. Notwithstanding these limitations, the biocultural hypothesis of xenophobia is useful in understanding the broader spectrum of xenophobic processes.

The Fanonian views and Harris' (2002) three hypotheses of xenophobia are central to this chapter. On the one hand, despite their stated limitations, in this chapter, the author draws on Fanon's (1963) work to argue that colonialism and the struggle to remove it significantly influences the causes and nature of xenophobia experienced by the Diasporas in South Africa. Again, his characterisation of the middle class may accurately reflect the turf war on economic resources and nationalisation discourse. The destruction of Dahoman and Voltaic peoples' vending stalls in the Ivory Coast by the locals that Fanon describes is barely distinguishable from what is experienced in South Africa.

On the other hand, Harris' (2002) three xenophobia hypotheses are valuable and generative for grasping how xenophobia occurs in South Africa. As the next section shows, his three hypotheses allow one to consider how such foreigners are identified and attacked. Comprehending xenophobia according to Harris' (2002) hypotheses will allow the reader to grasp its causes and nature. The following section uses these theories to understand the critical drivers of Operation Dudula and #PutSouthAfricansfirst.

3.1 Attacks on Migrants: Operation Dudula and the #PutSouthAfricansFirst Case

This section analyses the recent (2021 - 2022) xenophobic incidents in South Africa. They have been spearheaded by and run under the banner of what has been termed *Operation Dudula.* In social media, they appear under the banner *#PutSouthAfricansFirst.* This operation aims to 'remove all illegal foreign nationals by force'. The magnitude of the operation is reflected in how it captured the attention of many media houses, as shown in print and electronic newspapers. Table 1 shows such headlines.

Table 1: Operation Dudula

DATE	NEWSPAPER	HEADLINE
24 January 2022	*Sunday Independent*	*Bara taxi rank deserted in wake of Operation Dudula*
01 February 2022	*Daily Maverick*	*Ringing the alarm: We need to act against xenophobia before lives are lost to violence*[1]
18 January 2022	*News24*	*Hawkers caught in the middle as Soweto residents descend on Bara taxi rank to remove illegal immigrants*[2]

[1] https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2022-02-01-ringing-the-alarm-we-need-to-act-against-xenophobia-before-lives-are-lost-to-violence/

[2] https://www.news24.com/news24/southafrica/news/hawkers-caught-in-the-middle-as-soweto-residents-descend-on-bara-taxi-rank-to-remove-illegal-immigrants-20220118

02 February 2022	*News24*	*Immigrant traders in Gauteng fear for their safety after threats of xenophobic attacks*[3]
09 February 2022	*New Frame*	*How politicians stoke fires of xenophobic resentment*[4]
22 January 2022	*Sowetan Live*	*Human rights foundation slams #OperationDudula targeting illegal foreign nationals*[5]
14 February 2022	*Sowetan Live*	*Fear grips foreign nationals as Dudula wave rages. Traders forced to abandon stalls* [6]

Before analysing the news headlines and the actual excerpts of the news, it is imperative to understand the origins and nature of the operation. The operation seems to have taken its name from a similar operation launched in 2006 to target criminal acts of musical piracy initiated by high-profile musicians (Republic of South Africa 2006). On the one hand, Operation Dudula was formed to eradicate the sale of fake CDs and DVDs, depriving musicians of an income. On the other hand, like the 2006 Operation Dudula, the current operation (2022), which was relaunched in 2021, ostensibly targets 'all illegal foreign nationals' (Bornman 2021) who are characterised as either causing criminality, being undocumented, or taking South Africans' jobs. Coincidentally, particularly from the Fanonian perspective, is the organisers' timing of the relaunching of the operation, which coincided with the South African Youth Day, 'which commemorates those who died at the hands of the oppressive apartheid forces on June 16 1976, while protesting against the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in schools' (Bornman 2021). Like the Operation Dudula of 2006, which targeted 'criminals' who benefited from the music they neither composed nor sang, the metaphor suggests that foreigners want to benefit where they have

[3] https://www.news24.com/news24/southafrica/news/immigrant-traders-in-gauteng-fear-for-their-safety-after-threats-of-xenophobic-attacks-20220202
[4] https://www.newframe.com/why-politicians-stoke-fires-of-xenophobic-resentment/
[5] https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2022-01-22-human-rights-foundation-slams-operationdudula-targeting-illegal-foreign-nationals/
[6] https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2022-02-14-fear-grips-foreign-nationals-as-dudula-wave-rages/

not worked. Ignoring this significant fact would be ignoring Fanon's (1963) critical arguments of the pitfalls of national consciousness in the post-colonial period. As Fanon would argue, some of the sentiments expressed by Operation Dudula exemplify Fanon's thesis for xenophobia in post-colonial Africa. For instance, in the Ivory Coast, 'the Dahoman and Voltaic peoples, who control the greater part of the petty trade, are, once independence is declared, the object of hostile manifestations on the part of the people of the Ivory Coast' (Fanon 1963:155). Like what is happening in South Africa, Fanon describes what was happening in Ivory Coast as follows:

> From nationalism, we have passed to ultranationalism, to chauvinism, and finally to racism. These foreigners are called on to leave, their shops are burned, their street stalls are wrecked, and in fact, the government of the Ivory Coast commands them to go, thus giving their nationals satisfaction.

There is no better way to describe what is happening in South Africa than Fanon's insightful description above. As in the Ivory Coast, *The Sowetan Live* reported that the Operation Dudula campaign forced undocumented foreigners out of informal trading in townships and chased away dozens of people from the Johannesburg CBD, Alexandra and Orange Grove (Marupeng 2022). Similar scenes were reported in the *IOL* newspaper, which states that 'residents from Diepkloof in Soweto woke up to the scenes of a mop-up operation aimed at removing illegal foreign nationals and South Africans who sell goods without permits while occupying stands at the Bara taxi rank' (Makgatho 2022). Makgatho reports that video footage shows members of Operation Dudula burning boxes and goods left behind. There is a striking resemblance between Fanon's characterisation of xenophobic actions in the Ivory Coast and what is happening in South Africa. Nevertheless, what are the actual causes of this xenophobic attitude towards migrants? In the following section, this issue will be explored in greater detail.

3.2 Operation Dudula: Causes of Xenophobia

In earlier sections, the general causes of xenophobia, hypothesised by Fanon (1963) and its specific causes in South Africa based on Harris' (2002) three hypotheses have been explored. To what extent do these explanations match Operation Dudula in particular and *#PutSouthAfricansFirst* in general? *First*,

this section focuses on the explicit and implied causes expressed by the operation's proponents. It draws on social media as well as on evidence in electronic newspapers. The causes of xenophobia and the key drivers of Operation Dudula are premised on illegal immigrants, job opportunities and crime.

The proponents of Operation Dudula often assert that immigrants are in South Africa illegally. They describe them as 'undocumented'. This assertion has severe ramifications for the other two causes. It seems to be a consistent feeling among the proponents of Operation Dudula and *#PutSouthAfricansFirst* that immigrants are illegal and undocumented. These perceptions seem to feed on social media and electronic newspapers showing people crossing the border along the Limpopo River. One Twitter user who uses the Twitter handle *@Secure SA Borders* expressed this sentiment when responding to some South African citizens who seem sympathetic to foreigners. The Twitter user noted:

> The truth is struggling South Africans who use public facilities, who live with *these undocumented immigrants* [emphasis added] in their communities are the ones who are severely affected by influx of immigrants, so we are not expecting privileged people to understand our complaints about foreigners. *(@majiya_sqhamoTruth.)*

Emphasising the issue of undocumented immigrants, another Twitter user, Barry Saayman, seemed to respect lawful migrants in the country. Based on that, the user believes Operation Dudula is lawful and justified:

> The way I understand it, the protestors have nothing against law-abiding foreigners that respect our immigration, tax, health, and labour laws. There is no place in SA for undocumented immigrants. They should rather voluntary leave SA sooner than later. *(@SaaymanBarry.)*

While the issue of undocumented immigrants seems straightforward, another matter related to this concerns immigrants with fraudulent documents. This matter is more complicated as it includes, on the one hand, migrants with unauthentic documents purporting to authorise them to stay and work in the country. On the other hand, it includes migrants with authentic documents they obtained fraudulently through collusion with officials working in the Department of Home Affairs (DHA 2020). However, targeting immigrants on any of these grounds by members of Operation Dudula is highly problematic and ineffective for many reasons. First, many immigrants are legally in the

country. An untrained person will, in most cases, be unable to distinguish between the documented and the undocumented. As a result, all foreigners will be targeted using Harris' (2002) biocultural traits, which have nothing to do with their documentation. The 'undocumented' mantra is arguably just a smoke-screen for unexpressed feelings and reasons that are not immediately visible. Arguably, using Harris' arguments of the biocultural hypothesis, foreigners are targeted based on their visible differences rather than their immigration documents. These could be physical-biological or cultural differences (Harris 2002; Morris 1998). Screening people for documentation would require road-blocks that evaluate everyone rather than the selected few. The operation's selectiveness cements this argument of bias, for their targets are mainly black Africans to the exclusion of other races.

The *second* reason flowing directly from the 'undocumented migrants' argument is that these immigrants steal jobs from deserving South Africans. This assertion seems to be one of the critical drivers of Operation Dudula and *#PutSouthAfricansFirst.* This sentiment is illustrated in the following quotations from Twitter users:

> #OperationDudula is on a mission to make at least 2000 Zimbabweans losing their Employment Every Week. If You Zimbabweans and you work at Eskom, Uber, Bolt, Food Lovers, Spar etc. please pack your bags Your job is lost. We Taking Back Stolen Jobs. *@lawyerPTSA1st*
> #OperationDudula. We are winning. We went to different shops, hotels and restaurants. Cambridge requested only 3 working days instead of 7 to get rid of their foreign staff. Shoprite were 100% south Africans. Spar, they agreed to implement 7 days deadline.
> *(Ngube' Ngcuka@Aa_Thembisile.)*

There seems to be a strong sense among the proponents of Operation Dudula that foreigners are causing the rising unemployment in South Africa. To cement this argument, the members of Operation Dudula went around shops, mainly in the hospitality industry, demanding to see and change the proportion of foreigners employed (see Ngube *Ngcuka@Aa_Thembisile* above). This sentiment is not restricted to formal jobs, as we have also seen informal traders being driven out, as mentioned in the earlier sections of this chapter. While Fanon (1963) does not seem to provide useful theoretical tools to think through this kind of xenophobia, Harris' (2002) scapegoating hypothesis does provide useful

insights into this cause of xenophobia. As Harris argues, instead of facing the actual causes of rising unemployment, such as low economic growth (Khalid *et al.* 2021), the proponents of Operation Dudula seem to be scapegoating. Drawing on Morris' (1998) work, Harris (2002:4) suggests that 'hostility towards foreigners is explained concerning limited resources, such as housing, education, health care and employment, coupled with high expectations during the transition'. The transition from Apartheid brought high expectations for the previously disadvantaged black South Africans. However, the transition did not deliver on their expectations.

Consequently, out of frustration, people often create a 'frustration-scapegoat' (Tshitereke 1999:4), which are African foreigners. This psychological feeling of discontent is based on the belief that black South Africans are getting less than they feel entitled to, due to the presence of foreigners. That feeling drives the proponents of Operation Dudula to march to shops and give the shopkeepers the ultimatum to fire all foreigners and hire black South Africans. Interestingly, the demand to displace foreign workers does not consider whether they are documented.

The *third* and most emotive driver for the proponents of Operation Dudula and *#PutSouthAfricansFirst* is the perception that foreigners in the country drive crime and are difficult to trace because they are undocumented. In earlier sections of this chapter, the general causes of xenophobia hypothesised by Fanon (1963) and the specific causes in South Africa based on Harris' (2002) three hypotheses are described. To what extent do these explanations match with Operation Dudula and *#PutSouthAfricansFirst*? First, this section focuses on the explicit and implied causes expressed by the operation's proponents. It draws on social media and evidence gleaned from electronic newspapers. The primary driver of Operation Dudula is the crime committed by 'undocumented' illegal immigrants. The crimes range from robbery to drug trafficking. One parent who supported Operation Dudula said the following:

> My son has cleaned out my house. My duvets, pots and many other household items have been stolen. He has vandalised the house to feed his addiction, and I blame the drugs. The people [foreigners] who are killing our children should go (Simelane 2021).

This sentiment is not limited to drugs alone but extends to serious crimes such as murder and robbery. A Twitter user responding to the reported 60% increase

in car hijacking in the last three years reported in the *Sowetan Live* newspaper, seems to imply in the response below that foreigners are the cause of this:

> a good majority of South Africans will go through the trauma of being hijacked. Our cars are ordered by African brothers across the border. *(...@LisasaysSA1st.)*

Still related to crime, another Twitter user, while responding to a SABC political commentator who insinuated that the majority of people who vandalised the railway infrastructure were foreigners, stated:

> We have been saying it for years now. Foreigners from Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique, and elsewhere vandalise our infrastructure and do the most crime. You called us xenophobic for speaking the truth. *(@landback.)*

Because of the high level of crime in South Africa, the perception that foreigners cause crime seems to heighten xenophobia and sympathy for Operation Dudula. Against the backdrop of prison statistics, this perception seems based on facts. The World Prison Brief (2021) reports that foreign prisoners constituted about 10% of all people in South African correctional facilities in 2021. This figure may appear insignificant if about 90% of inmates are South Africans. However, comparing the figure with other African countries illustrates that the percentage of foreign prisoners in South African prisons is disproportionally high, only lower than that of Cote d'Ivoire, which is 30%. For instance, the percentages in some other African countries are as follows: Nigeria (0.3%), Egypt (1%), Kenya (0.6%) and Zimbabwe (1.9%) (World Prison Brief 2021). However, the proporof the prison population should also be viewed in light of the proportion of international migrants in South Africa, which is significantly high. Both Cote d'Ivoire and South Africa have a significantly higher proportion of international migrants. Therefore, arguing that foreigners cause crime may be erroneous and misleading. In 2000 Peberdy questioned the use of terms like 'illegals' and 'illegal immigrants' to describe undocumented immigrants, which implies that they are engaged in crime and criminal acts (Peberdy 2000). The conflation of arrested undocumented immigrants and arrested criminals arguably fuels misconceptions and xenophobia, often perpetuated through social media (Nkabane & Mutereko 2021). This conflation misdirects attention from the actual causes of crime and scapegoating, as Harris (2002) characterises them.

While Fanon's (1963) views on the pitfalls of national consciousness do not seem to provide comprehensive insights into crime and the lack of employment opportunities as critical drivers of xenophobia, his characterisation of the transition from Apartheid to democratic government and xenophobic attacks has significant parallels (Phiri 2021; Nenjerama 2021). Several studies have drawn from Fanon and post-colonial discourse in general to understand xenophobia in Africa (Nenjerama 2021; Mpofu 2021; Phiri 2021). An uppermost issue related to xenophobia is the entrance of the black middle class into positions of political power but with little or no economic means. Fanon notes:

> The national middle class which took over power at the end of the colonial regime is an underdeveloped middle class. It has practically no economic power, and in any case, it is in no way commensurate with the *bourgeoisie* of the mother country which it hopes to replace (Fanon 1963).

As a result, the economic power has remained in the hands of the formerly advantaged. The native masses, as a result, seem to compete for employment opportunities offered by the former colonial masters with African foreigners. To remove or reduce the competition, proponents of Operation Dudula demand the removal of foreigners. The implicit message is that 'these are our employers'. Therefore, it can be argued that Operation Dudula's mission is not about the economic emancipation of black South Africans. Ironically, it is about replacing foreign African workers with local black South Africans in white-owned businesses. Fanon says this is because 'the national economy of the period of independence is not set on a new footing' (Fanon 1963:151). It is still much the same in terms of ownership. Fanon argues that as the black middle class demands the power held hitherto by the foreigner, the masses on their lower level present the same demands but are confined to replacing the foreign Africans in employment. This assertion explains the selective targeting of Operation Dudula in particular and xenophobia in general.

4 Conclusion

There are considerable difficulties in simplifying a complex issue such as xenophobia. It is not to say that these difficulties are insurmountable but that we should be aware of them to come up with lasting solutions to the problem.

In the broader context of the book, *The Diasporan: South African Perspectives*, this chapter has sought to understand and contribute to the growing corpus of literature on Diasporan experiences in South Africa. Drawing on the post-colonial tools developed by Fanon and Harris' three hypotheses, the chapter has demonstrated that xenophobia and the experiences of international migrants are shaped by both the history of colonisation and the processes and form of transition. As Fanon has shown, Operation Dudula, which poses a significant threat to many migrants in South Africa, is not unique to South Africa. Fanon (1963) predicted that such a situation would likely arise in all newly independent African countries. He blames this phenomenon on the fact that the national middle class, which took over power at the end of the colonial regimes, is underdeveloped. He provocatively argues that this national middle class is intellectually lazy and has no clue how to grow the economy, which would create opportunities for the frustrated masses. Drawing on Harris' hypotheses, this chapter has illustrated that the frustrated masses and some politicians blame the lack of opportunities on African foreigners as scapegoats. It is a combination of economic failures and the frustration of the high hopes at the end of Apartheid that drives Operation Dudula and *#PutSouthAfricansFirst*. It is important to acknowledge that Operation Dudula and #PutSouthansFirst may indeed have legitimate concerns regarding unemployment and crime in South Africa. It is argued that the causes of the limited employment and high crime rate are not to be situated in the presence of African foreigners in the country. Removing the foreigners per the demands of the agitators without fundamental changes to the economic policy will not solve the problems of unemployment and crime.

In general, it seems that South Africa has genuine unemployment problems and a high crime rate and that these are arguably significant drivers of xenophobia targeted at African migrants. The contribution of this chapter has been to illustrate that such problems are not peculiar to South Africa but are a common phenomenon in most post-colonial countries in Africa. While host nationals' responses might differ in form and character, they all seem to border on xenophobia. The absence of the voices of the migrants limited this study. Their understanding could have enriched the analysis by providing an alternative angle.

Notwithstanding the relatively limited perspectives presented here, this chapter offers valuable insights into xenophobia in two ways. First, it uses powerful theoretical lenses to illuminate the xenophobia black box. Because of that, it introduces a novel understanding of xenophobia from a post-colonial

perspective. Secondly, the chapter contributes to international policy on migration and xenophobia in South Africa and other post-colonial states.

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