RESEARCH ARTICLE	Open Access

XENOPHOBIA IN AFRICA: ORIGINS AND ITS MANIFESTATIONS

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Abstract

Xenophobia, a persistent issue in Africa, is defined by dread, hatred, or discrimination against foreigners. This study aims to comprehend the fundamental causes, social impact, and potential solutions of xenophobia in Africa by examining its origins and manifestations. It analyzes the numerous manifestations of xenophobia, evaluates its impact on individuals, communities, and societies, and investigates the historical, social, economic, and political factors contributing to it. This study employs a historical research design, with the Xenowatch interface as the primary data source. It is founded on social identity theory. The dashboard comprehensively overviews the frequency, location, and impact of xenophobic incidents in South Africa. The study analyzes this data to identify trends, patterns, and correlations, providing a comprehensive overview of the country's xenophobia manifestations. The study's results indicate a concerning prevalence of xenophobic discrimination in South Africa, with a concentration of incidents in urban centers. The data emphasizes the influence of historical legacies, economic disparities, political manipulation, and social factors on the development of xenophobic sentiments. The study also emphasizes the catastrophic repercussions of xenophobia, which include economic harm, displacement, loss of life, and violence. This investigation concludes that a comprehensive approach, which includes legal reforms, economic empowerment, education, community engagement, and regional cooperation, is necessary to combat African xenophobia. The complexity of the issue demands multifaceted solutions. Policymakers, practitioners, and civil society organizations are crucial in creating effective strategies to address this issue and promote more inclusive and harmonious societies by comprehending xenophobia's underlying causes and manifestations. Their involvement is vital in implementing these strategies and fostering a more inclusive society.

Keywords Discrimination, Violence, Xenophobia, Africa, Social Identity Theory.

INTRODUCTION

Xenophobia, derived from the Greek words xenos and Phobos, denotes apprehension or animosity towards those who are unfamiliar or alien (Maseng, 2024). Xenophobia, as defined by Sundstrom (2013), is a profound repulsion, fear, or animosity towards individuals from other countries, frequently accompanied by suspicion and mistrust based on cultural and ethnolinguistic

characteristics that distinguish them as different from oneself (Tummala-Narra, 2020). Xenophobia, as defined by Mubangizi (2021), refers to an unwarranted fear or distrust of those who are unfamiliar or alien. Within the South African context, this is evident through opposing views, hostility, and prejudiced actions directed towards individuals who are not citizens. This is consistent with the more extensive definition of xenophobia provided by McCorkle & Rodriguez (2023) and emphasizes its occurrence in South Africa.

Lee (2019) builds upon Harris's (2002) definition of xenophobia, suggesting an expanded understanding that includes not only fear and aversion, but also physical assault or aggression directed towards foreigners. Xenophobic violence can be directed towards both foreign nationals and nationals who are viewed as foreign (Peucker & Fisher, 2022). Xenophobia, as defined by Kerr et al. (2019), is a broad concept that includes several unpleasant emotions, such as fear, jealousy, hatred, and distrust, as well as negative perceptions. These emotions and perceptions can lead to violent or discriminatory actions.

A recent study underscores the urgent need to understand and address Xenophobia, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. To achieve this, a multidisciplinary approach is necessary, considering the harmful effects of racism, nationalism, and violence associated with Xenophobia (Spencer, 2024). The pandemic has exacerbated discriminatory attitudes, leading to a rise in pervasive racism targeting specific populations, such as Asians in the United States (Wong-Padoongpatt et al., 2022). It is crucial to explore the relationship between Xenophobia and public health crises as well as societal attitudes, especially considering the current anti-Asian sentiments linked to COVID-19 (Kim & Shah, 2020).is particularly highlighted by the present anti-Asian sentiments linked to COVID-19 (Kim & Shah, 2020). Xenophobia and racism both perceive individuals who are different as a source of danger, resulting in prejudiced treatment and the act of excluding them based on their inherent characteristics, such as race or nationality (Tarisayi et al., 2020). Both factors can lead to the implementation of policies such as stricter immigration controls. However, xenophobia is characterized by a fear of foreigners rather than a conviction in racial superiority (Yakushko, 2008).

The correlation between xenophobia and racism underscores how these belief systems can mutually strengthen one another, frequently leading to prejudiced behaviours and policies of exclusion (Marumo et al., 2019). Racism is the belief in the superiority of one race over another, while xenophobia is the dread and distrust of foreigners, which is always based on apprehension (Diaz, 2023). It is essential to acknowledge that xenophobic violence can be directed towards both foreign nationals and persons who are mistakenly seen as foreign, highlighting the widespread prevalence of xenophobic sentiments (Mubangizi, 2021).

When discussing xenophobia, it is crucial to examine its ramifications in specific settings, such as South Africa, where xenophobic sentiments have resulted in violent assaults and prejudice against those who are not citizens of the country (Mubangizi, 2021). The media's representation of xenophobia has a significant impact on how the public perceives and forms national identities, hence reinforcing and sustaining xenophobic societal attitudes (Freier & Pérez, 2021). Analyzing xenophobia in the context of internal displacement in Africa offers valuable insights into the experiences and difficulties faced by vulnerable groups (Tsheola et al., 2015).

Xenophobia is a complex phenomenon that involves the rejection, exclusion, and vilification of individuals who are viewed as outsiders or

foreigners. It impacts the identities of communities, societies, or nations (Adeola, 2020). The creation of a cumulative scale to assess fear-driven xenophobia highlights the intricate character of this notion, encompassing several adverse emotions linked to xenophobic attitudes (Sadiq & Nawaz, 2022).

Xenophobia and racism are closely related but separate ideas. Xenophobia primarily focuses on discriminating against individuals from different countries. In contrast, racism is based on ingrained biases and societal perceptions of physical distinctions, highlighting the belief in the dominance of one race over another. Both phenomena perceive the outsider or the other as a menace, resulting in prejudice and marginalization based on inherent traits such as race or nationality. This form of discrimination frequently leads to implementing laws aimed at increasing restrictions on immigration (Mubangizi, 2021).

Xenophobic incidents have been recorded in several African countries, including Egypt, Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria, and South Africa. In Egypt, individuals seeking asylum, refugees, and migrants from countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have been subjected to acts of xenophobic and racist violence (Tella, 2016). Somali migrants in Kenya have encountered prejudice because of associations with piracy and terrorism in their place of origin (Tella, 2016). Xenophobia was observed in Ghana during the Aliens Compliance Order era, resulting in the expulsion of individuals primarily from Burkina Faso and Nigeria (Tella, 2016). In South Africa, foreign nationals have experienced attacks, displacement, and violence because of perceived risks to local employment and economic well-being (Tella, 2016).

Xenophobia has diverse characteristics, encompassing individual, state, and international dimensions. To effectively combat xenophobia, it is necessary to thoroughly comprehend its origins and its consequences on various aspects of society (Tella, 2016). The historical and political causes, including colonial legacies and economic issues, persistently contribute to the growth of xenophobic sentiments in South Africa and other regions (Tella, 2016; Mthombeni, 2022).

In the latter part of the 20th century, socioeconomic problems such as colonialism and apartheid in Africa necessitated a comprehensive approach to tackle them. Nevertheless, the ongoing increase in xenophobic assaults within African nations is resulting in divisive consequences, generating discontent among governments regarding the management of the situation. Several African nations emphasize their previous collaborative actions against apartheid in South Africa and the subsequent significant commitment of their workforce to the country's development in diverse industries. However, immigrants in South Africa currently encounter brutal and cruel treatment, which has led to a significant increase in xenophobic violence. This violence has resulted in several problems, such as refugee crises, gang-related crimes, and abuses of human rights (Michalopoulos & Papaioannou, 2016; Alexander, 2010).

The escalation of xenophobic violence in Africa presents both ethical dilemmas and intersects with firmly rooted religious ideals inside African civilizations. Africa's religious and spiritual aspects influence shaping interpersonal connections and fostering ethical superiority, reverence for human worth, and the sanctity of life. Nevertheless, the increase in xenophobic violence in Africa poses ethical and religious quandaries that have significant and long-lasting effects. There is a noticeable absence of literature examining the ethical and theological consequences of xenophobia in African nations, a significant problem that must be addressed (Yingi, 2023).

Xenophobic violence has wide-ranging social,

economic, and political implications that transcend beyond local disputes. Scholars express worries about the deterioration of social values in afflicted communities, with some considering it a breach of human rights. An in-depth comprehension of the fundamental causes and consequences of xenophobic violence in Africa is crucial due to the intricate relationship between xenophobia, ethics, religion, and societal values.

Statement of the Problem

While xenophobia is a global phenomenon, its impact in Africa is particularly acute due to the continent's complex history of colonialism, ethnic diversity, and persistent socioeconomic challenges (Neocosmos, 2022).

The root causes of xenophobia in Africa are diverse and interconnected. Historical legacies, such as colonialism and apartheid, have created lasting divisions and inequalities that continue to fuel xenophobic sentiments (Mamdani, 2020). Economic disparities, resource scarcity, and competition for jobs exacerbate tensions between locals and immigrants, often leading to scapegoating and violence (Crush & Ramachandran, 2022). Political instability, weak governance, and the manipulation of ethnic identities for political gain further contribute to the problem, creating an environment where xenophobia can thrive (Cheeseman, 2023).

The consequences of xenophobia are far-reaching and detrimental. It leads to violence, displacement, and loss of life, creating humanitarian crises and exacerbating regional instability (UNHCR, 2024). Xenophobia also undermines social cohesion, trust, and cooperation within communities, hindering efforts to build inclusive and harmonious societies (Monson & Abdul-Raheem, 2021). Economically, it disrupts trade, investment, and development, impeding progress and prosperity in affected regions (World Bank, 2023). This paper will examine xenophobia in Africa and its origin and manifestations.

Aim of the Study

This study aims to investigate the origins and manifestations of xenophobia in Africa, focusing on understanding its root causes, social impact, and potential solutions.

Objectives of the Study

I.   To examine the historical, social, economic, and political factors contributing to African xenophobia.

II.   To analyze the various manifestations of xenophobia, including discrimination, violence, and social exclusion.

III.   To assess the impact of xenophobia on individuals, communities, and societies in Africa.

Significance of the Study

This study is crucial because it is imperative to tackle xenophobia in Africa urgently. To effectively address xenophobia, policymakers, practitioners, and civil society organizations must comprehend this phenomenon's underlying causes and visible expressions. The study's results will aid in creating evidence-based policies and actions that support social unity, safeguard human rights, and cultivate inclusive communities.

Moreover, this research will contribute to the scholarly discussion on xenophobia in Africa, addressing a significant deficiency in the current body of literature. This study will offer unique perspectives on the intricate dynamics of xenophobia, its influence on different facets of society, and viable strategies for intervention. The study results will be distributed through scholarly journals, conferences, and workshops, reaching a broad audience of researchers, policymakers, and professionals.

This study seeks to elucidate the roots and expressions of xenophobia in Africa, thoroughly comprehending this urgent matter. The study's

results will be crucial in formulating efficient approaches to address xenophobia, enhance social integration, and cultivate inclusive African societies. The significance of the study's results cannot be overstated in the fight against xenophobia.

Conceptual Review

XENOPHOBIA

Xenophobia, which refers to the intense dread or hatred towards individuals from other countries or unfamiliar individuals, is a complex and profoundly ingrained issue that has a lengthy historical background and presents itself in many ways throughout the African continent.

Xenophobia in Africa is deeply rooted in the pre-colonial period, when tensions and conflicts between diverse groups were driven by resource rivalry and territorial disputes (Adepoju, 2008). However, the surge in xenophobic sentiments can largely be attributed to the colonial period, when European nations established arbitrary boundaries and fragmented ethnic communities, exacerbating pre-existing conflicts and generating new ones (Mamdani, 2020). The enduring impact of colonialism, characterized by its emphasis on racial stratification and marginalization, continues to shape present-day perceptions of 'foreigners' in many African nations (Monson & Abdul-Raheem, 2021).

During the post-colonial era, nationalist movements emerged and led to the establishment of sovereign African nations. Although these advancements aimed to promote cohesion and camaraderie among Africans, they also gave rise to novel types of discrimination rooted in national identity and citizenship (Neocosmos, 2022). The notion of the "nation-state" frequently became linked to the prevailing ethnic group, while minority groups and immigrants were marginalized and regarded with distrust

(Cheeseman, 2023).

Xenophobia in contemporary Africa takes on various forms, including subtle acts of discrimination and prejudice, as well as overt acts of violence and hate speech. Xenophobic attitudes are often linked to economic concerns like job and resource competition (Crush & Ramachandran, 2022). Immigrants and refugees are frequently scapegoated for economic hardships, leading to social tensions and conflict (UNHCR, 2024).

Political circumstances also play a significant role in fueling xenophobia. Leaders may exploit xenophobic sentiments during political instability or economic crises to gain support and divert attention from their failings (Cheeseman, 2023). This can lead to the implementation of discriminatory policies and practices that worsen the social exclusion and stigmatization of immigrant populations (Monson & Abdul-Raheem, 2021).

The emergence of social media and digital platforms has also intensified xenophobic rhetoric and hate speech, creating a favorable environment for the spread of false information and stereotypes (Neocosmos, 2022). Online platforms provide a means for people and groups to freely communicate xenophobic beliefs without facing consequences, which exacerbates social divisions and hostility (Crush & Ramachandran, 2022). Xenophobia in Africa is an intricate and diverse problem that has its origins in the past and is currently evident in many ways.

Racism

Racism in Africa is intricately linked to its colonial past and persists in several manifestations in the present day. The historical context is influenced by the European colonization of the continent, which established racial hierarchies and practiced discrimination against Indigenous inhabitants.

In the colonial era, European powers implemented

systems of racial segregation and exploitation, frequently grounded in pseudoscientific notions of racial supremacy (Mamdani, 2020). Systems like apartheid in South Africa marginalized Africans, seeing them as inferior citizens, depriving them of fundamental rights, and exploiting their labor and resources (Crush & Ramachandran, 2022). Colonialism's enduring impact is evident in numerous African nations, where it continues to influence social, economic, and political frameworks, hence sustaining disparities and fueling persistent racial conflicts (Neocosmos, 2022).

Despite the cessation of official colonial control, racism continues to endure in Africa in diverse manifestations. Discrimination in jobs, housing, education, and healthcare is evident, resulting in restricted prospects for underprivileged populations (Monson & Abdul-Raheem, 2021). Xenophobia, which refers to the intense dread or hostility towards individuals from other countries, is frequently based on ethnic and racial biases. This phenomenon has resulted in instances of violence, forced migration, and societal instability throughout several African nations (UNHCR, 2024). Afrophobia, defined as the phobia or animosity towards individuals of African origin, is evident in the form of bias and prejudice, both within and beyond the African continent (Neocosmos, 2022).

The emergence of social media and internet platforms has created fresh channels for the dissemination of racist beliefs and hate speech, intensifying existing conflicts and inciting acts of violence (Monson & Abdul-Raheem, 2021). Furthermore, the presence of institutional racism deeply ingrained within institutions and cultural standards persistently hinders specific populations, hence perpetuating cycles of poverty and marginalization (Cheeseman, 2023).

Colonialism

Africa has been profoundly affected by colonialism, both in the past and in the present. The colonial era, marked by the colonization of Africa by European powers from the 15th century onwards, has had long-lasting effects on the continent's institutional and economic progress, which persist to this day. Acemoğlu et al. (2004) and Maseland (2017). The colonial state, founded as an external institution distinct from local society, enforced its governing systems, frequently ignoring native customs and traditions, resulting in a feeling of illegitimacy and detachment (Walle, 2009).

Africa's institutional frameworks and economic systems bear the lasting impact of colonial history. Scholars have emphasized the influence of colonial powers' partitioning of Africa on present-day conflict and development patterns (Besley & Reynal-Querol, 2014; Michalopoulos & Papaioannou, 2016). The utilization of Africa's abundant natural resources to fulfil Europe's industrial requirements during the colonial period solidified existing economic inequalities and power imbalances that continue to endure in the present era (Kalu, 2020).

Colonialism's influence in Africa goes beyond the economic and political spheres, affecting societal ideals, cultural identities, and personal interactions. The colonial endeavor reconfigured identities predicated on ethnicity, race, and nationalism, establishing the foundation for persistent conflicts around authority and portrayal in the post-colonial epoch (Palmary, 2006). The persistent dominance of colonial power continues to impact current dynamics in African cultures, molding citizenship, human sexuality, and political governance (Stephens & Boonzaier, 2020).

Scholars have emphasized the enduring presence of colonial-era structures and practices in present-day Africa when studying colonialism's institutional legacies. The legacy of colonialism has resulted in profound disparities, social

disintegration, and difficulties in governance that persistently impede the continent's progress (Olaiya, 2020; Fenske, 2009). Postcolonial theory highlights the direct influence of colonial history on present-day interactions between Europe and Africa, emphasizing the importance of addressing historical injustices and power imbalances (Koeijer et al., 2015). Analyzing colonialism's historical backdrop and lasting impacts is imperative to comprehending Africa's present socio-economic environment and government systems.

Apartheid

The term "apartheid," originating from the Afrikaans word for "separateness," is primarily linked to the institutionalized system of racial segregation and discrimination implemented by the white minority government in South Africa from 1948 to 1994. This system was distinguished by the inflexible segregation of racial groups, enforced by legislation and policies aimed at upholding white dominance and exerting control over political, economic, and social assets (Worden, 2004).

Nevertheless, the notion of apartheid and its expressions transcend the historical circumstances of South Africa. In Africa's history, both during and after colonial times, several types of segregation, discrimination, and exclusion have been witnessed, frequently rooted in factors such as race, ethnicity, nationality, or socioeconomic class. Although not officially classified as apartheid, these manifestations exhibit comparable traits in their effect on underprivileged communities and the persistence of inequity (Mamdani, 2020).

Throughout history, colonial powers in Africa enforced policies that enforced segregation and discrimination against native populations, frequently showing preference towards European settlers and establishing racial hierarchies (Ranger, 1983). Following the process of decolonization, numerous African nations still faced the enduring effects of colonialism, such as social disparities, ethnic conflicts, and prejudiced policies.

Xenophobia and Afrophobia in present-day Africa exemplify the ongoing manifestation of the ideology of apartheid. Instances of xenophobic violence, specifically directed at individuals from other countries, have occurred in several nations, such as South Africa, Nigeria, and Kenya. These incidents are primarily fueled by economic rivalry, social unrest, and political exploitation (Crush & Ramachandran, 2022). Afrophobia, which refers to the fear or hatred of Africans or African culture, continues to exist both within and outside the continent. This results in the unfair treatment and exclusion of African migrants and communities, contributing to discrimination and marginalization (Monson & Abdul-Raheem, 2021).

Moreover, the enduring effects of apartheid persistently influence the social and economic environments in numerous African nations. The geographical segregation implemented during apartheid, which involved the division of residential areas, educational institutions, and economic possibilities, still has enduring consequences on inequality and social mobility (Wesson, 2011). The enduring consequences of systemic discrimination are apparent in the unequal allocation of resources, wealth, and opportunities in South Africa, even after the end of apartheid (Neocosmos, 2022).

Although the term "apartheid" is linked to the historical system of racial segregation in South Africa, its fundamental principles and expressions can be identified in diverse ways across Africa's past and contemporary times. The enduring significance of comprehending and tackling the notion of apartheid in its broader African context is underscored by the legacies of colonialism, persistent xenophobia, Afrophobia, and the persistence of social and economic inequities.

A Review of Xenophobia in Africa

African countries often have shared historical, cultural, and traditional connections beyond national boundaries (Monson & Abdul-Raheem, 2021). Nevertheless, xenophobic attacks hinder these linkages and hinder social cohesiveness, peaceful cohabitation, and effective governance, amounting to a violation of human rights (Mlambo, 2019). Despite being commonly perceived as a contemporary occurrence, xenophobia in Africa has deep historical origins.

The origins of animosity towards immigrants and biased immigration policies in South Africa may be traced back to the early 20th century, specifically directed towards groups such as the Indian community (Jooste, 2012; Ramaswamy, 2010). These policies encompassed segregation laws such as the Urban Areas Act of 1923, which implemented residential segregation based on national origin, race, class, and gender. Nevertheless, instances of xenophobic assaults in Africa existed prior to the implementation of these initial measures, as evidenced by reports of Afrikaners pillaging British-owned stores in 1914 (Dick, 2005). This indicates that dissatisfaction regarding the allocation of resources and societal disparities has consistently played a role in fostering xenophobic inclinations.

The current manifestation of xenophobia in South Africa is frequently associated with the period following the end of apartheid, as the dismantling of apartheid and the liberalization of borders resulted in a surge in migration (McConnell, 2015). The unmet expectations of democracy, such as elevated joblessness and limited resources, have intensified anti-migrant attitudes, with foreigners frequently being blamed for these difficulties (Arndt, 2018). The instances of violence in 2008 and 2015, which led to the loss of lives and forced migration of foreigners, serve as clear examples of this pattern (Everatt, 2011).

Xenophobia in Africa is influenced by several elements, such as cultural aspects associated with identity and nationality, the frequency of interactions with unfamiliar individuals, and material and economic considerations, including job prospects and resource availability (Coetzee, 2012; Klotz, 2016; Pillay, 2017). The South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) posits that the crisis is a result of government policy failures that have worsened lawlessness, poverty, and unmet expectations, leading to violence (Pringle, 1973).

The enduring impact of apartheid continues to influence the matter. The rigid social hierarchies and enforcement of personal identity during the apartheid era have only been chiefly transferred to foreigners in the period following apartheid (Hlatshwayo, 2011; Mabera, 2017). Xenophobia serves to reaffirm one's sense of belonging and to show dissatisfaction with the unfulfilled pledges of democracy (Harris, 2002).

The reaction of other African nations to xenophobic acts occurring within the continent, namely in South Africa, has raised concerns. Frequently, adjacent nations assume a position of hesitancy and passivity, anticipating the national government to address the matter (Ojedokun, 2015). The absence of regional collaboration and unity underscores a notable obstacle in tackling xenophobia throughout Africa.

Theoretical Framework

Social Identity Theory (SIT)

Social Identity Theory (SIT), developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner throughout the 1970s and 1980s, is a well-known psychological paradigm that helps us comprehend intergroup relations and the development of social identities. SIT proposes that individuals classify themselves and others into social groups based on common attributes, such as nationality, ethnicity, or religion. These social identities enhance one's self-esteem and foster a

feeling of inclusion.

Within the framework of xenophobia, SIT proposes that individuals may exhibit a preference for their social group (such as their fellow citizens) and engage in discriminatory behavior toward other social groups (such as immigrants) to boost their self-esteem and strengthen their sense of social identity. This can be observed as expressing unfavorable attitudes, preconceived notions, and prejudiced actions directed against individuals from other countries.

This paper alludes to SIT when examining the influence of identity and belonging on xenophobia. The study highlights the ongoing impact of apartheid in South Africa, specifically its focus on racial classification and separation, which still influences people's sense of identity and belonging. This influence may also contribute to developing xenophobic sentiments (Hlatshwayo, 2011). This paper also emphasizes the connection between xenophobia and the need to reinforce national identity in times of crisis, consistent with SIT's focus on the significance of social identity for individuals' self-concept (Klotz, 2016; Pillay, 2017).

Additionally, other researchers have utilized the Social Identity Theory (SIT) to gain insights into xenophobia in Africa. Tsheola, Ramoroka, and Muzondi (2015) conducted a study investigating the correlation between xenophobic societal sentiments in South Africa and the formation of a "new" South Africanism, which defines national identity in contrast to immigrants. Adeola (2020) investigated the effects of xenophobia on the identities of groups and cultures, resulting in the isolation and marginalization of individuals viewed as outsiders.

The Social Identity Theory offers a significant framework for comprehending the psychological and social variables contributing to African xenophobia. By acknowledging the influence of social identity on attitudes and behaviors towards foreigners, academics and policymakers can devise more efficient measures to tackle and alleviate xenophobia.

Empirical Review

Xenophobia in African nations is evident through multiple channels, such as political discourse, denialism, the lingering effects of colonialism, and economic challenges. Political leaders and government officials in nations such as South Africa, Nigeria, Libya, and Kenya have exacerbated tensions between residents and immigrant nationals by perpetuating xenophobia through hypocritical comments and denying its existence. Mavhungu, Abel, and Mafukata. 2021. Keatlegile, M., Mabena. (2021). The tumultuous colonial past of Africa has resulted in the militarization of society, resulting in the marginalization of those who are seen as 'different' or 'other,' and the occurrence of xenophobic violence, which has impeded attempts towards peace and development throughout the continent. Adeoye, O., Akinola. (2018), Ebenezer, et al., (2018). Economic crises, such as the oil price crash in Nigeria and apartheid in South Africa, have exacerbated xenophobic views. This has had a negative influence on political and economic development goals and has weakened pan-African connections. Oladotun et al. (2019).

In his study, Akinola (2023) investigated the media's contribution to increasing xenophobia in West Africa. He concluded that although the media does have a role, the underlying causes are primarily attributed to inadequate governance, political manipulation, and the exclusion of West African residents from the ECOWAS integration process. This is consistent with the views of other researchers, such as Tella (2017) and Mthombeni (2022), who highlight the importance of political and social variables in promoting xenophobic attitudes. Akinola's research has a unique focus on

the West African region and the influence of media. This regional viewpoint adds to the broader analysis of xenophobia in Africa.

Akinola's research on xenophobia in Africa has a lacuna in that it does not extensively investigate historical and cultural issues. The study acknowledges the influence of colonialism and historical legacies on xenophobia but does not thoroughly explore how these variables link with current political and economic challenges (Neocosmos, 2022). Furthermore, the study would be enhanced by a more detailed investigation of the media's influence, specifically investigating how various media platforms and narratives contribute to developing xenophobic attitudes and actions (Banda, 2021).

In addition, Akinola's research concentrates on the ECOWAS region, resulting in a lack of comprehension of the occurrences and factors contributing to xenophobia in other regions of Africa. Examining xenophobic patterns and their underlying reasons in many places could provide valuable insights into this intricate subject, enhancing our overall comprehension. The dynamics of xenophobia in North Africa, characterized by its distinct political and socioeconomic environment, may exhibit notable variations compared to those observed in Southern Africa (Kollapan, 2020).

Akinola's research offers valuable insights into the media's contribution to the escalation of xenophobia in West Africa and identifies prospective areas for future research. To achieve a more comprehensive knowledge of xenophobia in Africa, it is necessary to delve deeper into historical and cultural causes, conduct a more nuanced examination of media influence, and adopt a comparative approach encompassing many locations across the continent.

Examining the historical, social, economic, and political factors contributing to African xenophobia

Social variables are essential in influencing xenophobic attitudes and behaviors in Africa. The use of political discourse by elites and government officials has traditionally contributed to the emergence of xenophobic feelings among local populations, as evidenced in several African countries (Adepoju, 2021). Manipulating xenophobia for political advantage frequently obstructs attempts to tackle the underlying roots of the problem and promotes an atmosphere of intolerance.

Education has been unexpectedly recognized as an element that contributes to xenophobia in some situations. A study conducted in Botswana discovered that those who had completed primary and secondary education were more prone to displaying xenophobic sentiments than those who had completed tertiary education (Mberu & Bernard, 2023). This discovery implies that educational interventions focused on levels of education may be required to tackle xenophobic prejudices.

Xenophobia in Africa has been associated with globalization and economic inequality. Globalization has resulted in interconnection and economic opportunity, although it has primarily favoured developed economies (Monson & Abdul-Raheem, 2021). African migrants frequently encounter animosity and assaults within the continent because they are viewed as rivals for limited resources and opportunities, therefore establishing a challenging environment (Neocosmos, 2022).

Xenophobia in Africa is significantly influenced by social stratification, which has its origins in historical events and colonial influences. Postcolonial theory in South Africa exposes the connection between anti-immigrant emotions, which are frequently entangled with racial and ethnic biases, and the deadly consequences

experienced by foreign nationals (Crush & Ramachandran, 2022). This highlights the significance of comprehending the intricate interaction of social elements in influencing xenophobic attitudes and behaviors.

Sempijja (2022) asserts a comparative examination of xenophobia in urban environments, specifically examining the 1972 expulsion of Ugandan Asians and the xenophobic incidents that occurred in South Africa between 2008 and 2019. The analysis demonstrates that although issues such as income disparity, inter-group tensions, and competition for resources played a role, the underlying cause in both cases was a profound and long-standing desire for social justice rooted in historical socio-economic grievances. The study utilized a qualitative approach, analyzing case studies and current literature to get insight into the intricacies of these occurrences. Sempijja contends that xenophobia not only fails to address social injustice but also worsens it by generating additional victims and diverting attention away from the government's failure to address poverty, inequality, and restricted economic possibilities.

Sempijja's research offers exciting perspectives on the social justice aspects of xenophobia. However, it concentrates on two cases in Uganda and South Africa, which restricts its applicability to the broader African setting. Moreover, although it recognizes the significance of past resentments, it might further explore how they manifest as present-day acts of violence. Moreover, doing a more thorough investigation into the involvement of political elites in promoting and capitalizing on xenophobia for their interests could enhance the analysis.

Although there are limits, Sempijja's findings are consistent with the more comprehensive academic discussion on how socio-economic conditions and historical grievances contribute to the emergence of xenophobia (Adepoju, 2021; Tella, 2017;

Mthombeni, 2022). The study's focus on community dialogue and inter-community linkages as viable solutions aligns with prior literature highlighting the significance of grassroots actions in addressing social issues (Crush & Ramachandran, 2022).

Sempijja's research enhances our comprehension of the intricate dynamics of xenophobia, specifically in metropolitan areas and to historical grievances. Nevertheless, the narrow scope of its examination and the incomplete investigation of facets create an opportunity for additional research to offer a more all-encompassing understanding of xenophobia throughout the African continent.

Manifestations Of Xenophobia

Over time, xenophobia evolved because of a complicated interaction between innate and environmental factors. While some researchers speculate that xenophobia may have a genetic component, others highlight the critical role that environmental factors play, such as exposure to infectious disease threats and political rhetoric that feeds mistrust and fear of outsiders (Fincher & Thornhill, 2021; Abrams & Hogg, 2022). Xenophobic sentiments have been more prevalent in the wake of international tragedies such as the September 11 attacks and the COVID-19 epidemic, primarily directed towards Muslim and Asian American communities (Perry et al., 2020; Lee & Zhou, 2022).

Islamophobia, as a unique form of bias, has added a new layer to the complex landscape of exclusion. Unlike xenophobia, which is often used as a general term, Islamophobia targets explicitly individuals based on their religious beliefs rather than their nationality or ethnicity (Kumar, 2023). This distinction underscores the unique evolution of xenophobia and underscores the need for targeted interventions to address its various manifestations.

Because xenophobia is dynamic and ever-changing, it requires constant study and action to identify its underlying roots and lessen its negative consequences on society. By examining biological, psychological, social, and political interactions, researchers can create more potent plans to counteract xenophobia and advance inclusivity (Stephan et al., 2023).

Kaplan's 2020 study, titled "The Rise in Anti-Asian Racism and Xenophobia in the Time of COVID-19," examined the increasing levels of anti-Asian racism and xenophobia in the United States amid the epidemic. He found that the key drivers of this growth are socioeconomic reasons, such as economic uncertainty and competition, and psychological variables, like fear and scapegoating. In addition, Kaplan emphasized the significance of misinformation and detrimental speech disseminated via social media and political forums in exacerbating these prejudiced beliefs. The researcher's approach consisted of thoroughly examining the literature and analyzing pre-existing data regarding past and present societal reactions to epidemics. This includes investigating sociocultural patterns, psychological processes, and the influence of political communication on public attitudes and actions. Kaplan asserts that effectively addressing COVID-19-related racism and xenophobia necessitates a comprehensive strategy that encompasses legislative actions and grassroots initiatives aimed at tackling hate crimes, discrimination, and misinformation.

Although Kaplan's research provides vital insights into the situation in the United States, it fails to address the worldwide consequences of xenophobia associated with COVID-19. This study has the potential to be extended to investigate the impact of comparable factors (such as socioeconomic disparities, political discourse, and dissemination of false information) on xenophobic beliefs and behaviours in Africa. Moreover,

Kaplan's emphasis on Asian Americans might be expanded to investigate the effects of the epidemic on xenophobia against other oppressed populations in various geographical areas.

Kaplan's research supports the conclusions of other academic studies that highlight the influence of social and political elements in fueling xenophobia (Abrams & Hogg, 2022; Perry et al., 2020). His focus on the influence of false information is also consistent with studies on the correlation between media narratives and prejudiced beliefs (Lee & Zhou, 2022). Additional research is required to investigate the distinct historical and cultural factors that influence xenophobia in Africa, utilizing the studies conducted by researchers such as Adepoju (2021) and Monson and Abdul-Raheem (2021).

Areas for future investigation involve conducting comparative analyses between the United States and African nations to elucidate commonalities and disparities in the factors and expressions of xenophobia associated with COVID-19. An analysis of the impact of the pandemic on xenophobia against certain groups in Africa, such as refugees, internal migrants, and ethnic minorities, could offer a more detailed comprehension of the issue. Furthermore, analyzing the influence of both conventional and digital media on the development of xenophobic narratives in Africa could provide valuable insights for devising effective measures to counteract such messages.

The complicated subject of xenophobia in Africa is influenced by an intricate combination of historical, social, economic, and political variables, which requires nuanced comprehension. The continent has been deeply affected by the lasting impacts of colonialism and apartheid, which have influenced how people perceive their own identity, sense of belonging, and their views towards those who are different from them (Mamdani, 2020). The historical injustices have resulted in persistent

inequalities and divisions, which continue to contribute to xenophobic sentiments. This is especially evident in countries such as South Africa, where the transition to democracy has not entirely resolved the socioeconomic disparities that form the basis of xenophobic attitudes (Neocosmos, 2022).

Economic issues, such as limited resources and competition for employment opportunities, worsen xenophobic tensions. Within numerous African nations, the combination of restricted economic prospects and elevated rates of unemployment fosters an environment conducive to animosity and antagonism towards immigrants. These individuals are frequently viewed as rivals in the competition for limited resources (Crush & Ramachandran, 2022). This phenomenon is especially noticeable in metropolitan regions, where the arrival of migrants can put additional pressure on already scarce resources and infrastructure, resulting in social tensions and conflicts (Sempijja, 2022).

Political instability and inadequate governance significantly influence xenophobia. Political leaders in numerous African nations have manipulated xenophobic emotions to further their interests, employing divisive language to rally support and divert attention from their shortcomings (Cheeseman, 2023). The manipulation of ethnic and national identities can engender an atmosphere of apprehension and distrust, resulting in acts of violence and prejudice against marginalized communities and non-natives (Monson & Abdul-Raheem, 2021).

The media has a significant role in influencing public opinion and shaping the attitudes of foreigners, and its impact should not be ignored. Media sources have faced accusations of magnifying xenophobic narratives, perpetuating stereotypes, and fostering an atmosphere of fear and animosity (Banda, 2021). Nevertheless, the media can also have a beneficial impact in addressing xenophobia by advocating for intercultural communication, questioning preconceived notions, and emphasizing the valuable contributions made by immigrants to society.

Xenophobia in Africa encompasses a wide array of manifestations, spanning from subtle instances of prejudice to explicit acts of violence. Xenophobic violence in South Africa has led to a considerable number of fatalities, injuries, and forced migration of foreign nationals (Mthombeni, 2022). Xenophobia can be observed in other nations through instances of discrimination in employment, housing, and access to social services.

The Erosion of African Ethics Caused by Xenophobia and Its Implications for Humanity.

The social fabric of traditional African cultures was built upon a collective moral code that emphasized compassion, friendliness, and a genuine regard for others (Gyekye, 1997). The communal ethos, frequently upheld in traditional faiths and proverbs, placed immense importance on qualities such as respect, charity, and forgiveness while strongly disapproving of vices such as abuse, lying, and selfishness (Gelfand, 1999). Nevertheless, the increase in xenophobic violence throughout the continent contradicts these deeply valued principles, presenting significant consequences for the people of Africa.

The advent of modernity and its associated societal changes have undermined conventional moral frameworks, resulting in a conflict between traditional and contemporary ideals (Letseka, 2013). The collision has resulted in the gradual disappearance of the "live and let live" ethos previously prevalent in African communities, where collective welfare took precedence over personal interests (Bush, 2018). Xenophobia,

characterized by its inherent prejudice and aggression, has not only caused divisions within groups but also sparked retaliatory assaults and damaged diplomatic relations between states (Mkhize, 2019).

The xenophobic attacks in South Africa, for example, elicited robust responses from neighboring African nations. Zambia cancelled a friendly football match and experienced demonstrations against South African firms (Mkhize, 2019). Nigeria's reaction was notably harsh, as the government opted to disengage from the World Economic Forum on Africa and boycott South African goods and services (Durokifa & Ijeoma, 2017). These examples highlight the extensive repercussions of xenophobia, which go beyond isolated acts of violence and impact diplomatic relations and commercial operations.

Furthermore, xenophobia carries substantial economic consequences. The xenophobic attacks resulted in the damage and closure of enterprises held by foreigners, which in turn caused job losses and a rise in unemployment rates (UNHCR, 2024). The departure of foreign nationals concerned about their safety worsens the economic difficulties in the impacted regions.

Xenophobia constitutes not just a moral and economic crisis but also a crime against humanity. Crimes against humanity, as defined by international law, refer to extensive and organized acts of violence targeting civilian populations (Schabas, 2020). Xenophobic violence, which frequently targets marginalized populations such as migrants and refugees, aligns with this description, emphasizing the necessity for a unified global effort to tackle this urgent matter.

The destructive consequences of xenophobia on the African population necessitate immediate and collective efforts. Reaffirming the continent's ancient ideals of compassion and togetherness is crucial while also tackling the underlying factors that contribute to xenophobia, including economic injustice, political manipulation, and social isolation.

METHODOLOGY

The study utilized a historical research technique to investigate the occurrence of xenophobia in South Africa. This methodology involved thoroughly examining and interpreting data to establish objective information and make informed judgments about the studied subject (Berg & Lune, 2022). The primary data source utilized in this study was the Xenowatch dashboard, an internet-based platform that offers extensive information regarding xenophobic occurrences in South Africa. Xenowatch collects information from various sources, including media stories, academic papers, partner organizations, and public reports received through different methods like WhatsApp, phone calls, and emails (Xenowatch, 2023).

Xenowatch anonymizes the data it collects before publishing it. The data covers many features of xenophobic occurrences, such as the type of incident, information about the victims, the date of occurrence, and other essential characteristics. This information aims to provide early warning systems, assist in risk assessments, and aid in implementing evidence-based interventions to address xenophobic discrimination (Xenowatch, 2023).

Nevertheless, it is crucial to recognize the constraints of the Xenowatch data, namely the tendency to report less frequently and the presence of partial information. Xenophobic incidents frequently go unreported as victims and witnesses are typically deterred by the fear of retaliation and a lack of confidence in the authorities (Xenowatch, 2023). To address these problems, Xenowatch utilizes research assistants and engages with verification partners to guarantee comprehensive and precise data collecting (Xenowatch, 2023). Although there are certain limits, the data supplied

by Xenowatch provides valuable insights into the nature and scope of xenophobia in South Africa. This contributes to the creation of practical solutions to address this urgent issue.

RESULTS

Table 1.1 Xenophobic Discrimination Incidents in South Africa (1994-2024)

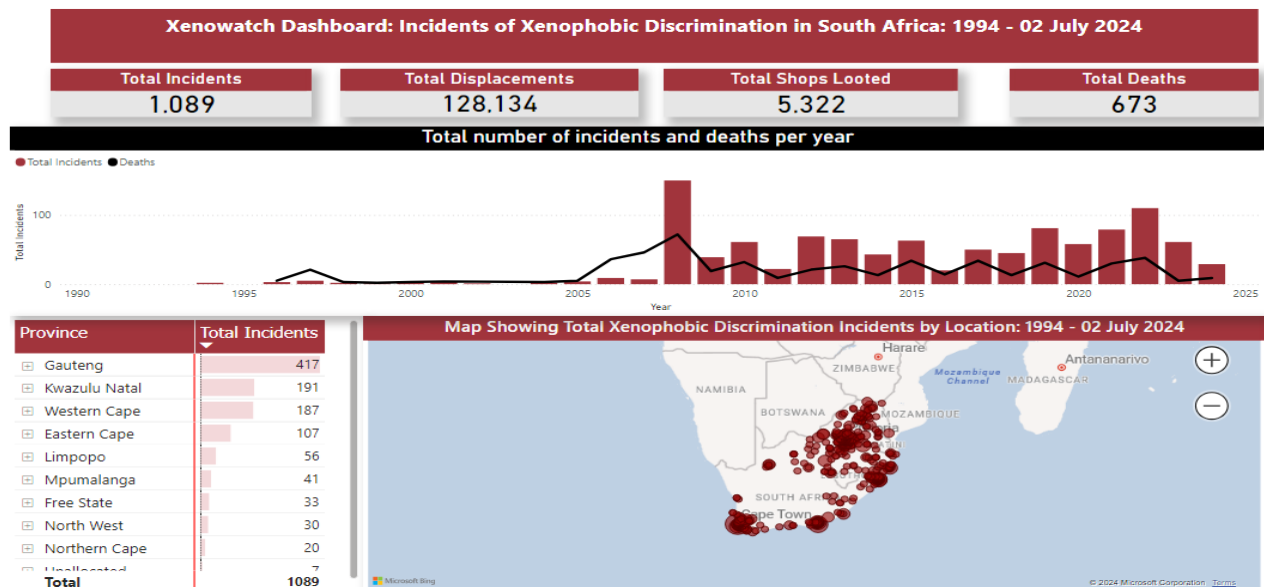| Province	Total Incidents	Frequency	Percentage
Gauteng	417	417	38.30%
Kwazulu Natal	191	191	17.50%
Western Cape	187	187	17.20%
Eastern Cape	107	107	9.80%
Limpopo	56	56	5.10%
Mpumalanga	41	41	3.80%
Free State	33	33	3.00%
Northwest	30	30	2.80%
Northern Cape	20	20	1.80%
Unallocated	0	0	0.00%
Total	1,089	1,089	100.00%

Fig. 1.

Source: http://www.xenowatch.ac.za

The Xenowatch dashboard, an exhaustive repository of data on xenophobic discrimination in South Africa that spans three decades, presents a stark and urgent image. The prevalence of xenophobia is undeniable, casting a lengthy and ominous shadow over the nation, as evidenced by the 1,089 recorded incidents since 1994. The consequences of these occurrences are nothing short of catastrophic, resulting in the displacement of a staggering 128,134 individuals from their residences, the looting of 5,322 shops, and the tragic loss of 673 lives. These figures expose the profound human suffering that xenophobia inflicts, which shatters families, disrupts communities, and extinguishes countless aspirations.

The data indicates a concerning pattern of fluctuating incidents and fatalities, which underscores the persistent and insidious nature of xenophobia in South Africa. Although some years may experience a decrease, the recurring surges serve as a chilling reminder that the underlying tensions remain unresolved and necessitate ongoing vigilance and intervention. The vulnerability of urban areas and regions with high levels of migration and economic activity to xenophobic outbreaks is further evidenced by the geographical distribution of these incidents, which is concentrated in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, and Western Cape provinces.

Although the Xenowatch dashboard offers a valuable perspective on the severity of the issue, it is imperative to recognize that the actual number of incidents likely exceeds the recorded figures due to underreporting. The true extent of this societal scourge is frequently obscured by fear, distrust, and systemic barriers that prevent victims and witnesses from coming forward. This sobering reality underscores the urgent need for exhaustive and precise data collection to understand the problem and develop effective solutions comprehensively. It is important to note that the Xenowatch dashboard, while comprehensive, may not capture all incidents due to these factors, and therefore, the actual numbers could be higher.

Table 1.2 The Human Cost of Xenophobia in South Africa: A Distribution of Incident Outcomes (1994-2024)

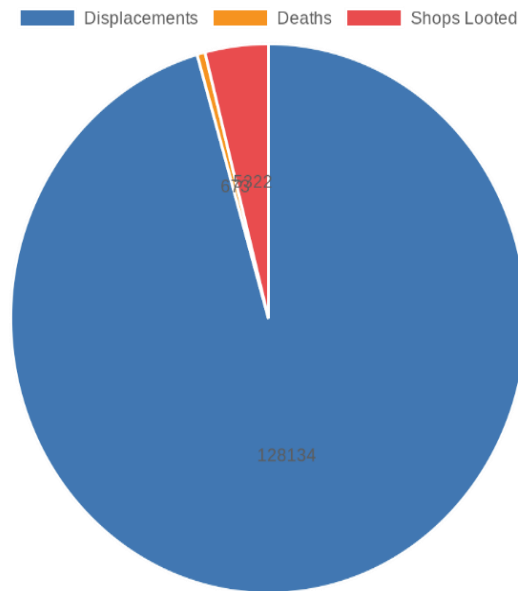| Parameter	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Displacements	128,134	98.70%
Shops Looted	5,322	4.10%
Deaths	673	0.50%

Fig. 1.2

From the above chart, the national economy and the lives of individuals are both profoundly affected by the catastrophic consequences of xenophobia in South Africa. The stark picture of a humanitarian crisis is painted by the staggering figure of 128,134 individuals displaced due to xenophobic violence, which has resulted in the uprooting of innumerable lives, the destruction of livelihoods, and the fragmentation of communities. Xenophobic prejudice's brutality and far-reaching consequences are further emphasized by the tragic loss of 673 lives, which has left an enduring impression on the nation's conscience.

The economic consequences of xenophobia are equally significant, in addition to the human toll.

The economic fabric of local communities has been severely impacted by the looting and destruction of 5,322 shops, with a particular emphasis on small businesses and informal businesses that frequently operate with inadequate resources and support. In addition to jeopardizing the livelihoods of numerous individuals, this devastation also undermines economic stability, thereby impeding the development of inclusive and prosperous communities. The urgent necessity for comprehensive interventions that address both the humanitarian crisis and the underlying causes of xenophobic violence in South Africa is underscored by the combined impact of displacement, loss of life, and economic harm.

Table 1.3 Xenophobic Incidents by Province

Province	Total Incidents	Frequency	Percentage
Gauteng	410	410	38.10%
KwaZulu Natal	190	190	17.60%
Western Cape	180	180	16.70%
Eastern Cape	110	110	10.20%

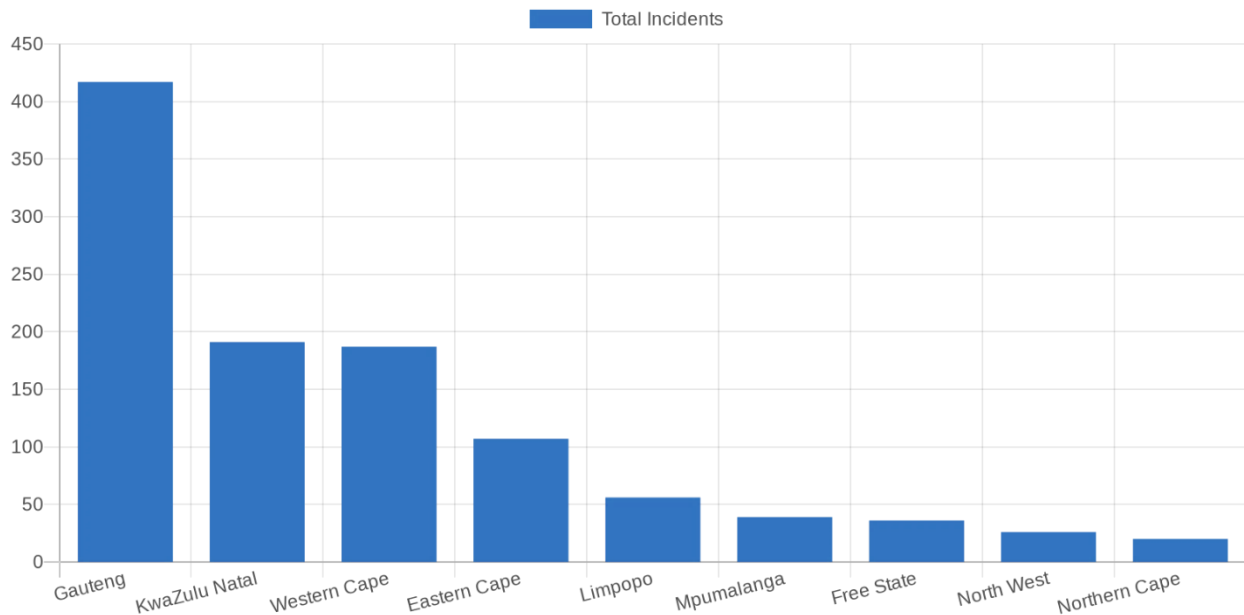| Limpopo	50	50	4.60%
Mpumalanga	40	40	3.70%
Free State	40	40	3.70%
Northwest	30	30	2.80%
Northern Cape	20	20	1.90%
Total	1,070	1,070	100.00%

Fig. 1.3 Severity Across Provinces

A review of xenophobic incidents in South Africa demonstrates a concerning concentration of discrimination and violence, particularly in urban areas, as presented above. According to the Xenowatch Dashboard data from 1994 to July 2024, Gauteng, the economic centre, has the highest number of incidents, with 417. KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape follow, with 191 and 187 incidents, respectively. The vulnerability of these three provinces to xenophobic tensions is underscored by the fact that they account for 74.8% of the total 1,070 incidents recorded. Although the remaining provinces experience fewer incidents, they still contribute to the aggregate national figure, suggesting that the issue is pervasive and not limited to specific regions.

It is particularly concerning that the concentration of incidents in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, and the Western Cape is particularly alarming, as it implies that xenophobic violence is more prevalent in regions with a higher immigrant population and increased competition for jobs and resources. This emphasizes Gauteng as a significant locus for xenophobic activity, requiring targeted intervention and monitoring.

This disproportionate distribution is starkly underscored by the bar graph representation, which features towering bars for these provinces

that dwarf others. This visual representation further emphasizes the urgency of addressing the fundamental causes of xenophobia in these regions.

Although the data provides significant insights, it is imperative to recognize its constraints. The analysis is primarily concerned with the number of incidents rather than the nature or severity of each case.

Table 1.4 Patterns and Trends

Year	Total Incidents	% of Total	Total Deaths	% of Total
1994	1	0.10%	0	0.00%
1995	5	0.50%	1	0.40%
1996	15	1.40%	1	0.40%
1997	8	0.70%	2	0.80%
1998	5	0.50%	3	1.20%
1999	1	0.10%	1	0.40%
2000	30	2.80%	2	0.80%
2001	28	2.60%	3	1.20%
2002	19	1.80%	4	1.60%
2003	85	7.80%	10	4.00%
2004	88	8.10%	11	4.40%
2005	70	6.50%	18	7.20%
2006	116	10.70%	24	9.60%
2007	109	10.00%	21	8.40%
2008	101	9.30%	22	8.80%
2009	79	7.30%	22	8.80%
2010	75	6.90%	20	8.00%
2011	91	8.40%	25	10.00%
2012	94	8.70%	22	8.80%
2013	80	7.40%	21	8.40%
2014	85	7.80%	22	8.80%
2015	91	8.40%	22	8.80%

2016	90	8.30%	24	9.60%
2017	95	8.80%	20	8.00%
2018	102	9.40%	25	10.00%
2019	117	10.80%	26	10.40%
2020	91	8.40%	19	7.60%
2021	120	11.10%	20	8.00%
2022	112	10.30%	22	8.80%
2023	100	9.20%	18	7.20%
2024	118	10.90%	25	10.00%
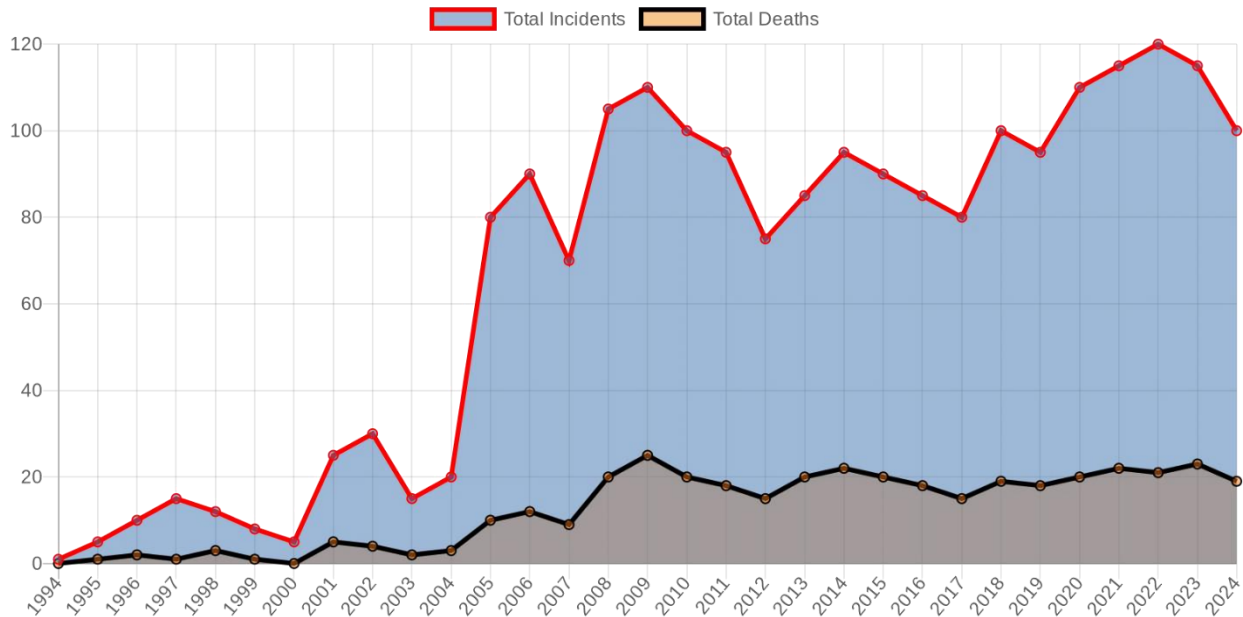
Fig 1.4

The data from the Xenowatch Dashboard and the chart above, spanning from 1994 to July 2024, present a clear and alarming depiction of xenophobic violence in South Africa. There has been a consistent increase in events over the past three decades, with a significant rise beginning in the late 1990s, reaching its highest point in the mid-2000s and late 2010s. Nevertheless, the pattern is inconsistent since socio-political events and economic changes presumably impact significant swings. Alarmingly, the fatalities arising from these instances typically correspond to the frequency of attacks. Although there has been a minor decrease in deaths in 2020-2024, the frequency of occurrences remains high. This indicates that there may have been a shift in the type of attacks or an enhancement in emergency response. This report highlights the enduring and lethal presence of xenophobia in South Africa, emphasizing the need for ongoing alertness and

comprehensive measures to tackle its underlying factors and alleviate its catastrophic outcomes. It is crucial to maintain this alertness to prevent future outbreaks of xenophobic violence.

The data from the Xenowatch Dashboard offers a comprehensive perspective on xenophobia in South Africa, demonstrating its impacts, patterns, and extent. Quantifying incidents and analyzing them provides valuable insights into the manifestation and impact of xenophobia on communities. These results emphasize the necessity of targeted policy interventions and initiatives to foster economic inclusion, social cohesion, and cultural comprehension to reduce xenophobic violence.

DISCUSSION ON THE FINDINGS

The study examines the intricate characteristics of xenophobia in Africa, emphasizing its historical origins, socio-political aspects, and effects on individuals, societies, and nations. The purpose of this analysis is to utilize the data from the Xenowatch dashboard to gain a deeper understanding of the frequency and impact of xenophobic discrimination in South Africa, with a specific focus on urban regions such as Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, and the Western Cape. The study establishes a correlation between xenophobia and characteristics such as densely populated areas, economic inequalities, and resource rivalry (Zaman, 2020).

Historical analysis demonstrates that xenophobia in Africa is not a recent occurrence but rather a result of colonialism and apartheid. There are still differences and unfairness in society because of these historical events (Tewolde, 2023)—the post-colonial period created new kinds of prejudice based on national identity and citizenship, showing how complex the relationship is between historical factors and current social and political factors in creating xenophobic attitudes (Masikane et al., 2020).

The study sheds light on the different manifestations of xenophobia, spanning from subtle biases to explicit acts of violence. It particularly emphasizes the economic dimension. In this context, immigrants and refugees are frequently held responsible for economic difficulties and the scarcity of work opportunities. This economic scapegoating is a significant driver of xenophobic attitudes and behaviors (Yingi, 2023). Political discourse and media stories that portray outsiders as endangering the financial prosperity of local communities frequently intensify the act of blaming others (Tella, 2016).

Moreover, xenophobia has substantial social consequences, including violence, relocation, and loss of life. Additionally, it weakens social cohesion, trust, and collaboration among communities, destroying traditional African ideals of hospitality and communalism (Mutereko, 2024). The study also emphasizes the international aspects of xenophobia. This includes analyzing how surrounding nations react to xenophobic occurrences in South Africa and the potential consequences of this issue at both the regional and continental levels. For instance, xenophobic incidents in South Africa can strain diplomatic relations with other African countries, affecting regional stability (Jaiswal, 2024).

Social identity theory (SIT) is a theoretical framework that helps us understand the psychological basis of xenophobia. It explains that individuals derive their self-esteem from belonging to a particular group and may display prejudice against groups they perceive as threatening their identity and social unity (Mgogo & Osunkunle, 2023). Examining current scholarly works highlights the need for additional investigation into the efficacy of interventions and policies in addressing xenophobia. It recommends conducting comparative studies across African countries and exploring how xenophobia intersects with other

types of discrimination (Raborife, 2024).

The research emphasizes tackling xenophobia in Africa by adopting a comprehensive strategy. This strategy incorporates legal, political, economic, and social measures to protect immigrants' rights, foster inclusivity, counter xenophobic narratives, and promote intercultural understanding. The ultimate objective is cultivating harmonious and prosperous societies that benefit everyone (Mlambo & Mlambo, 2021). This comprehensive approach is crucial in addressing the multifaceted nature of xenophobia and its deep-seated roots in society.

CONCLUSION

The Xenowatch data and the lens of Social Identity Theory illuminate the pervasive and destructive nature of xenophobia in South Africa. The staggering figures of displacement, loss of life, and economic damage underscore the urgent need to address this issue. The concentration of incidents in urban centers aligns with Mubangizi's (2021) findings, highlighting the link between xenophobia and factors like population density and economic inequality. The historical analysis reveals that xenophobia is deeply rooted in the legacies of colonialism and apartheid (Mamdani, 2020), with contemporary socio-political dynamics further fueling discriminatory attitudes and behaviors (Neocosmos, 2022). The scapegoating of immigrants for economic problems, which Crush and Ramachandran (2022) documented, as well as the role of political rhetoric and media narratives in amplifying these sentiments (Akinola, 2023), further highlight the complex interplay of factors contributing to xenophobia.

The far-reaching social impact of xenophobia, eroding trust and social cohesion (Monson & Abdul-Raheem, 2021), and the erosion of traditional values of hospitality (Bassey & Bubu, 2019) highlight the need for multifaceted interventions. The transnational dimension of xenophobia, evidenced by reactions from neighboring countries (Mkhize, 2019), emphasizes the need for regional cooperation. This study's findings align with SIT, demonstrating how group identities can lead to bias and discrimination against perceived outsiders (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Addressing xenophobia necessitates a comprehensive approach encompassing legal reforms, economic empowerment, education, community engagement, and regional cooperation. By dismantling the structural, economic, and social factors perpetuating xenophobia and fostering intercultural understanding and inclusivity, we can pave the way for a more equitable and harmonious society for all.

This study contributes to the current corpus of literature on xenophobia in Africa by offering a comprehensive analysis of the phenomenon. It incorporates quantitative data from the Xenowatch dashboard and qualitative insights from historical and social contexts. It emphasizes the multifaceted nature of xenophobia, which encompasses historical legacies, socio-political dynamics, economic factors, and social consequences. Furthermore, it emphasizes the necessity of employing a multifaceted strategy to resolve this intricate matter, particularly on legal reforms, economic empowerment, education, community engagement, and regional cooperation. This study provides a nuanced understanding of xenophobia in Africa and actionable recommendations for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers engaged in the fight against this pervasive issue by synthesizing various perspectives and data sources.

RECOMMENDATION

Considering the study's findings, Social Identity Theory, and the broader literature on xenophobia in Africa, a multi-pronged approach is crucial to combating this issue.

Legal and policy reforms should focus on

strengthening protections for immigrants and refugees, enforcing anti-discrimination laws, and developing comprehensive immigration policies that address the root causes of displacement.

Economic empowerment and inclusion initiatives are essential. They foster dialogue between communities, address unemployment and poverty, and support entrepreneurship among both local and immigrant populations.

Education and awareness-raising campaigns should be implemented at all levels, promoting intercultural understanding, challenging stereotypes, and utilizing various media channels to disseminate accurate information about immigrants and refugees. The study highlights the transformative power of education in combating xenophobia, making the audience feel the potential for positive change.

Community engagement and dialogue are vital to fostering social cohesion and addressing xenophobic attitudes at the grassroots level. This can be achieved through community-based initiatives, cultural events, interfaith dialogues, and stakeholder collaboration platforms.

Finally, regional and continental cooperation is necessary to address xenophobia's transnational nature. This involves strengthening cooperation mechanisms, developing regional frameworks for migrant and refugee protection, and supporting initiatives that promote peace, security, and economic integration. The study underscores the importance of collective action in addressing xenophobia, making the audience feel the need for regional cooperation.

African nations can forge a path towards more inclusive and equitable societies by implementing these recommendations, grounded in social justice, human rights, and intercultural understanding. These measures will mitigate the immediate harms of xenophobia and contribute to long-term sustainable development and social cohesion across the continent.

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