

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**FRAMING OF THE XENOPHOBIC ATTACKS IN SOUTH AFRICA BY THE  
*BBC* AND *AL JAZEERA* ONLINE NEWSPAPERS**

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**ALEXANDER NYARKO YEBOAH**

**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

**2020**

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

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**A thesis in the Department of Communication and Media Studies,  
Faculty of Foreign Languages Education and Communication,  
submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the award of the degree of  
Master of Philosophy  
(Communication and Media Studies)  
in the University of Education, Winneba,**

**JULY, 2020**

## DECLARATION

### Student's Declaration

I **Alexander Nyarko Yeboah**, declare that this Dissertation, with the exception of quotation and references contained in published works which have all been identified and acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of Dissertation as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

**Supervisor's Name: Dr. Christiana Hammond**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this study to the Glory of God who has made it possible for me to reach this far, and to my lovely son, Nana Yaw Opuni Yeboah.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study is at its final stages thanks to the grace of the Almighty God, and I remain grateful for his wisdom and strength that took me through the hectic but refreshing moments of undertaking this research.

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines how the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* newspapers framed the xenophobic attacks in South Africa. The study is underpinned by the Framing Theory. Data were gathered from 32 news and feature articles by the *BBC* and 63 by *Al Jazeera Online* newspapers. These were thematically analyzed. The findings reveal that the attribution of Responsibility frame is the most dominant. This was followed by the frames of Human Interest, Economic Consequence, Conflict, and Morality in the order of importance. Also, it was revealed that the African immigrants in South Africa were depicted as Targets and Competitors of the local South African. The findings also show that the two online newspapers used negative tones in describing the South African but are slightly positive towards the African immigrant. The study concludes that the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* newspapers impute responsibility for the attacks to the South African people who see the African immigrants as the cause of the economic frustration of the South African. It is recommended that news makers minimize framing players of migration crisis in a negative light in order to better mediate in migration related crisis and avoid stirring violent confrontations between immigrants and local populations.



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

The repeated occurrence of xenophobic attacks in South Africa has become a major human rights concern due to the many atrocities that have been committed against mostly African immigrants (Bronwyn, 2001).

The first record of the attacks was in 2008 when South Africans shocked the world with the violence that claimed more than 60 lives and destroyed properties of many foreigners in the country (*Al Jazeera Online, 2015*). It became more troubling when the same attacks emerged in 2015 with seven deaths (*BBC News Online, 2019*) with the same measure of attacks on African immigrants in a country that is noted for hosting persons from all races. Then, when the problem seemed to have subsided, the 2019 attacks emerged with horrifying pictures of fellow Africans subjected to brutality whilst their properties were destroyed by some angry local South Africans.

Davis (2010) describes xenophobia as an exceedingly negative perception and practice that discriminates against non-citizen groups by their foreign nationality. According to Breed and Semanya (2015, p. 5), “xenophobia is driven by fear of the other, fear that turns into hatred and wants to destroy the other.”

In the South African context, xenophobia goes beyond just hating and discriminating against foreigners; it includes looting, destruction of properties, vandalism, hostilities and abuse often leading to death, especially targeting blacks from African countries and in rare cases the Chinese, Somalians, Pakistanis, Bangladesh (*HSRC, 2008*). Even though xenophobia is a concept that has existed long in the history of mankind and at different locations in the world (*Okunde & Oni, 2019*), the South Africans are

beginning to culture a certain version of the practice that is worth investigating. Commenting on this, Olijó (2015) notes that “xenophobic attacks have remained regrettably consistent in South Africa since the country got her independence in 1994” (p. 1). Mbetga (2014) argues that xenophobia needs to be viewed in the context of the past. Accordingly, Mbetga (2014) observes that the psychological consequences of apartheid persist and that they show themselves in both negative and positive forms. Racial victims frequently internalize the dominant definitions of themselves; the more powerless and threatened group members feel, the greater their need to denigrate others below them. These incidents reveal that, despite the transition to democracy, post-apartheid South African society has not managed to rid itself of all discriminatory attitudes and practices (Mbetga, 2014). Harris (2002) agrees and argues that, “prejudice and violence continue to mark contemporary South Africa” (p. 169). The researcher observes that, “Indeed, the shift in political power has brought about a range of new discriminatory practices and victims. One such victim is 'The Foreigner'. Emergent alongside a new-nation discourse, ‘The Foreigner’ stands at a site where identity, racism and violent practice are reproduced.”

This hatred for the foreigner is explained by the fact that the local South African is entrenched in a climate characterized by suspicion toward immigrants; such suspicion is amplified by the national discourse and reinforced in their local communities (Olijó, 2015). In this regard, one can say that xenophobia is linked to new racism which is based on the discriminatory treatment of the “other” on the basis of the “other’s” national origin, culture or ethnicity (Matsinhe, 2011).

According to Valji (2003) these ideas and actions can only be understood “in the interplay between economics, migration, nationalism, and the unique history and transformation South Africa has experienced in the past decade” (p. 2). (Olijó 2015)

agrees to this by saying that economic frustration, joblessness and competition over limited resources are features often used to describe a context that can be conducive to the rise of anti-migrant sentiments and attitudes. To this end, one can say that xenophobic attitudes are robust among street hawkers and squatters, not only because of competition for scarce survival space but for the rare opportunity to ostracize others. In this way, new identities of superiority are manufactured (Mbetga, 2014). Valji (2003) confirms this and argues that, “The rise of popular sentiments of intolerance amongst all sectors of South African society has occurred over a relatively short period of time – but it has led to a national unity that exists on few other issues. Regardless of race, education level, or income bracket, South Africans appear to feel similarly about those who come to the country from outside” (p. 3). As such, African migrants are blamed for crime, spread of venereal diseases and accused of stealing jobs from local South Africans. It is not ‘foreigners’ originating from Europe who are targeted, but black Africans, and this radicalized stereotype of ‘aliens’ is perpetuated by the local media, in particular tabloids like the *Daily Sun* (Mbetga, 2014). For instance, “The press rarely differentiates between ‘illegal alien’ and other categories of migrant, and as a result studies show that the ability of the average South African to make this distinction is limited” (Pigou, Valji et al., 1998, p. 4).

The mass media therefore play a role in the process of ‘othering’ African migrants (Mbetga 2014) using their media to stir xenophobic sentiments and for the locals to spread their message of hatred against foreigners (Harris, 2001). Most often, migrants are framed as smugglers, drug traffickers and fraudsters, thereby fostering the classification of African migrants into different criminal groups as well as affiliating individual countries with specific crime (Solomon & Kosaka, 2014). In this regard, Danso and McDonald (2001), Pineteh (2017), and Tella (2016) assert that, in the South

African situation, the print media had repeatedly been accused of employing labels and metaphors that nurtured the creation of homogenous identity for African migrants in South Africa. In this light, Smith (2011) shows that the media do not just transmit information to the public, but also reproduce certain ideologies and discourses that support specific relations of power. Smith (2011) therefore observes that it is important not only to look at the media as a means to measure public perceptions of foreigners, but also the way in which perceptions are created.

In joining the conversation, Harris (2001) avers that it is not simply about whom the press quotes or allows to comment on migrant concerns but also the way in which these comments are framed and presented that is important. This is further expanded by Bird and Fine (2002) who note the relationship between media and society. They explain that whilst the press responds to news and reports on incidents as they occur, thereby reflecting issues pertinent to the broader societal context, the press also shapes and influences social issues in ways in which news is chosen, highlighted and covered.

These extensive studies of the English speaking press convincingly demonstrate that, for more than a decade, newspapers have been running stories that are anti-immigration/xenophobic and provide little analysis of the subject. Fine and Bird (2002) argue that the media does indeed place prominence on incidents of a racial twist. Moreover, that the media provide an imperfect picture of incidents, coverage is simplistic with little in-depth discussion of the issues raised, and the media continues in their patterns of labeling the majority of immigrants from Africa as illegal, even though their only crime is a lack of appropriate documentations, and that little differentiation can be found in the media with regards to different categories of migrant (Fine & Bird, 2002). The press itself is therefore seen as xenophobic, a fact attested to by Kleist (2017). He observes that “the great nationalisms of the 20th century were largely media-driven fractures

between ‘us’ and ‘them.’ The creation of such boundaries is consubstantial to the most fundamental media effect: providing a common experience of space, time, and language. In this sense, all media are ‘xenophobic’ as they provide a specific experience of belonging that may appear to be unique and natural” (p. 5). Kleist (2017) also observed that the press in selected European countries published stories that were against foreign domination of the locals as a way of gathering support for nationalist movements. This shows the press persists in projecting one aspect of an issue above the other (Entman, 2004) and also shapes the perception of both migrants and indigenes on immigration issues. This role of the press helps individuals to make up their minds on what to adopt in response to xenophobic tendencies.

As many researchers such as Mbetga (2014) and Danso and McDonald (2012) have researched into the xenophobic violence in South Africa using mostly African traditional media, the current research explored into how non-African online media outlets framed xenophobia in South Africa.

The online media outlets selected for the content analysis are *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* newspapers. The two media outlets were selected because, as Zhang and Hellmueller (2017) put it, they were ‘transnational’ media organizations with their news reportages not limited to their region of operation. Again, the *BBC Online* service was selected because it was adjudged the most influential western news organization in the world (Westcott & Mukherjee, 2011). *Al Jazeera Online* was also chosen because it was one of the largest news organizations in the world with a Pan-Arabic perspective that paved the way for the spread of the ‘Arab Spring’ (Howard & Hussain, 2013).

### **1.1.1 Overview of *BBC Online***

*BBC Online* is the online service of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) which supports its TV, radio programmes, and web initiatives. According to the Department for Culture, Media and Sports (2016), the BBC is a key player—by some measures, the main player—in the UK’s online space. There is a degree of agreement that it has helped drive the sector to its current world leading position (particularly in the case of online video). The website was launched on 4 November 1997. It is the website of *BBC News*, the division of the BBC responsible for newsgathering and production. It is available in 32 other languages and has a worldwide coverage. Its current status is an online newspaper. The website contains international news coverage as well as British, entertainment, science, and political news.

### **1.1.2 Overview of *Al Jazeera Online***

Al Jazeera, the Arabic-language satellite channel, launched its first broadcast from Doha on November 1, 1996. It has since expanded into a media network with several outlets, including the internet and news channels in multiple languages. As one of the first Arab news channels, it soon became the most watched TV outlet in the Middle East and North Africa (*Al Jazeera Online*, 2016). Its nonstop coverage of conflicts and uncensored talk shows were unprecedented in a region where government control of the media is widespread. The TV channel's exclusive stories from Afghanistan, Iraq and African countries established its reputation globally (*Al Jazeera Online*, 2016).

*Al Jazeera Online* is an offshoot of the Qatari state-funded broadcaster in Doha, Qatar, owned by the Al Jazeera Media Network. In 2003, Al Jazeera hired its first English-language journalists from the *BBC's* Today Programme. In March 2003 it launched an English-language website and then launched an English language channel in 2006. It was originally called *Al Jazeera International*.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Media coverage on migration has enormous consequences on public opinion (Iyengar, 1991). It affects how the public learns about migration and migrant groups, forms political judgments and take electoral decisions (Bail, 2012). As a source of information on economic, social, cultural and political reality, the media determines how the public learns about migration, this is because by emphasizing some issues while excluding others, newsmakers influence what information is available in the public's mind (Scheurele & Shanahan, 2002). This becomes the means by which people's perceptions about migration issues are shaped. These concepts are consistent with the process of framing. Therefore, a framing study of the xenophobic attacks in South Africa becomes relevant and important.

A lot of studies have been conducted on the influence of the media in the xenophobic attacks in South Africa. Most of these studies (Bekker et al, 2008; Danso & MacDonald, 2001; Fine & Bird, 2002; Macdonald & Jacobs, 2005; Mbetga, 2014; Ngwane, 2014; Pineteh, 2017) used the print media, mostly South African newspapers, in their analysis. Nelson and Salawu (2017) analyzed the attacks using Youtube Videos of South African Broadcasting Corporation and two foreign television stations. Gap therefore exists in the use of non-African media outlets to frame the xenophobic attacks in South Africa. Again, all these works used traditional media with minimal studies (Asakitikpi & Gadzikwa, 2019) concentrating on use of online newspapers. This therefore leaves a gap in the use of online newspapers to research into xenophobic attacks in South Africa. Most of these major works (Danso & MacDonald, 2001; Fine & Bird, 2002; Macdonald & Jacobs, 2005; Bekker et al, 2008) used discourse analysis to assess the crisis. This research would therefore use qualitative content analysis and Framing Theory to analyze the attacks. Specifically, the research investigates how the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera*



*Online* newspapers framed xenophobic violence in South Africa. The research would identify the dominant frames used in the news reportages by the two online newspapers, determine how the African migrants in South Africa were depicted, and establish the tone of voice used by the two online newspapers in referring to the South Africans who are players in the xenophobic attacks in South Africa.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

1. To identify the dominant frames used by the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* newspapers in reporting the xenophobic attacks in South Africa.
2. To determine how the two online newspapers, depict the African immigrants in South Africa.
3. To establish the tone of voice the two online newspapers use in referring to the South Africans as players in the xenophobic attacks.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

1. What are the dominant frames used by the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* newspapers in reporting the xenophobic attacks in South Africa?
2. How are the African immigrants in South Africa depicted by the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* newspapers?
3. What is the tone of voice the two online newspapers used in referring to the South Africans as players in the xenophobic attacks?

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

A lot of studies have been done in the area of framing of the xenophobic attacks in South Africa. Most of these studies were conducted using African news media outlets (mostly print media) to investigate an African immigration crisis. This research, however, is to fill the void of research work in the framing of xenophobic attacks in South African using non-African online news outlets (*BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* newspapers) which are portals outside the immediate environment of the attacks. This would add to research on the xenophobic violence in South Africa by showing the differences between research findings on the attacks using traditional and African media outlets and research findings on the same phenomenon using non-African online news portals.

### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

This study analyzed how the media framed the xenophobic attacks in South Africa. There are several online news newspapers that report on this issue. For the purposes of this study, only the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* newspapers were content analyzed. The study was, however, limited to coverage of news and feature stories between May 2008 and March 2020. This period was chosen because it covered the occurrence of the three separate xenophobic attacks in South Africa.

### **1.7 Organization of the Study**

The thesis consists of five chapters. The introductory chapter looked at background of the South African version of xenophobia. The chapter argued for the responsible role the media could play in ensuring it went beyond just portraying the victims of the attacks and the perpetrators into deeper issues that looked at the underlying causes of

the violence. Chapter two of the study reviewed empirical research studies conducted by other researchers into the issue of migration crisis in general. The chapter also provided a discussion on the theoretical framework that underpinned the study. The study was set within Framing Theory.

Chapter three discussed the systematic methods followed in sampling the newspaper editions, and in gathering and analyzing data. Chapter four was devoted to the findings and discussions of the data. Discussions were done in relations to framing theory and related literature. Chapter five looked at summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

The focus of this study is to determine how the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* newspapers framed xenophobic attacks in South Africa. The choice of the topic was informed by the need to look at the subject of xenophobia in South Africa from the eye of non-African online newspapers. The research also seeks to identify the dominant frames used by the two online newspapers, determine how African migrants in South Africa were depicted, and establish the tone of voice used to report the attacks in relations to the local South African. This chapter reviews related literature in the area of xenophobia and migration crisis in general. The chapter then discusses Framing Theory which forms the context within which the study has been situated. It begins with an overview of the meaning of theory and the usefulness of theories in mass communication. After that, framing theory is examined with the objective of developing a framework for the study.

#### 2.1 Literature Review

UNHCR (2015) researched into press coverage of refugee and migrant crisis in the EU. The researchers content analyzed thousands of newspapers from five countries written in 2014 and early 2019. They found differences between countries in terms of the sources journalists used, the language they employed, the reason they gave for the rise in refugee flows and the solutions they suggested. Germany, Spain and Sweden used the terms 'refugee' and 'asylum seeker' while Italy and UK preferred the word 'migrant'. They also found that the media differed in the dominant themes in their

coverage. For example, humanitarian themes were more common in Italian coverage than in Britain, Germany and Spain. Threat themes were the most prevalent in Italy, Britain and Spain. Swedish press was seen as the most positive towards refugees whilst the British press was the most negative and polarized.

Their work provided an important insight into each country's press culture in relation to migrant crisis; it also offered insight into historical trends. In as much as UNHCR (2015) adds to the body of knowledge with regards to research on migration crisis, there are limitations in their use of European newspapers to report a European migration crisis. This is because it would limit the conversation since the newspapers may report on the issues having the European socio-cultural antecedents permeating the stories. This lapse would be curtailed with the current research which investigates into how non-African online portals reported an African migration crisis. In this context, the media outlets involved are from a different socio-cultural setting as the setting of the migration crisis, in this case the xenophobic attacks in South Africa. Again, the use of a quantitative analysis limits the work to figures. However, the current research, which would employ qualitative content analysis, would go beyond the numbers and address issues of context, observing the use of latent and manifest meanings in the framing of the news reportages. This would help to unearth broader socio-cultural dimensions of the problem in order to expose the roots of the crisis.

Corbu and Buturoiu (2017) observe that the European Union (EU) is under severe pressure due to the multiple crises it has to manage. Among them, the refugee crisis is remarkable, since it is shaking both the individual member states and the EU as a whole. The researchers assert that media coverage of the refugee crisis is important because

the media still are the main source of information concerning distant issues, and as such it facilitates people's access to social reality. Using the perspective of agenda-setting and the conceptual background of framing theory, the researchers aim to (1) identify the most prominent frames online media employ with reference to the refugee crisis, and (2) reveal the tone of voice online media use when portraying issues related to this crisis. To achieve these two goals, they content analyzed 1,493 online news articles, published between April 15, 2015 and February 29, 2016. Findings show that online media outlets mainly refer to the refugee crisis in terms of responsibility and conflict, in this order of prominence. At the same time, online media portals prefer using a reasonably balanced viewpoint when portraying the refugees, and a slightly negative one in terms of attitudes towards the European Union.

This study contributes to research of migration crisis by using online media, which is consistent with the current research. By this, Corbu and Buturoiu (2017) explore how different research findings that use traditional media content for their analysis would be from findings based on content of online media. Their research is also significant because it sets the pace in research using online media that also tests effects of media reportage on heavy online users. This research is, however, limited by the use of European online portals to address a European migration crisis, which sets the tone for possible bias in reportage on the migrants. The current research would broaden the conversation to look at how online portals outside the domain of the immigration crisis would report on the crises. This would determine whether the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera online* newspapers followed a different pattern from that of the mostly traditional and African media outlets in coverage of the xenophobic attacks in South Africa or not.

Jakob-Moritz et al. (2018) observe that, to understand public opinion about immigration in Europe, one has to understand the media's role in it. The researchers established that despite differences in the way immigration and migrant groups are represented in European media, there are common patterns. They assert that migrants are generally under-represented and shown as criminals. They found out that although media framing differs based on specific migrant groups, the discourse focusing on immigration coverage is often negative and conflict-centred. The researchers then observed that frequent exposure to such media messages led to negative attitudes towards migration, might have stimulated stereotypical perceptions of migrant groups, and even influenced vote choice. This study broadened the horizon of research into migration crisis by supporting other findings on migration crisis in Europe which established that the media present migrants in a negative light and promote stereotypical tendencies. It explored the question of the use of voice tone to determine the direction of news on migration, and the current research found it instrumental in shaping research question three which looked at determining the tone of voice the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* newspapers used to refer to South Africans in reporting the xenophobic attacks.

Abrajano, Hajnal and Hassell (2017) observe that framing changes an individual's position on issues and demonstrate that framing induces shifts in aggregate political opinions and political identities. They observe that the competitive nature of most real world political debates presents multiple frames that cancel each other out. To this end, the researchers assessed this proposition and the extent of real-world framing by focusing on the issue of immigration which has been framed in largely negative terms by the media. Through content analyses, they access the link between *New York Times*

coverage of immigration and aggregate white partisanship over the last three decades. They found that negative framing on immigration was linked to shifts towards the Republican Party. This shows that under the right circumstances, framing alters core political predispositions and shapes the partisan balance of power.

This adds to research work on reportage on migration crisis by revealing how heavy consumers of news on migration tend to shift their political realities in response to the realities set by the media outlet reporting. Their findings, notwithstanding, this work content analyzed a single newspaper and that was a void the current research would fill by broadening the search to include another news outlet. Again, the researchers used *New York Times* which is a US newspaper to analyze a US issue which brings in concerns about reportage having socio-cultural biases specific to the Americans; the current research would use non-African news outlets to analyze an African immigration question. This would help the current research get a divergent understanding of the xenophobic attacks in Africa as the reportages might not be influenced by the socio-cultural settings of the news outlets concerned. The other void is seen in the use of a newspaper in the analyses which ignored the diversified nature of the online media, a void the current research would be filling. However, both works share common grounds by the use of framing as their grounded theory which helped both to assess how the media determined what and how the public should think about migration issues. Again, Abrajano et al. (2017) informed the current research in their findings that framing alters core political predispositions and shapes the partisan balance of power. To this end, the current research would try to understand how *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* news portals attempted to alter the perception of readers concerning the subject of xenophobia in South Africa due to how they might have framed stories to help audience tilt towards supporting hate tendencies of the South African or not.



Zhang and Hellmueller (2017) analyzed 287 photographs published on *CNN International* and *Der Spiegel Online* news sites to examine the evidence of global journalism practices in visual news content using qualitative content analysis. They found out that transnational news outlet *CNN International* more frequently used close-ups and tracking shots to feature refugees in its visual reportage than the German news magazine *Der Spiegel*. The large presence of the ‘human interest’ and the ‘lose/gain’ frames in *CNN international’s* visual coverage emphasized the humanitarian aspect of global suffering. In contrast, apart from the ‘human interest’ frame, the ‘law and control’ and ‘xenophobia’ frames were adopted in *Der Spiegel’s* visual coverage. Using such comparism, this study discussed if news sources’ capacity of managing the visibility of suffering control reflect a cosmopolitan viewpoint on a global issue.

This research broadens the scope of studies on the media and migration crisis to include use of pictures conveyed by the news stories. It brings in the dimension of how the journalist presents stories from the viewpoint of the camera. This area of research into migration crisis using pictures is not much exploited. This is because most works on xenophobic research use text. The current work adopted the term ‘transnational online newspapers’ from Zhang and Hellmueller (2017) that helped me to select online newspapers with their reportage not focused only on the regions they were sited, leading to the choice of *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* newspapers. However, the gap with this work is that the researchers used European online newspapers to analyze a European refugee situation. The current research would analyze an African migration situation using non-African online newspapers to showcase how the phenomenon is framed outside the zone of the xenophobic attacks. Again, Zhang and Hellmueller (2017) differ from the current research in that they seek to analyze how pictures accompanying stories on refugee crisis in Europe were analyzed. The current research would

qualitatively analyze text to determine how the selected online newspapers analyzed the xenophobic attacks in South Africa.

Dzilenski (2017) investigate into how different national news media frame migration to their audience. She qualitatively content analyzed three online news outlets from Spain, US and Germany published between May 1, 2016 and October 31, 2016. They collected 87 articles, 22 from Germany, 33 from US and 32 from Spain. The researcher argues that national news media construct multiple frames of migration, maintain significant international focus in their reportage and often emphasize their discontent with national governments' handling of migration issues. The researcher found that media in the three countries framed discontent with current handling of international migration by national governments by pointing out the absence of strong and collaborative measures that were put forth by national governments and international organizations to address these concerns. They again found out that the US majored on the state of international migration, yet reflected very little on migration issues internally. Germany offered self-reflective media frame of migration often illustrating mixed opinions on the subject. Spain's national media leans towards more positive accounts of migration.

Dzitenski (2017) contributes to research on migration crisis by observing that a country's perception on a given subject could affect news reportage on that subject. This perhaps explains why most research into xenophobia in South Africa reflected the mindsets of the local South African. This sets the pace for research work into finding the extent to which media outlets imbibe local concerns about migration issues in their reportage. The limitations with Dzitenski (2017) is that the researcher used only western online newspapers in the analysis; the current research used a western and an Asian

online newspaper for its analysis to help broaden the dialogue. Again, a gap exists in the location of the phenomenon because Dzitenski (2017) looked at migration issues in a western country whilst the current research analyzed a migration crisis in an African country.

Bosilkov and Drakaki (2018) observe that representations of immigrants in the media are considered a major factor in shaping immigration attitudes. In the context of the migrant crisis in Europe, they analyze how news content about the migrant crisis is framed by the media in Greece and Macedonia, two neighboring countries on the Balkan migrant route. By using framing theory as analytical framework, this study applies Benson's (2013) paradigmatic 'security/threat' and 'humanitarian/victim' frame dichotomy in migration coverage to the concept of issues framing. Through content analysis of six print media outlets in both countries (N=660), the researchers investigated the variety of sub-frames and framing devices within the scope of the two overarching frames, finding dominant portrayals of refugees as illegal trespassers, potential terrorists and social burdens in both countries. However, they observe that positive depictions of migrants were more common in Greece, which they attributed to the absence of ideological consensus and differences between the countries' political and media systems. By this, they theorize how news reports from domains with limited ideological consensus on migration issues could affect their depiction of the migrants. This indicate that the socio-political context of the media reporting had influence on how they frame actors in a media crisis.

This informs research into news outlets outside the zone of a migration crisis to determine whether the media outlets would follow popular rhetoric about migration in

the domain of a migration crisis or not. In this regard, research using the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera* online news portals to investigate xenophobic attacks in South Africa would give the researcher freedom to determine whether media outlets outside the domain of a migration crisis would be influenced by popular rhetoric about migration issues at the domain of the crisis or otherwise.

Milioni, Spyridou and Vadratsikas (2015) observe that immigration is a contestable issue in Europe. They assert that the retreat of multiculturalism since the 1990s has resulted in pressures exerted on immigrants to conform and integrate with their host countries. They observe that the strengthening of anti-immigrant stances has intensified after the economic recession that has deteriorated standards of living for large populations and has increased the competition between social groups for public resources. In their analysis, Milioni et al. (2015) observe that linguistic labels that evoke judgments have real consequences as citizen attitudes depend on the labels attributed to immigrants in the public discourse. This study employed framing analysis of online articles and television news programs about third-century immigrants that appeared in Cyprus media in 2013 when the consequences of the financial crisis were most strongly felt by Cypriot population. Through purposive sampling, the researcher quantitatively content analyzed *Kathimerini* and *Politis Online* newspapers. One hundred and forty (140) items were analyzed: 84 articles from online newspapers (14 articles from six newspapers) 56 articles from online portals (14 articles from four online portals. For television, Milioni et al. (2015) analyzed 1,050 newscasts and examined 162 immigration related news items. The research revealed the explicit discursive and sourcing mechanisms by which immigration is constructed as a problem and immigrants are 'othered' in the media discourse.

Milioni et al. (2015) informed the current research in finding out how the selected online newspapers framed the migrants and therefore helped in shaping research question two. Both researchers used framing theory in grounding their work in theory. However, the use of European online newspapers to analyze a European phenomenon in Milioni et al. (2015) brings in possible socio-cultural biases in the reportages by the European newspapers under study; the current research fills the void in use of a non-African online newspaper to analyze an African problem to see whether these biases would be curtailed. Gap also exists in the research approach, because, unlike Milioni et al. (2015), the current research would use the qualitative approach which would reveal deeper meaning behind the statements and comments made by reporters and participants in drafting the news reports.

Buami (2013) examined the image of China in Ghanaian newspapers. He content analyzed 124 articles written about China in the *Daily Guide* and *Ghanaian Times* newspapers between 2007 and 2011. The results showed that more positive stories (55) were published about China than negative stories (33). The research again established that social issues were the most published stories with economic issues coming next. The research found out that most stories published by the two dailies about China were sourced from international news agencies. He used the International Media Dependency theory to explain why the two Ghanaian dailies depended on foreign media agencies news on China. His work was also set within the framework of News Value Theory by Galtung and Ruge (1965) which explains why media houses choose to publish certain news items.

Buami (2013) however presented a number of gaps which the current research seeks to fill. Firstly, there is a gap in theory since his work was grounded in two theories, i.e. the International Media Dependency theory and the News value theory. Analyzing representation of China in Ghanaian newspapers using Framing Theory would have presented Buami (2013) the opportunity to unearth the kinds of frames that were used in presenting stories about China and how the newspapers framed specific issues relating to China's involvement in Ghana. This would have given insight into how the press were attempting to tell the audience what to think about China and how. Secondly, there is a gap in the use of Ghanaian newspapers to report the image of China in Ghana. This would limit the conversation to issues peculiar to the Ghanaian society and introduce biases in the reporting about China's involvement in Ghana which could ultimately skew the findings in a certain way. Buami (2013), however, corroborates the current research in the sense that whilst the former studies into portrayal of another country in Ghanaian newspapers, the latter studies into portrayal of migration crisis in an African country using non-African online newspapers. Buami (2013) used quantitative content analysis, which limits his work to analyzing the numbers in relations to the issues on China. The current research would use qualitative content analysis to bring out meanings behind the publications of the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera online* news portals on the subject of xenophobic attacks in South Africa. This work also helped the current research to construct research question two because whilst Buami (2013) looked at the image of China in Ghanaian newspapers, the current work looked at how migrants were framed by the two non-African online portals.

Dela-Dem (2018) attempts to answer the question of how the Ghanaian media contributed to the negative framing of Liberian refugees during the height of the

Liberian civil war. In this study, the researcher adopts descriptive research method. The topic seeks to review the role played by the Ghanaian media in projecting negative perceptions of Liberian refugees by the Ghanaian society. Dela-Dem (2018) explores the question of portrayal of refugees in general and narrows down to the Liberian refugees in Ghana. This study draws data from both secondary and primary sources on refugee situations across Africa with much focus on refugee situations in Ghana. These sources include articles, research material, online articles, news, and academic books on the subject. Data used are from articles of the *Daily Graphic*, *Ghanaian Times* and *The Chronicle* newspapers. This included reportage dating back to early 1990s. Dela-Dem (2018) found that the print media in Ghana, rather than aiding the social integration of Liberian refugees, thwarted it through its predominantly negative coverage of the group. Negative press coverage of Liberians helped reinforce unfavorable impressions Ghanaians might have formed of Liberians from personal interactions.

These findings of Dela-Dem (2018) informed the current research in finding out how the two online newspapers reinforced perceptions about foreigners through the framing of the xenophobic attacks in South Africa. Another common ground of the two studies is seen in the use of Framing Theory which helped to unearth latent meaning of statements aimed at better revealing the nature of reportage on migration in Ghana. The gap with this research, however, is seen in the sources of material for the research. Dela-Dem (2018) used Ghanaian newspapers and other materials like books, research articles, etc. The current research however used Non-African online newspapers to study an immigration phenomenon in South Africa. Dela-Dem (2018) employed a quantitative content analysis to study into the depiction of Liberian refugees in Ghana by Ghanaian newspapers and other sources; the current research would use a qualitative

approach to study the xenophobic attacks in South Africa which would present deeper meanings behind the attacks in South Africa.

Olijo (2015) investigated public perception of Nigerian newspaper coverage of xenophobic attacks in South Africa with specific emphasis on portrayal of Nigerian victims, perpetrators and the South African Government. With the aid of Cochran formula, a sample size of 385 respondents was drawn from Enugu State, Nigeria. The questionnaire was used as an instrument of data collection while the reliability of the instrument was determined through a test retest approach yielding a correlation coefficient of 0.92. Results revealed that respondents perceived Nigerian newspaper portrayal of Nigerian victims of xenophobia as positive while the perpetrators were found to be portrayed in the negative light. The result also revealed that the South African Government was portrayed as incompetent. Within the frame work of Perception Theory, the researcher argues that the perception of the respondents may have been influenced by patriotism and recommends, among others that the media should avoid the temptation of portraying the South African Government in a negative light.

The limitation with Olijo (2015) is with the use of a survey to make judgements on newspaper framing of a phenomenon. This work could improve with a content analysis of newspaper reportages on the subject of xenophobic violence in South Africa. In this regard, Nigerian Newspapers other than people's opinion about newspaper coverage could have determined the extent to which framing of the attacks in South Africa and the players in the attacks were negative or positive. This work however shares some characteristics with the current research because, whilst Olijo (2015) sought to



determine perceptions of the public about newspaper framing of migrants in South Africa, the current research looks at framing of migrants by the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera online* newspapers.

Vanyoro & Ncube (2018) observe that the recurring xenophobic attacks on perceived foreign immigrants is one of the major setbacks on South Africa's envisaged 'rainbow' nation discourse. This study explores the [re]-presentation of xenophobia research findings in two popular South African newspapers: *The Mail & Guardian* and the *Sowetan* from 2008 to 2013. The study utilizes a qualitative research approach. Findings show that the two analyzed newspapers uncritically picked stories and purveyed them without a strong base facilitated by empirical research. In essence, empirical research findings were selectively utilized to 'authenticate' or legitimize convenient ideological positions. Finally, a clear tension between discourses of 'empirical knowledge' and 'popular perceptions' was evident in the analyzed stories. Vanyoro and Ncube (2018) adds to the body of knowledge in research on migration crisis by expanding the horizon to include not only media extracts, but research works on coverage of xenophobia in South Africa. In this regard, it gives the research community the opportunity to explore how the media even select research findings for publication. This feeds into the general perception that the media uncritically selects issues about migration crisis to be reported on and that the reports are not only uncritical but also unanalytical.

CCME & WACC (2017) believe that the representation of refugees and migrants in the media plays a major role in the tone of public debate and, ultimately, the welcome and

integration of refugees and migrants in their new countries. They therefore conducted research to assess media representation of refugees and migrants in Europe. Participating countries were Greece, Italy, Spain, Serbia, the United Kingdom, Sweden and Norway. In addition, they conducted interviews with representatives of refugee networks and media, including a consultation bringing people from both groups together to review the initial research findings. The aim of this report is to spark discussion on the topics considered, build on positive trends, and inspire more research and action on the issues. They found that only 21% of news items on asylum and migration reference a refugee or migrant. Certain groups of people are even more invisible. Of the 21% of the news items that reference migrants or refugees, less than half (40%) of the articles quote them directly and that refugees and migrants are most often only identified by their displacement.

The findings of this research bring to the fore the question of personalities referenced for news stories on migration crisis. In this case, the researchers observed how migrants were not well represented in news articles. This angle to the migration debate assisted me in finding the extent to which the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* portals referenced the African migrants which had the capacity to influence perceptions about xenophobia in South Africa. This is because, by referencing African migrants, the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera online* outlets did not only give prominence to the migrants but also projected their views with the aim of fighting for their right.

Bursztyn, Egorov, Enikolopov and Petrova, (2019) studied the causal effect of social media on ethnic hate crimes and xenophobic attitudes in Russia using quasi-exogenous variation in social media penetration across cities. They observed that higher

penetration of social media led to more ethnic hate crimes, but only in cities with a high pre-existing level of nationalist sentiment. Consistent with a mechanism of coordination of crimes, they realized that the effects were stronger for crimes with multiple perpetrators. They implemented a national survey experiment and showed that social media persuaded young and low-educated individuals to hold more xenophobic attitudes, but did not increase their openness to expressing these views. Their results are consistent with a simple model of social leaning where penetration of social networks increases individuals' propensity to meet like-minded people.

This research is significant because of the use of social media in its data gathering and analysis which is not the case in most researches on migration crisis. The researchers observe how social media, which has a wider reach, could easily be used to spread hate among people who depend heavily of new media technology. This leads to the question of the possible changing phase of immigration crisis in the sense that the innovative nature of social media technology has the ability to either mobilize people to propagate hate crimes against foreigners or become a tool to combat hate crimes. It brings a certain dimension to research which was not explored by the current research. Bursztyn et al. (2019) however share some characteristics with the current research in the sense that both works looked at the prevalence nature of hate crimes among the youth and unemployed sections of society. In the case of the xenophobic attacks in South Africa, the hate crimes were committed mostly by poor or young South Africans who were struggling to find their place in the economic structure of the country and therefore fell prey to the propagation of hate by some persons through the media.

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

Severin and Tankard (2001) describe theories as universal accounts that define people's perceptions of how the world functions. These researchers observed that mass communication theories help in providing explanations about the process through which people learn from the media, the uses to which people put mass communication, the role of mass media in influencing people's values and views, and the effect of mass communication on the public. In accordance with the topic, the objectives and the use of qualitative content analysis in the systematic collection of empirical data, the study was situated within the theoretical framework of Framing Theory.

### **2.2.1 Framing Theory**

Since 2000, Framing Theory has become one of the most accepted theories within research in mass communication and political communication (Bryant & Miron 2004). According to Cissel (2012), Goffman (1974) was the first to give attention to framing as a form of communication. This fact was supported by Botan and Hazelton (2006) who place Goffman as the founder of Frame Analysis. The theory was put forth by Goffman in 1974 under the title of Frame Analysis. According to Goffman (1974), people interpret what is going on around them through their primary framework. Goffman's underlying assumption is that individuals are capable users of these frameworks on a daily basis, whether they are aware of them or not.

Framing may be considered as schemes of interpretation that enable individuals to detect, perceive, recognize and label occurrences or life experiences (Goffman, 1974) as cited in (Cissel, 2012).

Framing theory in communication research deals with the organization of media texts, and their effects (De Vreese, 2003). At the core of the theory, framing looks at how

events, issues or social players are organized in communicative texts and in the minds of individual audiences. Tankard (2001) offers a more specific definition within the context of media framing. He says that “A frame is a central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion and elaboration” (p. 100).

According to Entman (1993, p. 52), “To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.”

Entman (2004) offers a more significant definition by saying that framing concerns selecting and stressing some facets of events or issues, and making connections among them in order to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation and/or solution. It is therefore obvious that framing takes place whenever one chooses what to include or exclude as well as what to emphasize or not in a communicative message.

Frames can also be used to divert attention to or even omit select pieces of information, which is just as powerful as highlighting specific areas or characteristics of a story (Entman, 1993). The risk in understanding or ignoring information is that it limits the alternatives or knowledge the public is exposed to (Entnam, 1993). This makes framing an inevitable tool in news production whether it is done consciously or unconsciously. Framing is important also because the audience member makes use of news to form opinions about issues not within their own domain of experiences. It can therefore be said that the way the media frame politics has great influence on the way people value what is reported to them by the news media (Iyengar 1991). According to Entman

(2004, p. 14) “The most inherently powerful frames are those fully congruent with the schemas habitually used by most members of society.”

In this regard, the *effects of framing* are modified by the socio-cultural context of the media reporting and the audiences who are exposed to the news frames (Stromback & Aalberg, 2008). This means that in a way *framing* can also be traced back to particular socio-cultural settings. This is because journalists are generally part of the same socio-cultural context as their audiences. But there are other important variables apart from socio-culture. These are the political and the media systems, the context of an issue, the conditions of news production, among others.

The socio-cultural inclination of news is given a further explanation by Ofori-Birikorang (2009) who avers that many news articles receive substantial attention because events described in the story adopt the features of the local cultural images that may be positive, negative, providing a solution, or explaining an event. He further suggests that engagement in the social process may result in perceptions and biases that may be factual or incorrect. In this regard, members of the media use familiar frames to help the public make sense of the information they are being given (Bronstein, 2005). This means that frames allow the media to report a story that requires little or no effort by the public to understand because the consumers automatically identify the commonly used frames, which prevents journalists from having to explain new or unfamiliar information.

In this light, media frames have the ability to influence public opinion in the way they transfer information from a media source to social and individual awareness (Entman, 1993). These frames serve as the structures through which individuals understand and organize information (Reber & Berger, 2005; Scheufele, 2004). Ardevol-Abreu (2015),

in linking news frames to what one comes to accept as reality, indicates that frames draw attention to some aspects of reality at the expense of others. He therefore suggests that in order to define frames, one must take into account what is described and what is left out. Framing is said to be present not only in the mind of the journalist who writes the news report, but also in the news report that he builds, reaching the reader through a decoding process that is necessary to understand the news report and the reality to which it refers (Ardevol-Abreu, 2015).

Van-Dijk (1993) states that the media have always carried some form of social power which has the potential of controlling the minds of readers or viewers and through news production the media provide knowledge to their audiences and this becomes important in determining the direction of discourse and understanding. This direction of discourse could then be said to be how the media emphasizes some issues and deny others. This was well articulated by Gamson (1996) when he said, framing means to place emphasis on certain features of the news to the denial of others.

Framing Theory also stresses that media have the power to shape a story in a positive or negative manner, with the negative portrayals having a stronger influence on the audience than positive portrayals (Billings, 2004; Eastman & Billings, 2001). The theory recognizes that information can be presented in several ways, and that how it is organized and disseminated through the media impacts how the public understands and uses the information they have been given (Terkidsen & Schnell, 1997).

In all these, the individual plays a vital role in determining what to accept as news and what not to accept. This is supported by Higgins and Bargh (1987) and Jussim (1991) who observe that these factors do not by themselves negate the power of individuals to construct their own social realities.

### **2.2.2 Framing Migrants and Migration**

The media play a crucial role in responding to the opportunities and challenges presented by migration. By determining how news stories should be told, the media create narratives that influence public opinion. Stereotypical migration coverage promotes xenophobic tendencies. On the contrary, fair, objective and balanced representations of migrants promote awareness and enable citizens to take informed political decisions. The media is therefore an important player in the control of migration (Desmaris, 2017). In this regard, migration media coverage has consequences on public opinion because it influences how the public learns about migration, forms political judgments and take electoral decisions (Bail, 2012).

Firstly, as a source of information, the media determines how the public learns about migration. This is because by emphasizing some issues while excluding others, journalists influence what information is available in the public's mind (Kim, Scheurele and Shanahan, 2002). Frequently stating facts about global migration create a set of considerations that consumers can retrieve from their memory (Aldrich, Sullivan and Borgida, 1989). The fact that individuals depend on their immediate set of considerations rather than on their entire knowledge repertoire when questioned about specific issues (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987), media cues are important in shaping audience's knowledge about migration.

Second, the media have an influence on how the public forms political judgments. By paying attention to some issues above others, the media determine what audiences should prioritize (Baumgartner & Jones, 1993). Dunaway, Branton and Abrajano (2010) show that with increase in coverage of migration issues, the public is likely to rate migration as the 'most important problem' facing the country. News that highlight jobs promotes an economic understanding of migration while news on human rights or



responsibility activate moral considerations (Chong & Druckman, 2007). News with unfavorable depicting of migrants reinforces individuals' pre-existing ethnic or racial stereotypes (Domke, McCoy & Torres, 1999). Third, the media shape the public's political behavior. The media becomes a means by which migrant groups can participate in a country's public and political life, have a voice, make claims, project counter-narratives, develop counter-arguments on and foster debate about migration issues (Bloemraad, Grauw & Hamlin, 2015). A heightened coverage of migration increases public perception of its importance (Helbling, 2014), and the frames used to depict migrants impact the ways the public forms judgments on migration issues (Helbling, 2014).

The visibility of migrants in the media therefore is an important factor to consider while assessing the fairness of media reporting on migration. In general, the numbers of a migrant group within a country does not influence its visibility in news coverage. Although there is great variation in how media organizations report on migration, an important part of coverage associates migrants with particular forms of crime abuse, and describe them in a sensational manner (Commission Fédérale sur le Racisme, 2003). Besides the themes addressed in news coverage, the type of information provided also affects representations of migrants. When disclosing partial, out of context or inaccurate, information, newsmakers mislead audiences about the reality of migration.

The nature of the news delivered is itself highly impacted by the sources that journalists select (Ana, 2013). Men from migrant communities tend to be more often cited than women (Bail, 2012). Politicians, official figures and the police also constitute the most cited sources in media coverage of migrants, while refugees and migrants are less often solicited (Yalonis, Mogannam & Milton, 2005). Finally, the words used to qualify

immigrants and asylum seekers and the images selected to document their journey are key in shaping their representations. In particular, using words that tend to represent a group of individuals as uniform, derogatory statements that ascribe negative qualities to groups, and stereotypes that convey fixed and over-simplified images of migrants, convey negative and unfair representations of migrants (Desmaris, 2017). For instance, in South Africa, the tabloid *The Daily Sun* depict Zimbabweans as fake asylum-seekers, sellers of stolen goods, thieves, illegal farm workers and killers; Congolese as dealers and Ghanaians as crooks (Mbetga, 2014).

### **2.3 Summary**

This chapter reviewed some studies that were related to the coverage of xenophobia and migration crisis in South Africa and across the globe. Two of the studies were carried out in Ghana. The works, which were reviewed broadly under migration crisis, revealed that the media, mostly print media, presented stories which portrayed victims of migration crisis in a negative light and were simplistic in their analysis of migration crisis. As such the media fell short of informing readers of the true situation of issues as they occurred. Whilst some of the studies identified the location of a newspaper to be a contributing factor to why they published negative stories about migrants, others saw such bias as coming from structural reasons which have to do with the processes of news creation. Again, whilst some of the studies observed that similar media and political systems will produce similar news coverage on migrant issues, others found that the sources used in writing stories on xenophobia influenced the kind of reportage published on the subject. Some of the studies observed that news reportage depicting black migrants in a negative light could be the reason why some native South Africans carry false impressions about foreigners in South Africa, whilst other studies realized

that governments in countries with migration crisis did little to discourage their citizens from embarking on xenophobic attacks. Other research found that the viewpoints of most citizens in a migration crisis situation were shaped by the media constantly reporting on issues about migration in a certain way.

This chapter also focused on the theoretical framework on which this study was situated. This study was grounded in 'Framing Theory' which looks at the media's potential to influence social perception by determining what people think and how they think about them.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter describes the method used in obtaining appropriate data in relation to media framing of xenophobic attacks in South Africa. In broad terms, it discusses the method employed in collecting, analyzing and reporting the research findings. In specific terms the chapter presents information on the research approach, design, sampling technique, data collection, various content categorizations, units of analysis, and the data analytical tools employed in this study.

#### **3.1 Research Approach**

This research adopted the qualitative approach in gathering and analyzing data. Knowledge claims in qualitative approach are based on the constructivist perspectives or different meanings of individual experiences (Creswell, 2014). According to Braun and Clarke (2013), qualitative research captures the complexity, mass and contradiction that characterizes the real world, yet allows the researcher to make sense of patterns of meaning. Qualitative studies therefore interpret the qualities of social phenomena rather than predict relations between predefined variables (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Creswell (2014), in describing qualitative research, puts it as an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. Again, to Lindlof and Taylor (2002), qualitative research seeks to preserve and analyze the situated form, content and experience of social action, rather than subject it to mathematical or other formal transformations, which is the case of quantitative method. Qualitative approach is therefore used to explore new phenomena and to capture an

individual's thoughts, feelings, or interpretations of meaning and process (Given, 2008). Qualitative approach was used for the current research because it would not only involve numbers and provide a single answer but would treat context as important (Braun and Clarke, 2013). It was also the most appropriate because the research focused on the interpretation of data.

### **3.2 Research Design**

Research design is described by Creswell (2014) as a strategy, plan, and a structure of conducting a research project. The research design ensures that the researcher is able to answer the initial question as best as possible based on the evidence obtained. That is, in research, the issues of sampling, method of data collection, and design of questions are all secondary to the evidence the researcher needs to collect (Creswell, 2014).

The research design used for the study is qualitative content analysis. Content analysis is the logical process of categorizing qualitative data into clusters of similar units, or abstract categories to identify patterns and relationships between variables or themes (Given, 2008). Content analysis as a research method is a systematic and objective means of describing and quantifying phenomena (Downe-Wamboldt 1992; Sandelowski, 1995). In qualitative research, content analysis is explanatory, which involves close reading of text; the researcher recognizes that text is open to an individual explanation and that it reflects multiple meanings (Gheyle & Jacobs, 2017).

Tankard (2001) contemplates that content analysis is a method for analyzing message content in an orderly manner which is a tool for observing and analyzing message of certain communicators instead of using interviews or surveys or observation, which are equally useful tool for gathering data.

This therefore means that, for the researcher to identify the dominant frames, to determine how African migrants were depicted, and the tone of voice used in the coverage of the xenophobic attacks in South Africa, there is the need for the researcher to content-analyze the news and feature articles the researcher selected, concentrating on the paragraph as the unit of analysis and reducing large volumes of phrases and words into fewer categories to convey meaning (Cavanagh, 1997). This work looked at the content of two online news portals, *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* newspapers. Content analysis was therefore the best research design that enabled the researcher to analyze the text and the data the researcher collected.

Qualitative content analysis was selected for the study because the design is conducive in describing communication content, comparing media content to the real world, and in determining the root causes of events (Creswell, 2014). It was, therefore, expected to serve as a useful tool in analyzing how the South African version of xenophobia was framed by the *BBC News Online* and *Al Jazeera Online* portals. Content analysis therefore would help the researcher to collect the evidence needed to answer the research questions posed by the inquiry.

Wimmer and Dominick (2011) defined five purposes for the use of content analysis. The first purpose is that content analysis can be used to describe communication content to reveal what exists. Then content analysis can be used to test hypothesis. Thirdly, the design can be used to evaluate the image of a specific group of people in society. The fourth purpose is that it can be used to establish a starting point for studies of media effects. Finally, content analysis can be used to compare media content to the real world.

Content analysis is appropriate for the current research because it permitted the researcher to make descriptive analysis of the news stories in the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* on the xenophobic attacks in South Africa. By content analyzing the news stories on the xenophobic attacks, the researcher was able to describe the communication content to reveal what exists, which is the first purpose as indicated by Wimmer and Dominick (2011). The content analysis of the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* portals also evaluated the image of the South African people and the African immigrants in relations to the immigration crisis in South Africa. Again, results of this content analysis research will be a standard for comparison with real world issues to establish whether these online news representations are a true replication of the reality of societal incidences.

In this regard, content analysis is seen as the empirical study of communicated content which takes into consideration the meaning, context and intentions of the communication. This research would therefore make meaning of the content communicated by the online news portals. This would help identify the kinds of frames that dominated the coverage of the xenophobic attacks by the two online news portals. The analysis therefore went beyond ordinary word counts to include latent content analysis with a focus on discovering underlying meanings of the words or the content (Babbie, 2013; Morse & Field, 1995). The research followed empirical steps in revealing the concealed inherent meanings entwined into the text and thus bringing into focus the different dominant frames, determining the depiction of the African migrants and establishing the tone of voice used to capture the xenophobic attacks in South Africa.

The following steps of content analysis as outlined by Wimmer and Dominick (2010), guided this study: formulation of the research hypothesis or question, definition of the

population in question, selection of an appropriate sample from the population, selection and definition of a unit of analysis, construction of the categories of content to be analyzed, establishment of a quantification system, training of coders and pilot study, coding the content according to the established definitions, analysis of collected data and then conclusion. Some of the steps in the process of qualitative content analysis overlap with quantitative content analysis procedures (Tesch, 1990), but others remain unique to this method. Thus, depending on the objectives of the study, the content analysis may be more flexible or more standardized, but on the whole, it can be divided into steps. The steps are preparing the data, defining the unit of analysis, developing categories and a coding scheme, testing one's coding scheme on a sample of text, coding all the text, assessing your coding consistency, drawing conclusions from the coded data and then writing up the methods and findings in a report (Zhang & Wildermuth, 2005).

Content analysis includes thematic analysis of texts, indexing and identification of themes or major ideas in a document or sets of documents. These texts include field notes, newspaper articles, technical papers, or organizational memos (Wimmer & Dominick, 2010). This surely gives the essential Rationalization for the researcher's choice of online news portals specifically the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* news portals as the text of interest for the study.

According to Rose, Spinks and Canhoto (2015), content analysis is highly regarded in media and communication studies because it is “a flexible research approach that can be applied to a wide variety of text sources” (p. 7). Helped by the availability of computer software programs, content analysis can handle large amounts of data. The flexibility of content analysis allowed the researcher to collect and analyze data with more convenience. Krippendorff (2004) further argues that content analysis is an



unobtrusive research method, in that it can be used to analyze naturally-occurring data without the physical presence of the researcher at the time the event occurred. Based on this argument by Krippendorf (2014), it makes meaning for this research to have been able to analyze the content of previous issues of the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* news portals without the researcher accessing the online news at the time it was initially published.

The researcher selected issues of the *BBC and Al Jazeera Online* newspapers which were published between May 2008 and March 2020 being the period of the occurrence of the three separate xenophobic attacks in South Africa. As a result, content analysis may be helpful in reducing the problem of social desirability bias amongst respondents when researching sensitive topics (Harris 2001; Insch et al. 1997). Xenophobic attacks in South Africa is a sensitive matter and the research needed to rely on hard facts and not information that may be overstated or understated because of the assumption that the biased information may be more helpful or favorable to the research. In that regard, if the online portals reported bad and undesirable behavior about the xenophobic attacks in South Africa, that information is unchanged at the time of accessing the story and so credible data is available for accurate analysis and findings. In summing up, content analysis allowed for this research to have reliable data for objective analysis to be done in identifying the dominant frames, determining how the African migrants were depicted and establishing the tone of voice by the two online portals in reporting the xenophobic attacks in South Africa.

Krippendorf (2004) further makes a case for content analysis by claiming it can cope with large volumes of data. In the instance of this research a total of 95 news stories on xenophobic attacks in South Africa were selected. These articles produced 769 paragraphs for the analysis.

According to Zhang and Wildermuth (2005), the whole process of qualitative content analysis usually starts during the early stages of data collection. This early involvement in the analysis phase will help the researcher move back and forth between concept development and data collection, and may help direct the researcher's subsequent data collection toward sources that are more useful for addressing the research questions (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This is the approach I took during the course of gathering and analyzing data for this research, and it was rewarding in providing a rich interpretive perspective of the news stories analyzed. From the start of data collection, I ignored most of the stories that featured attacks on non-black African immigrants and attacks on native South Africans. However, as I became conversant with the stories, it became clear that could impact on the findings and thus there was a need to revisit those stories that were initially discarded and those stories gave the right perspective of the state of xenophobia in South Africa as covered by the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* newspapers.

### **3.3 Sampling**

Sampling involves the selection of a segment of a population to represent the entire population (Amendahe, 2005). Sampling allows a researcher to study a relatively small number of units in lieu of the target population and to obtain data that are representative of the whole target population (Amendahe, 2005).

It is therefore important to use sound judgement in selecting the manner of obtaining data and from whom or where the data will be acquired, since no amount of analysis can make up for improperly collected data (Bernard et al., 1986). Palys (2008) observed that one cannot determine one best sampling strategy because the one which is best will

depend on the context in which the researchers are working and the nature of their research objectives. This means that the researcher is free to choose the most appropriate technique that would give the researcher the best and right results to satisfy the inquiry of the research.

Lindlof and Taylor (2002) also avers that the effectiveness of a sampling strategy depends on how it enables researchers to collect data without wasting time and resources. This means making sure that the sampled texts are the ones needed to answer the research questions. As the present study was conducted within a research project targeting specifically identifying the dominant frames, determining how the African migrants were framed and establishing the tone of voice used by the two online portals in reporting on xenophobia in South Africa, the sampling method was designed to match this objective. The sampling adopted was purposive. Because xenophobia in South Africa has recurred three times, I selected news articles related to the attacks from May 2008 when it first occurred to March 2020 just after the last occurrence of the attacks. I searched the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* news portals with the most effective search engines. The terms used were: xenophobia, African nationals in South Africa, immigration, foreigner or alien, discrimination, and hate crimes. After examining the results, additional searches were conducted using the names of the countries from which the majority of African immigrants in South Africa came from (Nigeria, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe) together with the phrase South Africa xenophobia.

The search results were subsequently studied (reading through the title, the story lead and sometimes the story) to determine whether the item met the above-mentioned content criteria. After identifying the news articles that matched the criteria, the final

sample of online news and feature articles totaled 95 items: 32 from *BBC* and 63 from *Al Jazeera Online* newspapers.

According to Patton (1990) the “logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in-depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, thus the term purposeful sampling” (p. 169).

Schwandt (1997), cited in Lindlof and Taylor (2002), indicated that cases are selected because the researcher has sound reason to believe that ‘what goes on in there’ is important to obtaining understanding of some concepts or processes, or to testing and explaining some established theory. Purposive sampling was therefore used because it presented the researcher the opportunity to gather the required data for the realization of the objectives of the study. It also allowed the researcher to test the theories used and also to understand the concepts related to these theories.

To satisfy the needs of the research, and answer the questions posed by the research, the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* newspapers were purposively selected from among the existing online portals and analyzed to identify the dominant frames, to establish how the Africans migrants were depicted and establish the tone used by the online portals in reporting on xenophobic attacks in South Africa. Both media outlets were selected based on their dominance in the news industry globally which makes them a voice in world affairs. The *BBC* is adjudged the most influential western news organization in the world (Westcott & Mukherjee (2011). *Al Jazeera* is one of the largest news organizations in the world with a Pan-Arabic perspective that paved the way for the spread of the ‘Arab Spring’ (Howard & Hussain, 2013).

### **3.4 Data Collection Method**

The data collection method used for this research was document analysis. Bowen (2009) observes that document analysis is a methodical procedure for reviewing or assessing documents. Document analysis, like other analytical methods in qualitative research, requires that data be scrutinized and construed in order to stimulate meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Bowen (2009) affirmed that documents that may be used for systematic assessment as part of a study took a variety of forms which include advertisements, agendas, attendance registers, minutes of meetings, manuals, and background papers. Others include books and brochures, diaries and journals, printed outlines of events and programs, and various public records. Scrapbooks and photo albums can also supply documentary material for research purposes (Bowen, 2009). These types of documents are found in libraries, historical society offices, newspaper archives, and institutional files.

In this study, the type of documents selected for analysis was news and feature articles of the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera* Online newspapers published on the xenophobic attacks in South Africa from May 2008 to March 2020.

#### **3.4.2 Data Collection Procedure**

The data collection technique used in this study was qualitative content analysis. Data collection from the two online newspapers focused on identifying the dominant frames, determining how the African immigrants were depicted, and establishing the tone of voice used by the two online portals in covering the xenophobic attacks in South Africa. With regards to 'frame analysis', Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) identified two possible approaches to content analyzing frames in news: the inductive and deductive. The inductive approach involves analyzing a news story with an open view to attempt

to reveal the array of possible frames, beginning with very loosely defined preconceptions of these frames (Gamson, 1992). This approach can detect the many possible ways in which an issue can be framed, but this method is labor intensive, often based on small samples, and can be difficult to replicate.

A deductive approach involves predefining certain frames as content analytic characteristics to verify the extent to which these frames occur in the news. This approach makes it necessary to have a clear idea of the kinds of frames likely to be in the news, because the frames that are not defined a priori may be over looked. This approach can be replicated easily, can cope with large samples, and can easily detect differences in framing between media (e.g. Television verses press) and within media (e.g. differences in news programs or newspapers verses tabloid style news media). The inductive approach was used in this study.

The researcher first engaged the text through multiple readings of every news story that was sampled to obtain a general understanding of the contents while notes were taken at every stage. Then a close reading of the text was done in a more detailed form to identify the “discursive strategies” that were latent in the text (Bertrand & Hughes, 2005; Feldstein & Acosta-Alzuru, 2003). The researcher identified the recurring issues or topics that emerged from the reading and these themes were put into categories. These categories were made up of the predetermined frames of Neuman, Just and Crigler (1992) and Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) which are Conflict, Human Interest, Economic Consequence, Morality, and Responsibility frames.

Saunders (2006) asserted that for the reader to understand the media employment of standardized representations, he or she needs to engage in active interpretations. As a result of this claim, the researcher re-read the stories taking note of the thematic

categories to further obtain a deeper interpretation of the themes (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). This was done by looking for how they were related and the distinctions between them (Gavrilos, 2003). The outcome of this was that latent cultural meanings and significance embodied in the text were extracted. Through this process the researcher took the analysis of the news stories beyond the manifest meaning of the text. The analysis thus was in-depth, intensely contextual, and more culturally positioned.

According to Van Gorp (2007) frames are embedded in media content during the writing process, when journalists construct the news message in such a way that many elements refer to that frame. He observed that each frame that a journalist has applied in a text can be represented as a “frame package,” a cluster of logically structured devices that function as an identity equipment for a frame. Therefore, a major part of a frame analysis is the reconstruction of these frame packages. Such a frame package is composed of the manifest devices and the manifest and latent reasoning devices (Clark and Buan, 2013). I looked for the manifest meaning in the news articles by looking at the various framing devices, such as word choice, metaphors, exemplars, descriptions, arguments, and visual images that point to the same core idea. These devices are held together under the heading of a central organizing theme.

The reasoning devices, explicit and implicit statements, which deal with justifications, causes, and consequences in a temporal order (Gamson & Lasch, 1983; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989) are related to the four framing functions which Entman (1993) distinguished, namely the promotion of a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation. These latent and manifest meanings of words and statements helped the researcher to code the selected paragraphs under the predetermined themes of Neuman et al (1992) and Semetko and

Valkenburg (2000) which are Conflict, Human Interest, Economic Consequence, Morality and Responsibility.

### **3.4.3 Unit of Analysis**

Wimmer and Dominick (2003) point out that a unit of analysis in a written content could be a single word or symbol, a theme or an entire story or article. These writers maintained that the unit of analysis should be defined in a way that would make it clear as to what should or should not be included in the study. The units or content coded for this study consisted of paragraphs of every *straight news story* and feature/opinion articles which were on the subject of xenophobic attacks in South Africa between May 2008 and March 2020. News stories in this research are operationalized as the type of journalistic articles that reports simply the facts, stick to the issues, and employing language that is precise and straight to the point. Feature articles, on the other hand, employ a lot of background exploration of the issues under discussion and broaden the conversation in an attempt to analyze concepts and sometimes bring in the writer's personal judgements on issues. The paragraph here is defined as a unit of the news or feature article that carries a specific information which is related to the objectives of the current research.

The current research adopted the predetermined frames by Neuman, Just and Crigler (1992) and Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) which are Conflict, Human Interest, Economic Consequence, and Responsibility frames. The conflict frame refers to contention between persons, groups or institution in society; Responsibility frame looks at attributing the cause of violence to certain persons or institutions in society. Economic consequence frames observe that conflict in society is due to struggle over limited resources, and Human Interest frames talks about statements that provoke emotional feelings about issues. Morality frames look at observing events in society



from religious or moral point of view. The data gathered from the research were therefore coded using indicators derived from the analysis of the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online news* publications which pointed to the predetermined frames above and were used in answering research question one.

The researcher systematically studied the content of the articles of the two online portals in order to categorize them under the predetermined frames of Neuman et al. (1992) and Semetko and Valkenburg (2000). Thus, any straight news and feature article related to the xenophobic attacks in South Africa from May 2008 to March 2020, were included in the sample and coded. The data for the study were collected by a coding guide. A coding guide was developed based on the predetermined frames of Neuman et al. (1992) and Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) and used to monitor the coding of the identified stories in the online news portals. To help in the coding process, some content categories were created based on the research questions.

To answer research question two, I read through a third of the data intensively, and categories were created based on the interpretations and themes that were identified (Pickle, Quinn, & Brown, 2002). I identified two major frames which are African migrants as 'Targets' and as "Competitors' of the local South African.

'Targets of frustrated South Africans' suggests that the African immigrant is seen as a person who bears the blame for the economic hardship the poor South African was going through. The frame of 'Competitors of the local South African' observes that the African Immigrant is seen as a person who struggles with the local South African for the limited resources of the land.

To satisfy the third research question, stories were coded for negativity, positivity and neutrality of tone by reportages of the two online newspapers. To determine the direction of the story as to whether they were positive, negative or neutral, I adopted the definition used by Chaudhary (2001) in his analysis of negative news in Western and Third world newspapers. Negative reportage included negative stories about stereotyping of migrants, physical attacks on African migrants in South Africa and destruction of properties of migrants. It includes deliberate actions of local South Africans that have caused personal injuries or destruction to life and property, and the responsiveness to destruction relief. These categories were covered with articles such as forcefully ejecting migrants from their homes, displacing migrants, attacking them publicly, burning them alive, destroying their stores and houses, and stealing their properties. These issues were subjectively and contextually defined and determined because the discourse before, during and after a xenophobic attack can be positive too depending on how it is depicted. Positive news, according to Chaudhary (2001), is defined as solutions to problems, relief efforts for persons experiencing difficulties and threats to their lives. Others include a drop in threats and risk to lives and improved safety. The neutral news was defined as stories that involved both positive and negative elements in an equal measure or neither positive nor negative elements exist.

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

After the document analysis, I employed thematic analysis for analyzing the data gathered. According to Braun and Clark (2012), thematic analysis is a method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a dataset. Through focusing on meaning *across* a dataset, thematic analysis allows the researcher to see and make sense of collective or shared meanings

and experiences. Thematic analysis also presents itself as a sense-making method for reducing and managing large volumes of data without losing the context (Lapadat, 2010). Thematic analysis is also for getting close to or actually submerging oneself in the data, for organizing, summarizing and focusing the interpretation (Lapadat, 2010). The data was analyzed using the predetermined frames of Neuman et al. (1992) and Semetko and Valkenburg (2000).

### **3.6 Trustworthiness**

Commenting on issues relating to validity and reliability, Creswell (2014) observes that validity in qualitative research does not carry the same connotation it does in quantitative research. He asserts that in qualitative research, “validity is used to determine whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, or the readers account” (Creswell, 2014, p.201). For their part, Cohen and Crabtree (2006) remark that validity might be addressed through richness, depth, honesty and scope of data achieved, the participants approached, the extent of triangulation and the disinterestedness or objectivity of the researcher. To ensure trustworthiness of this research, I employed Creswell’s ‘Clarifying Researcher Bias’ and ‘Rich, Thick Description.’

In clarifying my bias, I admit that I strongly resent how black African immigrants were treated in the xenophobic attacks by black South Africans, and that could have played into my analysis of the issues. This was taken into consideration during the data analysis which made me ensure that I stuck to the issues dispassionately and took out my biases on the subject of xenophobia in South Africa.

I further ensured trustworthiness in my research work through adhering to a ‘rich and thick description’ of events as stated by Creswell (2014). This would enable readers to transfer information on the xenophobic attacks in South Africa to other settings and determine whether the findings can be transferred due to similarity of characteristics.

Again, in observing trustworthiness of my research, I employed peer review or debriefing as put forward by Creswell (2014). In that regard, I solicited the help of an individual, a colleague researcher, who kept me honest. My peer asked hard questions about my methods, ensuring that the processes I followed were proper. Again, the peer ensured that the meanings I gave to certain information from the documents I analysed were correct and that the interpretations I gave were also consistent with factual reality. The peer also provided me with an opportunity for catharsis by sympathetically listening to my feelings on given issues. Both the peer and the researcher kept written accounts of the sessions, called “peer debriefing sessions.”

### **3.7 Summary**

The focus of this chapter was the systematic procedures used in collecting data for this study. The most relevant data gathering approach used for the study was qualitative content analysis, since the study primarily examined contents of online newspaper publications that were biased. The chapter also used qualitative content analysis to gather data and the articles for the analysis were sampled purposively. The chapter also presented the unit of analysis which was the paragraphs of the news and feature articles. The chapter then presented the data analysis method which was thematic analysis that allowed the research to discover and make sense of collective or shared meanings and experiences.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 4.0 Introduction

This research investigated how *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* newspapers covered the series of xenophobic attacks in South Africa. The research set out to identify the dominant frames used by the two online portals to cover the xenophobic attacks in South Africa and determine how the African migrants are frame. The research also investigated the tone of voice used by the online portals in reporting the attacks.

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study. The data were analyzed using paragraphs of the news and feature articles in relations to Framing Theory and related literature.

In all, ninety-five news stories on xenophobic attacks in South Africa were analyzed, thematized and subjected to interpretation. The following are the objectives of the study:

RO1: To identify the dominant frames used by the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* newspapers in reporting the xenophobic attacks in South Africa.

RO2: To determine how the two online portals depict the African immigrants in South Africa.

RO3: To establish the tone of voice the two online newspapers use in referring to the South Africans as players in the xenophobic attacks.

#### 4.1 Research Question 1: What are the Dominant Frames used by the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* Newspapers in Reporting the Xenophobic Attacks in South Africa?

The research question sought to identify the dominant frames used in reporting xenophobic attacks in South Africa from May 2008 to March 2020. The content analysis of the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* newspapers reveals some important information pertaining to the themes and patterns found within the online portals. The data was coded under the predetermined themes of Conflict, Economic Consequence, Morality, Human Interest and Responsibility as determined by Neuman et. al. (1992) and Semetko and Valkenburg (2000). The figures in Table 1 are from calculating the codes for each theme as presented by the two online newspapers. The findings are presented in Table 1:

**Table 1: Frequency Distribution of Dominant Frames by *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* Newspapers.**

Category	BBC Online	Al Jazeera Online	Over all Total
Conflict	48 (17.9%)	83 (16.6%)	131 (17.0%)
Economic Consequence	72 (26.9%)	70 (14.0)	142 (18.5%)
Morality	48 (17.9)	33 (6.6%)	81 (10.5%)
Human Interest	59 (22.0%)	123 (24.6%)	182 (23.7%)
Responsibility	41 (15.3%)	192 (38.3%)	233 (30.3%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>268 (100%)</b>	<b>501 (100%)</b>	<b>769 (100%)</b>

**Source: Fieldwork Data, 2019/20**

##### 4.1.1 Responsibility Frame

The frame of Responsibility emerged the highest of the five frames used by the online newspapers to cover xenophobic attacks in South Africa from May 2008 to March 2020. This theme involves the use of words that attributes responsibility for the

outbreak of xenophobic attacks in South Africa to the state machinery and people of South Africa. This frame reflects the thinking that South African authorities are not doing enough to prevent or control the outburst of xenophobic attacks in South Africa, but are rather inciting xenophobia through their utterances. This theme presented a picture of how politicians and state officials in South Africa fueled xenophobia as cover up for their inability to create prosperity for their people. Under this theme, politicians were perceived as persons who had failed to deliver on their promises to the poor South African and therefore diverted attention of their failure by inciting xenophobia.

The overall total number of codes for this theme was 233 representing 30.3% of the number of codes for the four themes. *BBC Online* had 41 codes representing 15.3% of *BBC* codes whilst *Al Jazeera Online* had 192 codes representing 38.3% of *Al Jazeera* codes. These figures were arrived at by coding the paragraphs in the selected news and feature articles that were related to the objectives of the study in relation to the predetermined themes of Neuman et al. (1992) and Semetko and Valkenburg (2000). The number of codes were then calculated for each online portal.

The extract below from an *Al Jazeera Online* article, revealed how most South African politicians—government and opposition—altogether masterminded the xenophobic violence in South Africa through their utterances: [https:// www. aljazeera. com/indepth/opinion/south-africa-pariah-africa-190909145153827.html](https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/south-africa-pariah-africa-190909145153827.html)

Such violence is neither new to the country, nor surprising. For years, South African politicians have found it more convenient to feed xenophobia rather than address it, to blame foreigners for poverty and the absence of basic services than to admit to their own failures to provide for the needs of the impoverished majority. Today the South African economy is on the verge of recession and the political elite needs to wash its hands.

This political strategy, while effective in distracting the electorate in the short term, has had a devastating impact on the national psyche. It appears that the South African nation is increasingly embracing Afrophobia, disregarding its own history of oppression and African solidarity.

Many South Africans and their politicians who fuel xenophobic sentiments refuse to acknowledge that many of these migrants have fled desperate, life-threatening, conflict-ridden environments and are simply seeking a safe and dignified life in South Africa. There

Seems to be a concerted effort to avoid discussion about the pervasive economic, climatic, social and political problems driving migration within sub-Saharan Africa and the need to show solidarity towards those seeking safety and sustenance for themselves and their families

Mhaka & Dadoo, 2019, Sept. 10 - *Al Jazeera Online*

In the extract above, politicians in South Africa are seen as persons who have failed to create prosperity for South Africans, and, to cover up their failure, had diverted attention by inciting the attacks on foreign migrants. In this regard, they continually made statements that stirred the populace to rise up against migrants, blaming African migrants for being the cause of the plight of the poor South African. Even opposition and local politicians were engaged in such acts because they wanted to canvas for support and be seen in the eyes of the poor that they had the issues of the poor South African at heart. The result was that they stirred South Africans to rise up in violence against migrants.

This extract contributed to framing xenophobic attacks in South Africa as a creation of the politician and the state apparatus. This framing of the attacks would make the



audience understand that the attacks had a hidden agenda of freeing politicians of their responsibility to the South African.

The following *BBC Online* extract, which is an assessment of the xenophobic attacks by some opinion leaders in South Africa, is an example of the frame of Responsibility:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-49797720>  
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-49797720>

But the economy is not growing fast enough to tackle rising unemployment, which stands at nearly 30%, and many believe that xenophobia is, fundamentally, a political problem.

This is about who governs the townships now and in the future," said Prof Landau.

What we see is protection rackets replacing formal government - gangster politics. Whether they whip up xenophobic protests or... other violent protests, this is done by local politicians to bring attention and to boost their own political careers."

In Katlehong, the idea that politicians were exploiting the tensions to increase their profile and popularity found plenty of support.

Everyone wants a piece of the cake, and it's a small cake. Politicians, migrants, everyone. The have-nots will always feel the brunt of everything. They say it's criminal but we can see it is political," said community organiser Papi Papi, who expressed concern that a forthcoming local election would trigger more violence.

African Centre for Migration & Society, 2019, Sept 26 - *BBC News Online*

In the extract above, a community organizer in South Africa informed that xenophobia was as a result of the poor performance of the South African economy which had failed

to address issues that affected the poor South African. In this regard, he showed how the politician, whose duty it was to create prosperity for the South African poor, had failed in that duty. That notwithstanding the politicians still sought a way to legitimize themselves in the eyes of the populace, hence inciting the poor and frustrated South African to rise up against African immigrants whom they accuse as being the cause of the poor story of the average South African.

The extract above gives a manifest meaning of the frame of Responsibility by creating the impression that the xenophobic attacks in South Africa was an orchestration of the political hierarchy, both government and opposition, as a cover up for their failure to create prosperity for poor South Africans. By this extract, *BBC Online* made the audience to see the treachery of the politician thereby helping the audience to identify those who caused the insurgence of xenophobic violence in South Africa.

The following *BBC Online* extract also presents a manifest meaning of ‘Responsibility’ in the xenophobic attacks in South Africa. In the extract, the reporter accuses the political leadership of South Africa for stirring the attacks to make up for their failure in creating prosperity for South Africans:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7408367.stm>

I think this may be orchestrated from quite high up as there is great rivalry between those who support President Thabo Mbeki and those who support Jacob Zuma.

While it is undoubtedly true that some of the frustrations that have fueled xenophobic violence are rooted in socioeconomic inequality and high unemployment levels among South Africans (between 40 and 65 percent according to various statistics), the president’s remarks in the current context are certainly unhelpful and possibly inflammatory.

BBC, 2008, May 19 – *BBC News Online*

In the extract above, the President of South Africa was accused of laying the blame for the poor economic output in South Africa on the black migrants who were believed to have occupied the economic spaces that should have been occupied by the South African. This statement, according to the story was inflammatory and had the tendency to incite violence against migrants. This extract, like others, presents the frame of Responsibility which demonstrates how the political leadership of the state incites attacks on foreign migrants. This portrays politicians in South Africa as persons who are responsible for causing xenophobic violence as a means of keeping up their relevance in South African politics.

This viewpoint agrees with Corbu and Buturoiu (2017) who studied migration crisis in Europe and found out that most news articles portrayed migrants in a more positive light and laid responsibility of the crisis on the European Union. In this regard, it would be understood why most articles published by *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* portals presented the South African government and politicians as the ones fueling the xenophobic attacks, thereby presenting the migrants in a positive light. In further exposing the treachery of the South African politician, Desai (2008) observed that “What becomes clear though is that by the time of the May 2008 attacks a powerful xenophobic culture had been created and state organs were geared to hounding African immigrants” (p. 6). This fact was explained further by Claudia, Finotelli and Sciortino (2009) and Magnani (2011) who informed that at the political level, immigration comprises a common field of contestation, as political actors and parties attempted to benefit from conflicting social ideas and public discussion. This shows the extent to which the South African political class was portrayed by the online portals to have stirred xenophobia in order to benefit from it.

#### 4.1.2 Human Interest Frame

Most of the articles published by the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* newspapers had some indication of the 'Human Interest' nature of the xenophobic attacks in South African. This Human Interest issue was reminiscent of the one the black South Africans faced themselves while under the apartheid regime. The total codes for the 'Human Interest' theme was 182 representing 23.7% of the overall total codes for the four themes. *Al Jazeera Online* came up with 123 codes representing 24.6% of codes for *Al Jazeera* whilst *BBC Online* had 59 codes representing 22.0% of codes for *BBC*. Paragraphs on the news and feature stories for the research were coded under the theme of Human Interest and the codes were calculated to give the figures as presented. The following are excerpts from the two online portals to demonstrate the frame of 'Human Interest.'

*BBC Online* newspaper published an article in which it recounted the traumatic experience some children in South Africa went through. In the following extract, the head teacher of a school talked about the experiences of some of his pupils in relation to the xenophobic attacks:

Twelve of our children are in refugee camps," says headmaster Pieter Joubert.

Some have seen ugly things that no adult should have to witness. We've had people burned out of their homes. I don't think the students will get over their experiences easily.

One child drew a man in a burning house, screaming for help.

Another wrote: "I am hated. I am hated. I am hated... What did we do to deserve this?"

The picture showed broken hearts. In another drawing, a speech bubble comes from a stick man, saying: "U will die, u people."

Twelve-year-old Carmel, whose uncle was shot during the violence, says: "We are not safe anymore even in our own houses. We just don't know what to do. When you hear a noise, you think that maybe they are coming for you.

BBC, 2019, Sept. 11 - *BBC News Online*

The excerpt above showed how the attacking South Africans had no respect for human life which made them demonstrate extreme violence at immigrants. The report told of how children had to watch the brutal killing of some persons without the attackers caring about its effects on the children. It was also pathetic to see how the South African burned people alive in very bizarre of circumstances that did not only take the dignity of the victims away but also subjected them to intense torture before they died.

This extract presents a manifest meaning of the frame of 'Human Interest' by exposing the carnage that was demonstrated in the xenophobic attacks. This would therefore provoke emotions in the audience and make them and make them abhor the attacks that took place in South Africa.

The following extract from an *Al Jazeera Online* story shows how some foreign nationals are tortured to death as if they are not humans, exposing the Human Interest concerns of the crisis:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/02/foreign-shop-owner-set-alight-south-africa-150227061954428.html>

Petrol was poured over the store that the victim was in, and he caught fire," Makhubela said. In 2008, more than 60 people were killed in a series of attacks on foreign nationals across the country. At the time, a Mozambican national was burnt alive on the streets of township. Even

as the image of his harrowing death was published widely, drawing international Condemnation, no one was ever charged with the crime.

Two years ago, a Somali man died after being beaten, pelted with stones and dragged through the streets of Port Elizabeth. The attack was captured on a mobile device and shared on social media, prompting international outrage.

Patel, 2016, Feb. 27 - *Al Jazeera Online*

In the extract above, the reporter described terrible scenes and created horrid images in the minds of the reader as lives were taken mercilessly, disregarding the dignity and sanctity of human life. The extract revealed that a foreign migrant was petrol-bombed in his house which set the house ablaze and killed him in the flames. The extract presented another story in which a Mozambican was burnt alive on the streets in the full glare of everybody; there was also the pelting of a foreigner with stones and dragging him through the streets till he lost his life.

This extract, together with others, presents the frame of 'Human Interest' as demonstrated by the South African. This frame helps the audience to see the series of xenophobic attacks in South Africa as a brutal act which tells of how inhumane some South African could be to fellow blacks.

The following extract from a *BBC Online* news article advances the conversation of human interest by presenting yet another bizarre scene. In the scene, mostly foreign migrants are slaughtered on the streets of South Africa:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-15076486>

Some foreigners were necklaced - set alight with petrol doused tyres around their necks - and their shops were burned down.

Mostly Somalis, Zimbabweans and Mozambicans were targeted during the violence which left more than 100,000 foreigners displaced and at least 60 people dead.

When they came in 2008 my brother and I were sleeping inside the shop, he was in another room. A group of men came in, shot him and burned the shop down - I was lucky to escape," Mr Haji recalls.

Fihlani, 2011, Nov. 10 - *BBC News Online*

In the extract above, a foreign migrant narrated how two brothers sleeping in their store after work were attacked by some local South Africans, killing one instantly. The other escaped and the house was burnt to the ground. This was the scene that characterized the 2008 xenophobic attacks such that over 60 people were killed with thousands more displaced. They also presented stories of a Mozambican who was burnt alive on the streets whilst the attackers went about seeking for more victims.

This excerpt shows how the xenophobic violence against black immigrants in South Africa is framed as a 'Human Interest' issue that provoked sentiments in the audience against the South African. This frame intends to make the audience abhor the attacks and see them as inhumane and therefore needing condemnation.

Framing xenophobia in South Africa as a 'Human Interest' issue corroborates with Harris (2002, p. 169) who argues that, "*prejudice and violence continue to mark contemporary South Africa*". In this regard, Harris observes that the South African society was gradually being defined by brutality and provoking human interest concerns, a fact which was captured by the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* newspapers in their framing of the South African xenophobic attacks. Harris (2002, p. 169) contends that, 'even the most horrific acts of aggression do not stand as isolated exemplars of a 'thing' called violence but cast ripples that configure lives in the most dramatic of ways,

affecting constructs of identity in the present, the hopes and the potentialities of the future, and even renditions of the past.’

These attacks of human-interest dimensions, according to Donham (2011) had been associated with the South African past and their present and promises to continue into the future. This perception of violence on the part of some South Africans was fueled by the publications of the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* newspapers through their publications. This makes the audience member accept that the attacks were a human-interest issue that needed to be dealt with urgently. This fact is supported by (Iyengar 1991) who stresses the inevitability of framing as a tool in news production. He believes that, whether consciously or unconsciously, framing the xenophobic attacks in South Africans as a ‘human-interest’ issue makes the audience form opinions about the South African xenophobia as an act of brutality. It can therefore be said that the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* framing the politics of the local South African as a human-interest issue has the potential of inspiring the need for the international community to intervene and prevent such occurrences.

#### **4.1.3 Economic Consequence Frame**

The theme of Economic Consequence emerged the third frame used by the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* newspapers in covering xenophobic attacks in South Africa from May 2008 to March 2020. This theme involves the use of words that demonstrate how economic reasons were seen as the cause of the xenophobic attacks in South Africa during the said period. This theme reflects the thinking that South Africans are not getting jobs because the jobs are not available and the South Africans are in strict competition with the black immigrants for the few jobs available.



Economic Consequence frame attained 142 thematic codes with a percentage of (18.5%) of the overall total number of codes for the four themes as illustrated in Table 1. *BBC Online* recorded the highest thematic codes for this frame with 72 codes representing (26.9%) of *BBC* codes whilst *Al Jazeera Online* recorded 70 codes representing 14.0% of *Al Jazeera* codes. Some of the indicators that made reference to the frame of Economic Consequence are: foreigners stealing jobs, poor economy, xenophobia common in shanty towns, attacks rampant at CBD, etc. Below are excerpts from the two online portals that demonstrate the frame of Economic Consequence.

The following *Al Jazeera Online* extract explains how black South Africans find themselves poor even after apartheid. The writer insists that after the white South African leaves the Central Business District (CBD), the black South African fails to take over, a situation the foreign migrant has exploited. The extract is giving a latent meaning of 'Economic Consequence' of xenophobia:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/failed-decolonisation-south-african-cities-leads-violence-190910123546431.html>

In South Africa, foreigners occupying the vacuum created by the retreat of the state become the focus of violence because they are portrayed as having interrupted the black succession of a prosperous Central Business district (CBD) and having caused the deterioration of the space. The argument goes that the exclusion of black South Africans from the CBD was supposed to have ended after the fall of apartheid; instead a new type of foreigner is standing in between the attackers and that fantasy.

The same violence that treated black South Africans as intruders in a "naturally white" space, is visited on "intruding" foreigners. This is the argument that policy makers endorse when they imply that excluding

foreigners from South Africa will resolve crime and violence in the cities their policies abandon.

Nyabola, 2019, Sept. 11 - *Al Jazeera Online*

The extract above accounted for how foreign migrants were advancing economically whilst the locals South Africans were suffering. The narrator recalled how the CBD, representing the centre of wealth in Johannesburg, was controlled by white South Africans. With the abolishing of apartheid, the blacks were disappointed that the wealth was not transferred to them. Black immigrants rather replaced former white owners and were prospering in the economic space. The South Africans therefore believed that the violence would stop when the foreigners leave. This extract, like many others, depicts the frame of 'Economic Consequence' by presenting the argument that the South African poor was not able to take advantage of the prosperity of South Africa but have allowed the foreigner to do so. This frame by *Al Jazeera Online* would make the audience appreciate the unfairness in the attacks against the African immigrant since it portrays the poor South African as unprepared to take control of the economic space in South Africa.

The following *Al Jazeera Online* article presents the story of how embittered South African drivers demonstrated against decision to employ black immigrant drivers:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-49628655>

The attacks started after South African lorry drivers staged a nationwide strike to protest against the employment of foreign drivers.

The country has become a magnet for migrants from other parts of Africa because it has one of the continent's biggest and most developed economies.

But there is also high unemployment in South Africa and some people feel foreigners are taking their jobs.

Page, 2015, Nov. 24 - *Al Jazeera Online*

The extract above explains why South Africans rose up against foreigners. The narrative goes that, as the indigenes struggle to secure employment, it was clear employers preferred the migrants who were prepared to work for less salary, as such when most transport industries employed immigrant drivers, the indigenous South African drivers felt they were denied their right and therefore went on a demonstration. This extract demonstrates the 'Economic Consequence' frame in South Africa since the cause of the attacks were as a consequence of an economic struggle between the poor South African and the African migrant. This was also the reason why the South African would make scapegoats of the African immigrant as targets of the frustration of the South African. This frame by the *BBC Online* helps the audience to appreciate the fact that the attacks against the migrants were unnecessary and that African immigrants were only used to cover up for failure of the locals to secure or create their own jobs.

In the following extract from an *Al Jazeera Online* article, some economic migrants who are escaping xenophobic violence in South Africa, have found themselves cramped in camps:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2015/04/fear-distrust-victims-regroup-south-africa-150429112904392.html>

There is a lot of confusion here. No one in the camps for internally displaced people understands how they pose a threat to South Africans - nor why they're being killed for trying to make a living.

Foreigners living in the cramped camps are ordinary barbers, cashiers, security guards, and corner-store owners unaccustomed to being targets of hatred and violence.

"We are just creating so when they say we are taking [jobs] from them, they are totally wrong," said Amuri Djuma, 32, from the Democratic Republic of Congo.

"Even if we leave there still won't be jobs in South Africa. They will still be asking for jobs."

Essa, 2015, April 29 - *Al Jazeera Online*

In the extract above, Amuri Djuma, a 32-year-old from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) wondered why foreign migrants were targets of the anger of local South Africans accusing them of stealing their jobs. He wondered this accusation because most of the migrants were self-employed, doing their own businesses and therefore did not believe the attacks were because they were stealing jobs from the local population. He went on to indicate that the South Africans would still be looking for jobs even if the immigrants left, which gave the latent meaning that the South Africans were either not diligent enough to create their own jobs or were not qualified to be absorbed by the many industries in the country.

By presenting the frame of 'Economic Consequence', the news articles present the xenophobic attacks as a cover up for the inadequacies of the local South African in taken advantage of the prosperity of South Africa. This is because the poor disposition of the South African to find jobs or create their own jobs goes to show how the reasoning, that the African immigrants were making their lives miserable, is not true and that they are using the immigrants to burn out their frustration for not prospering in a booming economy.

This framing of the xenophobic attacks in South Africa as ‘Economic Consequence’ is in agreement with Harris (2001) who observe that the foreign African is used as a scapegoat, someone to blame for social ills and personal frustrations. This was also attested to by Haslam and Holland (2012), Larsen, Krumov, Ommundsen and van der Veer (2009), and Philo (2013) who postulated that at the societal level, under such economic and social insecurity, immigrants are blamed for causing economic hardship because they are seen as contributing to heightened unemployment and struggle for limited resources of South Africa. The *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* portals therefore framed the xenophobic attacks to reflect the desire of the poor South African to claim control over the job market and retail business in South Africa. By this, the two online news portals portrayed the attacks as a means of expressing the South African’s frustration for not gaining control of the South African economy. The current research findings also agree with Tankard (2001) who insist that, by framing an event or an actor in a certain way, in this case as ‘Economic Consequence,’ economics becomes a central organizing idea for viewing the xenophobic attacks in South Africa. This is because the context of struggle for survival had been suggested as the issue through selecting and emphasizing the economic frustrations of the South African, and excluding issues about the high number of immigrants in South Africa. In this regard, the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* newspapers selected and emphasized on the frame of economic consequence whilst they excluded other issues that would have placed the event of xenophobia in South Africa in a different light. Entman (1993) puts it further by saying that it was not only about the selecting and highlighting certain issues above others, but also making connections among them in order to project a particular understanding, evaluation and/or solution. This helped to bring out the theme of Economic Consequence for the reportage on the xenophobic attacks in South Africa because the two online portals

made connections between the black immigrants in South Africa and the state of poverty of some local South Africans. The connection was that the former stole the livelihood of the latter.

#### **4.1.4 Conflict Frame**

The conflict frame was the fourth of the frames as determined from the data with 131 overall codes representing (17.0%) of the total number of codes for the four themes. *Al Jazeera Online* had a higher number of codes with 83 representing (16.6%) total number of codes for *Al Jazeera*. *BBC Online* had 48 codes representing (17.9%) of total number of codes for *BBC*. The conflict frame observes that the xenophobic attacks in South Africa were framed as a struggle between the local South African population and the African immigrants in South Africa. This conflict is seen in how the local South Africans see the African immigrants as persons whose presence in South Africa militate against the wellbeing of South Africans. In this regard, the foreigner is seen as not just obstructing the economic prospects of the South African but was also endangering the life of the South African since the foreigners are accused of indulging in crime and spreading diseases through their activities. This perception of the South African about the black foreigner pitches the two groups against each other resulting in violent attacks on mostly foreigner.

*Al Jazeera Online* published the views of a foreign migrant, Djuma, who wondered why foreigners are tagged as criminals when crime was already prevalent in South Africa before he first visited the country. Djuma says:

*<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2015/04/fear-distrust-victims-regroup-south-africa-150429112904392.html>*

When we came here, the country was full of crime so I don't know where they get the idea that foreigners are the ones doing the crime, being criminal.

Essa, 2015, April 29 - *Al Jazeera Online*

In the extract above, the foreign migrant was wondering why foreigners in South Africa had been tagged as criminals. This was because Djuma claimed that he met crime in South Africa when he first visited. This stereotyping was mostly targeted at black immigrants by poor South Africans and suggest a conflict situation because it calls on the local South African population to rise up in violence against the alleged criminals. They believed that the immigrant was illegal, stole jobs, and brought diseases to South Africa, but as Djuma indicated, all kinds of crime persisted in South Africa before he visited, giving the latent meaning of the immigrants being accused with the aim of making them targets of violence. This extract is an example of how *Al Jazeera Online* framed xenophobia in South Africa as a conflict pitches the local South African against the African migrant.

*Al Jazeera online* shows how much hatred the local South African has for the black immigrant which becomes the basis for a conflict. In the following excerpt a local South African explains how the exit of foreigners from South Africa could end crime:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/09/live-peace-migrants-fearful-sa-attacks-190904051255164.html>

They can go and take their drugs with them, said Joseph Ngcobo, repeating an oft-repeated South African stereotype that migrants bring nothing but crime and economic hardship. We have no job and no money but they do. South Africans must have those things.

Many locals have alleged that the targets were brothels and drug dens being run by migrants from elsewhere in Africa, including Nigeria and Zimbabwe.

News Agency, 2017, Feb 24 - *Al Jazeera Online*

The extract presents the perception of South Africans that foreigners are criminals and agents of diseases which sets the basis for conflict between the two groups. The narrator creates the impression that when migrants leave South Africa they would go also with crime and South Africa would inevitably be sound. In that regard, the narrator believed that Nigerians and foreigners in general were the only group of people engaged in drug peddling and prostitution and that was why the call for violence against them. The South Africans continued with their agitation for conflict by indicating that immigrant facilities the South Africans attacked in the xenophobic violence were brothels and drug dens suggesting that the attacks were justified since they fought against crime. This extract, like others, presents the frame of conflict since the local South African abhorred the presence of the African immigrant in South Africa.

In the *BBC Online* extract below, a Nigeria migrant in South Africa recounts how irrespective of his diligence, which has made him prosperous in South Africa, he is still branded as a criminal by local South Africans:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-39119955>

People here are saying that Nigerians are bringing drugs and prostitution, but can I tell you something, while I don't condone crime, Nigerians are not the only ones involved in crime here. It's all too easy to profile one group, and that is not right; it's also dangerous and puts people's lives in danger.



It's important for South Africans to know that not all of us are criminals, the same way not all South Africans are engaged in crime. They need to understand that you cannot paint people with one brush. I am a hard-working man and there are many law-abiding foreigners who are helping to building the country.

I own a restaurant in Randburg, we make Nigerian food and South African dishes. I also own a liquor store which has been in business since 2007. All I want to do is provide for my family and help people make a living too - some of my employees are South African.

After years of working part-time jobs I raised enough to finally take myself to school, I completed a business management course in 2010 and that has helped me with running my businesses.

BBC, 2017, March 1 - *BBC News Online*

The frame of Conflict is presented in the extract above as the narrator indicated that the tag of 'crime' and 'agents of diseases' placed on African immigrants in South Africa was not justified. This was because the narrator believed that tagging foreigners as criminals made them targets of attacks even though the foreigner was not the only one who was engaged in crime, and that South Africans could also be criminals. The immigrant also recounted how, through hard work, he had set up two stores and had educated himself, a fact to show that there were good and law-abiding immigrants in South Africa who were contributing meaningfully to the South African economy and that they posed no threat to any South African.

This extract, like many others, shows that *BBC Online* framed xenophobia in South Africa as a conflict between the local population and the African migrant because the South African felt the presence of the African foreigner threatened their livelihood and security.

These findings from the data above corroborate Jakob-Moritz et al. (2018) also observe that immigration coverage is often negative and conflict-centred suggesting that the two online portals presented xenophobia in South Africa as a conflict situation between the indigenes and African immigrants. This conflict stems from the fact that the South African sees the African migrant as persons who make the South African society lawless by indulging in crime and also spreading disease through their promiscuous activities. This also agrees with Pineteh (2017) who found that African immigrants in South Africa were seen by the South African as demons who ought to be exorcised before South Africa could have peace. This perception carried by the newspapers suggests that conflict exist between the local and foreign population that were duly captured by the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* newspapers.

#### **4.1.5 Morality Frame**

The theme of Morality looked at the xenophobic attacks from the perspective of how South Africa had not been grateful for Africa's help during the apartheid struggle. It then becomes a moral question to the effect that the South Africans were killing African immigrants and destroying their livelihood when African states had been instrumental in the evolving of a prosperous and democratic South Africa. The news articles created the impression that the success story of South Africa could not have been told without the vital role other African states played during the apartheid struggle. That was why the articles felt that maltreating fellow Africans was unthinkable and immoral. The overall total number of codes for this frame was 81 representing 10.5% of the total number of codes for the four themes. Under this theme, *BBC Online* had 48 codes representing 17.9% of *BBC* codes with *Al Jazeera Online* having 33 representing 6.6% of *Al Jazeera* codes.

In the following *BBC Online* extract, the reporter recounted how South Africans benefited from the rest of Africa when they were fighting against the apartheid regime:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-10838573>

South Africa owes her existence to the endless generosity of Africans during the struggle, when there was nothing like "too little to share" with South African exiles across the whole continent.

As a Nigerian, reading about the xenophobic inspired attacks on fellow Africans in South Africa is saddening to me. I recall how in the late 70s & early 80s we were asked to contribute to the liberation movement - the Nigerian government actually asked ordinary citizens to contribute, and we did happily, believing that we were contributing to the fall of apartheid. On a personal level, I recall that my hostel mate having told us wide-eyed 18 year olds his experiences during the Soweto riots, filled us with pity that a young person like us to have suffered so much was unacceptable. It sharpened our resolves then to see the end of apartheid. And now this! I wonder if I were to bump into my former hotel mate now somewhere in, say, Jo'burg, if he would attack me or as ask that i be sent away from SA. I just wonder.

Sevenzo, 2010, Aug. 3 - *BBC News Online*

In the extract above, the writer informed how Nigeria contributed money to aid the apartheid struggle in the 1980s. Nigeria even asked her citizens to contribute financially which was a show of solidarity with fellow black Africans. This was why even the writer on a personal level assisted a South African fellow student in his hostel in Nigeria to overcome the pain he was going through seeing his fellow South Africans suffer back at home.

This extract, like others, presented the frame of Morality and suggested to the audience that South Africans were ungrateful for the help other African states offered her when they were going through their challenges.

The following *Al Jazeera online* article also traced the help African states gave to South Africa during apartheid:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/south-africa-pariah-africa-190909145153827.html>

Amid the animosity and aggression aimed at African migrants, it is hard to discern whether the South Africans participating in the pogroms on (black) foreigners remember how not long ago they (and their parents and grandparents) were themselves ruthlessly persecuted.

Throughout the decades of apartheid violence, many South Africans sought refuge in African countries. Many of the anti-apartheid movement were living in exile in other African countries. Their struggle was bankrolled by African governments who had just achieved freedom and independence; Nigeria alone was sending some \$5m annually to South African freedom fighters, including the African National Congress (ANC).

Our pre-colonial and post-independence struggles form the indelible fabric upon which our individual African identities find true, proper and viable character. Like it or not, from Cape Town to Cairo, we are all, in equal measure, African-with African problems to resolve.

Mhaka & Dadoo, 2019, Sept. 10 - *Al Jazeera Online*

In this article, the writer told of how most of the South African exiles, fleeing the heat of the apartheid struggle, found themselves in Nigeria and other African states where they were sheltered and groomed to go back to continue the struggle. The article also brought to the fore the financial obligations Nigeria had towards South Africa in helping

them end apartheid rule. It concluded that South Africans must understand that all Africans were equal irrespective of where they came from and that their collective identity was seen through their collective struggle to overcome the challenges that confronted them. This extract, like others suggested the frame of Morality observing that the South Africa erred in attacking black African immigrants when they knew that they were not only their brothers, but were coming from states that had sponsored their struggle for democracy and black rule. This makes the audience appreciate how unreasonable the attackers were for attacking people they should be thankful to.

*Al Jazeera Online* presented yet another story to advance the argument that the poor treatment of African migrants in South Africa betrays the help African states gave South Africa during apartheid:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/failed-decolonisation-south-african-cities-leads-violence-190910123546431.html>

One of my favourite passages in Nelson Mandela's autobiography *Long Walk to Freedom* is the section where he describes being smuggled out of South Africa to visit a series of African countries and seek support for the armed struggle in his home country. Over a number of months, Mandela would receive travel documents from Tanzania and Ethiopia which enable him to go to 13 countries and meet leaders from another four.

The material support for the African National Congress (ANC) and its armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe, was significant, but so too was personal support for Mandela and his entourage. For example, Sekou Toure, then president of Guinea, on hearing that the men were low on funds after so much travel, sent two large suitcases of money for their personal use. It was Guinean money, so not much at all, but enough to tide them over until their next destination.

For those of us who considered ourselves part of South Africa's anti-apartheid struggle, the ambivalent response from South Africa's political leadership - with some notable exceptions - sounds like a betrayal of the solidarity and support that was given to the ANC and the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC) during the worst years of apartheid.

Only Julius Malema, a leader of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) opposition movement, has gone on record rejecting any equivocation when it comes to stopping attacks on African foreigners. Yet, where would South Africa be if thousands of ANC and PAC exiles had not been welcomed across Africa during the struggle?

Nyabola, 2019, Sept 11 - Al Jazeera Online

In the extract above, the writer recounted Africa's help to the African National Congress (ANC) which was seen in how Nelson Mandela, the foremost personality in the apartheid struggle in South Africa, was aided with travel documents to pass through most African states to canvas for support for the struggle. It also told of how most African states, like Guinea, gave huge sums of money to aid in the struggle such that the attacks on African migrants in South Africa betrayed the assistance the rest of Africa gave to South Africa. This betrayal, he said, was mostly seen in the abysmal response of the South African authorities to the attacks. The online article also created the impression that South African leadership were not eager to stop the attacks. This extract, like others, presents the frame of Morality which makes the audience see attacks on African migrants in South Africa as an act of ingratitude towards fellow Africans who were part of the success story of South Africa.

The excerpts above agree with Valji (2003) who observed that attitudes of intolerance and violence were not manifesting themselves against all foreigners but against blacks from other African countries. This agrees with the frame of Morality because there is a

moral question of why attack Africans who had helped in the apartheid struggle when they should rather be grateful for their assistance.

Van Dijk (1993) states that the media have always carried some form of social power which has the potential of controlling the minds of readers or viewers, and through news production the media provide knowledge to their audiences and this becomes important in determining the direction of discourse and understanding. In this regard, the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* newspapers exercised their social power in affecting the minds of readers about the need for South Africa to put the African first because of the role Africa played in the apartheid struggle. By the frame of Morality, the two online portals provided knowledge to their audience and that became the basis for determining the direction of discourse that targeting black migrants in South Africa was against the spirit of African unity and peaceful coexistence. This also sits well with Ngwane (2014) who found that some South African media outlets partly projected the need to promote the pan-African agenda and appreciate Africa's help during apartheid.

#### **4.2 Research Question 2: How are the African Immigrants in South Africa depicted by the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* Newspapers?**

This research question sought to address how the two online news portals depicted the black African immigrants in the xenophobic attacks. The framing of the black immigrants in South Africa are classified under the themes 'Targets of the frustrated South African' and 'Competitors of the local South Africa.'

##### **4.2.1 Targets**

From analysis of data collected, it could be deduced that migrants in South Africa are framed as Targets of the frustrated South African. Harris (2002: 169) agrees and argues

that, “the shift in political power has brought about a range of new discriminatory practices and victims. One such victim is 'The Foreigner.' Emergent alongside a new-nation discourse, ‘The Foreigner’ stands at a site where identity, racism and violent practice are reproduced.” This means the immigrants are victimized because they are foreigners and vulnerable and may not retaliate for the violence against them. According to Valji (2003) their (local South African) persistence (in victimizing the immigrant) is demonstrated by xenophobia and the increase in violence directed against black ‘foreigners.’ These scholars set the foundation for the depiction of the mostly black immigrant in South Africa as targets at the hands of the poor South African. In the extract below, *Al Jazeera Online* presents an article in which a young immigrant, who witnesses an attack on his family members by some local South Africans, has this to say:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/focus/2008/07/2008714205043110639.html>

The criminals were beating my aunt, father and mother. I was worried for our shack as they were breaking everything," he says.

"I was very, very sad and I didn't know why someone who is the same as me would do this. I still think about it today," the boy says.

Davis (2008, Jul 14) *Al Jazeera Online*)

In the extract above, the boy narrates an incident of victimization in which his parents and aunt were being beating by some South Africans. It was obvious the immigrants had not committed any crime to deserve that kind of treatment. Indeed, the word ‘criminals’ gave the manifest meaning of victimization of the immigrants since the actions of the local South African were framed as criminal. The local South Africans were determined to commit this act against the immigrants because they felt they were



poor foreigners who had no means of defending themselves in a system that was not ready to defend them. The boy's assertion that the attackers were just like them suggested that it was poor black South Africans who were attacking poor black immigrants in South Africa. This makes the boy wonder why their own kind could attack them when they had not committed any crime.

This extract, like others, show that *Al Jazeera online* framed the foreign migrants as targets who were constantly attacked by embittered poor local South Africans. By framing the immigrants as targets, the online portal presented the immigrants as persons who could not be blamed for the xenophobic violence in South Africa because they did nothing to deserve it.

*BBC Online* also gives a manifest meaning of victimization in a situation in which two foreign migrants in South Africa are attacked by some criminals. The migrant narrates the ordeal:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7408367.stm>

My brother and I own a grocery shop in Johannesburg.

At about midnight last night a group of about 40 or 50 people came and banged on the door. We let them in. They started looting the shop and they took everything. There is nothing left.

They beat up my brother with a large fork. He has serious injuries to his back and one of his veins has been cut. He is now in hospital being treated for his injuries.

Harun, 2008, May 19—*BBC News Online*

The extract above demonstrates how the migrants were victimized by local South Africans who sought to take advantage of the vulnerability of the foreigner in South

Africa. The worry of the poor South African was that the foreigner seemed to be prospering economically whilst they suffered. The South African therefore believed that if they were not prospering, then they must target the foreigner and make their lives miserable. This accounted for why the South Africans attacked foreigners by destroying their source of livelihood (the grocery store) and inflicting pain on them because the South Africans knew the immigrants could not retaliate.

This extract, like others, framed foreign migrants in South Africa as targets of the frustrated South African which would make the audience appreciate why attacks on the immigrants was not justified because the immigrants did nothing to deserve it.

*Al Jazeera Online* published another story of a foreign migrant, Peter Jongwe who was threatened and had to leave his residence. The following extract gives the manifest meaning of victimization:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/amp/indepth/features/2015/04/fear-distrust-victims-regroup-south-africa-150429112904392.html#referrer=https://www.google.com>

I've been in South Africa for two years. We rented a 10-room house. Seven rooms had foreigners, the other three had South Africans who were Zulu.

The Zulus said we must leave and they started breaking down our doors and stealing our things. I hid with my wife under the bed and thank God we escaped with our lives, he said.

Mutasa, 2015, April 21—*Al Jazeera Online*

In the excerpt above, the black immigrants were victimized by some poor South Africans they shared apartments with. They were all poor people who had to live in rented apartments, but the Zulu tenants among them believed the immigrants were

vulnerable and therefore any violence they meted out at the immigrants would go unpunished. That was why they forcefully ejected them from their apartments and stole their belongings.

This extract, like others, framed foreign migrants in South Africa as targets because they suffered the criminality of some local South Africans. This frame presents the audience the opportunity to see the migrants as unfortunate people who are maltreated because of their vulnerability.

The excerpts above are in line with the assertion of Valji (2000: 63-64) that “the psychological implications of apartheid persist. They manifest themselves in both negative and positive forms. Racial victims frequently internalize the dominant definitions of themselves...the more powerless and threatened group members feel, the greater their need to denigrate others below them.” By this, one could say that the poor South African feel that they were powerless and threatened in South Africa therefore the need to free themselves by denigrating others below them, in this case poor black immigrants. This is perhaps the reason why poor black South Africans could rather turn against the immigrants and victimize them in such gruesome circumstances.

These articles also agree with Mbetga (2014) who observed that the *Daily Sun* newspaper in South Africa portrayed black foreigners as victims. In that regard, like Mbetga (2014), the articles of *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* portals portrayed the migrants as persons who were suffering at the hands of the South African people and their system because the foreigner have become convenient targets to burn the frustration of the South African for their poor living conditions of the local South African. This shows that the South African system collectively targeted the foreign nationals for attacks under the guise of xenophobia.

### 4.2.3 Competitors

(Danso & McDonalds, 2001) cited in (Pineteh (2017) associate African immigrants to criminality, alien illegality, demons and parasites, suggesting that “by the time of the May 2008 attacks a powerful xenophobic culture had been created and state organs were geared to hounding African immigrants” (Desai, 2010 p. 6). These attacks on foreigners was because they were seen as persons who did not deserve to compete with the local South African because they were foreigners and ought to be discriminated against. In that regard, Mbetga (2014) argues that the mass media plays a role in the process of ‘othering’ African migrants. Xenophobic portrayals and anti-immigrant discourse are partly rooted in local people’s fears, as well as the struggle for access to scarce political, social and economic resources.

That notwithstanding, the two online newspapers framed the migrants as persons who were better placed to compete with the South African over the resources of South Africa, creating the impression that the local South African was not well disposed to stand such competition.

*Al Jazeera Online* published an article that presents the argument of Bongekile Dladla, a local South African who believes the repatriation of the immigrant community would be a refreshing news to the indigenes of South Africa:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2015/04/fear-distrust-victims-regroup-south-africa-150429112904392.html>

They are greedy and if they went away spaces for business would open up," Bongekile Dladla, 28, a hawker from Durban, told Al Jazeera when asked about foreigners.

People of South Africa are hungry, they are sitting at home. While companies in South Africa are employing foreigners ... [because] it's cheap labour. We are hungry and angry, Zungu told AFP.

Al Jazeera and News Agency, 2019, Sept.3—*Al Jazeera Online*

In the extract above, a local South African says that foreign migrants in South Africa were greedy people. Their greed, according to the narrator, was because they had occupied all business spaces meant for local South Africans. The narrator also informed that the foreigner had crowded the systems to the extent that the natives were denied of their livelihoods because it had been taken over by the immigrant. This situation, to the local South African, makes the immigrants compete for the same jobs with the locals to the extent that the employer preferred immigrants to the locals because the immigrant accepted less pay for the same work done. This extract gives a manifest meaning of strict competition being offered by the immigrants for the limited jobs in South Africa. This is because the exit of the foreigner would not end the economic woes of the poor South African. It is an allegation also because the migrants did nothing to stop employers from employing the local South Africans. The extract connotes a group of local poor South Africans who have failed to make ends meet in a booming economy and blames the foreigner for their troubles.

In the following *BBC Online* extract, some local South Africans discuss the cause of the xenophobic attacks in South Africa in relations to foreigners:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-49797720>

A group of local men, playing a game of Ludo on a scrap of cardboard, at first insisted that opportunistic criminals were entirely to blame for the violence, but they soon began to complain about the presence of foreign nationals.

"I'm not xenophobic," insisted a man who gave his first name as Alfred. "But these foreigners are prepared to work for less.

They work for small money," his friend Frederick agreed. "And they hire their own, so it's hard for us to compete. There is frustration.

Harding, 2019, Sept. 26—*BBC News Online*

In the extract above, the two local South Africans believe that the attacks on foreign migrants was justified because the migrants accepted low wages and robbed the South Africans of their jobs. By insisting that the African immigrants accepted low income, Alfred believed that was why employers preferred immigrants to local South Africans, and Frederick observed that the immigrants were greedy because they hired only foreigners to work for them when they start their own businesses. This gives a latent meaning of alleging the black immigrants are foreigners who should not have the same economic opportunities like the indigenes. This is because the narrators feel that the jobs were the preserve of the local South African and that the jobs the African immigrants were engaged in ought to have gone to the South African. The *BBC Online* portal framed the migrants as persons who were not necessarily taken any jobs from the locals but that the locals were not disposing themselves adequately to benefit from the economy of South Africa.

This extract, like others, presents the foreign migrants as competitors and deny the local South African the opportunity to benefit from the economic system. This frame allows the audience to accept that the immigrant was not partly to blame for the attacks on them.

The following *BBC Online* extract also gives the manifest meaning of African migrants being seen by local South Africans as competitors of the local South African:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7408367.stm>

I think this problem has happened because South Africans are jealous of the foreigners for taking their jobs. They are blaming the status quo on outsiders.

It is about jealousy because they see us as a barrier to their moving ahead.

I think the number one factor behind this trouble is the influx of millions of Zimbabweans. They are coming into South Africa in droves.

But now they are taking it out on all foreigners.

BBC, 2008, May 19—*BBC News Online*

In the extract above, the narrator accounts for the attacks in South Africa by insisting that the South African is jealous of the foreigner for allegedly taking the jobs belonging to the local South African. This competitor perception meant that the immigrant stood in the way to the economic wellbeing of the local South African. That was why the South Africans saw the influx of immigrants into their country as a threat because they believed that the immigrants were coming in to compete with the locals over the limited jobs and make things more difficult for the South African. The narrator's insistence that the South African was jealous of the immigrants created the impression that the immigrants were not stealing jobs belonging to the locals as alleged, but that the locals were not able to prosper in the economy as the immigrants were. This extract, like others, shows that the *BBC Online* framed the migrants as competitors of the local South African over the resources of South Africa, a frame which would make the reader perceive the local South African as people who did not have what it took to prosper in the South African economy.

The excerpts above corroborate the findings of Ngwane (2014) who observed that during the 2008 xenophobic riots, autochthony and narrow nationalistic claims of belonging were at play. This means that some South African tabloid newspapers observed the need to project nationalist tendencies as a way of ensuring that native South Africans benefited from the economy of South Africa. The *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* portals therefore portrayed the migrants as persons who were lawfully competing for the resources of South Africa defying nationalistic claims of South Africans that the foreign migrants were hindrances to the economic advancement of the local South African.

The frame of competitors by the two online portals contradicts Entman (2004: p.14) who asserts that, “The most inherently powerful frames are those fully congruent with the schemas habitually used by most members of society.” This therefore does not explain why the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* portals framed the foreign migrants as competitors instead of parasites even though the ‘schemas habitually’ used by most members of the South African community is that the African immigrant was parasitizing the economy of South Africa.

In framing the African immigrants as Targets of the frustrated South African and Competitors, the two online portals agreed with (Entman, 1993) who observed that this depiction of the migrant would help to divert attention to or even omit select pieces of information which is just as powerful as highlighting specific areas or characteristics of a story. This means that the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* newspapers diverted attention from the African immigrants to the poor local South African as the ones whose lack of ability to prosper was making them rise against the foreigners. According to Entman, the danger in understanding or omitting information is that it limits the alternatives or knowledge the public is exposed to, which means that the audience is made to only



understand the part of the local South African in causing the attacks without looking at other issues such as the effect of the influx of migrants into South Africa on the economy of South Africa.

#### **4.3 Research Question 3: What is the tone of voice the two Online Newspapers used in referring to the South Africans as Players in the Xenophobic Attacks?**

**Table 2: Frequency Distribution of the tone of voice used by the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* Newspapers in Reporting the Xenophobic Attacks in South Africa.**

<b>Category</b>	<b>BBC News Online</b>	<b>Al Jazeera Online</b>	<b>Over all Total</b>
Positive	21(8.0%)	62 (12.9%)	83 (11.2%)
Neutral	23 (8.8%)	44 (9.1%)	67 (9.0%)
Negative	217 (83.1%)	375 (78%)	592 (79.8%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>261 (100%)</b>	<b>481 (100%)</b>	<b>742 (100%)</b>

**Source: Fieldwork Data 2019/20**

##### **4.3.1 Negative voice Tone**

This looks at how reportage on the xenophobic attacks by the two online portals were negative in their voice tone towards the South African government and people. The negative tone recorded the highest number of codes used in reporting the involvement of the South Africans in the xenophobic attacks. This accounted for 592 number of codes representing 79.8% of the total number of codes for Tone. This means that most of the stories on the attacks had a negative voice tone in referring to the South African people and their government.

In the *Al Jazeera Online* story below, the writer, with a negative tone, recounted the reason behind the xenophobic violence in South Africa by looking at the role the Government of South Africa played in its occurrence:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2015/04/leave-die-choice-facing-immigrants-south-africa-150420103040830.html>

Equally, there has been little attempt by officials to acknowledge that the abject living conditions of millions of poor South Africans and the lack of social services, is a contributing factor, particularly in a context of gross corruption and Kleptocracy within government circles.

Kajee, 2015 April 20—*Al Jazeera Online*

In the extract above, the writer indicated that xenophobia in South Africa was possible because the government did very little to even accept that the attacks were as a result of their failure. By using the word ‘abject’ the writer presents the South African poor as being in a very bad state economically. By this, the writer set a negative tone that presents the South African government as not having done enough to deal with the prevailing economic hardship in the country. This poor living conditions is made worse by the use of the word ‘Kleptocracy’ which suggests that the government was not just failing to salvage the condition of the poor, but was actually stealing money meant for the development of poor communities. This again sets a negative tone for the reportage by the online portal and presents the South African government in a bad light in the eyes of the audience.

The following *Al Jazeera Online* story again sets a negative voice tone for the news reportage on xenophobia in South Africa:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2015/04/leave-die-choice-facing-immigrants-south-africa-150420103040830.html>

With horrifying images and poignant victim testimony making international headlines, the Zuma administration initially slow to react, has finally started to speak out against the savagery.

But it is important to note that the merely-mouthed language and qualified statements by the president and others have actually done little to curb the madness. F38

Unfortunately, the tacit acceptance of such attitudes at high levels of government and the desultory action by the police and criminal justice system, has resulted in an atmosphere of impunity, particularly when antipathy of immigrants is expressed F38

Since the mid-2000s, the South African government has pooh-poohed analysts' warnings of the potential for xenophobia, and has preferred instead to regard outbreaks of anti-immigrant violence as "criminality"

Kajee, 2015 April 20—*Al Jazeera Online*

The extract above again presents a negative voice tone against the South African people. This is evidenced in the phrase 'horrifying images and poignant victim testimony' which suggest the extent of carnage that was going on in South Africa. Apart from accusing the government of South Africa for doing nothing about the situation, the use of the phrase 'merely-mouth language' suggests negativity in the sense that the South African government was only engaged in rhetorics whilst refusing to do what could help stop the carnage. The words 'tacit' suggesting inability of the government to come out clearly to accept the blame and the word 'desultory' indicating a lack of focus on the part of the South African police to deal with the issue suggest negativity on the part of the South African people to deal decisively with xenophobia.

In a *BBC Online* article, a local South African gives an account with regards to why there was rampant xenophobic attacks in South African which sets the a negative tone:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-49797720>

"It is a time bomb. A time bomb," said local community organiser Papi Papi, pointing across the road to a new informal settlement of perhaps 100 metal shacks crowded onto a small patch of wasteland.

"These places are packed with migrants, more than locals. The government is not planning, just reacting, even [when it comes to] basic infrastructure, so that is where the problem is," he explained.

BBC, 2019, Sept 26 --*BBC News Online*

In the extract above, the narrator informs how the poor situation of some local South Africans had become a bomb waiting to explode. He indicates with a negative tone how settlements he called informal was housing many poor South Africans with their houses made of metal shacks and they residents having to live on a wasteland. The tone of negativity is further enhanced with the narrator's assertion that the government was not planning to deal with the poor state of affairs but was only interested in waiting for the situation to degenerate into violence before they came in. This sets a negative voice tone for the government of South Africa in their effort to deal with the xenophobic violence.

The extracts above which come with a negative tone, corroborates with Jakob-Moritz, et al. (2018) who observed that immigration coverage in Europe is often negative and conflict-centred. It also agrees with Corbu and Buturoiu (2017) who, in researching into refugee crisis in Europe, found that online media portals prefer using a reasonably balanced viewpoint when portraying refugees, and a slightly negative one in terms of attitudes towards the European Union. This is also true with the current research which

finds the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* Newspapers were negative towards the South Africans in reporting the xenophobic attacks and were more positive towards the African immigrants in South Africa. This research however disagrees with Milioni et al. (2015) who found out that immigration was constructed as a problem and immigrants were ‘othered’ in the media discourse. This is because this research found that large proportion of the extracts for analysis were negative towards the South African and their government, which suggests that the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* newspapers framed immigration in South Africa as a problem. The attitude and disposition of the South African people and their government were rather framed as a problem by the two online portals in the way they handled the attacks. This also suggest that, by presenting the South Africans and their government is a negative sense, the two online portals gave prominence to the failure of the South African to deal with xenophobia and made that fact more salient in the eyes of the audience, a fact attested to by Entman (1993).

#### **4.3.2 Positive**

This category looked at how the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* news portals presented the South Africans in the xenophobic attacks in a positive light. The overall total for this category was 83 codes representing 11.2 % of the total codes for tone. *Al Jazeera Online* had 62 codes representing 12.9% of Al Jazeera codes under tone whilst *BBC Online* had 21 codes representing (8.0%) of BBC codes under tone.

*Al Jazeera Online* extract below recounts President Ramaphosa’s efforts in fighting the xenophobic attacks which gives the story a positive tone:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/09/south-africa-scores-held-looting-anti-foreigner-protests-190903064029232.htm>

I am convening the ministers in the security cluster today to make sure that we keep a close eye on these acts of wanton violence and find ways of stopping them, President Cyril Ramaphosa posted on Twitter.

There can be no justification for any South African to attack people from other countries.

Al Jazeera, 2019, Sept 3—*Al Jazeera Online*

In the excerpt above, *Al Jazeera Online* presented a positive image of South Africa in relations to the xenophobic attacks by suggesting that the leadership of the country was eagerly fighting to stop the menace. 'To convey the Security Council' means to give the situation the topmost security consideration and 'to keep a close eye on the situation' is to ensure that they monitor the situation well so that the attacks do not erupt again. Then the tone of positivity was further enhanced when the president said that the attacks against foreigners were not justified. This extract, like others, presents a positive voice tone which puts the involvement of the South African government in the xenophobic attacks in a positive light in the eyes of the audience.

In another *Al Jazeera Online* extract, there was the indication of a positive tone in how the writer presented efforts by the leadership of South Africa to help curb the outbreak of xenophobia:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/03/south-africa-launches-hate-crime-unit-nigeria-170313171503090.htm>

South Africa says it will launch an "early warning" system with Nigeria to track and deter xenophobic attacks following a surge in violence in the rainbow nation.

South Africa's Foreign Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane said the new monitor would "help prevent violence" against foreigners and their businesses as she met with Geoffrey Onyeama, her Nigerian counterpart on Monday.

*Al Jazeera*, 2017, March 13—*Al Jazeera Online*

The positive tone is first presented with the collaboration between South Africa and Nigeria which had been at loggerheads because of the xenophobic attacks. This presents efforts by South Africa to solve the crisis, putting the South African government in a good light. The extent of positivity is enhanced by the assurance of the South African Foreign Minister that there were efforts to protect foreigners and their businesses. These extracts, like others, presents the South Africans in a positive light and makes the audience accept the fact that the South African was making efforts to correct xenophobia. In a *BBC Online* article, the narrator presented a positive tone in reporting on the xenophobic attacks in relation to the South Africa police:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2008/05/200861503026364520.html>

A police spokesman said: "The Germiston police have made a breakthrough in the xenophobic attacks that have plagued their area since Saturday by arresting four community leaders at [the] Dukathole informal settlement this afternoon."

*Agencies*, 2008, May 22—*Al Jazeera Online*

In the extract above, the narrator gives a picture of efforts by the South African police, which had been accused of not doing much to quell the unrest, actually doing something to stop the violence. In this extract, the police spokesperson recounts how efforts by the police have led to the arrest of some community leaders involved in the attacks. This to the police was a breakthrough because it could lead to the halting of the attacks because the attackers looked up to and took instructions from the community leaders. This

extract, like others, presents the South African police in positive light and prevents efforts in presenting the South Africans in a bad light in relations to the xenophobic attacks.

Findings from the extracts above contradicts with CCME and WACC (2017) who found out that half of the news stories in the overall sample they gathered about migration crisis had a neutral tone and one-third had a sympathetic tone. In the current research, less than one-third of the codes were for the positive with a large percentage for negative portrayals of the South African. The positive portrayal of the South African, notwithstanding, the current research supports Jakob-Moritz et al. (2018) who observe that immigration coverage is often negative and conflict-centred.

Framing Theory also stresses that media have the power to shape a story in a positive or negative manner, with the negative portrayals having a stronger influence on the audience than positive portrayals (Billings, 2004; Eastman & Billings, 2001). By this, the two online portals are more likely to have influence on their audience as they would stir them to see the South African people and their government as the cause of the attacks on the African immigrants.

#### **4.3.3 Neutral**

This category looks at stories which were neither negative nor positive or had both positive or negative elements, according to Chaudhary (2001), in relations to the South African people. In these extracts, the reporters stuck to the issues and avoided taking sides. The neutral tone came last with 67 codes representing 9.0% of the total number of codes for tone. Out of that, *BBC Online* had 23 codes representing 8.8% of *BBC* codes whilst *Al Jazeera Online* had 44 codes representing 9.1% of *Al Jazeera* codes.



*Al Jazeera Online* presented an article in which it outlined some of the conflict situations that were unfolding in South Africa in a balanced tone:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/04/south-africa-arrests-hundreds-xenophobic-violence-150420012539405.html>

More than 1,000 people have been displaced after violence against foreign nationals flared up on March 30 in the country's coastal province of KwaZulu-Natal, whose capital is Durban

*Al Jazeera*, 2015, April 19—*Al Jazeera Online*

In the excerpt above, the reporter stuck to the issues and ensured that the facts were the only thing presented. This was done by reporting the fact that over a thousand people had been rendered stranded following violence attacks which started in the country. The neutrality made the writer present the figures, the date and place of occurrence without employing any modifiers that suggested negativity or positivity in relations to the involvements of the South Africans in the attacks. The neutrality in tone makes the audience see the situation as a conflict that had happened without imputing any responsibility on any of the players of the conflict.

*BBC Online* also presented an article which was entirely neutral and devoid of words that connoted either negativity or positivity:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-49550429>

But the unrest here is largely an immigration issue. The unemployment rate in South Africa is nearly 28% and this places huge pressure on the lower end of the social ladder.

*BBC*, 2019, Sept 2—*BBC News Online*

In the extract above, the narrator avoided the drama that accompany most news stories and held to the issues on the xenophobic attacks. This the narrator did by observing that the violence, which the narrator called ‘unrest’ was an immigration issue, suggesting that the problem was not the creation of anybody. The narrator again stuck to the issues by informing the audience of the underlying causes of the unrest which was the huge pressure that was placed on the economic system due to the high unemployment rate with its attendant challenges, avoiding the usual reference to the African immigrants taking jobs or the local South Africans burning their frustrations on the immigrants.

*BBC Online* again demonstrated neutrality in their reportage on the attacks in relations to the South Africans by reporting on some aspects of the xenophobic attacks:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-49633566>

Ten people, including two foreigners, were killed in the city last week when mobs attacked foreign-owned businesses.

BBC, 2019, Sept 9—*BBC News Online*

In the extract above, the reporter presented the facts with neutrality without sensationalizing the issues. This was done by presenting the casualty figures at both sides which would help the audience to appreciate how both sides were affected. In the extract, the narrator was careful not to mention the South Africans are the attackers but called them ‘the mob’, then the narrator declined to mention the African immigrants who were attacked preferring only to mention the businesses that were destroyed. This suggests a deliberate attempt by the writer to avoid sensationalizing the issues and stick to a neutral tone as a way of making the audience see the real facts as they happened.

The findings of the current research agree with Corbu and Buturoiu (2017) who found that online media outlets prefer using a reasonably balanced viewpoint when portraying the refugees and a slightly negative one in terms of attitudes towards the European Union. This is because the two online portals portrayed the South African people and their government in a bad light and was more positive towards the African immigrant. Framing Theory also stresses that the media have power to shape a story in a positive or negative manner with the negative portrayals having a stronger influence on the audience than positive portrayals (Billings, 2004; Eastman & Billings, 2001). This means that, by framing the South Africa government in a negative light the two online portals present the xenophobic violence as an orchestration of the South African people. By this it could be said that the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* portals framed the South Africans in a negative light, yet made some attempts to present the South Africans also in some neutral light to create a balance even though the negative far outweighed the neutral.

#### **4.4 Summary**

This chapter focused on the findings of the study by discussing the research questions that sought to investigate the frames used by the online portals in presenting the xenophobic attacks in South Africa between May 2008 and March 2020. The articles were used to identify the dominant frames, determine how the online news portals depicted the foreign migrants, and establish the tone of voice used by the two online portals in reporting on the xenophobic attacks in South Africa. The dominant frames that emerged in the order of importance were Responsibility, Human Interest, Economic Consequence, Conflict, and Morality frames. The African immigrants were also depicted as Targets and competitors of the South African people. The research also

found that most of the reportage that referenced the South African people and their government had an overwhelming negative tone whilst the neutral and positive tones were minimal.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter includes the summary and conclusion drawn from the study that aims at examining the framing of xenophobic attacks in South Africa from May 2008 to March 2020 by the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* newspapers. It also provides a discussion on the limitations of the research study and offers recommendation for future studies in the area of xenophobic violence in South Africa.

#### 5.1 Summary of Findings

The study examined how non-African online news portals framed the series of xenophobic attacks in South Africa from May 2008 to March 2020. The findings of the study were grounded on data collected through qualitative content analysis of two non-African online newspapers—*BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online*.

The study tested for Neuman et al. (1992) and Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) predetermined frames, and identified that all five frames which are Conflict, Human Interest, Economic Consequence, Morality, and Responsibility were used by the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* newspapers to report xenophobic violence in South Africa. The frames identified in the content analysis of the two online newspapers were based on cumulative thematic codes with overall total percentage and rankings as follows: Responsibility 233 (30.3%), Human Interest 182 (23.7%), Economic Consequence 142 (18.5%), Conflict 131 (17.0%), and Morality 81 (10.5%).

The study also revealed that African migrants in South Africa were framed as ‘Targets of the frustrated South African.’ The African migrant was targeted because they were caught up in the struggle for the allocation of resources in South Africa. The African immigrants were depicted as persons who were made to bear the fury of local South Africans for not having the living conditions of the South African transformed even after the expiration of the apartheid regime.

The migrants were again depicted as ‘Competitors of the local South African,’ i.e. persons who were better disposed to exploit the resources of South Africa. They were seen as persons who dominated the job market and retail industry and were so industrious that prospered in the economy of South Africa.

For tone of voice, the researcher found out that the Negative tone had the highest number of codes (592, 79.8%). This was followed by the Positive tone (83, 11.2%), and then the Neutral tone (67, 9.0%).

## **5.2 Limitations of the Study**

The study examined online newspaper framing of xenophobic attacks in South Africa from May 2008 to March 2020. This was done by qualitatively content analyzing news stories to identify the dominant frames used to report xenophobic attacks in South Africa, determine how foreign migrants in South Africa were framed by the two online portals, and establish the tone of voice used by the online portals in referring to the South Africans who were players in the xenophobic attacks.

One limitation of this study is that I analyzed only two non-African online newspapers—*BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online*. Regardless of the fact that these two online

newspapers are leading online outlets in the world and believed to be a credible source of news globally, their content may not be enough to represent all the major non-African online portals which report on the xenophobic attacks in South Africa. In order to achieve a more holistic results, future studies could be done on this topic, using more than just the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* newspapers as used in this study to widen the scope and see how other non-African online newspapers also framed the xenophobic attacks in South Africa.

Apart from the limitations listed above, I also had difficulty in getting some published stories due to challenges in working with search engines. Therefore, I got 95 stories which could have been more. However, the 95 stories adequately represented news and feature articles on the xenophobic attacks in South Africa. Regardless of the above limitations, the study has critical implications for future research.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

Findings from this research showed that the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* newspapers framed the xenophobic attacks in South Africa as the responsibility of the South African government who failed to either prevent the occurrence of the attacks or effectively deal with it once it had started. Findings also revealed that the two online portals framed the attacks as an acute humanitarian issue that needed the intervention of the international community due to the extent of violence meted out against African immigrants in South Africa. The findings again revealed that the two online portals framed the attacks as the consequence of the struggle by the local South African to gain control over the job and retail market of South Africa which seemed to be controlled by African immigrants. The *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* newspapers also framed the attacks as a conflict that

had come about because the local South African labels the African immigrant as a criminal and a person who promoted the spread of disease in South Africa thereby making the migrant prone to attacks. Finally, the two online newspapers framed the attacks as a moral issue that questioned why South Africans refused to accept people from countries that had helped South Africa through her struggle against apartheid but were rather violently attacking them.

Findings from this research also revealed that African immigrants in South Africa were depicted by the two online portals as persons who had become targets of the frustrated South African. The South African was frustrated because their living conditions were poor even after apartheid and that the successive black governments had failed to elevate them from the economic hardships they were facing. In order to burn frustrations for being left destitute by the government, the South African chose to attack the black migrant and make them suffer for what was happening to the local South African. Again, the African immigrant was framed by the two online portals as persons who had enormous economic capabilities that put them above the South African to the extent that the employer preferred the migrant worker to the indigenous South African. The migrants were also framed as persons whose industriousness made them take over the retail business in South Africa and push the 'not-too-good' South Africans from business.

The tone of voice used by the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* newspapers in referring to the South African people and their government was largely negative attesting to the extent to which the two online newspapers made the audience to accept how the South African government and people had collectively staged and managed the attacks against fellow African migrants in South Africa.



From the foregoing, one could conveniently conclude that the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* newspapers framed the xenophobic violence in South Africa as the orchestration of the South African government and people who saw the attacks as the only means of hiding their inability to create prosperity for the people and inability to take advantage of the resources of South Africa respectively. The African migrant in South Africa were framed in a favorable light that showed them as economic migrants who were doing their best to survive in a foreign economy but had become targets of the South African because the South African could not make ends meet and could not compete the African migrant for jobs and the retail market.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

Despite the general negative dominance of frames in reporting xenophobic attacks in South Africa by news outlets, I present suggestions to help avoid some of the negative frames and be more constructive in reporting migration crisis. It is important for journalists to understand how foreign migrants are framed in migration crisis and to educate themselves on ways to avoid utilizing negative frames and patterns in their reporting. The public should also be aware of how the subject of xenophobia and the players of the attacks are framed because it is the audience who would be exposed to the frames. This is because they are most often unaware of the influence these frames and patterns may have on their opinions on the subject of xenophobia.

The media should increase awareness and appreciation of the differences between genuine agitation for migration control and xenophobia as well as decrease stereotypes surrounding migration issues and promote dispassionate reporting. The media should also expose the hidden intension of players of a migration crisis to afford audience the

opportunity to understand the real intention behind the crisis in order to make right judgment. It means that the media should be careful not to allow their socio-cultural biases to play into their reportage in order to present the facts without their inclinations influencing the outcome and inflaming violence.

In reporting migration crisis, the media is supposed to hold leadership of host countries accountable in order to portray the hidden intention of those leaders. This means that the leadership of a country is very instrumental in curbing or inciting migration crisis, and therefore they would handle migration issues well if they know that the media was monitoring their intentions and actions.

The media, in a migration crisis situation, could create peace when it reveals the problem immigrants go through, being the targets of every migration crisis. In other words, the media should concentrate reportage on the humanitarian aspects of the crisis and not to focus on anti-immigrant issues.

It is my hope that the results of this study will encourage the general public to become more educated media consumers and pay more attention to the frames that may subconsciously influence their attitudes negatively towards the migrants in a migration crisis.

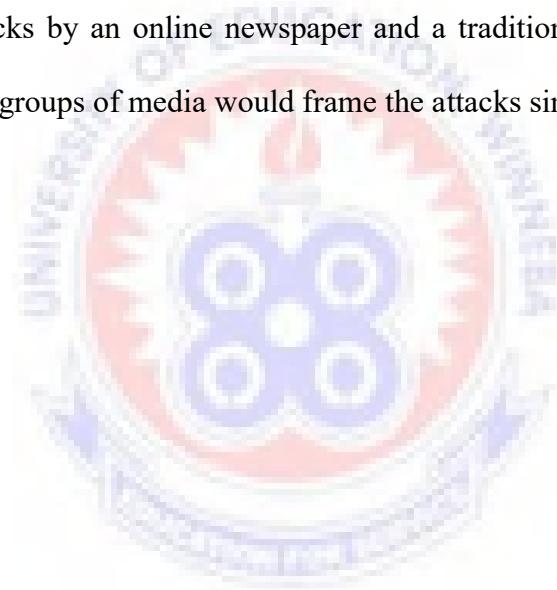
### **5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies**

In expanding this work, it would be interesting to have a research into how photographs tell the story of xenophobic attacks in South Africa. There are many photographs in the online stories that could have been analyzed in this study separately. An analysis of photographic elements would provide a separate understanding of what themes

emerged from the photographs accompanying the texts. This would provide a comparison to what themes emerged in the written portions of the online news portals and which themes emerged from the photographs.

Another research suggestion would be to study into how the electronic media—radio and television—framed xenophobic attacks in South Africa. This would reveal whether the same frames used in the online news publications on xenophobia are the same also in the electronic media.

It would also be interesting to have a comparative research to test framing of the xenophobic attacks by an online newspaper and a traditional media outlet to reveal whether the two groups of media would frame the attacks similarly or differently.



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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

#### CODING GUIDE

RQ1: What are the dominant frames used by the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* newspapers in reporting the xenophobic attacks in South Africa?

#### Conflict Frame

Variable	Category
Conflict frame	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Conflict between individuals, groups, institutions</li> <li>➤ Migrants as criminals</li> <li>➤ Migrants spreading diseases</li> </ul>

#### Human Interest Frame

Variable	Category
Human Interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Killing of migrants</li> <li>➤ Destroying properties of migrants</li> <li>➤ Ejecting migrants</li> <li>➤ Attacking migrants</li> </ul>

#### Economic Consequence Frame

Variable	Category
Economic consequence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Migrants taking jobs</li> <li>➤ Migrants controlling retail markets</li> <li>➤ Migrants preferred by employer</li> <li>➤ Migrants accepting low wages</li> <li>➤ Migrants employing fellow migrants</li> </ul>



**Morality Frame**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Category</b>
Morality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Attacking fellow Africans</li> <li>➤ Destroying livelihood of black Africans</li> <li>➤ Ignoring Africa's help during apartheid</li> <li>➤ Statements of ingratitude towards Africa</li> <li>➤ Ignoring calls for African unity</li> </ul>

**Responsibility Frame**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Category</b>
Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Failure to create prosperity</li> <li>➤ Failure to alleviate economic hardship</li> <li>➤ Failure to anticipate xenophobia</li> <li>➤ Failure to prevent xenophobia</li> <li>➤ Statements that incite xenophobia</li> <li>➤ Failure to assist vulnerable</li> <li>➤ Failure to effectively stop attacks</li> </ul>

RQ2: How are African immigrants in South Africa depicted the two online portals?

**Targets**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Category</b>
Targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ beating of African immigrants</li> <li>➤ killing of African immigrants</li> <li>➤ destroying properties of migrants</li> <li>➤ forcefully evicting migrants</li> </ul>

## Competitors

Variable	Category
Competitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ migrants owning shops</li> <li>➤ migrant more attractive to the employer</li> <li>➤ migrants well dispose to work/showing more promise</li> <li>➤ migrants willing to work under harsh conditions</li> <li>➤ South Africans not too disposed to work</li> </ul>

RQ3: What is the tone of voice used in reporting the South African xenophobic attacks by the *BBC* and *Al Jazeera Online* Newspapers?

## Tone of Voice

### Positive

Variable	Category
Positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ information about solutions to problems,</li> <li>➤ relief efforts for families experiencing difficulties and threats to their lives</li> <li>➤ a drop in threats and risk to live and</li> <li>➤ improved safety.</li> </ul>

### Negative

Variable	Category
Negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ stories about stereotyping of migrants,</li> <li>➤ physical attacks on African migrants</li> <li>➤ destruction of properties of migrants.</li> <li>➤ responsiveness to destruction relief</li> </ul>



### Neutral

Variable	Category
Neutral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Stories that did not fall into positive or negative</li><li>➤ stories that had an equal amount of both positive and negative</li></ul>



**APPEND B**

**CODING SHEET**

Online newspaper:

Headline:

Paragraph:

Author:

Date:

Variable	Category
Conflict	
Human Interest	
Economic Consequence	
Morality	
Responsibility	
Language used to refer to Africa immigrants	
Tone of voice used in referring to the South African as players in the attacks	

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South Africa's displaced in limbo

*Two months after xenophobic attacks, tens of thousands remain uncertain of future.*

by Rhodri Davies

14 Jul 2008



**Thousands of people remain displaced long after the eruption of the violence**

The 30 children at the Mid Rand camp would rather be anywhere but "home".

They are part of a crowd of more than 650 people sharing tents on a patch of land to the east of Johannesburg.

But this is no festival event with camping provided.

BBC News

**South Africa: Two dead in new bout of mob violence**

- 09 September 2019
- Africa

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Image caption: A businessman inspects the damage caused by a fire last week

**A fresh bout of mob violence in South Africa has left two people dead.**

It began after a speech in the commercial hub Johannesburg by a veteran politician, who was trying to quell tensions over xenophobia.

Mangosuthu Buthelezi was heckled by a rowdy section of the crowd on Sunday, who later clashed with security forces.

Ten people, including two foreigners, were killed in the city last week when mobs attacked foreign-owned businesses.



Image caption: Groups of men also interrupted a speech by the police minister last week

The initial bout of attacks started a week ago after South African lorry drivers staged a nationwide strike to protest against the employment of foreign drivers.

The country has become a magnet for migrants from other parts of Africa because it has one of the continent's biggest and most developed economies.

But there is also high unemployment in South Africa and some people feel foreigners are taking their jobs.

Video caption: SA xenophobic attacks: 'fake' videos stoke tension

As the week progressed, **people across the continent shared videos on WhatsApp which purported to show violent attacks on Nigerians** . But these were denounced as being misleading.

BBC



## Fear and distrust as victims regroup in South Africa

*After deadly xenophobic violence, foreigners sheltering in camps outside Durban plot their next course.*

by Azad Essa

29 Apr 2015



More than 5,000 people were displaced after deadly violence against foreigners [Azad Essa/Al Jazeera]

MORE ON HUMAN RIGHTS



South Africa migrant attacks: 'Why can't we live with peace?'

*After wave of xenophobic violence, many foreign nationals say they do not feel welcome and fear for their safety.*

by Nickolaus Bauer

4 Sept 2019





A looter makes off with goods from a store in Germiston, east of Johannesburg, South Africa [Themba Hadebe/The Associated Press]

#### EDITOR'S PICKS

**Johannesburg, South Africa** - Black smoke fills the air as Frank Uzoma stands outside his torched car dealership on Jules street, east of the Johannesburg city centre.

"I can't do anything here in [South Africa](#) any more," the 39-year-old Nigerian said on Monday, recounting the unrest that had begun the previous afternoon.

"Many people's shops and property have been destroyed or looted. We came here with nothing and what we have is now disappearing."

Uzoma, who has lived in South Africa for 16 years, is one of several hundred foreign nationals in the country's economic hub left destitute after several days of looting and violence.

Over 100 charred vehicles litter Jules street, an automotive and light industrial hub, amid burning tyres and broken glass.

The fronts of supermarkets, clothing retailers and liquor stores are either completely destroyed or heavily barricaded as running battles between police and angry mobs have gone for days, with officers deploying tear gas, rubber bullets and, on occasions, live ammunition.

"We are chasing these things away," Nkosi Sithole said, marching with a group from Wolhuter Hostel a Johannesburg workers' residence towards the inner city.

"They can go and take their drugs with them," said Joseph Ngcobo, repeating an oft-repeated South African stereotype that migrants bring nothing but crime and economic

hardship. "We have no job and no money but they do. South Africans must have those things."



A riot police officer throws a tear gas canister as looters make off with goods from a store in east Johannesburg [Themba Hadebe/AP]

'All foreigners must go'

There are no studies to unequivocally confirm if foreign nationals coming to South Africa affect the economy or society negatively and whether they are disproportionately involved in crime.

Meanwhile, it's debatable as to how many migrants are living or working in South Africa regularly or irregularly. Official statistics from the [2011 census](#) suggest just over two million, while a [discredited report](#) quoted extensively claimed there are up to five million migrants among South Africa's 56 million citizens.

Labour statistics [show](#) the country suffers from an [unemployment](#) rate of 29 percent, adding to further pressures in the competition for resources amid high inequality.

**READ MORE**

[Five killed in attacks on foreigners in South Africa](#)

Theories of how foreigners affect the country's fortunes run wild - as do the videos of the looting and skirmishes with police that have gone viral - raising concerns that the situation could mimic the xenophobic violence of 2008.

Patrick Bond, a professor of political economy at the University of the Witwatersrand Wits School of Governance, said the government had not done enough to dispel dangerous myths about migration.

"Failing to deal with the legacy of apartheid and its aftermath has contributed to the economic dystopia that is the lived reality of South Africa's poor - both local and foreign - that are only trying to survive."

Misconceptions appear to also be fuelled by [social media](#) awash with fake news as videos alongside alarming messages claiming the violence will intensify unless all foreigners leave are running rampant.

"These people have taken our lives away. They have taken our jobs and are putting pressure on public services. We are tired of them - ALL FOREIGNERS MUST GO!" reads one Whatsapp message.



Theories of how foreigners affect the country's fortunes run wild like the videos of the looting and skirmishes with police have gone viral [Themba Hadebe/AP]

On Tuesday evening, breaking his silence on the unfolding chaos, President Cyril Ramaphosa insisted South Africa is "a country that is completely committed against xenophobia".

"We do not allow and cannot tolerate the attacks on people from other African countries or any other country," Ramaphosa said in a pre-recorded address posted on Twitter.

But for those affected by the situation, the situation is plain and simple - they do not feel welcome and fear for their safety.

"I'm very scared here in South Africa. How can I feel safe if they are wanting to kill us?" asked Jayendra Singh, a Bangladeshi mobile phone shop owner in Hillbrow in the north of the City.



In the country since 2003, Singh said he knew no other home but was now considering his options amid the latest wave of violence.

"We earn money but we help South African people every day. Why we can't live here with peace?"

SOURCE: AL JAZEERA NEWS

## Five killed in attacks on foreigners in South Africa

*Police fire rubber bullets and arrest 189 people in Alexandra amid rallies linked to anti-foreigner sentiment.*

3 Sept 2019

Five people have been killed in xenophobic attacks in [South Africa](#), police said, as President Cyril Ramaphosa vowed to clamp down on what he described as "acts of wanton violence" and the African Union and Nigeria sounded the alarm.

Police fired rubber bullets and arrested 189 people in the township of Alexandra on Tuesday, a day after clashing with looters who local media said targeted foreign-owned businesses in several parts of the city.

Most of the deceased were South Africans, police said.

"I'm convening the ministers in the security cluster today to make sure that we keep a close eye on these acts of wanton violence and find ways of stopping them," he said in a post on Twitter.

"There can be no justification for any South African to attack people from other countries."



Looters take items from an alleged foreign-owned shop during a riot in the Johannesburg suburb of Turffontein on September 2, 2019 [Michele Spatari/AFP]

The violence comes amid a wave of protests in the transport industry linked to anti-foreigner sentiment.

Zambia's government on Monday called on Zambian truck drivers to avoid travelling to South Africa and those already in the country to park their vehicles "until the security situation improves".

Truck drivers in the southeastern province of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) started a nationwide strike on Sunday to protest against the employment of foreign drivers. KZN police said 11 trucks blocked the road to Richards Bay Harbour, one of the deepest natural harbours in Africa.

They told AFP news agency that at least four vehicles had been torched.

At least 20 people had been arrested "in connection with incidents related to protests within the trucking industry", KZN police said.

Lieutenant-General Khombinkosi Jula, chief of police for KZN province, said they had intensified patrols along major routes.

Sipho Zungu, chairman of the All Truck Drivers Foundation, told AFP his group had had "nothing to do with the strike", but stressed that it was fighting for the employment of South African drivers.

"People of South Africa are hungry, they are sitting at home.. while companies in South Africa are employing foreigners ... [because] its cheap labour. We are hungry and angry," Zungu told AFP.

The South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (SATAWU), which has over 200,000 members, also distanced itself from the violence.

South Africa's Road Freight Association told local media in June that more than 200 people have been killed in attacks on foreign truck drivers since March 2018.

SOURCE: AL JAZEERA AND NEWS AGENCIES

News

BBC News Navigation

### South Africa: No safe haven for Somalis

By Pumza FihlaniBBC News, Port Elizabeth

- 10 November 2011



Image caption: Abdi Habarwa says Somali businesses are often targeted by local criminals

**Many thousands of Somalis have fled famine and warfare at home, braving a treacherous journey across the continent to reach South Africa but some feel their new lives in Africa's richest country are little better than the misery they left behind.**

"If we wanted to fight we would have stayed in our land. We didn't come here to die we came here to take care of our families," says Qorane Haji, 29, whose shop was looted and burnt down in recent months.

Mr Haji has been living in South Africa for over five years. He owns a shop in Motherwell, a township in Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province.

More than 300 shops are owned by Somalis in the area, he says.

Most of the Somali population in South Africa lives in the Eastern and Western Cape provinces.

**No-one can save us, we came to South Africa to be safe but we have become targets of bad men who kill us just because we are not from here Anwar Haji, Somali national**

But business has not been easy.

Poverty and unemployment are high in South Africa - many people in the poor communities believe that foreigners are "stealing their jobs".

Somali-owned shops have been looted or burned down as a result.

News

BBC News Navigation

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## South Africa: How common are xenophobic attacks?

By Reality Check team BBC News

- 2 October 2019
- [Share this with Facebook](#)



Image copyright: GETTY IMAGES  
Image caption Foreign workers in South Africa have been targeted

**Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari is visiting South Africa this week to promote ties between Africa's two largest economies.**

The trip comes at a time when relations have deteriorated following a rise in attacks on foreigners in South African cities, including against Nigerians.

In response, hundreds of Nigerians have left South Africa fearful of the violence and Mr Buhari is expected to address a meeting of some of those still living in the country.