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Go back to your country

Critical discourse analysis of xenophobia in Namibian social
media context

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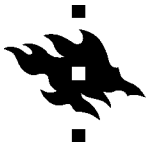
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Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract			
<p>Muukalaisvihaa on tutkittu eteläisen Afrikan kontekstissa viime vuosina kiihtyvään tahtiin. Tutkimusta on vauhdittanut Etelä-Afrikassa tapahtuneet väkivaltaiset hyökkäykset Afrikkalaisia maahanmuuttajia kohtaan vuosina 2008 ja 2015, joissa kuoli kymmeniä ja tuhannet joutuivat maanpakoon. Namibia mielletään usein Etelä-Afrikan pikkuveljeksi, ja monet Etelä-Afrikasta löydettävät ilmiöt toistuvat Namibiassa. Akateeminen tutkimus on keskittynyt lähinnä Etelä-Afrikkaan ja Botswanaan, jonka vuoksi halusinkin keskittyä tutkimaan muukalaisvihaa Namibian kontekstissa.</p> <p>Koska aiheesta ei ole tehty paljon aiempaa tutkimusta, tutkielmani aineisto koostuu namibialaisten sosiaalisessa mediassa käydyistä keskusteluista. Analysoin ainoistoa diskurssianalyttisin keinoin. Lopulliseen analyysiin valikoitui 779 kommenttia kahdeksasta artikkelista, jotka oli julkaistu namibialaisen uutissivuston Facebook-tilillä. Aloitin analysoinnin jakamalla kommentit kategorioihin niiden sisältämien diskurssien perusteella, jonka jälkeen tavoitteenani oli löytää mitä viitekehyksiä namibialaiset käyttävät perustellessaan omia mielipiteitään maahanmuuttajista, ja millä tavoin maahanmuuttajia puolustetaan. Toiseksi halusin saada selville, koetaanko tietyt kansallisuudet uhkaavammiksi muihin verrattuna.</p> <p>Tutkimuksessa käy ilmi, että namibialaiset kokevat maahanmuuttajat uhkana niin henkilökohtaisille kuin kansallisille resursseille. Maahanmuuttajia myös toiseutettiin, eikä heidän koettu olevan osa 'meitä'. Monet namibialaiset käyttivät maahanmuuttajia myös syntipukkeina ja syyttivät heitä niin hintojen noususta kuin korkeasta tyttömyysprosentista. Toisaalta muukalaisvihaisia kommentteja paheksuttiin syvästi ja maahanmuuttajia kohtaan koettiin solidaarisuutta – mutta vain jos maahanmuuttajat olivat muualta Afrikasta. Kiinalaisia maahanmuuttajia ei puolustettu kommentteissa lainkaan, ja heidät koettiin myös suurimpana uhkana namibian luonnonvaroille ja koskemattomuudelle.</p>			
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1. Introduction

We talk of people who do not want to listen, who do not want to work, who are thieves, child rapists, and house breakers.... When foreigners look at them, they will say let us exploit the nation of idiots. As I speak you find their unsightly goods hanging all over our shops, they dirty our streets. We cannot even recognise which shop is which, there are foreigners everywhere. I know it is hard for other politicians to challenge this because they are after their votes. Please forgive me but this is my responsibility, I must talk, I cannot wait for five years to say this. As King of the Zulu Nation... I will not keep quiet when our country is led by people who have no opinion. It is time to say something. I ask our government to help us to fix our own problems, help us find our own solutions. We ask foreign nationals to pack their belongings and go back to their countries.

- King Goodwill Zwelithini, March 2015, South Africa

Namibia and South Africa were one of the most racially divided and unequal countries in the world until the democratization of the countries in 1994. In South Africa, after the destruction of the Apartheid regime and with Nelson Mandela as their president, hopes and dreams of a better future were high as the Rainbow Nation took its first steps as an independent country. Unexpectedly South Africa has experienced an extensive and ever-rising problem with xenophobia after 1994 – a phenomenon that took many by surprise and led scholars searching for the answer that would explain the violence and scope of the events. Already in 1997, the Southern African Migration Programme (SAMP) started to document the extent of xenophobia in South Africa and Southern Africa, and they are continuing their research to this day. (Crush & Pendleton, 2004)

Xenophobia in South Africa escalated to violence in South Africa in 2008 and 2015, leaving thousands of immigrants displaced and 62 and seven people dead, respectively. Some of them were burned alive. The most recent attacks happened in March 2019 as I was writing this thesis; three immigrants were killed. If xenophobia was a well-researched topic even before these events took place, afterward it became one of the biggest problems for researchers in

this area. Some say that South Africa's problem with xenophobia can be traced back to ANC's¹ Aggressive nation-building project and xenophobia just happens to be an unwanted by-product. Others point their fingers to politicians, as all kinds of xenophobic statements and rhetoric are brought to light by all political parties in South Africa as a way to attract votes. In 2017, the deputy police minister in South Africa claimed that foreigners control 80% of Johannesburg. The Democratic Alliance is campaigning for the upcoming elections with the slogan "All South Africans First," and they want to make it illegal for foreigners to marry South African citizens. (Heleta, 2019) The quote above is often blamed for being one reason for the events in 2015, even though it was not by a party leader but the King of the Zulu nation under traditional leadership and thus holds a position of power and respect similar to party leaders and members. These explanations are, although relevant, quite one-sided, as there are many other reasons behind the rise of xenophobia in South Africa and elsewhere, which we will go through later on in this thesis.

The main focus of this thesis is Namibia. I chose the country to be the subject of this thesis due to the fact that Namibia is often described as the little brother of South Africa. Moreover, there is very little written about xenophobia in Namibia, specifically. South Africa and Namibia have a long and often painful history together, and many phenomena found in South Africa can be found in Namibia too. In fact, I have only been able to find data about Namibia in a limited number of articles, some of them quite dated. This might be because no violent xenophobic attacks have been recorded in Namibia. Crush and Ramachandran (Crush & Ramachandran, 2009) state that public opinion surveys of citizen attitudes towards migrants and refugees are not very common in the Global South². Most of the information must be gathered elsewhere – media, xenophobic attacks against foreigners, and statements of officials.

¹ African National Congress. It was founded in 1912 as a black liberation movement in Bloemfontein, South Africa. ANC has been the ruling party of post-apartheid South Africa since the elections of 1994. Their first elected president was Nelson Mandela, followed by Thabo Mbeki, Jacob Zuma, and Cyril Ramaphosa, who is the ruling president since 2017

² I have decided to use the term "Global South" instead of "developing countries" or "Third World." The term highlights the countries' geopolitical location instead of focusing on development and cultural differences. It also does not assume a hierarchy between like 'developing' and 'developed' or 'first', 'second', and 'third'. (Mitlin & Satterthwaite, 2013)

The ANC government in South Africa routinely denies xenophobia even when facing massive amounts of evidence proving the opposite; after the 2008 attacks, President Mbeki said that the attacks were *criminal*, not *xenophobic* (Crush & Ramachandran, 2009). This kind of denialism is not so prevalent in Namibia, where government officials have mentioned xenophobia being a problem – even when no severely violent xenophobic attacks have been recorded. The lack of 'severe' incidents in Namibia does not, however, mean that xenophobia does not exist. According to Campbell and Crush (Campbell & Crush, 2015), even when there is no apparent and violent xenophobia, migrants face systematic xenophobia in the workplace, schools and public hospitals. Foreigner status is often revealed once the immigrant starts speaking, which leads to them being treated as 'the other'. There are lots of newspaper articles on Namibian newspapers written throughout the years, suggesting that there is a more severe problem regarding xenophobia. It has also been found out that South Africa, Namibia, and Botswana are among the most xenophobic countries in Southern Africa (Crush & Pendleton, 2004). In the next chapter, I will highlight and explain the research problems in more detail as well as the research questions. Then I will proceed to give a brief explanation of the main terms used in this thesis.

1.1. Research problem and questions

Of course, no country is free of xenophobia. Xenophobia is not tied to a specific place – it is found everywhere, but it manifests in different ways. My aim is therefore not to find out whether Namibia is xenophobic or not or seek the answer to how xenophobic Namibia is. I will focus on the *how* instead of the *why*: my aim is to find out what are the socio-cultural frameworks people use to justify their xenophobic views and how people defend foreigners. I will also focus on who is/are the object(s) of xenophobia and are Namibians more xenophobic towards certain nationalities.

Due to the "absence" of violent xenophobic attacks and previous studies in Namibia, the data analyzed in this thesis is social media discourse. I am applying critical discourse analysis as a

method to analyze Facebook comments, and I hope to find out how societal constructions of power and in-group/out-group attributes are reproduced and reinforced in the online discussion. The data will be gathered from *The Namibian's* (largest newspaper in Namibia) Facebook page using relevant keywords.

For the purpose of my research, I will not consider inner tensions between different ethnicities in Namibia. This would be a very fruitful topic for research in the future, but considering the limited scope of my thesis, I cannot dive into this issue in full. Therefore, I will group together all Namibians regardless of their background, and will not mention their age, race, gender, educational background, or occupation while analyzing the comments.

But why do citizens of South Africa and Namibia (as well as Botswana) – countries bordering each other - harbor the harshest xenophobic sentiments? Is it because of the similar post-independence nation-building process after apartheid? Or is it because of economic circumstances? Do historical migration patterns possibly have something to do with it? Is it a natural consequence of nation-building? I will not have the means to find answers to all these questions in the scope of my thesis, but it is essential to ask them, nevertheless.

Having lived in Namibia for almost 1,5 years and being friends with many immigrants, and based on the current discussion, research, and the rising numbers of Chinese immigrants, I hypothesize that Chinese are causing much concern among the general population. I further hypothesize that this causes the Chinese to be the main object of suspicion, followed by Zimbabweans (who form a large part of the immigrant population in Southern Africa due to the instability of the country). Because of the lack of research done specifically about Namibia, I will talk quite a bit about what research has explicitly found in South Africa.

1.2. Key concepts: Xenophobia versus racism

It is essential to explain some of the terms used in this thesis since they are often used interchangeably in every-day conversations. These terms are 'stereotype', 'prejudice', 'racism', 'discrimination', and the main focus of this thesis – xenophobia.

The definition of stereotype according to Cardwell (1996:198) is "...a fixed, over-generalized belief about a particular group or class of people." It is a word that has a slightly negative ring to it, and people often use it to describe negative attributes. However, stereotypes are not inherently harmful. As Tajfel (1981) argues, "they provide the oversimplification and generalization the mind needs to process information and give order to reality." In other words, we use stereotypes in our everyday lives to simplify our social world; because of stereotypes, the amount of information processing (i.e., thinking) significantly reduces when we meet a new person because of possible similar experiences we have experienced in the past. By stereotyping, we make assumptions that person A from group X has a whole variety of characteristics specific to their respective group. Stereotypes lead to social categorization, which is one reason for the emergence of prejudiced attitudes, i.e., the 'us' versus 'them' mentality; also known as in-groups and out-groups. A distinct disadvantage to stereotyping people is that we ignore individuality and generalize their characteristics and abilities. Stereotypes can be both positive and negative; however, negative ones are far more common. (Cardwell, 1996)

Discrimination according to Merriam-Webster (2019) is "the practice of unfairly treating a person or group of people differently from other people or groups of people." Discrimination can be based on age, gender, race, sexuality, religion, social class, appearance –anything that is different from the subject. Xenophobia is a form of discrimination, as is racism. The term 'xenophobia' originates from two Greek words: *xenos* (meaning foreigner or stranger) and *phobos* (meaning fear). Xenophobia has been defined with slightly different words by many scholars, and all of them phrase differently the same core issue: excessive fear or hatred towards strangers and/or foreigners.

It is also important to make a distinction between racism and xenophobia since my thesis focuses mainly on the latter (although some sentiments expressed in some of the comments analyzed later on in this thesis could be classified as racism, too). Soyombo (2008: 87) argues that racism contains feelings of racial superiority, while xenophobia contains feelings of fear or hatred. They add that people who see themselves as racially superior (racists) might accept people whom they see as racially inferior to live among them, as long as they accept their inferior status. Xenophobic people, on the other hand, do not accept strangers to live among them.

In the next chapter, I will go through the history of xenophobia in South Africa and Namibia, give an overview of the background literature and the main arguments of previous studies. The methodology used in this thesis will be discussed in chapter three, with further emphasis on using social media and Facebook as the main platform for analysis. The fourth chapter focuses predominantly on Namibia, its demography and current day social media use together with current policies and laws concerning immigrants and migrant integration. The description of the data and the analysis of the frameworks found from the data will be discussed in chapter five.

2. Previous research & background

Xenophobia seems to be on people's lips a lot more than before, and it is a widely studied topic especially in the Western world. In the Global South, a lot of attention has been put on studying the poor working conditions of migrants, but the growth of xenophobic attitudes has not been so widely studied (Campbell and Crush, 2015). Due to the limited amount of previous research, it is of the utmost importance to research this topic in Namibia as well. In this chapter we are going to go through the history of xenophobia in South Africa in Namibia from the beginning of Apartheid until recent years, followed by how xenophobia has been explained by various scholars, and lastly – what has been found in the previous research that has been conducted of Southern Africa and more specifically Namibia.

The leading researcher on xenophobia in Southern Africa is SAMP. They started researching xenophobia in Southern Africa after the end of apartheid in 1996 to promote awareness of migration and development issues. They have published multiple articles regarding migration and xenophobia every year since the start and are the primary source of my literature for this thesis. Unfortunately, they do not have articles concerning Namibia specifically, but they do mention Namibia in some of their articles.

2.1. Whites only – history of xenophobia in South Africa and Namibia

Crush and Pendleton (2004) argue that the socio-political environment in South Africa has been particularly accommodating for intolerance of foreigners. The violent events that erupted in 2008 and 2015 are arguably the most visible xenophobic events in post-independent South Africa, but they were certainly not the beginning of discrimination in the country. We cannot understand the current day without understanding history, and we cannot ignore the shared history between South-Africa and Namibia. Since 1948 the countries were under a white majority rule in government – apartheid.

During Apartheid, one's "foreignness" was recognized by one's external characteristics. Black South Africans were not considered true South Africans. Instead, they were referred to as 'foreign natives' because instead of being South African, they were actually 'Transkeians', 'Bophuthatswanans', 'endans',³ or such. As Neocosmos (2006) puts it, it sounds quite absurd that the indigenous population, the *natives*, were considered *foreign*. Neocosmos adds that while this is, indeed, absurd, still it is "not much more absurd than any other state politics which, while adhering to a conception of citizenship as equivalent to indigeneity, attempts simultaneously to draw distinctions between different sections of the population living and working within the country" (Campbell & Crush, 2012; Neocosmos, 2006).

³ These words refer to Bantu homelands (that are now part of South Africa) or their inhabitants set aside for certain ethnicities.

Apartheid ended in 1991 in South Africa, but negotiations for what should happen afterward lasted until 1994. In 1994, the first non-racial elections were held in both countries. ANC was declared the winner in South Africa, and they elected Nelson Mandela as their president. In Namibia, the struggle for independence ended in 1990 after a 24-year period of war with South Africa, resulting in the end of apartheid. The first president of democratic Namibia was elected to be Sam Nujoma, a founding member of the SWAPO (South West Africa People's Organization), which played a major part in the liberation struggle and eventual independence.

The end of apartheid brought with it many deep and extensive transformations, but unfortunately, as a byproduct, an increase in the intolerance against foreigners was noticed too. (Crush and Pendleton, 2004) Reportedly South Africa experienced a significant increase in the inflow of immigrants after the all-race elections (one can understand why the country did not seem quite as tempting during the apartheid), and by granting the previous 'other' equal rights and citizenship, immigrants became the new scapegoats⁴ for economic, social, and political problems in post-apartheid South Africa. (Croucher, 1998)

Frayne and Pendleton (2002) mention that there are no available statistics about Namibia (then South West Africa) prior to 1990 because the territory was a part of South Africa. It is therefore impossible to know the inflow and outflow of migrants who crossed the border to South Africa from (now) Namibia's borders because the countries were one. During Apartheid moving across Namibian borders was heavily restricted to everyone else except South Africans. There was an influx of foreigners after independence, and it created a new question: who is Namibian?

In 1994 both countries were faced with a challenge: how to unite the citizens of different ethnicities and classes after the discriminatory laws of apartheid? Namibia's nation-building process started before that of South Africa and had a vast symbolic importance to the new political dynamics in South Africa. (Fosse, 1997) Melber (2009:474) notes that in post-apartheid Namibia 'there are worrying signs in the political culture of Namibia of a trend towards growing intolerance and totalitarian tendencies.'" Melber continues to point out that there are visible

⁴. Merriam-Webster defines scapegoat as "a goat upon whose head are symbolically placed the sins of the people after which he is sent into the wilderness in the biblical ceremony for Yom Kippur". In other words, scapegoating is putting the blame on someone other than yourself. (scapegoat, 2019)

combinations of xenophobic attitudes in the national discourse (i.e. newspapers), which has led leading policy-makers to “advocate a more and more narrow-minded definition of the concept of nation and a rigorous exclusion of those who do not match their self-proclaimed standards.”

Apartheid gave the people of both countries a common enemy to unite against, but in their attempt to sew shut the divides of the past and build a cohesive national identity based on shared loyalty to the South African state instead of identity-based on racial separateness, South Africa's ANC went on a rather aggressive nation-building project. While trying to construct the ‘South African’, politicians, media, and government officials focused on ‘who is not’ rather than ‘who is.’ As Crush and Pendleton put it: "South Africa's redefinition of the boundaries of citizenship and belonging is based on the creation of a new other; the non-citizen; the foreigner, the alien." (Crush and Pendleton, 2004:4 & Croucher, 1998)

While these violent xenophobic attacks in 2008 and 2015 in South Africa were no doubt the most visible and gained the most international attention, they were not the only ones. Crush and Ramachandran (2015: 8) mention that between 1994 and 2014 (not taking into account what happened in May 2008), at least 228 documented cases of collective violence against migrants and foreign-owned businesses occurred around South Africa. The actual number could be even higher since not all incidents get reported and documented. A rise in xenophobic incidents can be identified from 2006 onwards, but the most significant number of incidents has been between 2010 and 2014. (Crush, Chikanda, & Skinner, 2015)

The attacks were (and have been) mainly targeted towards black migrants from southern African countries (Crush, 2008), mainly Zimbabweans and Mozambicans, which in 2013 were the two top source countries of immigrants. Nigerians and Somalians were severely affected, too. In 2006 Neocosmos had already found out that some nationalities are singled out (often by the press), those being especially Nigerians, Mozambicans, and Zimbabweans, and they are often blamed for taking part in criminal activities.

This has caused some researchers to come up with new terms, such as ‘negrophobic xenophobia’ and ‘Afrophobia’, to explain the ‘peculiarity’ of the events. This, to me at least, sounds like some people have a hard time understanding how one black person can be

xenophobic towards another – a preconceived notion that all Africans feel solidarity towards one another, perhaps because of similar experiences under the colonial rule in the past, and should therefore see each other as brothers and sisters, not as foreigners.

2.2. What causes xenophobia?

The heart of xenophobia lies in social categorization – the 'us' versus 'them' mentality. All the terms mentioned above are a form of social categorization. It is, however, not only strangers, new immigrants, or foreigners who experience xenophobia; long-term immigrants who have been living among the dominant group can also experience xenophobia. Therefore, "the term 'strangers' may be used to refer to people who are not indigenes or original residents/occupiers of a particular location or people who are significantly different from the dominant or main group or population. The key issue is that they are not considered to be 'sons of the soil' or 'bonafide' members." (Soyombo, 2008: 86)

Commonly used terms for 'locals', 'indigene', or 'us', is an **in-group** – the group into which individuals belong. Similarly, the group into which an individual does not belong is called an **out-group**. Quasthoff (1989: 191) describes the groups and their differences like this:

One of the devices which members use to mark social differences, to differentiate "us" from "them" is the use of stereotypical attributions with respect to one's own group and the respective outgroups ("auto-" and "hetero-stereotypes"). These stereotypical attributions fulfill a dual function within the social patterning. Firstly, they are shared by the other members of the ingroup and thus establish or strengthen the in-group solidarity, define the co-members as "belonging to us." Secondly, they mark the difference between "us" and "them" by attributing traits to "them" which are different from the way "we are."

Through socialization processes, people in the in-group are encouraged to express loyalty and solidarity to their own group and distance themselves from the out-group. In-groups members can also have a sense of indifference, hatred, or disgust towards out-group members (Soyombo, 2008). Orrú (2014:114) adds that individuals are taught to build their own identities by comparing and contrasting themselves to other groups. This allows systematic emphasis of

the differences of the groups, where a tendency of applying negative stereotypes as attributes of the out-groups and positive stereotypes as attributes of the in-groups prevails.

It is not always so that the in-group is the majority and out-group the minority. This is true in South-Africa (and Namibia), where the apartheid regime of the white minority government was in place between 1948-1991.

When in-migration rises, and more migrants are coming than before, citizens often react negatively. This has been evident in Europe since the "flood" of migrants in recent years. However, interestingly, the perception that many migrants are arriving is enough, too. The perception (whether correct or not) that one's country is under siege from the outside is at the heart of xenophobia. (Crush & Pendleton, 2004)

Over the years, many have attempted to explain what makes us xenophobic and what factors can be found within a country when citizens express xenophobic sentiments. The most common theories for xenophobia (globally) are **economic theory, frustration-aggression theory, conflict theory** and **socio-biological theory** (Soyombo, 2008). The economic theory suggests that poverty and unemployment work as catalysts for xenophobia. Neocosmos (2006) agrees that discrimination is often justified by the social crises and poor economic state of the country, which is said to have deepened the fear and mistreatment of foreigners.

South Africa and Namibia, however, are doing relatively well economically. Namibia and South Africa are both classified as upper-middle-income countries by the World Bank. Is this theory therefore debunked in Namibia's and South Africa's case, because these countries are doing better economically than many of their neighboring 'not as xenophobic' countries? Even though on paper these countries are doing well economically, the countries are also among the most unequal in terms of wealth distribution: South Africa receives a Gini Coefficient of 0.631 and Namibia 0.639.⁵ (World Bank, 2013) This means that a small minority holds most of the wealth, and a big majority live in poverty. There have been significant improvements too: the poverty

⁵ Equality in wealth distribution can be measured using the Gini Coefficient: The World Bank gives a country a number between 0 and 1, with 1 being the most unequal (one person holds all the wealth). Gini Coefficient higher than 0.40 is considered alarming. (Yitzhaki, 1979)

rate in Namibia has gone down from 69.3 in 1994 to 28.7 in 2009 in Namibia (International Organization for Migration, 2016). Also, as Crush and Pendleton (2004) mention, it is only the *perception* of an economic crisis that is needed (even though in this case I would argue that it is not merely a perception at this point). Furthermore, as a criticism to the theory, is not only the poor who are xenophobic, rich can be so too – which is particularly evident in the case of Namibia and South Africa, as we will see later on in this essay.

When perceptions of the country's social, economic, or political situation are negative, citizens often find scapegoats to put the blame on. This brings us to the next theory, the frustration-aggression theory. The theory suggests that when people experience frustrations in securing goals (e.g., getting a job, providing for one's family), they are likely to respond with aggression and violence against the group perceived to be responsible (usually immigrants). (Crush & Pendleton, 2004; Soyombo, 2008)

The conflict theory explains xenophobia as a conflict between classes in a capitalist system. It can be explained as one group's desire to dominate the other group. It can also be explained as an expression of frustration or alienation (from the society) by the working class; under the capitalist system, more and more people are marginalized and thus have no strong institutional loyalties. They are therefore more likely to engage in deviant acts, such as xenophobia. Crush and Pendleton (2015) argue that this could be seen as a social construct where the in-group constantly tries to establish dominance over the out-group. However, they add that in Southern Africa where xenophobic views are not only held by those in dominant socio-economic groups, this theory is limited.

The socio-biological theory is quite self-explanatory and suggests that human beings have a built-in tendency to see the unfamiliar as dangerous and familiar as safe. (Soyombo, 2008) It is a pre-conditioned response to cultural and ethnic differences but does not consider the possibility of social construction. Crush and Campbell (2015) argue that the theory fails to explain a situation where xenophobia might be expected to exist, but it does not, and it also leaves little room for legal, social, and policy interventions. While xenophobia might involve

elements of racism, this is usually not the case in Southern Africa where skin-color or outer appearance is not the reason for exclusion.

More common explanations in the African context, according to Crush and Campbell (2015: 161-162), are those that see it as “absolute or relative material deprivation and resource competition” and “a natural, though not inevitable, consequence of nation-building and the emergence of new nationalisms.” Poor people see migrants as threats to their already scarce resources such as jobs, housing, service, and educational opportunity: migrants are seen as scapegoats for something governments failed to deliver to its people. The weakness in this argument is that it fails to explain why those in relatively good positions economically harbor xenophobic sentiments, too.

The nation-building argument explains the rise of xenophobia to the redefinition of belonging: who is South African and who is Namibian? After apartheid the boundaries (physical and non-physical) of the nation states were reimagined, effectively excluding those who did not belong within those boundaries. Xenophobia is only directed towards those who are physically present inside these boundaries, and those outside are not the problem. Interestingly, Crush and Campbell add that “new nationalist xenophobia allows no history” – SADC countries have a long history of cross-border movements, but it does not make a difference. Only the present moment and present (perceived or actual) actions of the immigrant matter. The cultural and ethnic differences are exaggerated, as well as the number of immigrants inside the borders and the effect this might have on the country. Any positive benefits of the outsiders are denied, and their exit from national territory insisted.

2.3. What previous studies have found

Although statistics alone cannot explain the nature of xenophobia in a country and the results can be debatable, they provide us with a general picture of the situation. Unfortunately, not many national surveys have been conducted in Southern Africa (with the exception of South Africa, where more surveys have been conducted over the years) that would give us

information about xenophobic attitudes among citizens. Because of this, xenophobia must be studied from public statements, the media, and attacks on migrants. (Crush, 2009: 11)

As Neocosmos (2006) puts it: empirical studies of xenophobia in South Africa are in fact plenty. The problem is, there is not enough studies that explain the problem or come up with solutions to make it better; "they tend to metaphorically throw their arms up in explanatory impotence". This article was written in 2006, 13 years ago from today, so that is plenty of time for things to change. But have they? In Namibia's case, research is lacking on both fronts. There are hardly any empirical studies done, and Namibia is only ever mentioned in the margins of more significant studies (usually South Africa).

The most important (and frankly, the only one) survey useful for my thesis in terms of measuring xenophobia in Southern Africa, especially Namibia, is the National Immigration Policy Survey (NIPS) conducted by SAMP in five Southern African countries in 2001-2 (six if we count South Africa, for which they used survey data from 1999).

One of the most interesting phenomena the survey found was that interestingly South-Africa, Namibia, and Botswana do not exactly follow the internationally more common patterns in term of xenophobic attitudes among citizens:

Negative attitudes in the anti-foreign "troika" (South Africa, Namibia, Botswana) are so pervasive and widespread that it is impossible to identify any "xenophobic profile." In other words, the poor and the rich, the employed and the unemployed, the male and the female, the black and the white, the conservative and the radical, all express remarkably similar attitudes. This poses a significant problem of explanation because it runs counter to the more general belief that certain groups in a population (usually those who are or who perceive themselves to be threatened by outsiders) are more prone to xenophobic attitudes than others. It also provides a massive public education challenge not only of knowing where to begin but also in deciding who to target. (Crush & Pendleton, 2004)

What could be the explanation to this? Why these three countries? Is it a coincidence that these three countries all border each other, and share a similar past – Namibia and South Africa actually being one country during a time in history?

Other countries surveyed expressed attitudes that were more tolerant than those of Namibia, South Africa and Botswana – although still not considered “tolerant”, as per se – they just fit the more typical profile of xenophobia, where certain socio-economic groups within the population express more xenophobic attitudes than others⁶. (Crush & Pendleton, 2004)

Other key findings were that citizens tend to exaggerate the number of non-citizens in their country (respondents in most countries think that between 40 and 50 percent of immigrants are there illegally), scapegoating non-citizens, and viewing non-citizens as a threat rather than an opportunity. Most citizens would like their governments to get tough with non-citizens, and immigrants are viewed as an economic threat – the most widespread one being the thought that migrants steal jobs even though according to the survey majority of them have no personal experience of such incidents (almost 90% of respondents had no personal experience of being denied a job because of a foreigner).

The survey also shined a light to the fact that there seems to be not much solidarity between SADC⁷ Countries, and SADC citizens see hardly any difference between migrants from SADC areas and elsewhere in the world. They continue pointing out that given the fact that SADC was established in 1980, it seems to have failed in its purpose of creating and reinforcing greater integration and cooperation between the states. This is at least true in the case of the "rogue states" (Namibia, South Africa, Botswana) that expressed high levels of xenophobia. (Crush and Pendleton, 2004: 1-2)

A more recent survey conducted by Afrobarometer (Chingwete, 2016) found that in South Africa, tolerance, in fact, does vary by race, urban-rural residence, education level, party

⁶ Confusingly, in 2002 Frayne and Pendleton write in another article that the answer to "how intolerant are Namibians of outsiders" is "---it depends, in part, on your racial group, your household income, and your education. ---less tolerant attitudes about outsiders and other ethnic/racial groups are strongest among poor and less educated Namibians; conversely, middle class, and better-educated Namibians are more tolerant and accepting." The article is referring to the same SAMP survey conducted in 2001-2, but somehow, they have come to different conclusions in 2002 and 2004 even though they are the same people! The answer to this might be that the first attempt to decipher the results of the survey in 2002 was not quite right, and they were able to understand the data in 2004 better. Whatever the explanation, I am going to focus more on the newer 2004 article.

⁷ Southern African Development Community. It is composed of 16 southern African states, and its goal is greater integration and cooperation between the states.

affiliation, and province, but not by age or gender. The survey found that white South Africans are least likely to harbor restrictive attitudes (35%), whereas the percentage for black South Africans was 43%, for Indians/South Asians 41% and Coloreds (40%). 46% of rural residents feel that foreigners should be barred compared to 39% urban citizens. The same survey, on another note, did find that South Africa (out of 33 other African countries surveyed) is among the most intolerant countries on the continent. The NIPS survey by the SAMP was conducted 15 years prior to the Afrobarometer survey.

In the Afrobarometer survey 2016 in Namibia, 2 questions out of 100 concerned migrants, 33% agreed and 27% strongly agreed that “because foreign migrants take away jobs, and foreign traders sell their good at very cheap prices, governments should protect their own citizens and limit the cross-border movement of people and good”. On the other hand, when they were asked whether they would like immigrants of foreign workers as neighbors, 20% said they would somewhat like it and 35% said they would strongly like it. 30% would not care and only 6% would strongly dislike it.

In the 2004 survey, interviewees were asked to rank people from different areas from unfavorable to favorable on a scale of 0-10. People from Asia received a shockingly low rate of 1.7, being the least favorable of all. Indians were rated as 5.3, followed closely by other Africans with a 5.5 rating. The highest rating was received by white people with a rating as high as 8.3. (Crush & Pendleton, 2004; Gagnon & Khoudour-Castéras, 2011)

An interesting find is also that the negative attitudes people have against foreigners are not a result of their own experiences. In 2006, 61% of South Africans said that they have had “little or no” first-hand contact with migrants from neighboring countries. (Crush & Ramachandran, 2009) From this arises the question; how, then, do people have negative attitudes against foreigners if they've never had any experiences, positive or negative, with foreigners? The answer is the media, which is especially relevant to my thesis. The media plays a critical role in creating and perpetuating (stereotypical) imagery of foreigners, which can over time lead to xenophobia. Media coverage of immigrants has been studied in South Africa, and they have found a negative bias in their writing. The imagery the South African print media spread was partly to blame why citizens felt that immigrants were ‘flooding’

into the country, not to mention the range of stereotypical negative characteristics that were attributed to foreigners. (Crush & Pendleton, 2004; Crush & Ramachandran, 2009) The most negative coverage was seen in Botswana and Namibia, where foreigners were painted to be 'job-stealers', 'criminals' and 'illegals'. In Namibia, the press often referred to migrants as illegal and openly linked together criminal activity, Angolans and Zimbabweans (Crush and Ramachandran, 2009).

We cannot ignore the importance of profit when discussing the media. As Fairclough (2003, 42) argues, it remains the ultimate driving force, and this may often lead to the inclusion of racist, sexist and xenophobic discourses. Because people have so little contact with non-citizens, as was found in the SAMP survey, media plays a critical role in creating negative imagery of migrants. Els (2013) confirmed that the Daily Sun newspaper in South Africa continuously portrayed the non-citizen as 'the other' who threatens the post-apartheid society and promises. Foreigners are defined in terms of citizenship, whether they belong to the nation-state or not. As Els (2013:48) puts it, South African citizenship becomes "the most prized commodity as 'foreigners' are defined in terms of citizenship and membership of the nation-state." Peberdy (2009:5) adds to this idea by arguing that "the idea of the nation-state and its right to defend its national territory and integrity from the outsider, the immigrant, remains as powerful as ever in South Africa." Because of the massive impact the media has on people's views, it is vital to study it more deeply.

3. Methodology

Taking into consideration the scarcity of previous research, I am using social media (Facebook) comments as my main source of data. Utilizing consumer-generated data on social media as the main source of data is still a fairly new field of research, but not entirely uncommon.

Xenophobia and how people reinforce xenophobic stereotypes on the Internet has been studied in social media context (in Italy) by Orrù (2014). He argues that overall, Internet is seen as a reliable source of information, and it acts as a channel for people to voice their social and political demands.

I will search for newspaper articles posted on Facebook focusing on immigration, migrants, and xenophobia in Namibia. I will also find articles focusing on certain nationalities (e.g., Chinese man arrested for fraud). This will allow me to find out which of these articles attract the most comments (therefore most likely evoking the most feelings), and moreover it will allow me to find out the most common frameworks people use to justify their views, and if there are any differences in the frameworks used to justify xenophobia towards different nationalities.

The Namibian is the largest daily newspaper in Namibia, and its Facebook page of almost 250,000 followers attracts quite a few comments on their news articles. I will analyze comments from these and other sources if they emerge, through the lens of critical discourse analysis and divide them into their respective framework categories. For this, I will be using ATLAS.ti, a qualitative research and data analysis tool. The program allows me to code the comments into their respective frameworks, and furthermore, it helps me keep track of the most popular frameworks (codes) and their relations to other frameworks, which would be far too time-consuming and difficult to do by hand.

Social media allows comments to be born "naturally", as opposed to interviews. This can be quite fruitful since people might feel more comfortable commenting on social media where they feel "freer" to express themselves, as opposed to sitting with another person who is carefully listening to what they have to say. There is a downside to the freedom of social media

that I need to take into consideration, as well. Not everyone taking part in online discussions and discourse is being honest. Some people take part in the discussion with the sole purpose of provoking, annoying, and ridiculing the other participants. This phenomenon is called 'trolling', and while it is often clear who is trolling and who is being honest, I can never be completely sure, which in some cases might lead to the data being skewed, i.e. producing much harsher discourse than what is the 'norm'.

The concept of social media analysis is still fairly new. The whole phenomenon is constantly changing, growing, and transforming, and the approaches are still debated, as it is clear that the 'traditional' models are not equipped to deal with this phenomenon. Social media allows data to occur "naturally", and something that would have taken the researcher much time and resources is now only an internet connection and a few clicks away. As opposed to other ways of gathering data for discourse analysis (e.g. interviews) there is minimal researcher intrusion in data. (Townsend & Wallace, 2016)

The popularity and accessibility of social media is growing quite rapidly in Africa, as people use it to connect, communicate, share information and most importantly for this thesis – share their attitudes and behavior on a wide variety of topics.

This makes the usage of social media discourse an attractive alternative to other ways of gathering data, albeit there are some issues and ongoing debates about the ethics of using this kind of data for research which I will discuss later.

3.1. Critical discourse analysis

It is crucial to understand the importance of discourse in creating and reinforcing ideas. That is why I have chosen critical discourse analysis (CDA) as the main method for analyzing my data. Discourse analysis strongly assumes social constructionism, in other words, that the way people perceive the world is socially constructed. CDA is not about analyzing the structure of the text itself but rather the socio-psychological attributes of the individual and the meaning behind the text, or as Fairclough (2015: 4) puts it "—analysis of dialectical relations between discourse and

other objects, elements or moments, as well as the analysis of the 'internal relations' of discourse." The main focus when studying discourses is in the historicity of the phenomena, in the power relations (e.g., dominance and inequality) or in institutional social customs. CDA aims to answer 'how' rather than 'why'. (Jokinen, Juhila & Suoninen, 1993, 27). In other words, CDA can be used to unveil the underlying ideologies by interpreting the more profound meaning under the discourse.

Fairclough sees discourse as a social practice. What he means by this is that firstly, language is a part of society. Secondly, language is a social process, and thirdly, language is a socially constructed process. However, discourse is not just an instrument for producing social realities: its primary focus is in power relations. According to Wodak and Meyer (2001) discourse reproduces power structures by normalizing specific types of discourse to the point that it is taken as neutral.

But what does it mean that the analysis is *critical*? Fairclough (2015: 7) explains it as something that is "wrong with a society --- and how 'wrongs' might be 'righted' or mitigated, from a particular normative standpoint". Wearing the 'critical lens' enables us to consider the power, ideology, and politics behind the discourse, e.g. it may help us identify racial undertones in political discourse. Of course, what is right and what is wrong can be subjective, but generally, most people agree that societies ought to be fair.

3.2. CDA and social media

A growing number of people are using social media in their everyday lives. It has been found that social media intersects with people's lives increasingly through hashtags, use of social media for protest mobilization, advertising, etc. (Wodak & Meyer, 2015) Traditional ways of interacting, such as telephone calls and letters, are no longer as common as they are losing space for instant messaging and social media communication. Even many newspapers are losing circulation numbers, as online newspapers become increasingly more popular and people read their news through social media, e.g., Facebook. Many (if not most) newspaper

publishers have a Facebook page, where they post their articles of the day for people to read and comment.

Therefore, as Wodak and Meyer (2015: 206) put it, we cannot ignore the changes and impact social media is bringing to critical discourse studies: “---social media communication has given rise to a new dynamic of communication that breaks away from the traditional linear flow of content from certain (privileged) producers to (ordinary, powerless) consumers, as well as changing the distribution processes that were at the core of assumptions about power in the mass media.” In other words, social media is increasingly more available to people of all people regardless of their background.

Even though it is an important question, we should not separate offline and online as two completely separate spaces. Digital text is still produced by humans as “the vast majority of human lives are affected or augmented in some way by digitally mediated practices, even if this is for some removed from their daily experience.” (Wodak & Meyer, 2015: 213)

3.3. Facebook

Facebook has become one of the most popular ways of communicating and sharing on the internet. Accessibility to Facebook continues to grow in Namibia, and penetration to rural areas in recent years has grown. Orrù (2014:130) argues that “Facebook could be considered as a new public and political space where people feel free to interact, express personal opinions and make sense of the reality around them.” We can easily choose the type of news we read on Facebook and what fits our understanding of the world.

Comments can be removed by moderators, and in some cases, while I was gathering data the moderator had commented that they will delete all xenophobic comments. The individual can choose what kind of advertisements they would like to see, and what kind of advertisements they would prefer not to see. The algorithm will often show you related posts of something you have been interested in before, and sometimes it will show you something your friend has liked. This allows a wide range of posts for an individual to see.

3.4. Ethics

There is yet no clear ethical framework for researchers to follow in terms of social media analysis. The most important topic for debate regarding social media ethics is whether the data should be considered public or private. The most important argument for the usage of this data is that whilst creating a Facebook account, the person is required to agree to the terms and conditions of the platform. However, it has been found in previous research that the knowledge people have of these terms is limited. (Townsend & Wallace, 2016) In other words, users do not necessarily see posting comments on Facebook as something they could be held accountable for later on, and my aim is not to ridicule or expose anyone.

The question of whether the discussion on Facebook is public or private is usually an ongoing debate. Even though all comments on Facebook are inherently public, there are private groups that require permission for participation. It is generally agreed that these private groups can be considered 'private' and are thus not available for analysis. In the case of my thesis, *The Namibian* has a public Facebook page that does not require permission to follow, and all posts are seen to non-followers as well. (Townsend & Wallace, 2016)

Another problem regarding ethics whilst using Facebook comments is that people do not write under a pseudonym – they write, supposedly, with their own names and faces, which creates a problem with the preservation anonymity. Of course, it is possible for a person to use a false name and picture, but generally, people use their own names and faces. Xenophobia is generally considered a sensitive topic, and people would not want to be categorized as xenophobic or racist. The intention of this thesis is not to point fingers and ridicule people who are leaving xenophobic comments under the articles used for analysis. For this reason, I will not be referring to the commenters by their names, gender, race, or anything that could help with the identification of the commenter. But it is impossible to completely anonymize the data since it is on a public Facebook page for everyone to be found with the right keywords.

One more topic concerning ethics is my personal standpoint as a researcher. My position is that of a white European female writing her master's thesis about a phenomenon (even though not an African-only phenomenon) happening on the continent of Africa. Despite having lived in Namibia for 1.5 years, my position is that of an 'outsider'. Even though it is not my aim to expose Namibians as xenophobic or to measure how xenophobic Namibia is, it is important to consider my privileged position as a researcher studying this topic and take into account the possible point of view of the 'colonialist'.

4. Namibia

4.1. Namibia demography

While geographically a large country, Namibia is one of the scarcest populated countries in the world. The total population of Namibia in 2016 was 2 324 388, of which 1 112 868 lived in urban areas and 1 211 520 in rural areas. It is ethnically a very diverse country, as many African countries are. The main ethnic groups are the Ovambo (half of the population), Kavango, Herero, Himba, Damara, mixed race (colored and Rehoboth Baster, White Namibians (Afrikaner, German, British and Portuguese), Nama, Caprivian, San, and Tswana. 50% of households speak Oshiwambo at home, 11% speak Nama/Damara, 9% speak Afrikaans, 10% speak Kavango, and 9% speak Otjiherero. 48% of Namibians lived in urban areas in 2016. (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2017:14)

According to the Migration and Remittances Fact Book (World Bank, 2016), there were 65,400 immigrants in Namibia in 2013; a percentage of 2.8% of the total population. The top source countries of immigrants were Angola, Zambia, South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Botswana. In comparison, the total percentage of immigrants in South Africa in 2013 was 5.1. Women made up 40.6% of the total immigration population. Out of all immigrants, 1,755 were refugees in 2014. However, the actual number of immigrants is unknown and unknowable – it is impossible to know how many come to the country illegally.

4.2. South-South migration

The number of migrants is on the rise globally. The global number of international migrants rose to 258 million in 2017, from 172 million in 2000 (UNDESA, 2017). According to an OECD report (Gagnon & Khoudour-Castéras, 2011) countries in the Global South are now increasingly more important in international governance because of the shift of the world's economic center towards the east and south. They argue that three events have played a central role in affecting international migration: The global economic crisis, the Arab Spring of 2011, and the 2011 famine in the Horn of Africa. Relevant to this thesis is only the first one since there are not many immigrants from Northern or Eastern Africa in Namibia.

A growing number of countries in Africa are now receiving more immigrants than they send when they previously were predominantly senders (Crush & Ramachandran, 2009:1; Gagnon & Khoudour-Castéras, 2011:62). Many of these immigrants now choose other countries in Africa (mostly neighboring countries) as their destination instead of, for example, Europe - this is called South-South migration (Crush & Ramachandran, 2009:1). According to United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (2018) North African countries provide the most migrants that go outside Africa.

South-South migration stock is likely to rise in the future, partly due to the increasingly restrictive migration policies of Northern countries, and partly because many Southern countries are growing fast economically (South Africa being the fastest) and they are now acting as new magnets for potential migrants. The primary senders of immigrants in Southern Africa are Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Lesotho. The main receiver in volume is South Africa, but Namibia, Botswana and Zambia all receive more than they send, too. (Gagnon & Khoudour-Castéras, 2011)

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) released a report in 2018 about Migration and economic development in Africa. They found that the middle class in Africa migrates to richer countries in the region, and in poorer countries, the need for employment is a major driver. The report also found that intra-African migration is beneficial

for the receiving country, for example in terms of structural change: they found that a 1 percent increase in the number of immigrants could increase the manufacturing value by 0.26-0.43 percent. Unemployment together with climate-change drivers has contributed 90 percent of SADC citizens migrating within other SADC countries. Labor migration has a long history on the continent, and remittances play a crucial role in household survival and economic development. (International Organization for Migration, 2016)

Most of the discussion nevertheless revolves around South-North migration, and South-South migration has taken the backseat. An increasing amount of studies are emerging about South-South migration and the issues it brings in tandem but compared to the number of studies done on South-North migration, research is lacking. To the surprise of many, South-South migration actually takes up most of the migrant stock. According to the 2016 World Bank report, South-South migration takes up 38% of the total number, whereas South-North migration comes second with 34%. (World Bank, 2016)

As the OECD report (Gagnon & Khoudour-Castéras, 2011) points out, the issues South-South migration brings has to be analyzed from a different standpoint, even though the migrants may face many of the same prejudices and hurdles as their South-North counterparts. This is because the receiving countries in the North tend to be quite homogeneous in their language, ethnicity, and culture, and the same is often not true in the South. Southern countries are often multi-ethnic and quite fractionalized, and immigration control can be less restrictive than in Northern countries.

Independence of Namibia brought with it considerable changes in the internal migration patterns and population concentrations in the country. On the one hand, migratory labor to South Africa all but ceased, yet, on the other hand, internal migration and urbanization grew rapidly. Unfortunately, limited data are available in relation to immigrants, partly as a result of a lack of digitalization and inaccessibility of data emanating from the Aliens Control System (data in relation to work permits and work visa applications) and the Citizenship Automation System. Border management provides several challenges in the Namibian context, flowing from

the porous nature of the borders and the sheer extent of border crossings between, for example, Namibia and Angola.

Namibia shares common borders with Angola, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Botswana. During apartheid, the border between Namibia and South-Africa was quite porous, but after Namibia's independence the cross-border migration between the two countries dried down due to tighter border control. This all meant a new era in migration patterns in Namibia, labor migration to South Africa ceased. (International Organization for Migration, 2016; Frayne & Pendleton, 2002) There are no statistics kept for Namibia (then South West Africa) prior to 1990, because the area was considered part of South Africa. Cross-border movement between Namibia and South-Africa was unrecorded, and cross-border movement between neighboring countries was practically non-existent due to the war and military presence at the borders. (Frayne & Pendleton, 2002)

With the number of immigrants on the rise, issues relating to discrimination, xenophobia, and integration have surfaced as well. (Gagnon & Khoudour-Castéras, 2011) In the North, where there is a long tradition of immigration policy, immigrants are still not often welcomed warmly by the local population. They are viewed with much suspicion and often get scapegoated for possible economic problems the country is facing. The same happens in the South - immigrants, especially those with little professional skills, are often blamed for taking jobs away from the locals, they are seen as the reason to why there is so much unemployment and insecurity. (Gagnon & Khoudour-Castéras, 2011:60) In extreme cases immigrants can become victims of violent crimes, like in South Africa 2008 and 2015.

Even though most immigrants from the South are residing in the South as well, according to Gagnon and Khoudour-Castéras (2011) immigrant integration is not a priority for the governments in the Global South. Because of discrimination, immigrants often reside in informal settlement areas (shacks, makeshift houses), which leads to a further divide between locals and non-locals, and they generate economic and social costs. They add that integrated immigrants, and therefore having a proper integration plan in place, helps the whole country,

whereas unintegrated immigrants can often become costly – even more so than in the North because they (informal settlement) can cause damage on the environment.

4.3. Tension between different Namibian ethnicities

As mentioned previously, for the purpose of my thesis I am not taking into account the tensions between different ethnicities within the borders of Namibia. It is, still, important to understand this side too, since it provides us some context of the society, and might provide us with some insight on the atmosphere in Namibia regarding ‘the other’.

Apartheid made ethnic identities a necessity (Töttemeyer, 1989). Namibia has an extremely rich ethnic diversity and cultural heritage, something Namibians pride themselves of. Still, Namibia today is still experiencing a divide due to ethnocentrism and tribalism. Stell and Fox (2015) found that interethnic boundaries are still fixed in modern-day Namibia, and their study suggests that Namibians value the maintenance of ethnic boundaries but are sometimes open to crossing them. Töttemeyer (2014: 17) came to the same conclusion and states: “ethnic entities in Namibia still live to a large extent separated from each other in their own compartments, culturally and geographically. This is equally applicable in rural and urban areas.”

As I am writing this thesis, it has not been even 30 years since the end of apartheid in Namibia. For more than a century the principal political and ethnic conflict was over the white colonial domination. Understandably, there is much tension between white and black people in Namibia, and economic equity and equal benefits for everybody as well as social justice to everyone have not been achieved yet. There is an ever-widening gap between the black middle and upper classes and the black working class, which is standing in the way of building a cohesive and equal society. (Töttemeyer, 2014)

When the apartheid regime ended, resources, especially land, were not evenly distributed. Nearly half of the fertile land remained in the ownership of the whites. The new government initiated the ‘willing-buyer, willing seller’ policy for the land reform, which has been criticized

for its inefficiency in term or re-distributing the land. Government administration has remained largely Ovambo dominated despite its strive for more ethnic balance, which has also led to some concerns. Ovambos made up the majority of the SWAPO party who orchestrated most of the liberation struggle. (Minority Rights Group International, 2019) The current president of Namibia, Hage Geingob, is the first non-Ovambo president in Namibia since independence; he belongs to an ethnic minority, the Damara.

Even though white Namibians are a demographic minority, they control a considerable portion of the economy and own a lion's share of the land. Therefore, they are not at an equal status, and thus not comparable, with the other ethnicities in Namibia. Albeit politically not as present in the government, they have a lot of influence in politics due to their effective control of key economic institutions. To tackle the gap between different ethnicities, the Namibian Constitution recognizes the importance of positive discrimination. Called Affirmative Action, this positive discrimination enables the government to put emphasis on people who were in the past subject to discriminatory laws and customs, resulting in certain ethnicities having better access to resources. Affirmative Action is designed to help sew that gap a little tighter together, and as a result people from historically disadvantaged groups now dominate state institutions. (Suzman, 2002)

4.4. Laws and policies in Namibia

One of the key problems in policy making in Namibia is the fact that while data on migration does exist, it is scattered across ministries, departments, and agencies, which makes migration data have limited usability in policy-making. Another problem is that is also hard to find and verify reliable international migration data. (International Organization for Migration, 2016)

There are two frameworks on migration on the African Union level, both containing the aim of mainstreaming migration for developmental purposes. The first one is the African Union Migration Policy Framework for Africa (AUMPF) and the second the African Common Position on Migration and Development of 2006.

On a national level, Namibia has two key policies in place, Vision 2030 and Namibia's Fourth National Development Plan (NDP4). Both policies approach the issue from a job-creation standpoint, which is also seen as a measure to address rural-urban migration. Especially NDP4 emphasizes employment creation as a measure to mitigate rural-urban migration. Vision 2030 is more of an overall promoter of the creation of an open-market economy, with the goal of accelerating the process of job creation. There are ten other policies relevant to migration.

Namibia has ratified several international and regional instruments regarding migration, except two principal instruments: International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 143 of 1975 and United Nations Migration Workers Convention of 1990, as well as two UN Conventions on statelessness (1960 and 1975).

The borders of Namibia are quite porous and active, especially the Angolan border. Due to that, there has been a bilateral agreement that led to the introduction of a border resident card between Angola and Namibia since 1996. The Namibia Human Rights Action Plan 2015-2019 states that cross-border health issues do not receive enough attention in border towns, and there is hardly any data regarding internal and external migrants.

Namibia aims to reduce the number of refugees through resettlement and local integration. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is planning on discontinuing its presence in Namibia because Namibia has reached its goal in finding durable solutions for refugees.

4.5. Who is online in Namibia?

Finally, it is crucial to consider who is online in Namibia before we proceed to analyze the data in the next chapter. The main factors that need consideration are accessibility to power and internet, penetration of internet connection, cost of internet and mobile devices, infrastructure, and computer literacy, high cost of internet, unaffordable for a large part of the population. Low computer literacy, poor infrastructures, power availability. Rural areas have less access than urban areas.

According to ITU (2016) there was a huge leap in accessibility to the internet in 2015, with 25.69% of Namibians having access to the internet as opposed to 14.8% in 2014. The newest data from ITU is from 2017, which states that 36.84% of Namibians had access to the internet. It is probably safe to assume, that the percentage in 2018 was close to or over 40%.(International Telecommunication Union, 2018)

According to a Forbes article (Shapshak, 2017), 94% of Africa's Facebook users use mobile devices for internet access. Mobile internet adoption continues to grow rapidly in Africa, and the expected number of unique subscribers is estimated to grow from 557 million in 2015 to 725 million in 2020. Even though the growth rate is the highest in the World, subscriber penetration is still expected to be the lowest in 2020 with a 54% penetration rate. There are significant barriers to the growth of mobile services, such as cost, coverage, power availability and technical literacy. The cost of mobile ownership is among the highest in the world in Africa, as a proportion of income. Moreover, the cost of living in Namibia is quite high, and this includes the internet (data cost on mobile devices as well as a Wi-Fi connection at home). This, of course, plays a crucial role in accessibility, since only those doing relatively well financially can afford extra commodities.

In 2016 the coverage of 3G and 4G networks in Africa were 50% and 16% respectively, around 30 percentage points lower than the global averages. Literacy rates in Sub-Saharan African countries are among the lowest in the world. These problems are the most acute in rural areas, where the cost of internet/mobile devices is the largest in relation to income levels.

In addition to this, using social media platforms requires a basic skill set. This comes more naturally to people who have had the privilege to be born in a 'digital age', but these skills are not limited to younger generations. Some schools in Namibia, however, do not have access to computers and therefore cannot teach computer literacy. This is a problem especially in rural areas and in schools based close to informal settlements.

5. Data analysis

In this chapter I present the final analysis with example comments from the data. I will start by describing the data collection process, followed by a short description of each article the comments were found under. I will then proceed with the actual analysis of the frameworks.

5.1. Choosing and gathering data

The data for this thesis was gathered from *The Namibian's* Facebook page. Facebook pages allow search with keywords, and the keywords used were 'immigrant', 'foreigner', 'Chinese', 'Angolan', and 'Zimbabwean'. In the beginning, keywords 'Zambian' and 'Botswanan' were applied too, because I wanted to gather data of all the main immigrant groups in Namibia. These keywords, unfortunately, produced no usable data, which forced me to leave them out of my thesis. I chose to include the Chinese, too, because there has been a lot of debate and conversation about the relationship the Chinese government has with the Namibian government.

I wanted to find newspaper articles that inspired people to write about immigrants and foreigners and the writers' attitudes towards them, therefore it was important to find newspaper articles that wrote about immigrants, even if the articles were writing about immigrants and negative/illegal things they had been part of. I tried to balance it out by choosing neutral articles in the mix too. I went through the news, and chose the news that had at least 25 comments under them. Some of the articles included almost 200 comments, but the data in them was relevant to my thesis, so I did not want to leave them out even though it meant that I had to code and analyze significantly more data than I had intended. I also wanted to have at least two articles for each keyword, to avoid the data being steered into a particular direction and to allow a more balanced outcome for the analysis. However, for a more thorough research that would be as objective as possible, more articles and comments would be needed (ideally all articles including the chosen keywords during a certain time-period). Unfortunately, I worked alone on this thesis which limited my ability and capacity to include

more comments for analysis. Some key frameworks might've been left out due to my (subjective) choice in articles.

After selecting the potential articles for data collection, I went through the comments to see whether the news had sparked relevant conversation - my aim is not to find out how racist Namibia is, therefore I did not just include any conversation that did not mention anything about foreigners - instead my aim was to find the discursive strategies that people use to justify their xenophobia.

Since no major violent attacks against foreigners have taken place in Namibia, and no xenophobic attacks have been reported of on the news, I chose to look for comments during 2015 – 2018. This decision is arbitrary in the sense that the years hold no other significance than 1. In 2015 South Africa experienced its second wave of xenophobic attacks, and Namibian newspapers were writing a lot about the subject, meaning that foreigners might have been on Namibian's mind a lot, 2. I wanted a larger selection for my data from recent years, without having to consider comparing the years for changes in attitudes over the years. The ending was chosen to be 2018 because I gathered my data between January 2019 and March 2019, and I wanted to include the most recent data in this thesis. Only comments written in English (or mostly in English so that the core message is understood) have been selected. Some of the selected comments did have parts written in Oshiwambo, Otjiherero and other native languages in Namibia. There is therefore always the possibility that I have missed some key information gotten lost in translation concerning language use, such as humor or sarcasm.

When deciding my keywords and the timeframe, I wanted to get a general overview of how much *The Namibian* actually writes about different nationalities and countries. The result of this research helped me narrow down my keywords into a more manageable number, and it also helped me focus on the nationalities that sparked the most commentary. *The Namibian's* webpage offers the possibility to search through their whole archive with keywords and a time period. I typed in all my possible keywords and chose the timeframe to be from the beginning of 2015 until the end of 2018. I also paired the main keyword (e.g. Chinese) with other keywords that I thought could spark feelings of fear, hatred, or distrust in Namibians when they

read the said article. The number of hits the search produced is written next to the keywords. Here are the results:

China	2442	Zimbabwe	2621	Angola	1529
Chinese	2060	Zimbabwean	729	Angolan	577
Chinese + illegal	208	Zimbabwean + illegal	53	Angolan + illegal	49
Chinese + crime	186	Zimbabwean + crime	59	Angolan + Crime	58
Total	4896	Total	3462	Total	2213

Zambia	1703	Botswana	1705
Zambian	385	Botswanan	13
Zambian + illegal	24	Botswanan + illegal	1
Zambian + crime	40	Botswanan + crime	0
Total	2152	Total	1719

As we can see, the total number of articles written of China and Chinese is the highest, followed by the Zimbabweans second and Angolans third. Angolans, Zambians, and Botswanans are relatively close to each other in terms of the total number of hits, but especially the keyword 'Botswanan' was not found together with the keywords 'crime' and 'illegal'.

5.2. Description of data

Here is a list of all the eight articles that were used for the data collection together with a short description of each. In the final analysis, whenever I quote a comment, I will indicate which article it was found under with a number after the quote (number 3 referring to the third article about Angolan street vendors).

1. A video of a demonstration against Robert Mugabe. The video is a x minute long video of thousands of (assumably) Zimbabweans protesting Robert Mugabe's dictatorship. *The Namibian* commented on the post saying that xenophobia will not be tolerated in the comments and all xenophobic comments will be deleted. (2017, 191 comments)
2. Angolan crisis hits Namibian property Market. An article about how many apartments and houses are empty in Namibia because of the rise in prices that is suggested to be caused by Angolans by creating an artificial demand. (2016, 245 comments)
3. Angolan vendors irk Namibian business people. An article about Angolans selling merchandise for as low as 50% cheaper, which has caused their Namibian counterparts to blame them of job-stealing – a situation that is “expected to have an ugly ending”. (2017, 42 comments)
4. Chinese man admits smuggling rhino horns. An article about one Chinese man who tried to smuggle 14 rhino horns out of Namibia in March 2014. (2015, 38 comments)
5. Chief trades timber for offices. An article about a Namibian Chief in the Zambezi region agreeing to sell 1000 trees to the Chinese in exchange for the building of traditional offices and a school hostel block. (2018, 112 comments)
6. The Windhoek city police arrested 22 illegal street vendors in Katutura. (2017, 89 comments)
7. Geingob urges Namibians to respect foreigners. President Geingob addressed the citizens to stop insulting foreigners and foreign investors and urged to get foreigners involved in the ‘Growth at Home’ policy. (2015, 37 comments)
8. Citizenship granted to 3000 foreigners. The citizenships were granted between 2010 and 2016. (2018, 25 comments)

Out of all the 779 comments, 419 were applicable for analysis and the rest (360) were left out. The 360 that were disqualified consisted of comments that did not express their stance clearly, there were various ways to interpret their comment, they did not address the issue, or the comment was not written mainly in English. The disqualified data was not included in the analysis, and the comments were not tagged, as doing so would have meant I need to code close to a thousand comments, which was not possible time-wise.

As mentioned earlier, it was significantly easier to find data with the keywords 'foreigner', 'immigrant', 'Chinese', 'Angolan', and 'Zimbabwean' than it was with 'Zambian' and 'Botswanan'. This is a result in itself – news written of Zambians and Botswanans don't spark as strong a reaction, whether negative or positive, as the former keywords. Another reason could be that newspapers write more neutrally of them, because most of the articles under the keyword 'Zambian' and 'Botswanan' were of football, whereas news written of Chinese, Zimbabweans and Angolans contained more negative connotations. This hypothesis is supported by previous research that does suggest that media has a major impact on the attitudes of citizens. This is, however, a topic for another research and I can only speculate. We will now look at the most popular negative frameworks, followed by the arguments in support of immigrants. Lastly, we will look at how the comments differed between immigrants from different countries.

I tried to balance the number of comments analyzed for each keyword (even though the comments are imbalanced, the ones applicable for analysis are different). Still, it is not in perfect balance, since some of the articles sparked a lot more conversation than others. However, I tried to have at least 50 analyzable comments for each keyword.

Whenever foreigners were mentioned in the articles, negative responses in the comments were found. But whenever there were xenophobic remarks written, there was always someone defending the foreigners – except when it was the Chinese. If it was clear that the defender was not a Namibian, but for example someone defending their own nationality, I did not include it in the analysis. It is however impossible for me to make sure that all the comments I chose were made by Namibians.

Out of the analyzable comments, 244 were labeled as 'negative' and 144 as 'support'. Some comments were labeled just as negative, when no particular theme could be detected from the text, such as "this must be rejected". Not all the comments labeled as 'negative' were necessarily xenophobic, but they just expressed negative feelings toward some actions by foreigners, for example "Hell no!" as a response to an article talking about how the Chinese have gotten permission to cut down 1000 trees in the Zambezi region in North-East Namibia. I've also tagged those comments as 'negative' that express agreement to a clearly negative/xenophobic comment.

Some of the articles were worded in such a way that they could attract certain kinds of (mostly negative) responses from commenters, such as article number two that stated: "...many places in Windhoek's central areas are empty as Angolans, who had a reputation for paying anything landlords demanded...", which already paints Angolans as being the reason for the steep rise in property prices. It is impossible to know from my data whether the commenters would have commented in the way they did if the article was worded differently, i.e. whether the stereotypes already existed as such or whether the article poured gasoline into the fire and created a new much harsher discourse on top of a more 'tame' one (Angolans having a lot of money). It is therefore important to keep in mind the role of media in creating and perpetuating stereotypes and xenophobia, and I will continue mentioning this throughout the analysis in places where there might've been a strong push from the article towards certain types of comments.

On the other hand, in the first of the chosen articles *The Namibian* announced that they would delete any xenophobic remarks from the comments. This means that the data I gathered might not show the true representation of comments on the negative-positive scale I have used, especially about the Zimbabweans who were the object of the article. But, in the reality of my thesis – as my aim is not to find out how xenophobic Namibians are, but what frameworks are used – it is not a dire issue.

There are some factors concerning possible distortion of the data that need to be taken into consideration. The number of commenters is lower than the analyzed comment, because some

commenters took part in the conversation multiple times. If I noticed the same person commenting about the same subject multiple times, I tried to not count his same arguments again unless they offered a new argument in their following comments. Therefore, the quantitative results cannot be considered definite. As another example of the possible distortion of data, some commenters would first write a much harsher comment and after getting feedback from other commenters, would 'eat their words' or try to mitigate their opinions. Although in some cases the opposite occurred, and commenters with a relatively 'tame' opinions would turn to name-calling and harsher comments after being 'poked' by other commenters. It is also important to consider the motivations of the commenters; do people only engage in topics that they are interested in, or do they 'give their 2 cents' on topics that they feel are not that relevant to them? My guess is that mostly people who feel strongly on the given topics comment, which would mean that the commenters are polar opposites from each other: those who harbor mostly negative feelings and those who harbor positive. Presumably most people fall into the middle-category, who do not often write comments under the article, but might 'like' or 'dislike' the post instead. Some people might also not be comfortable sharing their own opinions of such sensitive matters and would prefer to talk about it privately on their own page or discuss it with their friends and family. This does not translate into the data, which means that the overall conclusion is not a perfect representation of reality.

Some comments had multiple themes/frameworks within them. This made it quite challenging to choose which framework I should discuss the comment under, and thus caused some overlapping in the analysis part. It also naturally caused the number of comments within each framework is higher than that of total comments.

Under the 'negative' label, I found three main categories into which most of the comments fell. I named the categories 'Threat', 'The Other', and 'Scapegoating'. The rest I put into the 'Miscellaneous Negative' category. Under 'support' three main categories were identified as well: 'Solidarity', 'Not a Threat', and 'Condemn Xenophobia'. Rest fell into the 'Miscellaneous support'.

Interestingly, people did not refer to their personal experiences when justifying their views – whether negative or supportive. This finding is in alignment with what previous studies have found – people often base their opinions on what other people and the media have written.

The ‘Threat’ category was by far the most popular category with 123 comments. Comments were put into this category if they expressed fearful sentiments about foreigners in Namibia. People saw foreigners as a threat to their natural resources, and often the commenters seemed to feel that they were under siege by foreigners. Foreigners were seen as untrustworthy and being up to no good, engaging in illegal activities – especially the Chinese, who were seen as corrupt neo-colonizers. They were also attached to immorality (often sexual) and ruining Namibian women. Closely related to this category was also wishing the police or government to get tough with foreigners.

The next category was ‘The Other’ with 60 comments. This category consists of commenters who, in some way, made a (clear) distinction between Namibians and foreigners – in-group and out-group. The most popular one was the wish or demand that the foreigners return to their respective homes. Some expressed that the foreigners were uninvited, had gotten too comfortable or had overstayed in Namibia. Many people expressed that Namibians should be put before foreigners by the government and were concerned that this was not the case currently.

The third category, ‘Scapegoating’, was found in 30 comments. Commenters blamed foreigners for example of stealing jobs from natives, causing the economic crisis in Namibia, and scarce resources. The ‘Miscellaneous negative’ category consists of name-calling and feeling that foreigners disrespect Namibians, which gives Namibians the right to disrespect them back.

The most popular supporting framework was ‘Solidarity’ with 63 comments. Often people would refer to the foreigners as brothers and sisters (but only if they were African), and reminded other commenters that Namibians were helped by the very same countries in the past. Many also made the argument that Namibians are foreigners in other countries, so it is not a one-way street. The next category, ‘Not a Threat’, consists of 61 comments assuring other commenters that foreigners are not to be feared – they are just humans, often looking for a

better life. A large number of comments disapproved of the police targeting the wrong people who were 'just trying to make a living', even though they were illegally in Namibia. Some rationalized that foreigners are actually good for the economy. The third group called 'Condemn' is 39 comments expressing their disapproval of xenophobic comments and calling out newspapers for perpetuating xenophobia. In the next section we will analyze comments in all categories in detail.

5.3. Negative

In this section we will go through all the comments labeled 'negative'. We will start by analyzing the most popular sub-categories under 'negative', which are 'threat', 'the other', 'scapegoating', and 'miscellaneous'. Under each sub-category exist a number of frameworks, and we will discuss and analyze the main framework in each sub-category. 244 comments were labeled as negative, which means that roughly 63% of the analyzed comments were negative. With 360 comments being left out of the analysis, this means that roughly 33% of the total comments in all of the articles were negative.

5.3.1. Threat

Previous studies have found that the feeling of being threatened or under siege by outsiders (i.e. out-group) is at the heart of xenophobia (see chapter 2.5. and Crush and Pendleton, 2004). This finding is echoed in the 123 comments that were labeled as threat. The way the immigrant was seen as a threat to the country varied from citizens thinking 'they are too many', without further explaining what might be the outcome of 'them' being 'too many', to clearly explaining all the possible threats and their repercussions.

The most popular framework under 'threat' with 43 comments was the sentiment that foreigners are "too many". Even though most of the comments in this category are not as straightforward and hostile as in many of the other frameworks, it nevertheless suggests a

feeling of being threatened by outsiders. It also suggests that there is a certain acceptable number of foreigners within a country, and after it has been exceeded, *something* happens. Even though most don't indicate what the possible outcome of them being too many is, this most likely has something to do with the fear of losing something that's viewed as the core of national identity: when there are 'too many' foreigners in the country, what is at the core of *the Namibian* is threatened. Some commenters mentioned this by (sometimes jokingly) referring to Namibia having become 'Nambabwe' – a play with the words Namibia and Zimbabwe. In the next comments the main argument is that 'they are too many':

To be honest , you guys are jst too many here, imagine there are jst those that live in whk & multitudes in other towns as well. I hope the removing of mu[gabe] will come with your return home! (1)

It's not about hatred whatsoever, we just need space too, they are so many and I know if we were in their country in that number they'll feel the same way. (1)

The commenters start with 'to be honest' and 'It's not about hatred whatsoever', which can be seen a way of mitigation of what's about to come. The first commenter is 'just being honest'; about to say something that is true, avoiding being labeled as rude or xenophobic. Though not as blatantly mitigating and denying of prejudiced attitudes as the 'It's not about hatred whatsoever', it still contains the core idea. The first commenter continues to point out that the foreigners in the video are only the one's in Windhoek, and there are 'multitudes' of foreigners in other towns. Using a strong word like 'multitudes' suggests a negative perception from the commenter, and it also serves as a warning or reminder to other Namibians, too. The second comment argues that the foreigners are taking too much space, not leaving enough room for Namibians⁸ They continue the mitigation by invoking to the "fact" that the foreigner's would

⁸ An interesting argument knowing that Namibia is one of the most scarcely populated countries in the world. The commenter could, however, refer to the housing crisis and rising housing costs in Windhoek. The issue of land ownership, as discussed before, could be at the heart of this argument as well.

feel the same way if the tables were turned, therefore it is acceptable and not prejudiced to wish for their departure.

The feeling of being threatened by the sheer number of foreigners is especially imminent in the next comment, in which Chinese people are dehumanized and compared to a disease that is multiplying like viruses: “Thn poison sum Chinese..Thy r multiplying lyk viruses.....” (7). It was not uncommon for commenters to refer to the Chinese as a threatening medical condition, like cancer in another case, all suggesting that they are an unwanted and possibly life-threatening to the nation. This is quite a classic xenophobic move when talking about something unwanted coming from the outside, spreading something negative on the inside.

Exaggerating the number of foreigners was found to be a common response as well, as we know from previous research to be a common misconception related to xenophobia in chapter x).

Euh, never knew they are as many as such, making almost half of our population (1)

There over 200'000 Zimbos in Namibia and over 10,000who are now Namibians (1)

Neither comment offer any further views, but as it is rare that people are happy about foreigners coming to their country, and as it was found out that xenophobic people often exaggerate the number of foreigners in their country, it is safe to assume that these comments are negative. The first comment sounds surprised at the number of demonstrators in the video, possibly in a negative way. The expression of surprise in the comment suggests that they had not thought that there are many foreigners in Namibia before, but after seeing so many of them, they thought it was too many ('half of the population'). In other words, they were not concerned before, but the amount of people in one video seemed threatening to them. This is also related to the importance of the media in portraying foreigners in an objective light, since filming a demonstration held by foreigners who can seem quite angry and threatening because the topic of the demonstration (they wanted their Mugabe out) is a very emotional one.

30%of Namibian population is made up by them (1)

The 'they are too many' framework was often paired with other frameworks, where the second framework was often offered as a negative result of their too high numbers, for example "but they are so many . aye no wonder rent is high . they must leave" (1). This particular comment can be classified as scapegoating, of which I will talk more about in chapter 3.5.3.

With 31 comments, the second most popular discourse was the feeling of Namibia and/or Namibia's national resources being under siege – mostly by the Chinese. In fact, the only comment in this category that was not about the Chinese was one comment about the Zimbabweans, which suggested that the banks are favoring Zimbabweans, and soon the Zimbabweans will take over, and as a result the country will end up in a crisis like Zimbabwe.

While Namibians are sleeping, Zimbabweans are taking over and thanks to SME bank. Namibians were turned away for a simple SME start up loan while these Zimbabweans were given without any collaterals attached. Fellow Namibians keep on dancing Harambe Harambe one day we will wake up and be like Zimbabwe. Our politicians are too comfortable because they know the very same poor people that they turn away will still vote for them!" (1)

Most comments, though, express their concern that resources are being stolen from Namibians, and in return Namibia will get 'nothing but problems'. These comments contained a lot of serious concern and anger, which is quite apparent from the usage of strong negative words such as 'rape', 'hostage', 'destroy', 'daylight robbery', and 'colonizers'. The commenters clearly feel that the Chinese are bringing more problems to Namibia, and they are not actually concerned of helping Namibians, rather they just want to take what they can get and go back home. One commenter argued that 'this must stop immediately' and continued to accuse the Chinese of 'raping country resources'. The comment below insists that Namibian resources belong to Namibians, and not to outsiders. They call the Chinese 'greedy', and it is quite apparent that the commenter sees the Chinese as robbers.

They must leave Namibian resources for Namibian people .. They are greedy those Chinese people they want everything they see in Namibia. They must just go back. They bring more problems to our country then there is.. (5)

Some of the commenters foresee a bad future for Namibia because of the foreigners, indicating that before or without any foreigners (Chinese) Namibia would be better off. They are not seen as being on a benevolent mission – there is ‘a secret’ beneath the surface and Namibians ‘must be careful of these people’ or they will end up ‘losing everything’. The Chinese are seen as untrustworthy and having ulterior motives, and one commenter suggested that all the money that is coming from China to Namibia ‘is not free’. In the next comment the commenter expresses their worry for the future and especially the children, who will be left with ‘blow all’ after the Chinese are done. They continue to argue that the Chinese have a some kind of a reverse Midas touch, that leaves everything they touch ‘screwed up’.

I feel so sorry for the children of tomorrow,. Once these Chinese are finished there will be blow all left of this country. Only thing Chinese are good at – screwing up everything they touch!!!! (5)

Importantly, not all the blame falls on the Chinese – many people they blame their own government for being corrupt and greedy and allowing the Chinese in. It is sometimes unclear whom the commenters thought were most responsible – the one who sells or the one who buys. Many felt that the government had sold ‘them’, their ‘souls’, or ‘Namibia’ to the Chinese. One continued to speculate that the news article concerning 1000 trees being sold to the Chinese is ‘just a cover up story’, and all the donations the Chinese have given Namibia are an indication of the fact that the government ‘sold us’. In the next comment it is apparent that the commenter blames the president, or his stupidity, for letting the Chinese in. Even though the comment can be interpreted as humorous, in my opinion the humor only masks under it a true feeling of worry.

God give us a president with a better IQ even an average one will do, what is this?
(5)

As Crush and Pendleton (2004) mentioned, it is not uncommon for citizens to prefer harsh policy measures or the government/police to ‘get tough’ with the migrants. This can be seen in the many of the comments, too, but the ‘level’ of imminence, as experienced by the locals, varies greatly between different non-citizens’ nationalities. People suggested that the Chinese

(that the news article concerned) should be for example ‘hanged’, ‘fed to the lions’, and ‘left alone to survive in the Serengeti’. The next comment was probably one of the most violent ones.

Cut his hands off and send him home! (4)

The threat Namibians feel concerning the Chinese is undisputable. There is a clear difference, though, in the aggressiveness of the punishment wished upon the Chinese and other Africans, as you can see in the next comments where the first one is about the Chinese and second about Zimbabweans. The commenter starts with ‘please’, which makes his comment sound more like a request or suggestion. This was never the case with the comments concerning the Chinese, which were more like threats or orders that could not be negotiated. The commenter below also suggest that the police take care of the Zimbabweans, whereas the Chinese seemed to deserve a punishment that is outside of the law.

Please the Zimbabweans they mus go back, mos of those zimb doesn’t have documents...aayyyee! Police please do your job (1)

5.3.2. The other

Othring is at the heart of xenophobia, as we saw in previous chapters. We are conditioned to divide people into in-groups and out-groups, and to attach positive features to our own group and negative features to the out-group. Of course, most if not all of the negative comments are, in the end, about othering. This label is more about the clear distinction between do you or do you not belong. 60 comments were coded as ‘The Other’. The most popular framework in this category with 47 comments was labeled as ‘Go home’, which also contained forceful removal or deportation.

‘Go home’ is actually the most popular framework out of all the other frameworks found. Even though ‘threat’ was the most popular category, the most popular framework under ‘threat’ gathered 43 comments – five less than ‘go home’. This particular framework does not attach

any negative attributes to foreigners, but what it does do is separate locals from non-locals. It makes a clear distinction between who belongs and who does not. A vast majority of the 'Go home!' discourse was found under the first article which included a video of a demonstration against the (now former) Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe. Therefore, most of the people Namibians wanted 'out' in terms of my data numbers were Zimbabweans. One commenter even suggested something they framed as 'operation Zimbos out'. This is, however, not necessarily a true representation of whom the Namibians want out the most, especially when compared with the rest of the data which seems to strongly suggest that the Chinese are seen as the most threatening.

Of course, most comments in this category included other frameworks, too, which explained their reasoning on a deeper level than just a wish of their departure. Closely related to the 'Go home!' discourse were the feelings of foreigners being 'uninvited', 'too comfortable', or 'overstaying' in Namibia. The use of the word 'uninvited' suggests that foreigners should only come if they are wanted, or as one commenter continued to say: 'Namibians don't need Zimbabweans'. This discourse seems to argue that foreigners should always bring something to offer to the table, and Zimbabweans do not have that 'something'.

Saying that a foreigner is 'too comfortable' suggests that they can never be a part of 'us', and there should always be a certain amount of discomfort that the foreigner is feeling. This might suggest that it is okay for a foreigner to come if they are in danger or unreasonable amount of discomfort in their native homes, but they should never be more comfortable in Namibia than the Namibian – they should never feel *at home*. The comments including this discourse were found under the first post, a video of a demonstration. The commenters seem to feel that demonstrating is not something that a foreigner is supposed to do, since demonstrating often contains feelings of frustration or even anger, because people demonstrate when they feel that some wrongs need to be righted. This kind of behavior (which can be interpreted as threatening by some) means that boundaries of correct behavior (which is probably closer to quiet gratitude) for foreigners have been crossed.

The next comment contains both negative and supportive discourses. The writer starts by mentioning that they pray for peace in all African countries, which can be interpreted as mitigating or assuring the readers that he wishes no ill on anyone. The second sentence is interesting – particularly the use of the modal verb ‘can’. They seem to suggest that there *can* be solidarity, but *only* if the other does not ‘overstay in someone [else’s] territory’. In other words, solidarity comes with conditions; they can be brothers and sisters but only from afar and staying at your sibling’s house for too long will lead to something they refer to as ‘crush’. Even though the comment starts and ends with mitigation tactics and is not inherently negative, it feels slightly threatening and is labeled as both positive and negative.

My everyday prayer is for peace in all African country. We can be brothers and sister but you can’t over stay in someone e territory there would be a day you will crush. All the best hey no hard feeling. (1)

10 comments contained the framework ‘Namibians first!’”. This particular framework consists of comments that suggest that foreigners are sometimes being put before Namibians, which is not correct according to the commenters. Many people believe that it is the government’s job to take care of their citizens first, before foreigners. In the following comment the commenter compares foreigners to street kids. The use of the word ‘kids’ in a comment can be a strategy to make people more protective: everyone wants to protect their kids, and now the commenter is suggesting that street kids are being taken care of before your own kids. ‘Street kids’ are not as important as your own kids, because you can live without street kids. He uses hunger as a metaphor for the country, suggesting probably an economic crisis, and points out that you are supposed to feed your own children first before ‘street kids’. Pointing out that Namibians have nowhere else to go suggest that foreigners should not be in Namibia, but instead in their own countries.

When hunger strike we feed our kids first not the street kids.most foreign nurses are not doing anything special that locals can not do,plus we have invested a lot of resources in the training of our people.this is out people and Namibia is their home.they have no where else to go .we need to prioritize our people no matter the

cots..a loss to one Namibian is a loss to us all.Namibian jobs are for the Namibian people and klaar! (8)

In the next comment below, the government (ministry) gets a part of the blame again, as was the case in the previous category. The commenter suggests that being born in the 'land of the brave' seems to mean nothing to the officials, as they are full of 'favoritism' and 'unfairness' and 'corrupt practices'. They say that what is supposed to be given to the Namibian is being given to the other, who in this case are 'Chinese, Indian, Nigerians' and many more. These ethnicities are nowhere close to being a big minority in Namibia, but they are a big minority in South Africa. It is possible that the commenter got the nationalities from news articles concerning the violent attacks in South Africa and adopted the discourse and is now just repeating what he has learned. It is, however, true that there are many Namibians especially in the rural areas without proper identification documents.

That ministry is full of favouritism, unfairness maladministration n corrupt practices coz they are only best in giving namibian's documents to foreigners while we are having Namibians whom r still strungling to acquire the same documents even though they were born in this land of the brave. Home affairs must stand up n serve Namibians first but not Chinese, Indian, nigerians and mny many more countries. (8)

5.3.3. Scapegoating

Scapegoating was the third most popular framework with 30 comments. Scapegoating, as we saw in a previous chapter, happens when migrants are seen as the reason for citizens' frustrations, such as lack of job opportunities, housing, and even 'stealing' or 'ruining' women. Similarly, they are blamed for the nation's (perceived) scarce resources, and as a few said: "they bring poverty in Namibia". As we saw in a previous chapter, this is a common response to migrants when it comes to xenophobia. Individuals in the in-group attribute negative characteristics to the out-group and similarly positive attributes to themselves. In the comments, the outsiders are seen as some kind of a force that is sucking their country dry

without much benefit to the economy, or as one commenter put it: “sucking people’s money like bloody fuel”.

Foreigners are the easiest scapegoats. As De la Rey argues, “a key psychological factor in generating social unrest is a sense of relative deprivation. This arises from a subjective feeling of discontent based on the belief that one is getting less than one feels entitled to. When there is a gap between aspirations and reality, social discontent is likely to result” (1991: 41).

In other words, citizens feel that non-citizens are getting to opportunities and resources that actually belong to the citizens. Migrants are seen as coming from the outside and taking something that is not theirs, and one of the most common frameworks in this category is that of the non-citizens taking the citizens’ jobs, which we can see in the next two comments. Both comments are short and clear: the number of Zimbabweans is unacceptable and they are the reason Namibians do not have jobs, and foreigners are making life expensive for Namibians.

I wonder how many Namibians are in zim or some other African countries. This is unexpectable this is why there is no job for Namibians. (1)

They making life expensive for us . (1)

The third comment goes a bit deeper, starting by saying ‘this is nothing to do with race’, once again trying to mitigate the blow of the rest of the comment. They are already debunking the possible response that blame them of being xenophobic, which they feel they are not. They continue to argue that Namibians are ‘suffering’ because of foreigners taking their jobs, which is quite a powerful and emotional word that creates an image of Namibians being in pain and discomfort because of the presence of the other. Foreigners are not supposed to be working in Namibia, unless they create more job opportunities. If they do not create more opportunities, in other words if they are ‘simple workers’ like most Namibians, they are simply adding to the suffering of Namibians. This kind of thinking contains the sense that if there are foreigners in the country, they should be useful – possibly even more useful than the average citizen.

This is nothing to do with race. Namibian people are suffering because people from other countries are filling positions that Namibian people could have filled. If you

come to Namibia to create job opportunities for Namibians or make I don't mind but if you part of the work force I don't think it is fair for the countless Namibian work force out there. (1)

The next commenter goes on a rant about Angolans. They attribute almost everything negative to Angolans: rent, food, water, and electricity are now more expensive in Namibia because, for example, the Angolans 'eat a lot' and 'music in their rooms are on'. Everything can be traced back to the Angolans. Even the Namibian men are forced to kill Namibian women because Angolan men taught Namibian women to like money too much. The commenter is blatantly taking the blame away from the Namibian men who kill women and put it on the shoulders of the Angolan – they are taking a negative attribute from the in-group and attaching it to the out-group, which is a much more comfortable way of thinking for many. If there was no-one to blame for the misbehavior of the in-group, it could shatter the rose-glassed view of the in-group. But, for them, the explanation lies in the foreigner: they are bringing something from the outside that is corrupting the inside. In many other comments, too, this corrupting outside force can be seen, and people want foreigners to stop 'disrupting peace'.

Angolans are the worse people (Aakwankala) they spend money on renting without thinking of tomorrow, this is tomorrow that you have never thought of it! Angolans are the one made the renting price to rise- food price to rise cos they eat a lot and wholesalers thought that food are on demand, they made city water price to rise cos they had never taught how to save, they made electricity price to rise cos they can go to clubs and musics in their rooms are on- this was high life- too much life- wasted life- uncoherent life- they have ruined everything even our girls- our girls used to be cool-never cared of money for love- they turned them on love for money- we had no passion killings cos of them- our men started to kill girls cos the love has stolen by money! Let us be cool and go back to our old life! (2)

The Angolans are blamed for 'creating a mess', 'destroying everything' and denying the Namibians of things they would otherwise have, such as the 'AR'.⁹ The scapegoating of the

⁹ Affirmative Repositioning is a radical movement in Namibia related to the Land reform. The movement aims to improve the socio-economic conditions of youth and "restore black people's dignity as it relates to land" by repositioning the land. (Kambala, Nayuoma & Amupanda, 2015)

Angolans continues with some blaming Angolans for limiting Namibians' access to health-care. In the comment below the commenter 'remembers' something that 'apparently' happened. This suggests that the commenter has second-hand information on the subject, and they actually do not know whether it actually happened or not, and if it did happen, the 'how' is lost. Another commenter remembers 'a doctor' who refused to take Namibians because Angolans pay more, but the next mentions that 'most doctors' no longer take medical aid. After a quick research online, I could not find anything that indicates this being public knowledge that has been reported in the news.

I remember doctors refusing to attend to Namibians, just because Angolans apparently pay them cash and they don't mind the prices, no matter how some of you try to defend this foolish Angolans, they are bad and made prices of almost everything go up, not only accommodation! They must go and rot in their countries, high rent must fall, we also want to stay in luxurious suburbs. (2)

A key finding from this category of discourse frameworks is that the Chinese are not scapegoated in the same way as Zimbabweans and Angolans. Sure, it is clear from the previous category that Chinese are seen as stealing resources, but they are seen as a separate force from the rest of the society – they just take whatever natural resources they can and leave. They are never seen to be so deeply a part of a society that they would steal jobs and/or women. The Chinese are not disadvantaging the 'normal citizen' – they are disadvantaging the entire country.

5.5.4. Miscellaneous negative

Comments that did not exactly fit into the previous categories were labeled as 'miscellaneous negative'. This category consists of comments that included 'namecalling', and various ways of explaining why xenophobia is justified.

Angolans were often referred to as 'stupid' or 'dumb'. One commenter said that they are the 'worse' people on Earth. Zimbabweans were referred to as 'crazy', and a few times the

commenters referred to them as ‘zombis’ instead of ‘zimbos’, which suggests negative feelings towards Zimbabweans. The Chinese were called ‘greedy’, and one commenter made a racist remark concerning their eyes.

The most popular way to justify one’s xenophobic views was to point out that it is okay not to respect foreigners since they don’t respect Namibians either. Many continued that as long as foreigners don’t respect Namibians, Namibians do not have to respect foreigners. One pointed out that when Namibians respect foreigners, ‘they gain we lose’, suggesting that there is no point in respecting foreigners because they are ‘milking’ Namibians and ‘not everyone is benefiting from foreigners’. Another one added that if ‘they [Chinese] make our sisters carry plastic bags with fierces from their shops’, they no longer deserve the respect of Namibians.

5.6. Support

In this chapter we will go through all the supporting (or positive) comments. We will analyze all the main frameworks used in the comments in support of foreigners and/or immigrants, starting from the most popular ones. The support category is divided into four sub-categories (solidarity, not a threat, condemn xenophobia, and miscellaneous) which further include various individual frameworks. 144 comments were labeled as support, which is 19% of all comments. Out of all the analyzed comments, supportive ones took up 37%.

5.6.1. Solidarity

“Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu”, one africa one nation. (1)

Solidarity was the most popular framework in the support category with 63 comments. Many commenters, as a response to xenophobic comments by others, invoked to kinship and experienced oneness and belonging in regard to other Africans. The comment above is a Zulu

saying that roughly translates to 'I am because we are'; a person is a person only through other people. This is the essence of Ubuntu, a traditional African philosophy that helps us understand ourselves in relation to the world. In the next comment the commenter uses the same play with words 'Namibian' and 'Zimbabwean', put unlike in the 'Threat' category, this time in a positive way, claiming kinship.

Well done Nambabweans (1)

Other Africans (in this case, Zimbabweans and Angolans) were often referred to as 'brothers and sisters', accompanied by arguing that 'Namibia is their home too', even though not all suggested the latter. In the next comment, after referring to Angolans as 'brother and sisters', the commenter continues to suggest the other people leave them alone with their xenophobic remarks, because 'you never know where we will end up'. They are suggesting that Namibia could be at the receiving end at one point in time – no one is better than the other, and circumstances change. They also refer to God and suggest that everyone should let God rule the world instead of judging other people. He also seems to suggest that the xenophobic comments are made by the devil (or people acting on behalf of the devil) and suggest that everyone pray to kick the devil out. Otherwise, referring to religion was not very common in the comments, although a few did mention prayers and God.

We are brothers and sisters. Leave them we never know where we will end up. Lets kick devil out with prayers and Let God rule the world alone. (3)

It was also common to find people defending foreigners by saying that 'Namibian's are foreigner's somewhere', which invites commenters to think if they were living in a foreign country, what would their motives be and how would they want to be treated. Furthermore, saying that reminds other people of the fact that Namibia is not the only country with foreign people living inside its borders – in fact all countries have foreigners, out of which Canada was mentioned a few times, and they are still doing just fine. To this some counterargued that Canada is more equipped to take foreigners than Namibia, and thus the argument is irrelevant.

A very popular way to support foreigners, or in this case other Africans, was to refer to the history between the countries. Many commenters reminded other, often xenophobic commenters, of the fact that Angola and Zimbabwe helped Namibia during colonial times and Namibia's independence struggle. Many continued to point out that people seem to have forgotten the history between the countries and are now not helping the one who helped them in the past. Some, like the comment below, continued to predict that in the future things might not be the same anymore, and Namibians might need the help of neighboring countries. Suggesting that many commenters who are speaking negative things have forgotten that nothing is permanent, and we will always need each other's help and burning bridges is not the way to go.

I bet these vendors majority of them are angolian ryte? Where you chased our of angola during Jo struggle? For you to claim this piece of land as your country its through the support of Angolan citizens.. You should now where you are coming from en where you are heading. Do not just dance to your current wellness.... Use common sense before you act..... (6)

Many wish the Angolans and Zimbabweans well in their struggle and hope that in the future 'once you're great again' they 'please help Namibia'. Sometimes, though, this discourse was tied to the notion that the foreigners should 'go home' and 'fix' their country.

One of the most important findings in my data is that there seems to be hardly any support, let alone solidarity for the Chinese. Only 4 comments in the support category (144 comments in total) supported the Chinese. This is in alignment with the data found in the previous categories that suggests that the Chinese are seen as the greatest threat. The Chinese are seen as something else entirely, 'the other' even further than 'the African other'. The next comment highlights this in its shortness. The commenter is referring to Angolans selling merchandise cheaper than Namibians and suggests that it could be worse – the Chinese.

That's better then Chinese, after all we are all African. (3)

5.6.2. Not a threat

The third sub-category in the support is the 'not a threat' category with 61 comments. This category consists of commenters supporting immigrants and foreigners by pointing out that foreigners are not the kind of threat that many make them sound like. There were various reasons as to why they did not perceive foreigners as a threat, and we will go through the main frameworks.

A vast majority of the commenters were blaming the Namibian City Police for going after the wrong immigrants. This is the most popular category probably at least partly due to the choice in articles, as these comments were only found under one article. Therefore, this might not be a representative of "the bigger picture" in the frameworks people use in Namibia, but it is not invalid data either. A whopping 43 comments out of a total of 89, a percentage of 48, felt that the City Police were not right to arrest the illegal foreign vendors, 'illegals or not'. One commenter even continued to point out that during the independence struggle, Namibians did not need documents in Angola and Zimbabwe, and therefore it is unreasonable to treat them differently just because Namibia is now 'doing better than them'.

The vendors were not seen as the 'real' threat, even though many suggested that the real threat exists too. These particular vendors were seen as 'innocent', 'just trying to make a living' while the real threat, 'drug dealers just rooming free in streets', exists unattended. One added that 'stealing is a crime not this', Namibians should 'respect their hustle', and many suggested that because the City Police targeted these vendors, they are actually 'pushing them to steal'. The next comment, while including the feeling that these vendors are not a threat, contains other frameworks such as scapegoating (putting our economy down), and feeling of threat. The interesting part is that they say that the 'real' threat are the Chinese.

And this Namibian police is chasing other African out of Namibia while there is this chines[e] people all over Namibia also illegal and putting our economy down F**k the police and the government too (6)

The comment was also be categorized as solidarity, because the commenter is weighing ‘other Africans’ against the ‘Chinese’, suggesting that other Africans are more entitled to be in Namibia than the Chinese. Like discussed in the earlier chapter, it is not always clear which one the commenters blame more: the Chinese for coming in or the government for letting the Chinese in. It is, however, clear that even when the government receives a part of the blame, the Chinese are not supported and seen as blameless. It is sometimes unclear whether the comment should be categorized as ‘negative’ or ‘support’, especially in the case above, where the commenter is showing support for Africans but is xenophobic towards the Chinese. I decided to label the comment above as both ‘negative’ and ‘support’ and decided to showcase it here to demonstrate the multifaceted comments and how xenophobia and solidarity could coexist.

Many commenters supported foreigners by saying that they are just trying to survive, or they are looking for a better life because the economic and/or political situation in their country of origin is not great. The comment below is an example of such reasoning, and this kind of thinking suggests that the foreigners are not in Namibia because they want to be in Namibia, or they do not have any ulterior motives, nor do they wish ill on Namibians. They are here solely because of the unfortunate situation in the country of departure. However supportive, the commenter ends their comment by saying that they hope the Zimbabweans eventually leave, meaning that the foreigner will never be a part of the in-group, even though they are welcome to stay for a while. The invitation is not, however, permanent, and the foreigner is expected to return to their country in the end. In other words, the immigrant is expected to have a good enough reason to come to another country and should not leave their native land lightly.

Zimbabweans in Namibia are here simply because of the political and Economic situation in their country. Caused by the politicians as things are about to change for good let’s support them as a nation and hopefully one [day] they depart peacefully.

(1)

Some commenters also counter-argued those who claimed that foreigners are bad for the economy by saying the opposite. One commenter urged the other commenters to ‘stop

blaming the Angolans', because 'they did nothing but add value to the economy'. One commenter even said that they 'wish and hope not all Zimbabweans will depart' because their 'contributions are noticed'. Sometimes, however, this argument came with a condition; the foreigners must be 'law abiding citizens' in order to be good for the country, but nevertheless people should stop complaining because the 'boost of population' is needed and the foreigners should be allowed in because 'the [Namibian] government can't afford birth incentives'.

There were commenters who showed support by questioning the validity of those who claimed that foreigners are taking their jobs. Some mentioned that it is not true that foreigners are bad for the economy and we should 'stop blaming them', because, in fact, "they dd nothing but add value to the economy of Namibia" (2). The commenter in the quote below takes this argument further by questioning whether street vendors can even take 'your job' or 'kill your business' since most likely the commenter is not working as a street vendor himself.

Are you a street vendor? Are you selling kapana, sweets etc on pavements or anywhere else? Most probably your answer(s) will be no. So I don't see how they are killing your business (if you have any). (6)

Albeit quite sarcastic, the above comment highlights the sense that xenophobic people are 'uneducated' or 'stupid'. The commenter is trying to invalidate the scapegoating of the other commenters by reminding them of the fact that these street vendors are quite poor and will not threaten the livelihood of the commenter. The next comment took this same core argument but flipped it: "how can you say a pilot has taken your job when you don't even have a driver's licence" (1). They are arguing that not all immigrants are 'working class', and some immigrants are more qualified and more educated than the Namibians who are feeling threatened. Both ways of defending come from the core source: immigrants come from different backgrounds and have different skillsets, and the apparent 'threat' they are posing is not relevant for most Namibians, since they are not competing for the same resources.

5.6.3. Condemn xenophobia

Why are we this way? ☹️ These comments are unbelievable
#WeStandWithZimbabwe (1)

The third most popular supporting sub-category was commenters condemning the xenophobic remarks of the other commenters. In some sense one might argue that all the supporting comments are condemning xenophobia as a default, but in this case this category includes comments that were clearly targeted towards the people who commented xenophobic people. I labeled comments as ‘condemning xenophobia’ when the commenter clearly expressed their ‘shock, ‘disbelief’ and/or ‘disgust’ towards the xenophobic comments.

Namibia is not or should not only be for Namibians. We should learn to accommodate and welcome fellow Africans. Some comments I see here ain’t making sense. (1)

Commenters suggested that the ones leaving xenophobic comments are ‘idiots’ who are ‘making no sense’ (comment above) and need to ‘grow up’, which suggests that xenophobia is something childlike that only undeveloped people resort to – it is not the mature way. The commenter in the above comment argues that Namibia is not just for Namibians, it is for fellow Africans too, expressing solidarity towards other Africans. Many commenters said ‘shame on you’ to the people expressing xenophobia, which suggests that they believe it is shameful and not right to say such things of other people. Supporting this way of thinking, many commenters actually predicted that those commenting xenophobic comments are actually ‘illiterate’ or ‘uneducated’, like in the comment below. This is mostly supported by previous research conducted on the matter of xenophobia – the most xenophobic people tend to be those who are at more vulnerable positions, such as uneducated or unemployed. However, according to

the SAMP survey and study by Crush and Pendleton (2004), this could not be found in the cases of South Africa, Namibia and Botswana.

It's not all Angolans tht spend money like there is no 2mrw. Namibians tend to think tht all Angolans have money & r filthy rich. Stop thinking like uneducated ppl... Some of the comments are really from uneducated ppl. It is fantastic news tht the rent prices will go down because some of us can not afford those ridiculous prices just because the place is close to a varsity or campus..." (2)

5.7. About different nationalities/discussion

In this chapter we will discuss the general discoveries of the data analysis. We will start by going over each nationality analyzed (Angolan, Zimbabwean, Chinese) and further discussing the background and possible explanations. I will give some further information on what stereotypes were attached to each nationality, because not all of them were not discussed in the previous chapters. We will first go through Angola and Zimbabwe, as both countries share borders with Namibia, and both countries are in economic crisis which pushes people to emigrate. Zimbabweans and Angolans are among the most numerous immigrants in Namibia, and naturally a larger and more visible presence created stereotypes and in some cases xenophobia.

When discussing Angolans, people often mentioned in the context of money and women which is, to my personal knowledge, in alignment with the existing stereotypes. A total of 19 comments were labeled as 'Angolans and money', which contains the feeling of 'rich' Angolans 'showing off' by 'spending US dollars'. Angolans were called 'arrogant' who were not 'humble' enough, and many commenters expressed their disapproval of the way Angolans spend 'too much' money. The comment below suggests that Angolans thought they were better than Namibians because Namibians do not have access to U.S. Dollars. They continue to reference to 'the wheel' that has now turned, bringing Angolans down with it. The add that had Angolans been 'humble' in the past, they could receive help from Namibians, but the commenter suggests that this is not the case. Saying this the commenter seems to suggest that the Angolans deserve the lack of money and bad economy (even though in the end they continue

to wish them a brighter future). This sort of glee was eminent in many other comments too, where commenters laughed (e.g. “showing off will never help nor benefit ha ha ha ha it’s fun yoo” (2)) or suggested that they have ‘no sympathy’ for the Angolans and they should now ‘suffer the consequences’.

When the Angolans were so loud showing off and thinking we Namibians are to low because we are poor no US dollar. Did one not think the wheel can turn? If Angolan were humble im sure many could get help from fellow Namibians but now is late economy is hit hard but hope a brighter future for Angolan economy. (2)

The Angolan currency, kwanza, was pegged¹⁰ to the U.S. Dollar until 2018. Angola produces oil, and oil-exporting nations must peg their currencies to the dollar because oil is sold in dollars. This has kept the Angolan kwanza relatively stable and enabled them access to the U.S. Dollar which is stronger than the Namibian dollar. (Crabtree, 2018) This has led to the stereotype that Angolans are rich, which was further enforced by the Namibian’s article which stated that they have a reputation of paying everything the landlords demand. The article, of course, ignited the conversation about Angolans and money, and without the article this conversation might not have been held. However, this thesis aims to find out how stereotypes are produced and enforced. Stereotypes, and furthermore xenophobia, cannot come to existence in a vacuum.

The other main framework (or stereotype) specifically tied to the Angolans was ‘women’. Many commenters suggested that Namibian women often have Angolan boyfriends because of their US dollars, and after being with an Angolan will be unlikely to find another man. It is often unclear (as was in the case of Chinese and the Namibian government) which one is to be blamed, the Angolans or the Namibian women, to whom one commenter referred to as having ‘expired and no value’. The comment below seems to suggest that many Angolans had Namibian girlfriends, making it difficult for Namibians to get girlfriend (i.e. stealing women). Zimbabweans and Chinese were not mentioned in the context of women.

¹⁰ A dollar peg means that the country’s own currency maintains its value to the U.S. Dollar, so it rises and falls along with the dollar. (Amadeo, 2019)

While it was difficult to get a woman in Whk in recent years, most women are now lonely because the well-build guys loaded with US \$\$\$ left them due to the unavailability of the US \$\$\$ in their country. (2)

Regardless of the stereotypes, many commenters supported and showed solidarity to the Angolans, as was seen in the previous chapters. The solidarity was tied to a shared 'Africanness' and history of helping each other during colonial times and independence struggles.

The most popular discourse regarding Zimbabweans was that they should 'go home' because they are 'too many'. There were commenter's who wished Zimbabweans 'go back to their country' and 'fix' the poor situation there, first. Some feared that the presence of Zimbabweans would bring a similar crisis to Namibia, and they were further scapegoated and blamed for the economic crisis in Namibia. A few times Zimbabweans were affiliated with criminal activities, but twice it was the same commenter, so it was not a major discourse in my data.

Zimbabweans are a major minority in Namibia. A lot of emigrants are leaving Zimbabwe due to the poor socio-political and economic status of the country, and the neighboring countries are the main destination for most Zimbabwean emigrants. Most are finding their way to South Africa, but there are many Zimbabweans in Namibia, too. Zimbabwe was under the authoritarian rule of Robert Mugabe for three decades, all the way from their independence to the year 2017. Before the economic crisis (hyperinflation) hit Zimbabwe in 2008 after a steady decline in currency stability since the 1990's it was referred to as the 'breadbasket of Africa' (Musariri, 2018). Due to this, many commenters also expressed their condolences for Zimbabwe and wished that Zimbabwe become 'great again', something that was often tied with the wish that they 'return' once it is possible.

Finally, it is clear from the previous chapters that the Chinese are receiving the most hatred and suspicion. Commenters did not use pronouns such as 'we' and 'us' to establish experienced sameness. Moreover, no positive words such as 'friend', 'fellow' and 'brothers and sisters' were used when talking about the Chinese. When supporting the Chinese got was always tied to some economic gain, not to a shared humanity, as we can see from the comment below.

Let them cut so we can get infrastructures. (5)

To summarize the findings in the previous chapters, China and Chinese people were seen mainly as a threat to Namibia's natural resources. Commenters also wished for harsher and violent punishment for Chinese, than they did for Zimbabweans and Angolans.

China was mentioned out of context 12 times (meaning that the article itself did not concern the Chinese). Especially in the article (citizenship) that concerned 3000 foreigners receiving Namibian citizenship, commenters expressed their worry and/or fear that Chinese were given citizenships. One wrote that they "hope it's not the Chinese", while many wrote, possibly sarcastically, that '2999 are Chinese' and 'all Chinese, I suppose'. Considering the fact that China is not in the top immigrant sending countries in Namibia, this highlights the already found fact that the small number of Chinese in Namibia have a strong perceived presence. This might be due to the government level China-Namibia relations, which we will discuss next.

Since the distinction Namibians make between other Africans and Chinese seems to be vast, it is important to discuss possible explanations to this. During the past decade or so, China's growing presence in Africa has become a topic of debate. To China, Africa is of low priority and strategic importance in overall foreign relations. However, international media, politicians, economists – and seemingly the general public are all more or less taking part in the debate. Especially China's unique economic approach to Africa has been widely discussed and criticized. Sure, it meets the needs of Africa towards infrastructure and funding, but like Sun (2014) summarizes it, "natural-resource backed loans raise questions about the continent's future and its capacity for sustainable development". There is a tendency in many articles concerning China's Africa relations to see their actions as 'evil', exercising some kind of not-so-blatant-and-racist neo-colonialism.

6. Conclusion

In the absence of comprehensive research and data regarding xenophobia in Namibia, my thesis shines some light into the frameworks in the social media discourse by Namibians when talking about foreigners (often in a xenophobic manner). My thesis was not, however, able to give more information regarding the scope or penetration of xenophobia across Namibia and Namibian citizens, nor was that my aim.

Even though I did not analyze the articles the comments were found under, in some cases it was quite clear that the article was steering the commentary to a certain direction. Therefore, the findings in this thesis cannot be taken as the true representative of the reality of xenophobic discourses in Namibia. The general findings in my thesis are somewhat in alignment with previous research: citizens affiliate negative attributes with the out-group and positive ones to the in-group. The national identity of Namibians is re-enforced in the in-group (us) vs. out-group (them) rhetoric, and immigrants are represented as the alien, thus recreating 'the other'. The feeling that foreigners are a threat to the citizens of Namibia as well as to the country dominates the discourse. The commenters often wish that the foreigners leave their country, mostly because they do not belong but sometimes due to 'overstaying' or being 'uninvited'. There was a tendency to scapegoat foreigners as 'stealing' or 'ruining' their women, economy, and/or employment possibilities.

In terms of the supportive discourses, the most popular was 'solidarity'. When defending the immigrants, Namibians invoked to shared histories or to a sense of oneness and shared Africanness or humanity. The commenters often referred to the immigrants (other Africans) as 'brothers and sisters', further highlighting the notion that other Africans are more connected to Namibians than other nationalities. The other supportive discourses were 'not a threat', which contained of comments where people argued against other commenters, who claimed that the foreigners were a threat. The last supportive category, 'condemning xenophobia', consisted of people expressing their dislike or disgust towards people who share xenophobic sentiments, but did not always defend the immigrants.

However, one of the most interesting findings was the difference in the attitudes of Namibians concerning other Africans and Chinese. In chapter 2.9. we discussed the findings of Crush and Pendleton (2004) and how they found that there is no apparent solidarity between SADC regions, and SADC citizens make hardly any difference between migrant from other SADC areas and from elsewhere in the world. The data in my research seems to suggest otherwise – at least in the case of the Chinese. There is a clear distinction in the reactions Namibians have towards other Africans and the Chinese. There might not be a distinction between SADC citizens, non-SADC Africans and Europeans, but my thesis does not offer an answer to that. The support expressed for the Chinese was never about a shared humanity or oneness. It was always tied to economic gain or benefit and was always explained logically rather than emotionally. This is not to say that support for other Africans was not logical – it was, but it was mostly mixed with emotional responses, too.

Nonetheless, the reactions and comments concerning the Chinese were more harsh and violent, and my data suggests that the Chinese are seen as the “biggest threat” among immigrants. Moreover, the comments concerning the Chinese contained no notion of solidarity, whereas when the article and thus comments were of Zimbabweans and Angolans, there were always commenters defending them and shaming those expressing xenophobia. The Chinese are seen as a threat on a state-level rather than on a human level. It seems to me that many think the Chinese are not there to integrate into Namibia and make a home in the country – they are there just to ‘steal’ their natural resources.

In the limited scope of my thesis I was not be able to dive deeply into the world of xenophobia in Namibia. My thesis is only able to offer a directional result, but it is not comprehensive enough to be used as a true representative of the phenomenon There is dire need for a new national survey focusing on citizen attitudes towards migrants. There is also a need to do research about the media in Namibia.

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