

**THE CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY IN A MOZAMBICAN COMMUNITY:
REFLECTIONS ON XENOPHOBIA IN SOUTH AFRICA**

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that **The construction of identity in a Mozambican community: Reflections on xenophobia in South Africa** is my own work and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

28 February 2014

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ABSTRACT

Since the end of South Africa's Apartheid era, South Africans have become more aware of hate crimes that discriminate not on the basis of skin colour, but nationality. Among the targets of this xenophobic hate are Mozambican foreign nationals, one of the largest foreign national populations in South Africa. Structured Mozambican communities have been identified, offering support to their members in this environment. This study explores the impact of the xenophobic discourse on the Mozambican identity, particularly within the Mozambican community of Freedom Park, Soweto. Based on the social constructionist acknowledgement of multiple realities, this study used the African worldview as an epistemological framework to inform the methodology appropriate for this participant group. 12 participants, identified through convenience sampling, engaged in one group conversation that explored their understandings of their Mozambican identity and the corresponding impact of South Africa's xenophobic discourse. Following thematic content analysis, four themes were identified. Participants showed a strong sense of national pride in their shared Mozambican heritage, linked to support from their community and their government. Secondly, participants perceived a positive Mozambican identity that emphasized work-related characteristics. Thirdly, participants showed concern over how South Africans perceive them. Finally, the Mozambican identity was de-emphasized when discussing xenophobia. Participants adopted similar ideas to Mbeki's African Renaissance, in drawing on the broad categories of 'blacks' and 'Africans' and redefining the boundaries of belonging. In conclusion, implications for future research and government interventions are discussed.

Keywords:

Xenophobia; Mozambique; South Africa; Identity; African worldview; Social constructionism; Community; Belonging; Citizenship; African Renaissance

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

A Mozambican migrant, Ernesto Alfabeto Nhamuavhe, was allegedly set alight by several South Africans whilst still alive on the evening of 11 May 2008 in Diepsloot, Gauteng (Duncan, 2011). At the time, to many shocked South Africans, this marked the beginning of a wave of xenophobic attacks that spread across the country. Yet after examining the history of such attacks, one sees that present xenophobic tendencies can be traced back to 1994, or perhaps even further.

For Ernesto and others like him, the climate of xenophobia in South Africa is not limited to an occasional incident or news broadcast, but impacts their everyday reality. Acknowledging that many South Africans endure a daily struggle to make ends meet, for foreign nationals the discrimination attached to their citizenship is an additional challenge. Having relocated for whatever reason, these people encounter a number of discriminatory and even violent discourses that label them as outsiders and troublemakers.

With rough and out-of-date estimates of the number of regular Mozambicans in the country sitting around the 200 000 mark (Polzer, 2004), they are a significantly large population group living within our borders. These people once belonged; they were once included and were part of a community. Upon arrival in the country that used to hold promise, they are told that they do not belong here, are accused of criminal activities and are told that they cannot benefit from the fruits of a democratic South Africa because of their nationality.

These are the labels applied to them by a significant portion of South African society, and are unlikely to be congruent with the personal sense of self held prior to arrival in the country. Other Mozambican foreign nationals can provide the immigrant with support and a sense of group membership and belonging. Yet this places the foreign national in a situation where the people around him affirm his “Mozambican-ness” as a good thing, while this same “Mozambican-ness” is labelled and degraded by the broader South Africa society. The focus of this study is to examine how Mozambicans negotiate their own identity in the space between these conflicting messages.

1.2 XENOPHOBIA: BACKGROUND TO THE NEW “OTHER”

1.2.1 Xenophobia in South Africa

The South African Migration Project (2008) has created a timeline for the xenophobic events that occurred since 1994. While details of this history are provided later in Chapter 3, it is important to note here that a substantial proportion of xenophobic violence was directed towards Mozambican foreign nationals. While they were by no means the only targets of the xenophobic violence, the violence does seem to reflect the opinions of South Africans towards foreign nationals living in the country, among them Mozambicans.

In determining the exact nature of the sentiments held by locals towards foreign nationals, there seems to be agreement between researchers on the locals' general perceptions of foreign nationals. In the 2006 Xenophobia Survey, South African respondents revealed that 67% thought that foreign nationals depleted South African resources, the same percentage associated foreign nationals with crime, and 49% believed them to be carriers of disease (South African Migration Project, 2008). These opinions are further fuelled by legislation (Neocosmos, 2006), the media (Danso & McDonald, 2001), and by several of the country's politicians (Duncan, 2011).

A number of studies have examined the negative experiences of foreign nationals within this environment (Culbertson, 2009; Kanjo, 2010; Morris, 1998; Osman, 2009; Pretorius, 2004). The discrimination they encounter can be summed up in the term '*makwerekwere*'. This is a derogatory name for those people who are unable to speak the local languages, defining them by what they are not. This term verbalizes the locals' contempt for foreign nationals (Duffield, 2008) and effectively positions immigrants as “rootless, identity-less, culture-less, and therefore non-people without context or civilization” (p. 22). It is this context and subsequent alienation within which foreign nationals construct their understanding of themselves.

1.2.2 The Formation of Migrant Communities

Gold (1992) points out that the response to the xenophobic context can lead to unification of group members against external threats. When faced with this xenophobic environment, the sentiment of solidarity brings group members together as a reaction to this disadvantage. Harris (2001) found that this phenomenon has been occurring in South Africa, evident in the

formation of clusters of foreign nationals from a particular country. These clusters may help the new arrival make the transition and also protect their members from the xenophobia encountered every day. Sinclair (1999) also found that these migrant communities became a source of safety and membership for immigrants.

The existence of these migrant communities is partly corroborated by Shea (2008). Professional migrants in Cape Town (none of them Mozambican) said that they relied on their families, who gave them a sense of belonging while the broader system rejected them. In that study, however, it was found that the participants had not formed networks with nationals from their own countries but with other migrants (not from their country of origin) in their place of work.

Communities tied to country of origin were, however, found amongst the Somali migrants, who relied on their countrymen for the support that they did not receive from the broader South African population (Buyer, 2008). Within the Mozambican population, 84% of respondents felt that they had strong ties with their fellow nationals (Crush & Pendleton, 2007), indicating the potential for the formation of communities in this population group too.

1.2.3 Community as the Compass of Individual Identity

“Community is the compass of individual identity; it responds to the need to delimit the bounds of similarity” (Cohen, 1985, p. 110). In this statement, Cohen addresses the fact that identities of community members are found within the social space of the community. The individual’s identity is formed between the boundaries separating one community from another. In line with Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), one can hypothesise that if a foreign national belonged to a particular community, he or she would negotiate his or her identity within this community’s boundaries.

McKinlay and McVittie (2011) argue for a differentiation between a social and a personal identity; the former constructed in relation to others and the latter referring to the individual uniqueness seen to characterise the individual. This is corroborated by Sinclair (1999) and Appiah (2003). The collective dimension considers the collective identities of the groups to which the individual subscribes, and the personal dimension considers the characteristics the individual decides is part of him- or herself, for example, humour or intelligence. This study focuses on the collective aspect of identity. The reason for this is rooted in the beliefs of the participants themselves.

1.2.4 The African Conception of Self

The African understanding of self, as discussed by Okolo (2003), is socially situated and negotiated together with others. The concept of an individual uninfluenced by the group's definition of him or her is a Eurocentric one and is in direct opposition to the ways that an African negotiates his or her identity. "It is the community which makes the individual... without the community, the individual has no existence" (Okolo, 2003, p. 213). Ramose (2002) also emphasizes the "wholeness" (p. 65) of the greater community over individuality in traditional African thought. And so we find that African knowledge of the self and identity is socially negotiated.

The idea that knowledge is created through social interactions can be summed up in the statement that knowledge comes about as a result of everyday interactions, conversations, and events. Mkhize (2004a, p. 47) draws on authors like Kasenene (1994), Kinoti (1992), Menkiti (1984) and Verhoef & Michel (1997) when he reiterates that "It is through participation in a community that a person finds meaning in life". This means that for the African, knowledge generation is a social process and is constructed through social activity. One of the weaknesses that this study attempts to address is the failure to consider this in the methodology of previous studies.

1.3 ADDRESSING METHODOLOGICAL CONCERNS WITH A MOZAMBICAN POPULATION GROUP

1.3.1 Methodological Concerns

There has been frequent use of individual interviews with foreign nationals in attempting to gain insight into what we have above defined as a social activity (Buyer, 2008; Shea, 2008; Sinclair, 1999; Zar, 2009). Zar (2009) explored identity construction in students from Africa, using semi-structured interviews conducted individually. Buyer (2008) also used individual interviews to gather information on Somali identity construction, as did Shea (2008) in her exploration of the realities (including identity), of professional migrants from outside the Southern African Developmental Community (SADC) region. In a more dated study, Sinclair (1999) also used this method with 77 respondents from SADC countries in examining the link between migrant networks and identities.

These studies explored identity construction in a manner that did not take into account the social and participatory nature of the African identity. While acknowledging the contribution

of this method, it was the intention of the current study to gain more insight by conducting conversations with a group of foreign nationals, in order to allow the negotiation of identity to take place through participation in a social context. This is one of the two key differentiating factors that this research addresses; the second is the choice of population group.

1.3.2 Considering the Mozambican Population Group

This research highlights Mozambican foreign nationals because that country is one of the main sources of immigrants into South Africa (Morris, 1998), and as yet has not been examined in depth as a population group. Sinclair (1999) in a dated study looked at the role of migrant communities in identity formation in a number of population groups, Mozambicans among them. Although this was fourteen years ago and may need replication, she found support then for the link between migrant communities and identity construction. This was found to apply particularly to those individuals from Southern Africa. More recently, Shea (2008) focused on professional migrants from non-SADC countries living in Cape Town. She found that their professional occupations have alienated them from their communities, and that they do not rely on networks of their countrymen for a sense of belonging or identity. Zar (2009) used Erikson's theory of identity formation to examine the identity construction of foreign students (not including Mozambicans). Unfortunately the highest number of participants from the same population group was two, leaving little opportunity for social negotiation between members of the same migrant community to take place.

Perhaps the closest research to the current study is Buyer's (2008) examination of Somalian identities and the role that Somali communities in Cape Town play in the construction of these identities. The study found that this role is mediated by the shared history of the community and the level of education. Looking specifically at Mozambicans, the closest research to that which is proposed here is an exploration of the integration of Mozambicans in a Bushbuckridge community (Polzer, 2004). The study found that leaders in that rural area had chosen a philosophy of unity across national lines. This was thought to be a result of the shared sense of displacement within this Apartheid-affected community, and the unity of the Shangaans against the neighbouring Sotho people.

In defining the population group, exactly who falls within the boundaries of the term "Mozambican" is problematic. While the recent immigration from that country appears to be a result of the civil war from late 1980s to early 1990s, this is not a once-off migration pattern. Shangaan-speaking people in South Africa have Mozambican heritage that extends

back to wars over chieftainship taking place from the 1830s (Polzer, 2004). Exactly who is considered to be Mozambican enough to attract xenophobic sentiment, is not a simple determination.

Even after taking this complexity into account, it would appear that xenophobic tensions are somewhat indiscriminately applied to the different immigration categories of foreign nationals. While less negativity is directed towards regular refugees, the South African public struggles to distinguish between this group and other migrants (Idasa, 2001). The implications of this are that these two groups experience similar negative attitudes.

The ways that foreign nationals experience discrimination and its impact on their identity can only be explored within a given context. In this instance, that context is one which up until 18 years ago constructed the “other” along racial lines. It would seem that since the advent of democracy, the “other” has become defined along national lines (Harris, 2002; Vandeyar, 2012).

Apparent flare-ups of these tensions between South Africans and the new “other”, foreign nationals, provide the social scientist, together with economists, political scientists and other interested parties with a barometer upon which to gauge feelings of uncertainty in the country (Arends, 2011). Just like when the “other” was a different colour to the self, so there are costs to those who become victims. The question asked in this regard is: what is the cost of this violence for those who have been constructed as the “other”? How do they construct their own identity? Incorporating these concerns, this research addresses the question: “How do Mozambican foreign nationals construct their identity within xenophobic South Africa?”

1.4 AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

This study aims to facilitate conversations and gain insight into narratives that:

- explore the role that the Mozambican foreign national community plays in their construct of identity.
- describe the impact of xenophobia on the self-constructed identities of Mozambican foreign nationals living in South Africa.

1.5 DEFINITION OF IMPORTANT TERMS

In this murky world of belonging, citizenship and exclusion, it is important to note what is meant by some key terms before the conversation becomes more complex.

1.5.1 Xenophobia

According to the Dictionary of Race and Ethnic Relations, xenophobia is defined as, “fear of strangers” (Cashmore, 1996, p. 382). While in South Africa, the term “strangers” can and often does refer to locals with different heritages, for the purpose of this thesis, it will refer specifically to foreign nationals. Xenophobia will include those fears and dislikes that are not acted upon, as well as those that have led to victimisation.

1.5.2 Mozambican Foreign National

For the purposes of this research, this term will refer to those people who were born in Mozambique and have since travelled from that country to South Africa with the intention to live here for any period of time. This does not extend to the children of this generation who were born in South Africa and are therefore South African citizens. Most likely, these people will have entered South Africa for the first time within the last 20 years, although this research is not limited to any specific time period.

1.5.3 Alien

According to the Aliens Control Amendment Act 1995, an alien can be defined as “a person who is not a South African citizen”. This definition will also apply to the term foreign national, for the purpose of this research.

1.5.4 Illegal versus Legal Immigrant

The term “regular immigrant” will be used to refer to those people who have entered the country through the official channels and have valid travel or residence documents. This accepts Campbell’s (2010) criticism of the term “legal” and “illegal” and the discrimination attached to their use. By implication then, the term “irregular immigrant” will refer to those who have entered the country unofficially. At times, the words “migrant” may be substituted for the word “immigrant”, without any intended difference in meaning.

1.5.5 Refugee

The Refugees Act (1998) defines a refugee as a person with:

a well-founded fear of being persecuted ... is outside the country of his or her nationality and is unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country, or, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his or her former habitual residence is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to return to it or ... is compelled to leave his or her place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge elsewhere (p. 6).

This distinguishes a refugee from an immigrant, who may not have been forced to leave his or her place of origin but may have left of his or her own accord.

1.5.5 Victims of xenophobia

Exactly what is required for one to become a victim of xenophobia is not always clear. This research will concern itself with those who have experienced negative actions (including discrimination) and verbal comments that they believe to have been influenced by their nationality. Under the umbrella of “victim” we will also open up the study to those who believe that their national group is subject to xenophobic sentiment, even if they have not any direct confrontations as such.

1.5.6 “Makwerekwere”

This is a term often used by South African locals for those people who are unable to speak the local languages (Duffield, 2008).

1.6 CHAPTER STRUCTURE

Including the current chapter, this paper is comprised of 6 chapters:

Chapter One, the present chapter, aims to help the reader gain a concise overview of the study. In doing this, a brief overview of the literature is given, together with a discussion of the factors that differentiate this study from its predecessors. The problem statement and the aims of the research provide the reader with a map for the continuing chapters.

Chapter Two grounds the research in the established theoretical framework of social constructionism. The rationale behind this choice of framework is elaborated upon, with particular emphasis on the philosophy of the chosen participant group.

Chapter Three discusses and evaluates the literature that led to the gap that this study aims to address. This is divided up into subsections: xenophobia in South Africa, experiences of foreign nationals, the formation of migrant communities, and community as a compass for individual identity.

Methodology is further detailed in Chapter Four, together with a discussion on the research design, sampling strategy and the methods of data collection and analysis.

Chapter Five deals with the results of the study, presented through the use of thematic analysis, highlighting themes that were identified in the conversation.

Chapter Six interprets the results and discusses them, drawing conclusions, declaring limitations of the study and making recommendations for future researchers

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The research method, including the theoretical framework from which it emerges, is one of the key defining factors that distinguishes this research from others in the field. In order for the literature to be adequately interrogated in Chapter Three, it is important first to understand why a theoretical framework has been emphasized. In addressing this, this chapter will situate the study within the research participants' particular context and highlight the usefulness of the social constructionist paradigm for the Mozambican population. The chapter reviews the thinking and findings of researchers from the later 1970s to 2004 in order to lay a solid theoretical base for the literature review that will be undertaken in Chapter 3.

2.1 RESEARCH IN CONTEXT

Akbar (1984) argues for the consideration of context in conducting research, and explores the assumptions behind published research. He argues that Africans need a model of social sciences that is based upon the philosophical assumptions of the African worldview. It is from this statement that this chapter will take its lead, as it is the intention of the researcher to pay particular attention to context in selecting a research methodology.

It is important to begin with what is meant by research built upon a particular worldview. The notion of a worldview can be understood as "a set of basic assumptions that a group of people develops in order to explain reality and their place and purpose in the world" (Mkhize, 2004a, p. 35). In this definition the assumptions are the basis upon which an explanation of reality is built. These assumptions are highlighted here, as those upon which we build our understanding of reality cannot be regarded as irrelevant.

Often research methodology ignores a mismatch between the assumptions of the research approach and the epistemological assumptions of the people who are involved in the study. Nobles (1978, as cited in Akbar, 1984, p. 395) argues that the way research is conducted should match the cultural worldview of those it involves. In the case of the present study, the people involved are Africans with a unique worldview that is not congruent with Western research practices.

Western research practices attempt to ignore this problem through their aim of removing worldviews from research altogether. Their answer to this incongruence is found in the

modernist principle of objectivity. Objectivity is a tool used to attain what its proponents consider to be value-free research, while the researcher does not influence and remains uninfluenced by that which he or she studies (Mkhize, 2004a). Objectivity attempts to transcend different worldviews.

Yet Akbar (1984, p. 396) argues that objectivity is itself a worldview, stating that “when an observer chooses to suspend from his or her observations certain levels of reaction, then this is a value judgement”. Indeed, a number of authors of African literature view Western social science not as something that transcends African social science but rather as that which is in opposition to it (Menkiti, 1984; Mkhize, 2004a; Serequeberhan, 2003; Zahan, 1979).

2.2 THE IRRELEVANCE OF WESTERN RESEARCH PRACTICES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

2.2.1 A Colonialist Approach to Research

Akbar (1984) strongly criticizes those who are from Africa and ascribe to the African worldview, yet conduct research in line with Western principles. He contends that this contributes to the oppression and domination of African thought by Western thinkers. Asante, (1980, as cited in Sono, 1998, p. 69) commenting from the African American perspective on the same principle, said that:

Instead of looking out from his own centre, the non-Afrocentric person operates in a manner that is negatively predictable. His images, symbols, lifestyles, and manners are contradictory to himself and thereby destructive to his personal and collective growth and development.

The theme of oppression is not a new one in African literature, although writers use a number of terms for the dominance of Western science in South Africa. Hook (2004, p.16) uses the term “psychological imperialism” to highlight the exclusionary nature of the knowledge produced by Western science. Ironically, this exclusion that Hook speaks of takes place through a generalised form of inclusion in research that is not necessarily appropriate to Africans. They and others from developing countries are excluded from independent study and lumped together with First World populations in the results of Western-centred research. These forms of knowledge are deemed to be universally applicable, and used in Third World settings where they may not be appropriate (Hook, 2004).

Mkhize (2004a) calls this conveying of Western knowledge and research practices from the First World to developing countries a form of cultural colonisation. It is the modernist’s

attempt to remove culture from the research equation through objectivity, implying that knowledge generated in one culture group could be suitable for another cultural group. Serequeberhan (2003, p. 67) claims that objectivity looks past differences and contradictions in humanity as a whole and attempts to “flatten all difference”. In doing this, the Western worldview is elevated to the level of the singular, correct and universally applicable approach. Immanuel Kant, according to Serequeberhan (2003), agreed with this attempt to transcend culture, claiming that European modernity successfully accesses that which is real, whereas that which is not European can claim nothing except non-reality. This highlights the ‘colonial’ mentality; objectivity is a part of a modernist philosophy that is brought from the West and applied to Third World contexts (Mkhize, 2004a).

Smith’s (1999, p. 56) discussion of research “through imperial eyes” continues with the theme of colonialism. Seeing Western ideas as the only acceptable ones reveals a belief in the essential superiority of Westerners and the duty to advance indigenous people through rationality.

This Eurocentricism is the approach that permeates many aspects of our lives today, although a change has been noted in recent years (Serequeberhan, 2003). The days of seeing anything African as savage, barbaric or evil are, for the most part over. This opens up the space now for research that takes the African worldview into account. He sums up the choice for African researchers today as follows:

“*we* who belong to the Westernized segments of formerly colonized societies occupy positions of relative power which can be utilized either to replicate Europe or to try and unleash the concrete and suppressed possibilities of our respective histories” (Serequeberhan, 2003, p. 75).

2.2.2 The Researcher’s Position

It is the aim of this study not to merely “replicate Europe”. Based upon the argument above, it is accepted (by the researcher) that research is contextual and the context for this study is South Africa. Those who will be participating in the study are of African descent, and may ascribe to a worldview that does not fit with research conducted in line with the Western worldview. Although the researcher is herself less aligned with the African worldview, she acknowledges the role of context and worldview in research and aligns her research with the African worldview in consideration of the participants.

Up to this point, it has been argued that the African and Western perspectives differ and should not be adopted in an inappropriate context. What exactly is meant by the African worldview will now be briefly summarised to familiarise the reader with the worldview of the research participants and subsequently, of this study.

2.3 A BROAD OVERVIEW OF THE AFRICAN WORLDVIEW

Okolo (2003) acknowledges that there is obviously no single African philosophy that applies to all countries within the continent. Whereas thinking may differ to an extent between countries, so it may also differ between cultures, clans, families and individuals. With the aim of avoiding a retreat into relativism, the conversation will centre on the African philosophy that has been put forward by a number of African thinkers.

Ramose (2002, p. 40) provides the foundation for the discussion around the African worldview by stating that “Ubuntu is the root of African philosophy”. He goes on to approximate the meaning of the term ubuntu as the following: “to be a human be-ing is to affirm one’s humanity by recognising the humanity of others and, on that basis, to establish human relations with them” (Ramose, 2002, p. 42). This worldview emphasizes the relatedness of people, although is not limited to human beings alone (Menkiti, 1984; Mkhize, 2004a; Zahan, 1979).

2.3.1 The African Conception of Reality

Okolo (2003) provides a succinct summary of the way that an African perceives reality. Like Plato, the African perceives of two realms to reality; the visible and that which is not seen but is nevertheless experienced. Contrary to the colonial impressions of a ‘godless’ people, Africans believe in a supreme being, whom they call God. Tempels (1959) places this supreme being at the top of his hierarchy of beings. Beneath this Creator are the men who formed the different clans, followed by those known as the ‘living dead’. These are those family members who have passed on, although that does not mean that they have no impact in the here-and-now. They are in contact with human beings, who fall in below them in the hierarchy. Beneath us, come the animals, vegetables and minerals.

Those who fall above human beings on this tier are able to communicate with humans, and this may be done through prayers, rituals, and sacrifices, amongst others. It is therefore perceived that the Creator and those who came before are able to influence the everyday lives

of the African people and be influenced by people's obedience and performance of appropriate rites (Okolo, 2003).

The existence of this hierarchy demonstrates the perception in the African that the world is not only made up of the tangible and natural world, but there exists another spiritual realm that influences them in their everyday reality (Okolo, 2003). On a more abstract level, Ramose (2002) elaborates on this when he says that a person is at the same time both a physical and a spiritual being. One lives in the material world but acknowledges that the spirits and the living dead are as real as the natural world around him.

Having very briefly explored a few of the assumptions that make up the African worldview, we can start to explore what this worldview will mean for this study. In doing this, we will explore how these assumptions influence the African view of the person and compare it with the Western view.

2.3.2 The African Conception of Self

2.3.2.1 The self as a social entity

The individual's uniqueness and separateness from others holds the position of primacy in Western thinking around the nature of the person (Akbar, 1984). Independence is viewed as a good and worthwhile desire, while an increased need for others becomes problematic. This has even been taken to the point of pathology in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders' (DSM-IV-TR) criteria for a number of personality disorders. Akbar (1984) extends this focus on the singular person in his example of competition, where individuals compete with others (sometimes their own family members) for resources or recognition of the self as better than others.

This idea is further elaborated upon by Zahan (1979) and Menkiti (1984). In order for the West to define a person, the person has to be separated from his fellow beings (Zahan, 1979). In the Western worldview, autonomy and independence are encouraged. Individual characteristics are discussed as that which sets this person apart from others; he or she shows more of a specific characteristic than others, and therefore is said to have that characteristic as a permanent trait. This treats the person as a "being with an inner core, an end in itself and free" (Okolo, 2003, p. 213).

By contrast, in African philosophy the self is viewed in its relationship with others, not in its separation from them (Okolo, 2003). The communal world is highlighted in African thought where the individual world is the focus of Western thought (Menkiti, 1984). For the African, the individual is rooted in the communal world and it is only through this community that the self emerges and finds full meaning in life.

This focus on relationship emphasizes Tempels' (1959) and Mbiti's (1969) discussion of the communalism thesis (Kaphagawani, 1998). Mbiti explains that:

the individual does not and cannot exist alone except corporately... He owes his existence to other people, including those of past generations and his contemporaries. He is simply part of the whole... Only in terms of other people does the individual become conscious of his own being, his own duties, his privileges and responsibilities towards himself and towards other people (Mbiti, 1969, p. 108).

This perspective redefines the self as something that is not found within a person. Personality cannot therefore only be understood in therapy or through deep reflection. Rather, the relational viewpoint shows that the self is created and lived in interactions, and it is only through this social nature of the person that one can begin to understand the self (Mkhize, 2004a). Okolo (2003, p. 213) calls this the "we-existence" of the African.

Yet this does not mean that unique qualities are not acknowledged by Africans (Akbar, 1984). The emphasis is on the fact that the person is not a closed system, impervious to others around him (Zahan, 1979). This tension between the individual as unique and the individual as rising out of his community can perhaps be overcome through the notion of two types of identity. McKinlay and McVittie (2011) as well as Appiah (2003) discuss the idea of uniqueness as part of the 'personal identity' sphere (for example, humour or intelligence), and the aspects of society that contribute towards one's identity as the 'social identity'. A caveat is issued here: if the argument regarding African identity above is to be understood, then the 'personal identity' of which the above authors speak also uses social interaction to emerge. Qualities or characteristics of an individual become apparent and find meaning through interactions with other individuals. An example of this may be that an African may see herself as intelligent, but attribute it to the teaching she had from her family. Personal identity for an African is still not rooted inside one's core; it is located and perceived within that person's relational and collective context.

As the focus of this research lies with the collective or social dimension of identity, the emphasis on the community is important. Menkiti (1984) explores three types of definitions of the term 'community'. He lists the three as collectivities, constituted human groups and random collections of individuals. The African view of community falls within the collectivities definition. For Menkiti, this means that the people forming the community have an "organic dimension to the relationship" between them (1984, p. 180), with each individual as an offshoot of the community. The community comes first, and then the individuals arise. A Western definition of community fits with Menkiti's second definition: a constituted human group. In Western thought, the individuals are whole and complete before coming together in a group, lacking the organic relationship inherent in the African definition.

If the identity of the African self indeed arises out of the community, then the question that follows this assumption is, how exactly does this happen? This question will hopefully be answered through a discussion of the role of language and the role of participation in African conceptions of the self.

2.3.2.2 The self in conversation

Part of belonging to a particular social group is the sharing of a common language or method of communication. Menkiti (1984) argues that language plays an important role in the generation of shared thought, attitudes and mental dispositions. Language provides the means through which the individual interacts with the group, and through which he accesses the shared concepts and ideas of the group.

Along with the words inherent in language come the social rules that specify when something should be said, how it should be said, and who it is appropriate to say it to. This is shared knowledge that forms part of the group's ways of being. The role of language is to point the individual towards a "mental commonwealth with others whose life histories encompass the past, present and future" (Menkiti, 1984, p. 172).

It is, however, important to note that language is only one form of communication and Africans may also communicate nonverbally through activities or performances, such as rituals. We now focus our attention on the role that these other forms of communication play in the understanding of self.

2.3.2.3 The self as a participative process

In the discussion of the African conception of the self up to this point, I have argued that Africans see themselves in relation to others and that the community plays an important role in the understanding of individual identity. I also argued that one of the ways that identity is co-created is through the use of a shared language that references shared histories and knowledge. The focus now turns to what being part of a community and sharing a language have in common, namely a participation in community life. One cannot truly belong to a community without participating in its activities, and one cannot use the language unless one is participating in conversations with others. The concept of participation is crucial in understanding the construction of the African identity.

Ramose's (2002, p. 49) statement that human beings "are makers of truth" makes reference to the fact that truth is relational and relative, not absolute or objective. More important for the argument here, his conclusion follows that "truth is simultaneously participatory and interactive" (p. 50). For the purposes of this study, the truth that is under scrutiny is the truth of the individual identity. This concept of identity requiring participation is echoed by Mkhize (2004a) and Menkiti (1984), acknowledging that individual meaning is found through participation in the community.

This contradicts the Western notion of self as something relatively fixed and unchanging, whole at birth and no more complete at death. Africans conceptualize their existence as a cycle or a process (Zahan, 1979), which is not complete and continues throughout one's life. The existence of a human is one of becoming, not being (Mkhize, 2004a). When a child is born, he is not automatically a human being. Menkiti (1984) calls this cycle the 'processual nature of being'. The process of becoming a person takes place through the performance of a number of social obligations and rituals. And since these obligations and rituals are determined by the community and its beliefs and customs, space is created for a number of different cultures to create their own definition of the person. The argument has therefore come a full circle back to the importance of community in the construction of individual identity.

2.3.2.4 African philosophy and the current study

The above discussion of African philosophy and the nature of the person is imperative for this study. The participants of the study are African and existentially subscribe to the above

worldview to some extent. This means that when the Mozambican participant is asked about identity, the community will play an important role in his or her self-definition. Given the xenophobic sentiments found in South African society today, this negative opinion found in the community may impact upon the Mozambican's identity. If the community around the participant is degrading him or her on the basis of nationality, then the individual's perception of his identity may reflect this negative view.

Therefore to not heed Akbar's (1984) warning, and to study the Mozambican population group using Western methods could disregard the role of the community in the construction of Mozambican identity. This may prevent the findings from being useful to those for whom it is intended: the participants. After considering the African conception of self and how it differs from the modernist assumptions of the West, attention is now briefly given to the West's own critique of modernism.

2.4 THE WESTERN REVOLUTION AGAINST MODERNISM

At the start of this chapter, the distinctions between the traditional Western worldview and the African worldview were highlighted through a discussion on the conception of self. The Western argument was built upon the assumptions of modernity, emphasising objectivity, neutrality and individuality. A critique of this epistemological worldview has come from within its own European ranks, and in recent years has become known as postmodernism. It is through postmodernism that Western thought starts to recognise the inevitability of African thought in research practices.

2.4.1 Modernism as a Rationale for Western Research Practices

It is critical that the assumptions of postmodernism are understood in the context of what they are "post" to. What exactly distinguishes postmodernism from modernism? The differences pointed out by researchers appear to be boundless, and so the focus of this part of the chapter will extend only to those assumptions relevant to this research. These will include the beliefs in a knowable world, in the empirical method, in universal properties, and in research as progressive in nature (Gergen, 1992).

Particular attention will be given to what these modernist assumptions mean for research methodology. While this section moves briefly beyond the chapter's scope to ideas around methodology (Chapter Four), I wish to emphasize here how entwined one's worldview is with research methodology. It is only once I explore the implications of the modernist and

African worldviews for research methods, that one can critically assess the literature reviewed in Chapter Three.

The first modernist assumption, the belief in a knowable world, presupposes a reality that is external to the mind. This is the Cartesian dualism of mind versus body, where mind can consider body as something separate from itself (Descartes, 1649). This places that which is studied as separate and distinct from the mind or researcher considering it. The object of study was thought to have a basic essence that one could come to know through research. For psychology, this assumption means that the individual has an inner character or personality that can be studied and understood in terms of the individual alone.

In separating the researcher from the subject, modernism allowed for the creation of “otherness”. When Africans are considered to be the subjects of research, they are differentiated from the researcher and the attempt is made to identify their basic essence or personality. In describing an African personality, Africans become further separated from others (Duncan, Stevens & Bowman, 2004). This may have contributed towards the stereotyping that continues today.

The way that knowledge about a person is thought to be attained is through the use of empirical methods. Modernity holds onto the idea that if one applies a certain set of rules to the research process, the result will tend towards the truth of the subject’s essence. In this study, the subject’s truth or essence could be defined as their identity. These rules that should be applied include the values of objectivity and neutrality, where the subject is kept at a distance and bias is removed from the research process. The application of these rules will allow the person to reveal his or her identity without being influenced by the researcher.

Modernity maintains that empirical research leads to a truth or causal explanation that can be generalised beyond that particular situation. This is known as the belief in universal properties. The result of this belief is that if one gains understanding of a particular aspect of a person, this can be generalised to all people similar to that initial person in a particular aspect. It is at this point that we understand how Mkhize’s (2004a) “cultural colonisation” came to take place; findings in Europe were generalised to Africans on the basis of this belief in universal properties.

Finally, the belief in research as a progressive activity is considered. Research builds upon previous research findings that have not been disproved, to create a more complex web of

'essences' and casual explanations that come ever closer to the truth. Theories that are disproved are discarded as irrelevant. This is also linked to the belief in universal properties; different findings across contexts are seen as indications that a particular theory is not true for any context because it cannot be applied to all contexts.

2.4.2 After-Modernism: Critiquing the 'Truth'

One of the strongest criticisms of the modernist assumptions lies in the conception of one 'essence' that can be proven as the truth (Hoffman, 1992). Postmodernists claim that truth is relative and dependent upon a viewpoint. It is upon this claim that modernism's assumptions are critiqued.

This claim of alternative truths is founded in the question of language and its role in structuring the world (Gergen, 1992). Postmodernists argue that the language used to describe this absolute truth or essence is not merely a mirror of this essence. How people talk about the world and their experiences requires social conventions of language use. These social conventions include grammar and colloquial terms, which are neither universal nor neutral. Therefore, if the way they talk about the subject is dependent upon society, and societies differ, then it is proposed that there is no one objective way of conceptualising the essence of the subject. This discredits the modernist belief that the researcher can be neutral and unaffected by culture and language.

This argument against ultimate truth or essences has been extended to psychology's exploration of the self, particularly important for this research (Hoffman, 1992). A person does not have an 'essence' that can be reduced to emotions and character traits that remain unchanged across different contexts and observers. This is in contradiction with the viewpoint discussed above in the Western conception of the person, where the individual is assigned a characteristic that is relatively fixed and differentiates him or her from others. Hoffman (1992, p. 10) instead proposes that the individual identity does not lie within someone, but can be described as "a stretch of moving history, like a river or stream". In this way, postmodernism moves from a belief in universal properties or traits of a person to a contextual consideration that can vary. Attention is given to the location, period and culture of the person being considered, which is part of the social sphere in which a person is constructed (Gergen, 1992). Postmodernism adds social, cultural and historical aspects to the consideration of the person or truth that is being studied.

The regard of truth as a perspective also refutes the modernist claim of progressive research. Kuhn argues that what may look like a better truth when compared with another truth is merely another perspective, and is neither better nor worse than the original one that the modernist would have disproved (Gergen, 1992).

Finally, Habermas (1981, cited in Gergen, 1992, p. 21) criticised the empirical method of the 1980's for its drive toward neutrality and objectivity in research. Removing values or ideology from the research questions and process by formulating technical questions, only serves to hide the biases and values of the researcher. The research process may look like it is void of bias or ideology, but this is not the case. This is a particularly dangerous and powerful belief in objectivity, with ideology masked by the claim of neutrality.

Part of the power of the neutrality claim is the way that this methodology can be used as a tool to separate the subject from the researcher, creating a power divide between the subject and the all-knowing researcher. Because the researcher is placed in a position that is presumed free of personal and cultural bias, this places the researcher in a higher position of power than the subject. Considering the power imbalance that the empirical method creates, postmodernism does not hold the method in the same esteemed position as its predecessor (Gergen, 1992). There is no one set of rules that should be applied in order to conduct postmodern research. This has given rise to a number of different theoretical frameworks claiming postmodern status, social constructionism among them.

2.5 SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM

One of the characteristics of the postmodern movement is to connect researchers (particularly psychologists) and society together, instead of maintaining the power divide created by the empirical method of enquiry (Gergen, 1992). Yet the postmodern movement itself does not provide its followers with any specific method of conducting research that holds with its assumptions. Instead, a number of different frameworks have been conceptualised following this critique of modernism. These include deconstructionism, phenomenology, post-structuralism, and constructivism, among others. While these are not methodologies, they are theoretical frameworks emerging out of the postmodern movement that assist the researcher in designing a suitable method. The current study proposes the use of social constructionism as the theoretical framework that will inform the methodology. This framework will first be explored briefly, and then its relevance for the African worldview and this study will be discussed.

Carr (2000, p. 140) provides a simple definition for a somewhat complex concept. He defines social constructionism as “the theory that each individual’s world view is determined more by social consensus within the community, expressed in language, than the world out there”. This definition is particularly useful in organising the five prominent assumptions that define this framework. The exploration will begin with the definition’s phrase “the world out there”, in challenging the taken-for-granted world. The social consensus of the community will then be explored in its role in constructing a particular worldview, followed by the consideration of the cultural and historical implications of this construction. The focus will then shift to the ways in which social construction within the community takes place, through both social action and language.

2.5.1 Dis-Belief in the Inherent Nature of Things

The first assumption of social constructionism is that knowledge should not be taken for granted; instead it should be viewed critically (Burr, 1995). Knowledge is neither objective nor unchanging, and is instead a subjective perception of reality that varies depending on the position one adopts. This assumption of multiple realities contradicts the modernist assumption of the true ‘essence’ of things.

The modernist assumption is rooted in an exogenic perspective of the world, where knowledge is entirely dependent upon nature (Gergen, 1985). The modern purpose of knowledge is to gain access to nature in an unbiased way. From this viewpoint, knowledge attempts to mirror nature in as clear a reflection as possible. Social constructionists, however, adopt an endogenic approach to knowledge. This approach describes knowledge as reliant upon certain processes in the researcher, impacting how that researcher then conceptualizes nature. This means that knowledge cannot be a true mirror of reality, as the processes of the researcher have become involved. These processes will have blurred the reflection of reality.

This means that the categories that are generally “known” in South African society, that of Mozambican or “*makwerekwere*”, foreigner and local, are not inherent in nature. According to social constructionists, these categories are not concrete groups that are found in nature, but rather socially constructed groups that are influenced by politics and society (akin to the processes of the researcher). The dividing line between locals and “*makwerekwere*” is neither inherent in nature, nor is it arbitrary. It serves a function in society, and plays up to a particular agenda. Drawing the line along this dimension creates a sense of “otherness” in those who are constructed within the “*makwerekwere*” category.

Burr (1995) points out that these socially constructed categories guide social action. This has been seen in the xenophobic sentiment and violence directed towards “*makwerekwere*”. It can be argued therefore, that these constructions, while not objective reflections of reality, have a very real impact in the social world.

2.5.2 The Social Generation of Knowledge

Continuing with the example of categories of people groups, the question is posed, “How do we come to know these categories?” Social constructionists de-emphasize the role of the individual in inventing or perceiving these categories. Instead, these understandings of the groups and the people within them are “vicariously received” (Shweder & Miller, 1985, p. 41). Meanings are shared between people, held not by the individual alone but by those around him and socially negotiated in the social sphere (Berger & Luckmann, n.d.). Gergen (1985, p. 5) calls this the “result of an active, cooperative enterprise of persons in relationship”. This shifts the emphasis from the individual mind as a tool of knowledge-generation to social relationships, acknowledging the role of previous generations in passing on these constructs and ways of understanding the world.

In South Africa this is something that can hardly be denied. The generations living during the Apartheid era may have had certain understandings about race and assumptions that went along with them. Many children “born free¹” of this period of oppression adopt the same racial assumptions. This highlights the fact that knowledge is shared in the social sphere, passed down from previous generations through social interaction, and adopted as personal knowledge of these categories.

The implications of this for the research topic are important. Up until this point the example used has been categories of people, but these assumptions hold true for identity as well. Mozambican identity is not only gained through self-reflection and self-experience, but through the interactions Mozambicans have with others. The understandings society has of the person as a Mozambican influences and shapes how the individual can reflect on his or her own identity (Lather, 1992). This conception of the self as a socially defined reality has influenced the approach of this research study, will hopefully allow for the socially generated knowledge of the Mozambican identity to emerge.

¹ “Born-frees” is an expression coined for the generation born after Zimbabwe’s independence from Britain in 1980 and it has been adopted in South Africa to describe people born after 1994.

2.5.3 Inclusion of History and Culture

Social constructionism argues for the recognition of the historical, cultural and contextual nature of knowledge and our perceptions of the world. Knowledge in one time and place is not identical to knowledge in another time and place (Burr, 1995). Gergen (1985) explores a number of different concepts that have been researched for a number of centuries (such as a mother's love), and posits that these concepts have changed over time. This does not mean that the specific concepts or emotions have changed during this time, but instead that the understanding of them has altered.

This emphasis on history and culture follows on from the previous emphasis on the social context. Knowledge that is socially constructed is constructed within a particular society that has historical and cultural differences from others. The conception of the self, as explored in this study, will depend on the society within which it is negotiated. South African society today is different from South African society several decades ago. Also, during Apartheid the South African government held strong racial views that were different from those of indigenous African communities existing at the same time. Therefore, societal differences have been noted across both time and place. Today, one of the predominant concerns of our country is the xenophobic sentiments held toward foreigners. And it is within this same society that Mozambicans, 'belonging' to this group of foreigners, socially negotiate their own identities. One can expect that many layers of history and culture, some Mozambican and some South African, are expected to play a role in constructing the Mozambican identity.

One brief point that arises out of the previous two assumptions is the understanding that if knowledge is socially created and is dependent upon the society within which it is negotiated, then it can be used to serve political purposes (Lather, 1992). The question that arises from this point is: what purpose does constructing foreigners as "*makwerekwere*" serve?

Unfortunately, exploring the political implications of this construction is beyond the scope of this study. However, it is within the scope of this study to explore how social constructionists understand the process of knowledge creation. In discussing this, insight is gained into how xenophobic sentiments come about.

2.5.4 The Action of Knowledge Creation

Shotter (2000) agrees with Gergen's shift in emphasis from the mind to social interaction as tools of knowledge generation, but takes it one step further in his analysis of the writings of

Bakhtin, Voloshinov and Wittgenstein. He finds in their work an emphasis on participation, not just interaction. For these philosophers, meaning is something that originates in action and then becomes part of the body of knowledge; experience comes before meaning.

Burr (1995) does not ascribe a linear quality to the relationship between action and knowledge, instead recognising that they go together. Meanings are ascribed to behaviours, which may encourage certain actions and discourage others (Burr, 1995). These meanings are a form of knowledge that grows from the action and experience; as one experiences the social world, one gains knowledge of it and meaning for the experience is constructed. A circular process is completed when this knowledge becomes part of the experience and guides future actions.

The action itself is not however an individual performance; what one does is not entirely the property of the doer (Shotter, 2000). It is done in relation with others, in response to their initial action and partly restricted by it, giving all action a social quality overlaid with meaning. In this way, knowledge enters the social world and does not remain separate from it (Gergen, 1985).

This assumption emphasizes that knowledge is something lived, not merely something to be contemplated in solitude. It requires participation and experience of the social world, exploration, relationship, and finally, conversation.

2.5.5. Language as a Social Action

Conversation is perhaps one of the most important social actions that contribute towards knowledge construction. It has been left until last in this section to be able to build upon the argument already presented.

The traditional conception of language is seen as a tool that we use to talk about our world, like the paintbrush that gives colour to the artist's imagination. Language, like the paintbrush, is often understood as the tool we use to communicate about what is already there. From this perspective, experiences that take place in the world or in the artist's imagination are not created by language or the paintbrush, and exist independently of these tools. This traditional view sees language as a tool that tries to fit or match the experience, but is separate from it (Burr, 1995).

Social constructionism adopts the postmodern critique of this understanding of language discussed above. Language provides us with a way of understanding and expressing our experiences, and indeed, structures our experiences. Experiences are not present before we communicate about them in a variety of ways. Experiences are made possible and structured by interaction and communication (Burr, 1995).

Language has given humans a way of organising experiences of the world into specific concepts (Burr, 1995). As an example, the people often called “*makwerekwere*” cannot be known outside of the language used to describe them; the term holds meaning which differentiates this category from European foreigners and local Africans, for instance. The term has also provided the observer with the emotions and opinions of those who use the word, organising and structuring the experience one has of both the group itself and those who use the word. In this way, language has structured our experience of the world.

In fact, language is so important to our experiences that it cannot be escaped (Gergen, 1992). “One may never exit language (the system of signifiers) to give a true and accurate portrayal of what is the case” (p. 22). Neither is language a transparent medium that holds no cultural or historical bias (Burr, 1995). As humans, we are reliant upon language to convey and structure our experiences, but this is once again determined by the society at the time.

This emphasis on language has implications for the research study below. Burr (1995) highlights two very important points that help summarise this section on social constructionism. Mozambicans do not have some concrete nature that is separate from language, and so it is proposed that the person should be studied through conversation with others in consideration of language and context. Secondly, the Mozambican identity constructed in one way could also be constructed in another way; there is no objective truth to this nature or identity. Shotter (2000, p. 108) agrees when he says that “dialogically-structured activity has a dynamic, continually changing, oscillating, pulsating character, such that its structure at any one moment is very different from its structure at any other”.

2.6 USEFULNESS OF SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM IN AN AFRICAN POPULATION

In the previous sections various frameworks have been presented. The African worldview and conception of self was briefly discussed. This was compared with the traditional Western view. Following this, the basis of the traditional Western view has been explored with its

modernist assumptions, as well as the postmodern movement that challenged the modernist perspective. Finally social constructionism, one of the postmodern movements, has been described in terms of the major assumptions that it brings to the conversation. This final section will briefly explore the similarities between social constructionism and the African worldview, as well as how social constructionism respects the African worldview in research.

2.6.1 Similarities between the Social Constructionist and African Views of the Self

Mkhize (2004b) explores the work of Vygotsky and Bakhtin in talking about the dialogical self, and relates it to the Africa worldview. While acknowledging the fact that Bakhtin's work has only briefly been touched on by Shotter (2000) above, his concept of the dialogical self is consistent with the social constructionist perspective. This critique will be used to highlight the similarities between this social constructionist view of the dialogical self and the African conception of self.

The African conception of the self as a social entity fits with the social constructionist view that truth is created through relations with others (Mkhize, 2004b). From the African perspective, people are defined by those around them, not in terms of individualistic traits that are part of the person. The emphasis on the role of the communal world of the African in understanding who he is, is congruent with the social constructionist perspective that truth (person or identity) is constructed through relationships and engagement with others. Mkhize (2004b, p. 76) emphasises this when he says that the African "selfhood emerges dialogically, through participation in a community of other beings".

Following on from Mkhize's emphasis on dialogism is the role of conversation and language in understanding the person. Social constructionism proposes that reality, in this case the identity of the person, is made accessible and available through language. Language is the means through which we come to understand the world.

The African view is in agreement with this position. It sees language as a social process through which the African gains access to shared concepts and attitudes within society. Language is understood as the organiser for reality, which is in line with the social constructionist viewpoint. There is therefore agreement that the self is constructed through conversation and in relation to others. The inclusion of conversation and language is therefore highlighted in searching for a suitable methodology for this study.

Mkhize (2004b) also expands on the notion of the person emerging through a process. Africans are not considered fully human unless they have become involved in certain community actions and have participated in community life. Without this involvement, they become what Ramose (2002, p. 64) calls a “partial whole”. This emphasizes the emergence of the “wholeness” of a person (Ramose, 2002, p. 64) and identity as a process involving social action. Social constructionism holds that reality is constructed through action, meaning that the individual takes part in social processes and through doing so constructs, with others, his or her identity.

Mkhize (2004b) has highlighted the parallels between Bakhtin’s dialogical self and the self in African philosophy. In particular, there is a degree of synchronicity in three assumptions: the nature of the person as socially constituted, the role of language in constructing the person, and the participative nature of this construction.

2.6.2 Using a Social Constructionist Framework in Adopting the African Worldview

As has already been mentioned, the belief in multiple realities is an important foundation of both postmodernism and social constructionism. It is the intention of the researcher to work from a social constructionist framework, without a rigid construction of reality to which one must subscribe.

This acknowledgement of other realities allows the researcher to work within the African worldview, which will guide the methodology of the study. This means that the research will be sensitive to the context within which it is conducted, and will attempt to utilise a research methodology appropriate to the research participants themselves. It is through the application of the African worldview that the researcher aims to do more than merely “replicate Europe” (Serequeberhan, 2003, p. 75).

This choice of worldview will have implications for the methodology of the study. Mozambican identity will be explored in the social context in which this identity construction takes place, through conversations between members of the community. Emphasis will also be placed on how this identity is experienced and lived out, highlighting the participative and communal nature of identity construction. Finally, the role of the Mozambican community and the xenophobic society will also be questioned in exploring the social nature of identity construction. More detail on the specific methodology will be discussed in Chapter Four.

2.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The argument for a contextually appropriate research methodology has spurred the move from a Western research framework to one that is more suitable for the African context. The differences between the African and Western worldviews are made evident through a discussion on the conception of self. The acknowledgement of these different worldviews is reflected in the postmodernist and social constructionist argument. In loosely adopting the social constructionist perspective, the researcher can conduct more culturally-relevant research. It is with this intention that the African worldview is accorded prominence in this study, with particular impact upon research methodology. Given that this is not a trend in South African research, the literature will need to be interrogated with this approach in mind.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The African worldview that informs this research here becomes the lens through which the literature is viewed. Consideration of the African worldview's emphasis on social context will help the reader understand how important this could be in negotiating identity. The aim of this chapter is to expand on what this context looks like as a foreign national in general. I will begin with a brief overview of the xenophobic discourse found in South African society. The tangible implications of the xenophobic discourse are also discussed, together with how foreign nationals use migrant communities to buffer the effects of this discourse. Finally, the discussion focuses on the role that these communities play in identity construction, with emphasis on recent literature in the field.

3.2 HISTORY OF XENOPHOBIA IN SOUTH AFRICA

In attempting to describe the context within which the Mozambican identity will be explored, attention must briefly be given to the recent pattern of immigration from Mozambique before one can explore the xenophobic society that Mozambicans have entered into. A discussion on this aspect of South African society will be done through an account of the xenophobic violence in South Africa since democracy in 1994. Attitudes of South Africans towards foreign nationals will be explored briefly, and discussion will then turn to three areas where this xenophobic discourse is reinforced: legislation, the media and state officials.

3.2.1 Stages of Mozambican immigration

Immigration from Southern African countries has not always been controversial. More than a century ago in 1909, the South African government and the colonial Portuguese government in Mozambique signed the Mozambique Convention (Azevedo, 2002). This treaty effectively allowed Mozambican migrants to enter South Africa for the purpose of employment, which was often found in the gold mines. At least 100 000 Mozambicans crossed the border from the time of signing of the treaty up until the 1970's. Even during Apartheid, South Africa was an attractive employment destination to its neighbours, and migrant numbers only dwindled in the 1980s due to economic difficulties in South Africa and the tension resulting from Mozambique's support for the African National Congress (ANC).

Just when South Africa lost its attraction as an “employment Mecca” (Azevedo, 2002, p. 138), the Mozambican civil war forced an estimated 350 000 Mozambicans to enter South Africa as refugees (Peberdy, 2009). These are conservative numbers, and other sources estimate anywhere between 250 000 and 500 000 Mozambican refugees entered South Africa between 1987 and 1992 (Azevedo, 2002; Steinberg, 2011).

The conditions in their home country forced them to enter South Africa despite several discouraging factors (Refugees dossier no. 78, as cited in Azevedo, 2002). The Apartheid policy at the time discouraged the influx of black people into the country, and this was reinforced with a strong likelihood of being deported, arrested or killed should they be found entering the country illegally. The Kruger National Park also provided a formidable obstacle to Mozambicans, as entering South Africa involved four days’ walk through dangerous territory. Finally, the electric fence erected from the Komati port to the Mbunzi village was a large concern. This carried a very high electrical charge that had been responsible for nearly a hundred deaths by 1990.

For those who managed to survive these challenges, refugee status was awarded and later changed to permanent residency, so that 176 500 Mozambicans were legally living in South Africa at the end of the amnesty period in 1996 (Polzer, 2004). While it is again hard to say how many chose to return home after the war, Polzer (2004) estimates that at least 200 000 regular and irregular Mozambican immigrants elected to remain in the country.

In 1998, a review of the literature led Morris (1998) to the conclusion that Mozambicans made up the largest immigrant population in the country. This pattern changed from 2000 onward, where deteriorating living conditions in Zimbabwe are thought to have prompted a greater growth in Zimbabwean immigration (Campbell, 2010; Mawadza, 2011). Despite this, Mozambicans continued to be deported in greater numbers until 2004 (Campbell, 2010).

This summary focuses on the most recent events that led Mozambicans to cross our borders; yet many Shangaan-speaking people in South Africa have Mozambican heritage that extends back to wars over chieftainship taking place from the 1830s. Given the varied stages of immigration from Mozambique into South Africa, it becomes difficult to determine who exactly is “Mozambican enough” to elicit xenophobic sentiments. While this will be discussed further under Methodology in Chapter Four, it is with this complexity in mind that we now turn to a brief review of the xenophobic violence taking place since 1994.

3.2.2 Xenophobic Violence since 1994

Accounting for xenophobic incidents prior to democracy is complicated by the link between racial and xenophobic incidents. The Media Monitoring Project (as cited in Fine & Bird, 2007, p. 18) had found that discrimination ties the two concepts together. Both lead to prejudice based upon stereotypes, and so while one focuses on race and the other upon nationality, the country's history of overt racism is one that prevents an accurate exploration of the past xenophobic incidents. For this reason, the focus of this discussion will be on xenophobic incidents after democracy in 1994.

The South African Migration Project (SAMP) (2008) has created a timeline for the xenophobic events that occurred after the first democratic elections. While this is far too extensive to detail here, several incidents should be noted, particularly with regard to violence against Mozambicans. While they were by no means the only targets of the xenophobic violence, the space is not afforded here for the long list of incidents involving the various other national groups. The account to follow therefore includes incidences relevant to the Mozambican population group, taken from the SAMP (2008) timeline.

Immediately following the advent of democracy in 1994, the Inkatha Freedom Party threatened physical action if the government did not address the problem of illegal immigrants entering the country. At the same time, South African gangs attempted to forcibly remove Mozambicans, Zimbabweans and Malawians from Alexandra, a township in Johannesburg. Two years later, violence erupted as locals attempted to remove foreign nationals from the Mizamoyethu township in Cape Town, reportedly resulting in the death of two foreign nationals and two South Africans.

In 1997, foreign hawkers were attacked for two days, with locals destroying and looting their property. Local hawkers then demonstrated against foreigners in the country, chanting "chase the *makwerekwere* out". During the same year, 20 immigrants are reported to have been killed in Cape Town during xenophobic incidents.

In 1998, three foreign nationals were murdered while travelling on a train between Johannesburg and Pretoria, two others were burnt alive in Midrand, and three Mozambicans were attacked by police dogs. In 1999, reports indicated that Mozambicans were often assaulted and robbed on the repatriation trains back to Mozambique.

In 2000, two Mozambican farm workers were accused of stealing and were assaulted by a local security company. Four years later, tensions arose between Xhosa and Shangaan-speaking residents in Rustenburg, leading to two deaths and 52 displaced families. In 2006, more than 20 Mozambican-owned stalls were damaged.

In 2008, the year that xenophobia in South Africa made world news, 10 000 Mozambicans returned home between the 11th and the 25th of May as a result of the escalated xenophobic violence. While many other incidents that involved foreign nationals in general occurred, those listed here provide the reader with some understanding of the fear Mozambicans must have had that led to the rushed exodus back home.

This list provides some insight into the conditions that Mozambican foreign nationals have endured while living in South Africa. It only records the overt violence that was documented at the time; it does not describe the sentiments and xenophobia of a lesser degree of which these acts were an escalation. Research exploring South African opinions of foreign nationals will hopefully provide the reader with more insight into what is meant by a “xenophobic environment”.

3.2.3 Local Attitudes Towards “*Makwerekwere*”

Detailed theories hypothesizing around the question of why xenophobia is present in South Africa can be found in a number of different texts (Crush & Ramachandran, 2009; Harris, 2002; Matsinhe, 2011, among others). These include ideas around the scapegoating of foreigners for locals’ difficulties, the isolation of that which is foreign, and the degree of ‘foreign-ness’. These theories will not be explored in this paper, as the impact of xenophobia is the primary focus for this research. Instead, this section will explore the attitudes of local South Africans towards *makwerekwere*, in building the foundation for an examination of the impact that these have on foreign nationals.

In determining the exact nature of the xenophobic sentiments in the country, there seems to be agreement on the locals’ perceptions of foreign nationals. In the 2006 Xenophobia Survey, South African respondents revealed that 67% thought that foreign nationals depleted South African resources, the same percentage associated foreign nationals with crime, and 49% believed them to be carriers of disease (SAMP, 2008).

These perceptions have influenced what South Africans feel should be done in response to foreign nationals. 84% of respondents indicated that too many foreign nationals were

allowed into the country, and 35% supported a total ban on immigration. 74% thought that any foreign nationals not contributing to the economy should be deported, and 61% thought that those with HIV/AIDS should also be deported. South Africans in general did not support the migration of an entire family, but rather thought that people should arrive alone. 72% thought that foreign nationals should have identification on them at all times, and over 59% did not support the economic attempts of foreign nationals. The differences between the respondents and their levels of xenophobic sentiment were also studied. These revealed that there were significantly higher levels of xenophobic sentiment shown by groups with Afrikaans as their home language, with a lower income level, less education and in the unemployed group (SAMP, 2008).

However, these sentiments were not directed towards all foreign nationals equally. Since the majority of migrants arrive from SADC countries, Crush and Pendleton (2007) found significant xenophobic sentiment directed toward citizens of Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe. This corresponds with the numbers of migrants from those countries; Mozambicans and Zimbabweans were the largest groups of foreign nationals deported during the years 1991 to 2004 (Campbell, 2010; Crush & Pendleton, 2007).

This pattern of xenophobia was not directed towards white immigrants from these countries. Those who suffer negative attitudes were predominantly black, and their white counterparts were unlikely to experience the same level of xenophobia (Harris, 2001). This was seen when white farmers fled Zimbabwe in the early 2000's, and the relatively warm welcome they received from South Africans (Peberdy, 2009).

Sichone (as cited in Neocosmos, 2006, p. 113) in his research with the East African population group, found that xenophobic sentiment towards blacks was also not uniform. The majority of xenophobic sentiment was directed towards black foreign nationals who did not create economic wealth and opportunities, who were instead perceived to be taking the jobs meant for South Africans.

It appears then that some distinctions matter when it comes to foreign immigrants. Immigrants who have come under special public scrutiny seem to be mostly black foreign nationals originating in SADC countries, particularly Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe. Of particular interest is whether these foreign nationals create jobs for themselves and others, or whether they take what is considered to be a South African's job.

However, it appears that other distinctions may be less important in the eyes of South Africans. Idasa (2001) found that should one be able to distinguish regular from irregular migrants, irregular migrants would only be given basic rights by about 15% of the South African population. Yet the support for regular, temporary migrants to be given basic rights and access to basic services was also low, around the 20% mark. Difficulty in distinguishing between the two was seen in the attacks of May 2008, where the targets appeared to be irregular immigrants, but those with legal residence status were also victims (Campbell, 2010). South Africans also perceive there to be a far higher number of irregular immigrants in South Africa than has actually been documented (Crush & Pendleton, 2007). It seems therefore that while attitudes towards both regular and irregular immigrants may differ slightly, both groups provoke negative attitudes and experience xenophobia (Matsinhe, 2011).

This trend extends to the distinction made between refugees and other immigrants; one that the South African public also struggles to make (Idasa, 2001). One would imagine that attitudes toward refugees would be somewhat more positive than towards other immigrants. Yet only 20% of South Africans believe that basic protection and access to basic services for refugees should be funded by the South African government (Idasa, 2001).

In summary, the general attitude towards black foreign nationals from SADC countries in the search for jobs is very negative. South Africans make distinctions between regular immigrants, irregular immigrants and refugees in theory but not clearly in practice. How the legislature has embodied and enforced these broad negative attitudes will now be briefly explored.

3.2.4 Exclusionary Legislation

The laws and legislation of the country contribute to a very large extent to this xenophobic climate. Neocosmos (2006) examines the past and current legislation that has governed the treatment of foreign nationals, and comes to the conclusion that the legislation has allowed, and at times encouraged, xenophobic sentiment and activity.

In order to understand this discussion on legislation, perhaps one should look first to the state's definition of citizenship. The state saw only white people as true South African citizens, while blacks were not considered full citizens and black foreigners were not allowed to become citizens (Peberdy, 2009). In keeping with the racially exclusive policies of the

Apartheid system, this denial of citizenship to certain groups added to what Cejas (2007, p. 485) calls South Africa's "internal others".

Despite the denial of citizenship, black immigrants that were allowed to enter South Africa until 1986 as contract labourers in the mining and agricultural sectors. In fact, immigration for these purposes was encouraged because they were a cheaper form of labour, living under extremely exploitative conditions in hostels (Neocosmos, 2006).

Migrant labour from Mozambique was particularly encouraged. The Mozambican Convention was renegotiated in 1963, so as to continue to permit migration into South Africa (Neocosmos, 2006). After 1986, regulations became harsher for foreign nationals from Africa. These changes can be summed up in a brief discussion on the Aliens Control Act of 1991, and the Immigration Act of 2002.

3.2.4.1 The Aliens Control Act of 1991

A suitable starting point on the discussion around legislation is the Aliens Control Act (1991), which consolidated the policies regarding immigration during the transition to democracy. This Act has been criticised for being exclusionary in nature, dictating who does not belong rather than who does, and possibly fostering disconnection and "otherness" (Neocosmos, 2006; Peberdy, 2009).

The Act made entry into South Africa very difficult for those categorised as "others". It affected mostly foreign immigrants from other parts of Africa, except for asylum seekers and refugees. The few foreign nationals that were permitted to enter had to demonstrate skills that were scarce in South Africa, and employers had to prove that the foreigner had skills unavailable in the country (Peberdy, 2009).

The Aliens Control Act also outlined processes for removing unwanted foreign nationals, which excluded those migrants working in the mines. It also increased the powers of those responsible for policing this Act, and courts were not given jurisdiction over the correct use of those powers. This Act that is considered "draconian by any standard" (Neocosmos, 2006, p. 96) continues to influence the immigration policies today, even after it has officially been replaced by the Immigration Act of 2002 (Peberdy, 2009).

3.2.4.2 The Immigration Act of 2002

The Immigration Act of 2002 began as the Draft White Paper on International Migration. Finalised in 1999, it put forward a number of ideas that are reflected in society today. The perception of a South Africa saturated with irregular immigrants was encouraged (based upon a flawed Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) estimate) and the Paper discouraged immigration based on the high unemployment rate (Neocosmos, 2006). When this was passed and became a Bill in 2000, it continued to support foreign nationals employed in the mining industry. However, it seems that when foreign nationals do not have labour value, the regulations are far stricter.

As a result of this Bill, police were permitted to stop anyone and demand proof of immigration status. This is similar to a new pass law, and the community was encouraged to enforce this requirement. This attempt at community policing arguably provided leeway for at least one xenophobic incident in Zandspruit in 2000, where over 100 homes belonging to Zimbabweans were burnt down. Following this incident, the sections in the Act regarding community enforcement were removed in 2002.

When this eventually became the Immigration Act (2002), the police still had powers to intimidate foreign nationals, which contributed towards a corrupt immigration control system (Neocosmos, 2006). An amendment in October 2004 focused on easing the entry process for highly skilled foreign nationals without employment, which again defined who is good enough to enter the country. On a positive note, the word 'alien' had been formally removed from legislation, although this did little to make the foreign national feel at home (Peberdy, 2009).

At times, amnesties provided an opportunity for foreign nationals to gain a sense of belonging. Of note for this study are two amnesty periods of which Mozambicans could make use (Peberdy, 2009). The first, in 1996, allowed those foreign nationals from SADC countries who could prove they had lived in South Africa for five years, had South African dependents or spouses and had been economically active, to become legal residents. The second, in 1999, allowed the roughly 300 000 Mozambicans who had escaped the civil war to apply for residency.

In general, the legislation has been racist in its preference for the more wealthy (and white) immigrants than the poorer, African immigrants (Harris, 2001; Neocosmos, 2006; Peberdy,

2009). Legislation has emphasized national identity in gaining access to resources, which has arguable replaced the emphasis on ethnic identity of the Apartheid era (Neocosmos, 2006). This is a strong reminder of the earlier discussion on creating a new “other”.

3.2.5 Evocative Media Portrayal of Foreign Nationals

Another reflection of emotions and opinions regarding the creation of the “other” can be found in the media. The media places a distance between South Africa and what Harris (2002, p. 7) calls ‘the troubled North’. The African continent is discussed as something indistinct and homogenous, to which South Africans do not belong. In a circular fashion, the media could play a role both in reflecting opinions of society, as well as shaping them. As a form of information dissemination in the country, the media is presumed to be objective and factual. When it comes to xenophobia, several studies have called this supposed objective reporting into question.

In an analysis of print media articles addressing immigration, published between 1994 and 1998, the content of the articles was evaluated with regards to analytical style and the way that immigration was presented (Danso & McDonald, 2001). While articles were found to improve from year to year in analytical style and reflected a reduction in bias, over these 5 years it was found that 70% of articles were not analytical enough, and 33% of them were clearly anti-immigration. The sampled articles were also found to perpetuate stereotypes of foreign nationals as depleting resources, taking South African jobs and committing crime, without scientifically reliable information as a foundation for these claims. A large percentage of these articles used the terms ‘illegals’ and ‘aliens’ to refer to foreign nationals, and used negative images and metaphors associated with immigrants. 56% of the sample contained at least one negative reference to foreign nationals (Danso & McDonald, 2001).

The media as a whole are criticised for their portrayal of the problem as only involving black African foreigners, and for welcoming others like the white Zimbabwean farmers. The media, like the public, draws a distinction along colour lines (Nyamnjoh, 2010).

Following the May 2008 xenophobic violence, Harber (2008) explored two different approaches to covering these events. Although the text itself is emotive and is strewn with graphic pictures, the two approaches of the *Daily Sun* and *The Star* provide insight into how different viewpoints of the same events can be presented to the public.

The *Daily Sun*, a tabloid with a predominantly working class readership, portrayed the events of May 2008 with frequent references to the word ‘aliens’. This term that was removed from official legislation was still reflected in a headline such as ‘War on aliens’. Harber (2008, p. 162) comments on the effect of this term: it works in “emphasizing foreigners as outsiders, different and strange, not part of us, even threatening”. He tracks the progress of reporting on these attacks from when the violence first broke out. This newspaper focused on the effects of the violence for South Africans, paying little attention to the victims and even encouraging their readers not to appear foreign. This tabloid seemed to incite fear and hatred of foreigners, and was clearly written with a bias towards local South Africans and provided those harbouring xenophobic attitudes a voice.

Although the editor apologised for the apparent bias, calling it “batting for the home team”, this pattern corroborates Nyamnjoh’s (2010) conception of the role tabloids play in reflecting and reinforcing xenophobia. He believes that tabloids present foreign nationals as obstacles preventing locals from reaching their dreams.

This approach contrasted with the way that *The Star* portrayed the same events. With a middle-class suburban readership, it attended almost entirely to the victims of the attacks. While sympathetic towards the victims, it was also biased against the perpetrators. Little discussion or insight was provided into who the perpetrators were and what their grievances were. These were only discussed weeks later when the violence had abated.

Harber’s (2008) study of the two reporting trends show how powerful the media can be, and how polarised. Yet one of the strongest criticisms lies in the fact that foreigners are not given a voice in the media. In discussions around the xenophobic incidents in the media, “*Makwerekwere* were an absent presence, to be acted upon, but not expected to act or react” (Nyamnjoh, 2010, p. 70). In neither of Harber’s (2008) examples did the opinions of foreigners become important, perhaps reflecting the media’s disregard for foreign nationals as credible sources of opinion and information. In not acknowledging their voice, xenophobia is reported on as one would report on animal cruelty. Foreign nationals remain less than human.

The findings of Fine and Bird’s (2007) study indicate slightly more bias in articles concerning the treatment of migrants than in articles regarding other racially-motivated violence between South African citizens. The authors explain this difference as part of the subjective nature of pieces regarding xenophobia. They fail however to explain why these pieces are more subjective than others, and why articles related to this topic are allowed to be more subjective

than articles related to other topics. This does however highlight the strong emotions that arise with this topic, and the struggle the media has in reporting objectively about it. This struggle is also reflected in the third sphere of our discussion; the opinions of state officials.

3.2.6 Government

The legislation and the media both reflect the government's view of foreign nationals: the first in creating laws to reinforce them and the second in regurgitating them for public consumption. What government officials and politicians have been publicly discussing will also contribute towards the legitimacy of private sentiment, and there have been many instances in which South Africa's politicians have reinforced xenophobia (Harris, 2001).

Perhaps the most well-known and obvious, Mangosuthu Buthelezi, (then Minister of Home Affairs), in 1994 said "if we as South Africans are going to compete for scarce resources with millions of aliens who are pouring into South Africa, then we can kiss goodbye to our Reconstruction and Development Programme" (Hill and Lefko-Everett, as cited in Duncan, 2011, p. 264). Human Rights Watch (HRW) (1998) reports that similar statements reiterating the idea that illegal immigrants were sapping South African resources were made by members of the National Party, Freedom Front, and Inkatha Freedom Party. All three of these parties went on to support measures to curb immigration.

Another trend in political culture involved the close association of foreign nationals with crime (HRW, 1998). The Defence Minister in 1997, Joe Modise, perpetuated the stereotype of illegal immigrants as criminals when he said, "We have one million illegal immigrants in our country who commit crimes and who are mistaken by some people for South African citizens. That is the real problem" (HRW, 1998). National Party representatives linked foreign nationals, particularly Nigerians with crime, a trend that was also found amongst police officials.

At a time when democracy was in its formative years, these statements were criticized for being "alarmist and ill-informed" (HRW, 1998). Since 2000, the statements around xenophobia place a similar blame on foreign nationals. Neocosmos (2006, p. 100) argues that politicians' statements portray xenophobia to be "the result of immigration and thus inevitable and should be regulated through the law." He continues to see this as "another case of blaming the victims".

Part of the criticism of the statements made by officials includes the language that they have used. The use of the term ‘alien’ until the early 2000s to refer to foreign nationals implies that they are another species, not even belonging to this planet. The term ‘immigrant’ left no opportunity to distinguish between immigrants who intend to remain here, migrants who are here temporarily, and refugees. Thirdly, the word ‘illegal immigrant’ enhances the stereotype of foreign nationals as criminals (Peberdy, 2009).

Together with releasing dubiously inflated figures of immigrants in the country (Hill and Lefko-Everett, as cited in Duncan, 2011), the government and political parties have done little to contradict the views of the media and the public. Since 1994, the democratic discourse has been anti-foreigner and pro-South African. Here again, the lines of nationality divide those who are worthy from those who are not.

This is the pattern that can be found in South African society. The transition has been made from the importance of ethnic identity during Apartheid to the importance of national identity in enabling access to resources. This is the country that Mozambicans fled to, following the civil war; one divided along different degrees of citizenship (Neocosmos, 2006). Mozambicans entering the country were entering a society that rejected them in a number of ways. Through the legislation, media and party statements, foreign nationals are made to feel unwanted and unfairly discriminated against. Yet this discourse has effects that extend beyond the emotional; South Africans have found very tangible ways of showing foreign nationals that they do not belong.

3.3 EXPERIENCES OF FOREIGN NATIONALS

In Chapter Two, the African worldview was discussed in detail. Part of this discussion emphasized that the African worldview holds that it is through experience that one comes to know oneself. This has very important implications for the way that the literature is viewed, and it is for this reason that the discussion of theoretical frameworks came before a review of the literature. If experiences are imperative in the formulation of the African identity and knowledge system, then the experiences of foreign nationals in South Africa becomes relevant for this research. The conversation will now turn to the ways that the xenophobic discourse discussed above becomes part of the experience of foreign nationals. It is important for the experiences encountered by Mozambicans to be understood before one can look at how this impacts on the knowledge that they have of themselves.

It is important to note first that the experiences of foreign nationals vary somewhat in the extent of xenophobic sentiment that is encountered. Interestingly, 30 – 50% of foreign nationals interviewed thought that South Africans had positive views of their population group, which shows that xenophobia is not applied uniformly (Idasa, 2001). There appears to be at least one instance in Bushbuckridge where Mozambicans are included in community life, so much so that they do not want outsiders trying to distinguish between Mozambicans and locals for research purposes (Polzer, 2004). It is with this ambiguity and contradictory information in mind that the literature is explored. These findings indicate the acting out of xenophobia is not the experience of all foreign nationals living in South Africa. The categories below indicate a number of ways that the xenophobic discourse has become part of the lived experience for some foreign nationals.

3.3.1 Crime and Physical Abuse

In a review of Congolese and Nigerian experiences, Morris (1998) found that these groups were targets of crime and violence, and complained about the prevalence of crime compared with their home countries. In addition to this, refugees (and other foreign nationals) were found to be subjected to both physical and verbal abuse by locals (Pretorius, 2004). In the same study, women and children were found to be especially vulnerable to abuse and rape, and were unable to report the situation because of their undocumented status or the position of their assailants.

Not all violence is perpetrated by South Africans against foreign nationals: some sources of violence and conflict originate within the immigrant community itself. The country that the immigrants left often has its own divisions and forms of discrimination, which continues once they have relocated to South Africa (Harris, 2001). Within immigrant communities, violence such as kidnappings, rape, intimidation and beatings also contribute to the violence that foreign nationals encounter.

3.3.2 Verbal Abuse and Discrimination

Foreign nationals, including refugees, experience frequent verbal abuse that is isolating and discriminatory in nature. Foreign nationals are often called a number of derogatory names, which becomes more frequent if they are physically distinguishable from locals (Pretorius, 2004). In Osman's (2009) study, children recounted that because of their different appearance, they were teased and embarrassed at school. Dark skin, facial structure, hair

texture and physical build were among the reasons that these children were targeted, and this led to an increased sense of difference between them and the local children.

Four out of ten children in Livesey's (2006) study reported feeling different to other children in their school. Among the respondents in this study, the children reported being made fun of, being excluded because other children did not want to play with them, being told they were ugly and had stones thrown at them, and were called '*makwerekwere*'. Verbal abuse and discrimination was corroborated by other studies, and it seems to form part of daily life for some foreign nationals (Harris, 2001; Livesey, 2006; Pretorius, 2004).

3.3.3 Language

Common among many foreign nationals originating from Africa is the alienation found in the term '*makwerekwere*' (Morris, 1998). This is a name for those people who are unable to speak the local languages, and has the effect of setting foreign nationals apart from local black people (Duffield, 2008). This term positions immigrants as "rootless, identity-less, culture-less, and therefore non-people without context or civilization" (Duffield, 2008, p. 22).

Kanjo's (2010) research with foreign female students at the University of KwaZulu Natal gives more insight into this difficulty with language. Those who were unable to speak the local African languages often resorted to English in their interactions with locals. This distinguishes foreign nationals from locals in everyday interactions, such as catching a taxi. The participants reported feelings of humiliation and frustration following these interactions.

3.3.4 Acquiring Documentation and Interactions with Police

Foreign nationals have also reported challenges in acquiring the right documentation, especially if they require refugee status. During the process of acquiring documentation, foreign nationals are often mistreated by officials and police, and a lack of documentation further hinders the search for employment (Morris, 1998). Without proper papers, these foreign nationals became vulnerable to extortion and exploitation by police and other officials (Pretorius, 2004).

The police are far from a safe haven for foreign nationals experiencing the tangible effects of xenophobia. Often, police are avoided because they are one of the main sources of xenophobic treatment (Livesey, 2006; Neocosmos, 2006). Often the first contact that foreign nationals have with police is at the border post. Even foreign nationals entering the country

through legal means are often subject to exploitation by border officials during the entry process (Harris, 2001).

The police, together with employees at the Home Affairs office and officials working at the Lindela Repatriation Centre in Krugersdorp, display marked xenophobic attitudes towards foreign nationals (Mawadza, 2011). According to Neocosmos' (2006) review of the literature, this is apparent in physical abuse, torture, corruption and extortion. Reporting xenophobic abuse to the authorities often leads to interrogation and further victimisation (Harris, 2001).

3.3.5 Economic Challenges

Foreign nationals have also encountered difficulties finding employment. They feel that they are discriminated against in the job market and struggle to find employment, even if they have the correct documentation. As a result of this, they remain trapped in the poverty in which they arrived. Even those who are "highly skilled" battle to find work in line with their qualifications, and often turned to trading instead (Morris, 1998). Of note here is that traders are often the target of xenophobic attacks (South African Migration Project, 2008). When foreigners are discriminated against and cannot find employment, they are at risk of violence even when they start their own informal business.

3.3.6 Access to Services

In looking at the experiences of Zimbabweans, Culbertson (2009) found that getting medical treatment in South Africa was especially difficult for foreign nationals. They were often refused treatment, made to wait until last, or given inadequate care. This often impacts those who are most vulnerable, including pregnant women and the elderly (Miserez, as cited in Pretorius, 2004, p. 135).

From the above summary of discriminatory practices that some foreign nationals encounter every day, it becomes apparent that immigrating to South Africa is a long process. Papadopoulos, Stephenson, and Tsianos (2008, p. 210) agree that "Arrival has a *long durée*, it covers almost the whole life of the nomad; one is always there and always leaving, always leaving and always manifesting in the materiality of the place where one is". Reflected in this quote is the fact that foreign nationals' difficulties do not end when they arrive at their destination. They continue to experience challenges for many years after arriving in the country.

These challenges become part of the social environment in which the African is 'manifesting'. These experiences form part of the person's social context, and will contribute towards the person's definition of the self. However, it is often not the only social context that contributes to identity construction. In attempting to cope with these experiences, foreign nationals find themselves within a more positive social context; a migrant community.

3.4 THE ROLE OF MIGRANT COMMUNITIES

Gold (1992) points out that the response to this xenophobic treatment can lead to unification of group members against these threats. In South Africa, this has become evident in the formation of clusters of foreign nationals from a particular country, which may help the new arrival transition and protect its members from the xenophobia encountered every day (Harris, 2001). These clusters are defined by Massey *et al.* (1994, p. 227) as, "sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants and nonmigrants in origin and destination areas through ties of kinship, friendship and shared community origin". The formation of these communities, together with the functions that these communities fulfil, will now be briefly explored.

3.4.1 The Formation of Migrant Communities

Cohen (1985) looks at two components of community that help explain how these communities are formed. According to him, community implies a group of people who have identified similarities among them, and have distinguished themselves from others not part of their group.

This definition is similar to the definition of a group used in Social Identity Theory:

"a collection of individuals who perceive themselves to be members of the same social category, share some emotional involvement in this common definition of themselves, and achieve some degree of social consensus about the evaluation of their group and of their membership in it" (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p. 15).

When faced with a xenophobic environment, the sentiment of solidarity brings group members together as a reaction to this disadvantage. Sinclair (1999) found that in the search for social security, migrant communities became a source of safety and membership for immigrants.

The existence of these migrant communities is corroborated by professional migrants in Cape Town, who said that they relied on their families and others who gave them a sense of

belonging while the broader system rejected them (Shea, 2008). The family was found to use tradition as an anchor for the migrants, providing them with a way to maintain a similar lifestyle to that which they left behind. Similar communities were also found amongst the Somali and Congolese migrants, who rely on their countrymen for the support that they do not receive from the broader South African population (Amisi & Ballard, 2005; Buyer, 2008).

Citizenship seems to have become the criterion of importance since democracy, defining groups according to nationality. When foreign nationals are discriminated against on the basis of their nationality, their shared past may be brought to the foreground. Cohen (1985) finds that in cases like this, the group's shared history may become a resource in facilitating the development of a community. With the past come traditions and myths that are part of the group's expression of community. It is the circumstances, in this instance xenophobia and the emphasis on nationality, that contribute towards the "re-assertion of community" (Cohen, 1985, p. 99).

This is confirmed when one reflects on the most prominent criterion to ensure membership to these communities: country of origin. This appears to ignore in-group differences, highlighting instead the common nationality. The preference for one's own group (or nationality) fits with Self-Categorization Theory. This will be explained in more detail later, but one of the tenets of this theory is that "shared deprivations, costs or frustrations ... may provide a basis for the ... mutual attraction between people" (Turner, 1987, p. 65). For Mozambicans, the shared frustrations or deprivations arise from xenophobic discourse, which may explain why 84% of Mozambican respondents felt that they had strong ties with their fellow citizens (Crush & Pendleton, 2007).

What is noteworthy here is that these migrant communities are separate from the rest of society, and do not wish to be assimilated into South African culture, they only have the need to be accepted. They do not deny difference, but seek rather respect and human rights like all other members of the human species. Hadland (2008) uses the analogy of non-indigenous plants that do not put down roots in the new land, but remain loyal to their countries of origin and instead hover above the soil. They do this both out of original intent when they arrived here, but also out of a response to the xenophobic hostility they have encountered.

3.4.2 The Function of Migrant Communities

There are indications that those migrants already established within the country provide a source of authority, information and resources to new immigrants struggling with the transition to a new country. They often assist the new immigrant prior to arrival in the new country (Sinclair, 1999), and provide the migrant with ties to home (Shea, 2008).

This function of facilitating migrants' transition is just one of the four possible functions that Gelderblom (2006) proposes that migrant networks can perform. The other three include the stimulation of migration, encouraging others to follow suit, discouraging, which would be the opposite, and channelling, which involves directing migrants in a certain direction, including the opportunities for employment.

Hannerz (1996) reaffirms the earlier idea that these communities are centred around a collective past, and as such, satisfy three substantial needs of the migrant. The first answers the question of one's destiny, which becomes linked to the group's fate. The second provides the migrant with a sense of dignity; belonging to a group with a glorious history and presumably then a glorious future. The third provision answers the need for community and a sharing of experience. This third need is important for this research project, and is discussed in more detail in the next section.

Papadopoulos *et al.* (2008) go so far as to say that migrants require their informal networks in order to maintain their existence. This goes beyond the point of company and commiseration during troubled times, but rather paints migrant networks as something vital to the survival of foreign nationals.

In fact, these migrant communities may go beyond their support function in the Mozambican immigrant population (Muanamoha, Maharaj, & Preston-Whyte, 2010). It has been indicated that the presence of social networks already established in the country of destination may encourage migration. Muanamoha *et al.* (2010) found that Mozambican immigrants living in South Africa assist newcomers in providing the basic necessities upon arrival and in securing jobs and documents for their migrating compatriots. Relatives and friends, in both the sending community and the community receiving the immigrants, may decrease the risks inherent in crossing the border. This is hypothesized to play a role not only in easing the transition process, but encouraging further migration due to these self-sustaining networks.

The two aspects of the formation of migrant communities can be summed up in a statement from one of Duffield's (2008, p. 18) participants: "But because of this xenophobic attacks we came to terms that we are same people. So I mean from this xenophobic experience we learnt that we are brothers". It is the social context that creates the conditions for migrant communities, and these communities sustain their members in important ways.

3.5 COMMUNITY AS THE COMPASS OF INDIVIDUAL IDENTITY

"Community is the compass of individual identity; it responds to the need to delimit the bounds of similarity" (Cohen, 1985, p. 110). In this statement, Cohen addresses the fact that identities of community members are found within the social space of their community. Where the boundaries between one community and another lie, is where the individual's identity is formed. Applying this to the current problem, one can hypothesise that if a foreign national belonged to a particular community, he or she would negotiate identity within this community's boundaries. This link between migrant identities and migrant networks has also been identified by Gold (1992) in his studies of Soviet and Vietnamese refugees in the United States, and as we shall see, in Social Identity Theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1986).

3.5.1 Identity arising from Social Context

The Oxford English Dictionary provides McKinlay and McVittie (2011, p. 3) with a reference point when they begin to look for an understanding of the word 'identity' as "The quality or condition of being the same in substance, composition, nature, properties, or in particular qualities under consideration; absolute or essential sameness; oneness". Their argument slowly comes round to the differentiation between a social and a personal identity; one constructed in relation to others and the other referring to the individual uniqueness seen to characterise the individual.

The distinction between the collective and personal identities has been found elsewhere. Sinclair (1999) found that identities are negotiated on both an individual and collective level, and Appiah (2003) argues for a consideration of the two different dimensions of an individual's identity. These dimensions have already been discussed in Chapter Two in more detail.

It is toward the collective aspect of identity that this research is concerned with. The reason for this is rooted in the proposed research participants themselves, as has already been discussed in Chapter Two. Okolo (2003), building on the work of others, discusses the

impact of communalism on the understanding of identity in Africans. He goes on to say, “Individuals become real only in their relationships with others, in a community or a group” (Okolo, 2003, p. 213). The value of the migrant community in determining the individual’s identity corresponds with the African emphasis on the social negotiation of the self.

3.5.2 Identity as the “Other”

Social context can include the society that the person lives within, as well as the migrant community one may belong to. In brief reference to the first, Buyer (2008, p. 231) sums up the effects of the xenophobic tensions on identity when he says that a migrant “cannot help but immediately become vulnerable to certain labels, certain prejudices, which largely do not agree with their self-ascribed identity”. He talks of refugees, but this difficulty is similar for migrants in general, regardless of the reason for their immigration. This is echoed in the description of ‘illegals’ as others or outsiders, as well as ‘*makwerekwere*’; those who do not belong (Laher, 2010).

Papadopoulos *et al.* (2008) move beyond this sense of not belonging to a point where the illegal migrant becomes ‘dis-identified’; in the process of migration, the individual relinquishes what one was and says, “I prefer not to be” (Papadopoulos *et al.*, 2008, p. 219). In trying to evade being labelled as a migrant, one might attempt to become everything and everyone (and therefore invisible), sometimes doing this in order to avoid formal immigration procedures. The xenophobic discourse has provided the foreign national with the options of either becoming the outsider or becoming invisible.

3.5.3 Identity in Belonging to a Migrant Community

Looking beyond society to migrant communities, one can hypothesize that these communities provide the migrant with a more positive source of identity construction. Amongst a Mozambican response group, it was found that 90.4% of respondents reported that being Mozambican was an important part of how they see themselves (Crush & Pendleton, 2007).

The greater the importance placed on nationality, the greater the likelihood that this will become a source of identity construction for the Mozambican. If foreign nationals find that being Mozambican is “the most adequate medium for the expression of their whole selves”, they are likely to use this community in considering the self (Cohen, 1985, p. 107).

Similarly, there may be those for whom nationality has little significance, which would mean that national groupings have less influence over the individual's view of him- or herself (Hannerz, 1996). There is some evidence that foreign nationals may choose to remove themselves from associating with other foreign nationals, with only brief and instrumental attachment to their national group (Hadland, 2008). Social Identity Theory provides a possible explanation for both engaging with and withdrawing from national communities.

3.6 SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY

Tajfel and Turner's (1986) discussion of Social Identity Theory (SIT) explains how one's identity comes to be attached to a social group or community. From their definition of the social group provided above, they propose that membership in groups provides the individual with a system of self-reference. Groups assist in defining the individual and his or her position within the broader context through comparative processes. Turner and Reynolds (2008, p. 134) sum up SIT as "the idea that people have a need for positive social identity which requires them to establish a positively-valued distinctiveness for their own group compared to other groups".

This can be explained through three main assumptions of Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Firstly, individuals strive to maintain a positive self-concept. Secondly, groups in which the individual is a member are viewed positively or negatively in society. How the group is evaluated has an impact upon how the individual sees him- or herself as a member of that group (social identity). Thirdly, comparison between one's own group (in-group) and other groups (out-groups) that favours the in-group results in high prestige, whereas comparison favouring the out-group results in low prestige. A related assumption is that in order to maintain a positive self-concept when faced with low prestige due to unfavourable in-group/out-group comparison, individuals may leave their existing group for another group, or try to improve the evaluation of their present group.

Group memberships can become more salient in certain contexts, such as situations involving conflict and discrimination (Hogg, 2006; Turner, 1982). Group membership becomes salient in instances of readily accessible group categories, and when there is a fit between the group and the self (Hogg, 2006). For the purposes of this study, it is hypothesized that in a xenophobic society the category of nationality has become relatively salient due to the frequent discrimination, and therefore accessibility, of this category.

As a result of this salience, where a social category like nationality has become important to the individual in defining the self, one would tend towards evaluating one's nationality positively to satisfy the need for a positive self-esteem. However, in accordance with the third assumption, it is thought that if this category was not important to the person, then he or she may abandon that category in the search for a more positively-evaluated category (Hogg, 2006). This would explain both the positive evaluation of and association with one's national community, as well as the opposite reaction of dissociation from one's national grouping.

An important component in determining which route is chosen is the individual's beliefs about the social group he or she belongs to (Hogg, 2006). This includes five aspects the individual will have considered: the beliefs around the relative status of the group, the stability of the group, the legitimacy of the group, the permeability of the group's boundaries and the belief in the possibility for the status quo to change. These aspects contribute to the individual's choice to identify with the group, or to dissociate him or herself from it. In the individual's hypothetical quest for a positive self-esteem, the Mozambican will be faced with the choice of identifying with or dissociating from his national group. How they have come to understand the prototype of a Mozambican is therefore the aim of this research.

From the discussion in this chapter so far, it has been argued that given the experiences of the xenophobic discourse in South African society, foreign nationals have been subjected to a number of discriminatory and harmful experiences. In reaction to these negative experiences, foreign nationals have at times formed migrant networks or communities that serve a number of functions that satisfy the needs of their members. These communities or national groupings also have implications for the identity of the foreign national, and Social Identity Theory has been briefly explored in order to explain the relationship between the group and the individual's social identity. Given that this is the focus of this research, attention will now be given to recent literature on this topic.

3.7 RECENT LITERATURE IN THE FIELD

This research highlights Mozambican foreign nationals because that country is one of the main sources of immigrants into South Africa (Campbell, 2010; Polzer, 2004), and as yet has not been examined in depth as a population group. For this reason, recent literature from the last five years will be discussed with special attention given to the population group. Discussion will also centre around the methodology employed by other researchers. This will

be considered with regard to whether it allows for identity construction to take place socially and through language, congruent with the African worldview.

Shea (2008) explored the sense of belonging experienced by professional migrants from non-SADC countries living in Cape Town. She found that their professional occupations have alienated them from their communities, and that they do not rely on networks of their countrymen for a sense of belonging or identity. This suggests that there may be different findings in a population consisting of migrants without formal skills. Having a professional occupation may alienate one from his or her national grouping, or it may reduce the need of the foreigner for the support found within a migrant community.

Shea's (2008) method of data collection involved several one-on-one interviews with her participants, allowing for more insight into identity construction as a process than once-off interviews do. Considering that her sample group consisted entirely of non-SADC participants, the lack of reliance on migrant networks corroborates Sinclair's (1999) finding that national groups may be more important to people from Southern Africa than to others.

Zar (2009) used Erikson's theory of identity formation to examine the effects of living within South Africa on the identity construction of foreign students. The process of identity construction was found to be impeded by the xenophobic society, which rejects people on the basis of their nationality. Most of the participants struggled to establish one coherent identity in the face of this discrimination.

Unfortunately for the purposes of this research, the participants in Zar's (2009) study did not include any Mozambicans and the highest number of participants from the same population group was two. This left little opportunity for the establishment of social negotiation between members of the same migrant community.

Buyer (2008) focused on a similar topic to this study, although within a different population group. Buyer examined Somalian identities and the role that Somali communities in Cape Town play in the construction of these identities. Through the use of one-on-one interviews, Somali identity was separated by the participants into three dimensions: national identity, clan identity and refugee identity. How they prioritised these identities differed, but all preferred to live with other Somali nationals. They reported that this cushioned the negative effects of the xenophobic discourse on their self-concept.

Looking specifically at Mozambicans, the closest research to that which is proposed here is two studies conducted by Tara Polzer in the Bushbuckridge community (Polzer Ngwato, 2012; Polzer, 2004). In 2004, the Polzer study found that leaders in that rural area had chosen a philosophy of unity across national lines. This sense of unity corroborates Steinberg's (2011) findings that Shangaan-speaking South Africans were often welcoming to their fellow Shangaan-speaking Mozambicans. This was thought to be a result of the shared sense of displacement within this Apartheid-affected community, and the unity of the Shangaans against the neighbouring Sotho people.

In 2012, Polzer found that identity in the Bushbuckridge community was tied to where one lived in the village. The peripheral areas of the village that were often without the amenities available in the main part of the village were referred to as the 'Mozambican areas'. While these areas were not only populated by Mozambicans, and Mozambicans could and did live in the main section of the village, these spaces were important in determining one's status in the community. It was not necessarily the country of origin that contributed to the status and process of identity construction of the individual, but the part of the village that the person lived in. In addition to location, Polzer found that recognition by the state, a tendency towards modernity or tradition, and status were more important markers of identity than country of origin. In both of these studies, the methodology used was that of individually-administered surveys.

Vandeyar (2012) explored the identity construction of black immigrant students in South African schools. Vandeyar emphasised the importance of considering the social context of the individual, and used a qualitative approach that made use of both case studies and the narrative approach. While the majority of the data was gathered through one-on-one interviews, a six-week period of observation took places at the schools, in line with the emphasis on context. However, this format still did not permit for the social negotiation of identity.

Vandeyar (2012) found that race as an identity marker was emphasised by South Africans, requiring the immigrant students to incorporate this classification into their conception of self. The students found a way of negotiating their identities as foreign nationals and as inhabitants of South Africa in the use of hyphenated identities, and through emphasising their African identity. The students also told of being categorised into a group (like '*makwerekwere*') without a sense of identity tied to this category. However, the students felt that the identity

adopted, whether hyphenated, African or ascribed by others, was a way of adapting to living in South Africa and was not internalised.

Vandeyar and Vandeyar (2012) conducted a similar study with Indian immigrant students, although the findings differed somewhat. Indian students from Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka indicated that their identity rested on their nationality, and hyphenated identities were not considered by the students. Their identity seemed to be reliant on the amount of affiliation with their own foreign national community and with the South African community, corroborating findings discussed earlier about the role of community in identity construction. Students also indicated that they had South African Indians' identities assigned to them, positioning them within the 'Indian' category prevalent in South African society. Language was also found to be a key factor in determining a sense of belonging for this group.

Further research centred on immigrant students includes Crush and Towadzera's (2013) exploration of the exclusion that Zimbabwean children encounter in South African schools. Although this study did not deal directly with identity construction, this study added value in its choice of methodology. Unique to this study is the use of focus groups in allowing the parents of the children an opportunity to express and understand their experiences through conversation with others.

Research conducted with a national group struggling with being both African and non-African involved Zanzibaris living in Durban, South Africa. Kaarsholm (2012) traced the identity tactics that Zanzibari immigrants employed during Apartheid times and the changes that were made since the country's first democratic elections in 1994. During Apartheid, Zanzibaris constructed themselves both as exotic and distinct in their Arab heritage, and as a group with strong ties to Mozambique, distinguished by the Makua language. This enabled them to remain aloof from the Group Areas Act (1950) in Apartheid times. Since then, however, having a heritage of slavery has allowed the group to reposition themselves as Africans and therefore closer to a Mozambican rather than an Arabian identity. Whichever route they embarked on, they appear to emphasize their nationality as a source of their identity.

Considering the recent literature addressing this topic, the two main contributions of this study relate to the population group and the techniques used to gather data. Mozambicans are among the largest foreign population groups living in South Africa, and yet they have not been adequately addressed in discussion around the topic of xenophobic experiences. This

research hopes to counter this by focusing entirely on this population group and the effects that xenophobic discourse and migrant networks have on their identity construction.

Secondly, recent studies largely utilise techniques of data gathering that are incongruent with the African worldview and the corresponding social negotiation of self. It is proposed that in order to properly gain an understanding of how Mozambicans construct their identity, the choice of technique should allow for social negotiation and shared conversations around this topic. How I propose to do this will follow in the fourth chapter.

3.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Throughout this chapter, it is hoped that the sense of “otherness” has been prominent, as well as how this could influence the construction of identity. Cejas (2007, p. 474) sums up this link when she says that, “identity and alterity go together in the never-perfect exercise of establishing boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘them’”. Alterity involves creating differences and otherness, and this is something that has been seen in the form of xenophobic violence, as well as in the formation of migrant communities. It seems that one of the ways of coping with being conceived of as the “other”, is through the withdrawal into a group where one has a sense of belonging. It is apparent that these communities of belonging may provide the Mozambican with a sense of self that is contrary to that which is proposed by the rest of society. How one of the largest foreign national population groups negotiates this tension between discrimination and belonging is the focus of this research project.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous two chapters form the foundation for the rationale for the choice of methodology in this study. The African worldview, as discussed in Chapter Two, will inform the research philosophy and approach chosen for this particular study. The critique of the recent literature in Chapter Three related to this topic and has also highlighted aspects of the methodology that have been found incompatible with the African worldview. This chapter therefore explains the decisions made with regards to methodology, and the reasoning behind these decisions in terms of the African worldview and social constructionism.

4.2 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

4.2.1 Research Philosophy

The qualitative research philosophy will inform the choice of approach, research method, data collection and analysis for the proposed study. Ashworth (2008, p. 4) speaks of qualitative psychology as interested in the person's "grasp of their world", gathered through "open-ended, inductive exploration" (Terre Blanche, Kelly, & Durrheim, 2006, p. 272).

In contrast with quantitative research, qualitative research positions the researcher within a context. "At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 3). The emphasis is on descriptions and context, as well as meanings created within context.

The reliance of qualitative data upon these descriptions and meanings implies the need for interaction between the researcher and participants, in order to gain access to these descriptions (Mertens, 2010). It is this "dialectical interchange" (Mertens, 2010, p. 19) that highlights the researcher as the primary instrument of data collection (Terre Blanche, Durrheim, & Painter, 2006).

As has already been discussed in Chapter Two, social constructionism is the theoretical framework upon which this study is based. Social constructionism as a theoretical framework

assumes that reality is socially constructed and has implications for the way that research into subjective realities should be conducted. This has already been discussed in Chapter Two with methodology in mind, although several points require additional emphasis in this section.

According to social constructionists, reality is understood through engagement with others (Mkhize, 2004). Knowledge generation takes place in the social sphere and is not explored only through individual thought processes. This assumption means that the research context should allow for interaction between members of the Mozambican community.

Secondly, the context in which this discussion takes place should be explored. Social constructionism emphasizes the historical and cultural influences upon the different realities and knowledge that are constructed. For this study, it is important to consider the sample group and the context within which it was formed. The location of the participants, their relationships, their heritage and their culture will be explored in more detail in the sampling section.

Social constructionism also emphasises language and conversation in the construction of reality. How one speaks of a topic is considered, as well as the basic message conveyed by the words. This assumption means that the interaction between members of the Mozambican community should allow for conversations to take place and for the meanings to be constructed through language.

Following these three assumptions, it becomes clear that in order for this study to be congruent with the social constructionist framework, several parameters are established. These include the opportunity for interaction between members of the Mozambican community, that this interaction takes place through dialogue, and that the historical and cultural context of the conversation and the group be considered. These parameters provide some structure in working toward the research aims.

4.3 RESEARCH AIMS AND APPROACH

The theoretical considerations outlined above provide the researcher with the basis upon which to select a research approach. In order to make this selection, research aims are made explicit, and then the research approach will be discussed in detail.

The proposed research aims to facilitate conversations and gain insight into narratives that:

- explore the role that the Mozambican foreign national community plays in how they construct their identity; and
- describe the impact of xenophobia on the self-constructed identities of the Mozambican foreign nationals living in South Africa.

The research aims provide the researcher with the goal of the research endeavour, while it is the research approach or method that will provide the means of achieving these goals. In short, this study makes use of conversations between members of a pre-existing group of Mozambican foreign nationals. This group has a relationship with Blessed Joseph Gerard Catholic Church in Freedom Park, Soweto, although not all members of the community belong to the church. It is from this group that participants were drawn and engaged on the negotiation of their understandings of Mozambican identity. In research emanating from other frameworks, this has been called a focus group. However, for the purposes of aligning this idea with our chosen approach, I will instead call this a group conversation to position the terms within social constructionist language.

As with focus groups, the aim will be to generate conversation between the participants in the group around a particular topic (Wilkinson, 2008) and to rely on the interactions between the participants to provide the data for the study (Morgan, 1997). Group members are permitted to disagree and struggle for a shared understanding of the topic. It is this process that provides the researcher with a deeper understanding of the ideas that group members hold (Mertens, 2010).

These interactions are fuelled by a group energy which also distinguishes this approach from individual interviews. Conversations become a dynamic group encounter, which has been called the “synergistic group effect” (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990, as cited in Berg, 2004, p. 124). The dynamic nature of focus groups or group conversations would hopefully provide the context for a joint negotiation of identity.

Wilkinson (2008) acknowledges that this research approach is more naturalistic and closer to what would be seen outside of a research context, when compared with individual interviews. Reverting back to the social constructionist framework, this means a more naturalistic construction of reality (Perakyla & Ruusuvuori, 2011). If reality is constructed in the social

space through language and participation, then a group conversation provides a similar social context for the co-construction of meaning.

The role of the group facilitator adds to the spontaneous nature of a group conversation. Very little interruption from the facilitator allows for a variety of communication processes to transpire. A minimum amount of guidance allows the conversation to be as authentic and natural as possible, while still remaining relevant to the research aims (Wilkinson, 2008).

4.3.1 Advantages and Disadvantages of Group Conversations

Considering that a group conversation is a social constructionist term for focus groups, the advantages and disadvantages of the two are often shared. Advantages of the focus group or group conversation format include a level of flexibility, the mitigation of stigma in a group with similar individuals, decentralisation of the researcher, and the potential of the group to move beyond the researcher's expectations.

Group conversations or focus groups can be very flexible in their topic choice, their format, their location, participants and number (Berg, 2004; Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2011). This flexibility means that the researcher has room to structure the group conversation according to the research parameters. For this study, one group conversation took place at one of the coordinator's houses in Freedom Park, Soweto. This coordinator acted as group facilitator, due to the group's difficulty with English and the need therefore for the conversation to be conducted in Shangaan. This was important in order to align the methodology with the social constructionist emphasis on language and its role in the construction of reality. The facilitator was given several guiding questions, which he translated into Shangaan and used to guide the group conversation. The flexibility inherent in group conversations allowed for the structure and format of the group conversation to adapt to language concerns.

Secondly, Radway (1984, as cited in Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2011, p. 555) found that bringing together groups of vulnerable individuals can reduce the effects of stigma in society. The group, consisting of similarly stigmatised individuals, provides the individual with an environment where he or she is no longer considered inferior. This can be extended to include foreign nationals (Berg, 2004), who are often discriminated against, and are seen as the "contaminants of the nation" (Peberdy, 2009, p. 158).

Group conversations also have the advantage of removing emphasis from the researcher and placing it on the group as a whole. This has the dual function of making group members

more comfortable, and allowing the participants to take ownership of the research process and results (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2011). The decentralisation of the researcher is also in keeping with the social constructionist principle of shared knowledge generation, choosing to emphasise the role of the participants in the research process.

Finally, the dynamic nature of group conversations makes them somewhat unpredictable, moving the researcher beyond trying to prove any *a priori* theories. In fact, Macnaghten and Myers (2007) speak of the group setting as suitable for exploratory studies where the researcher is unsure about what may emerge from the group. Group conversations “take the interpretive process beyond the bounds of individual memory and expression to mine historically sedimented collective memories and desires” (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2011, p. 559). This is an advantage for this study because of the power that collective memories have in contributing towards the construction of the Mozambican identity.

Disadvantages of group conversations include the tendency towards group think, concerns about anonymity, and depth of information. Group think, the tendency of the group to aim for cohesion and agree with one another, is a worrying possibility in group conversations (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2011). This is may be more or less likely with a group that is already established, as their history of previous discussions may have created a group norm either in line with, or challenging, group think.

Secondly, concerns about anonymity are conventionally a concern for group conversations consisting of vulnerable or stigmatised individuals. Barbour (2007) argues however that sensitive topics can be explored in group settings, as long as the ethical implications are carefully considered. For this study, the group members were known to one another prior to the research process and therefore the structure of the group conversation did not jeopardise the identity of group members.

Finally, group conversations may not provide the same depth of information about an individual that one would expect from a long, semi-structured interview (Berg, 2004). This may be a valid concern for other studies, but is not a concern in this study. The aim of these group conversations is to provide the researcher with information regarding how identity is jointly constructed. The topic under investigation is not explored on an individual level. According to the social constructionist framework, this is required to be a social process and so in-depth individual interviews will not be appropriate to the chosen theoretical framework and epistemological paradigm.

Group conversations provide the researcher with an appropriate way of addressing the research aims using the social constructionist framework. However, this is not the only framework adopted in this study. This research approach will now be evaluated in terms of its applicability to the African worldview.

4.3.2 Alignment of this Research Approach with the African Worldview

The African worldview was explored in depth in Chapter Two. It is the intention of the researcher that this study be congruent with the culture of the research participants, and qualitative research provides such an opportunity (Lyons, Bike, Johnson, & Bethea, 2012). This consideration of culture in the research process has been called culturally sensitive research (Tillman, 2002).

Culturally sensitive researchers highlight the significance of culture and ethnicity in conducting research (Tillman, 2002). In doing so, they dispute the modernist assumptions of universal truths and the ability of an observer to be objective (Gordon, 1997, as cited in Tillman, 2002, p. 4). Instead, this type of research looks at the participant population and their cultural norms, and acknowledges the researcher's own culture, which may be different from the target population.

In this section, the choice of a qualitative research methodology will be evaluated on whether it is consistent with the African worldview or not. Group conversations as a research approach will also be discussed in terms of their congruence to the African conception of self as a social entity, as constructed through language, and as a participative process.

4.3.3 Qualitative Research and the African Worldview

The choice of a qualitative methodology has been found to reflect the values of the African worldview (Lyons *et al.*, 2012). The emphasis qualitative research places on context and a holistic perspective reflects the principle of interconnectedness in the African worldview. Environment and surrounding context moves into the foreground in most qualitative research, and the relationship between the person and the context is highlighted. This consideration of person-in-context has been argued earlier in Chapter Two, and acknowledges the importance of conducting research with African people in a way congruent with their beliefs.

The qualitative reluctance to work with *a priori* hypotheses is also appropriate for the African context. Without pre-constructed ideas about what may emerge from the research process, a

variety of different realities may become evident (Lyons *et al.*, 2012; Tillman, 2002). The inductive approach adopted by most qualitative researchers will allow for more than one ‘truth’ in the research data. Considering that in the African worldview ‘truth’ is created amongst people, the ‘truth’ that ultimately emerges will be unpredictable.

In acknowledging a number of realities, the influence of the researcher him- or herself is acknowledged in qualitative research. This has relevance in the earlier discussion of postmodernism and the move away from Western dominance of the research space. Because culture and research cannot be separated, most qualitative research attempts to highlight the influence of both the participants’ and the researcher’s culture in understanding the results. In this way, qualitative research methods “honour culture in a unique way” (Lyons *et al.*, 2012, p. 157). Attention will now narrow in on the match between group conversations as a qualitative research method, and the African worldview.

4.3.4 Group Conversations and the African Worldview

As already discussed, Africans see themselves as intrinsically connected with others around them, and their own understanding of themselves arises out of interactions with others. If Africans can only explore their identity by taking others into consideration, then it would be incongruent to ask a Mozambican for his own view of identity because African identity is not the product of individual cognition.

Group conversations provide the African participant with the social context in which he or she can negotiate the Mozambican identity. He or she is able to take others into consideration, and draw on identity constructions or dominant discourses of identity that are found in the social space.

Identity constructions and discourses are created and conveyed through language, according to the African worldview. Interactions in the social space require a medium for this exchange and negotiation, and language is one of the mediums emphasised by the African worldview. The chosen research approach therefore allows the participants the use of this medium in order to explore their understanding of the Mozambican identity.

The other critical consideration of the African worldview regarding a suitable research approach, is the participation of the sample group in community life. The African worldview emphasises shared activities and engagement with others in understanding the self, as well as the effect of this ongoing engagement on one’s view of identity. Menkiti’s (1984, p. 173)

“processual nature of being” sees the self as dynamic and changing. Therefore, this study looks at how the group participants actively co-construct their Mozambican identity at one particular time and context. This should therefore not be treated as the definitive answer to the question of Mozambican identity for this group for all time.

The epistemological paradigm adopted in this study provides the reader with an understanding of the researcher’s attempt to conduct research in a way that reflects the African worldview. The emphasis for the African remains on an identity that is social and created through language and participation. It is hoped that the choice of sampling method and process of gaining entry will similarly reflect respect for the African way of being.

4.4 STRATEGIES IN GAINING ENTRY AND IDENTIFYING A SAMPLE

It was my intention to continue the acknowledgement of and respect for the African worldview throughout the entire research process. I hoped to extend the theoretical consideration of the African worldview to a research process that reflected this respect. This has informed the discussion below relating to the process of gaining entry into the Mozambican community and the sampling strategy.

4.4.1 Gaining Entry

The sampling process began when I approached the Catholic Diocese of Johannesburg for assistance in locating an already established Mozambican community. They were able to link me with the Blessed Joseph Gerard Catholic Church in Freedom Park, Soweto, who has a large Mozambican population. The church provides emergency accommodation, medical assistance and counselling to immigrants in the surrounding area.

Two gatekeepers into this community were important for this research study. For ethical reasons, I will speak of Sister J. from the Catholic Diocese, and Mr. A., the connection to this particular group of Mozambican nationals. Gatekeepers are community members with a high level of prestige, and can be invaluable in helping the researcher connect with the participants (Lyons *et al.*, 2012). This is particularly important for those researchers who lack common ground with the participants. As a white, middle-class, female researcher living in the Northern suburbs of Johannesburg, gatekeepers were crucial for me to connect with the predominantly black, poor, male participants living in the township. Sister J. was valuable in connecting me with Mr. A., and Mr. A. was crucial in connecting me with the participants.

The process of establishing this connection was done in a manner in keeping with the social constructionist's emphasis on social negotiation of reality and no all-encompassing 'truth'. (Gergen, 1992). The community was approached in a respectful manner with emphasis on participation of all parties in the research process. This aim was carried out by attending their church service prior to meeting with any participants, indicating respect for the community and their practices. This reflected the social constructionist principles of an epistemology of participation and acknowledgement of local practices and expertise in the community (Anderson & Goolishian, 1992).

Unfortunately, Mr. A.'s brother was admitted to hospital that morning and he was unable to meet with me. Instead, I was introduced to members of the church and explained the reason that I was visiting. An informal conversation about their experiences living in Freedom Park ensued, creating a comfortable, non-threatening and informal context for my next visit.

Following Mr. A.'s brother's illness, he returned home to Mozambique for two months, making it difficult to establish a connection soon after the previous visit. In early October 2013, Sister J. again travelled with me to Freedom Park and introduced me to Mr. A. at his house. Up until this point, the research process moving forward had slowed because of the need for Mr. A.'s expertise regarding this population and his willingness to become involved and assist me. It was at this meeting that the finer details of the research methodology were worked out, emphasising the reliance on knowledge found within the community (Anderson & Goolishian, 1992). It is to these finer details that I now turn.

4.4.2 Sampling Strategy

Convenience sampling was chosen as the sampling strategy, and participants in this conversation were identified by Mr. A. This strategy is reliant upon the availability of participants that meet certain criteria (Gravetter & Forzano, 2009). The criteria chosen in this study were that participants must be adults (over the age of 21) and younger than 60 years, they must have been born in Mozambique and must have lived in South Africa for a minimum of two years. These criteria were very broad, making it easier for the researcher to gain access to those individuals who already perceive themselves as being victimised. Convenience sampling was also beneficial because they were identified by a fellow Mozambican, reducing the threat of being identified as foreigners in a xenophobic society.

As a result of the selection criteria discussed above, the group was made up of participants who were born in Mozambique and had moved to live and work in South Africa. The number of years that they had spent living in South Africa ranged from 2 to 29, and their ages also covered a broad range of 22 to 51 years of age. What all participants had in common, however, was that they were all part of the Mozambican community that Mr. A. was part of, meeting every month to support and help one another.

These Mozambican communities are formal networks that were established by the Consulate of Mozambique in Johannesburg (Muanamoha, Maharaj, & Preston-Whyte, 2010). This was encouraged in order to better support Mozambican foreign nationals living in Gauteng who may require the assistance of the Consulate. These communities were identified by Muanamoha et al. (2010) in Tembisa, Soweto, Johannesburg and Bekkersdal, and are estimated to include roughly seven thousand Mozambican nationals in each community. They are structured around a leader and an assistant, which in the Freedom Park community were referred to as the president and treasurer. Both of these leaders formed part of the participants in this study. They are responsible for communicating with the Consulate in Rosebank, Johannesburg, and frequently visit the Consulate in order to help Mozambicans from their community apply for the appropriate documentation.

4.5 DATA COLLECTION

As discussed above, the research approach adopted in this study makes use of one group conversation with 12 participants. This lasted approximately 90 minutes, and was facilitated by Mr. A., a member and coordinator in the Mozambican community in Freedom Park, Soweto. He conducted the session at his home in Freedom Park; a location that was both convenient and comfortable for the participants who had often held their meetings there. Beyond logistics, conducting qualitative research in this way provides greater reflection of the problems encountered in the community, in the community in which they occur (Hoyt & Bhati, 2007).

The fact that Mr. A. held both the roles of group facilitator and community leader may have had an impact on the participants and the opinions shared during the conversation. On one hand, as the community leader, the participants may have felt pressure to speak in a positive way about being Mozambican and about the value of their community. On the other hand, having a familiar facilitator may have relaxed the participants somewhat, so that they felt more comfortable sharing their experiences with someone who was not a stranger.

Mr. A. was provided with a topic guide made up of four open-ended questions in English, which he then translated into Shangaan and used to guide the conversation. These questions served only as a guide to keeping the conversation on topic and focussed, and were addressed to the general group as a stimulus for further conversation. The style used in eliciting conversation from the participants can often vary from facilitator to facilitator, with some intervening more than others (Macnaghten & Myers, 2004). In this case, the facilitator displayed some level of intervention, asking some people directly for their opinions, bringing them into the conversation. However, he also allowed the participants to respond spontaneously and did not interrupt participants who strayed off topic.

Throughout the group conversation, participants were encouraged to address one another and not the facilitator or the researcher. They were also encouraged to speak in Shangaan, which acknowledges the importance that the African worldview and social constructionism places on language in understanding reality. In allowing a natural conversation to take place, this reflected the African values of the self as social and the self in conversation, discussed earlier in Chapter Two.

4.5.1 Challenges in Data Collection

Related to the African worldview were two potential problems that would have been serious concerns for research conducted from a Western perspective. The first challenge occurred when the wife and children of one of the participants entered the home and joined the group in the middle of the conversation. They did not contribute to the conversation, but would have been problematic for a researcher adopting a Western worldview who would see them as neither participants nor non-participants, and would query their motive for attending. From an African worldview however, this is in line with the communalism in the African community. This dynamic is also a reflection of the inseparability of the self from others and the fluidity found in African groups and systems. The family of the male participant was involved in the process, even if their contribution was not verbal.

The second instance related to the sample size and the number of participants. Initially, it was decided with Mr. A. that he would gather some people from the community, totalling ten participants. It was anticipated that some participants would not attend on the Sunday afternoon, and it was estimated that between six and ten participants would take part in the conversation. However, on the day of the group conversation there were twelve participants, excluding the family mentioned above. This posed a challenge, as I felt that twelve

participants would be difficult to manage and some participants may not end up contributing to the conversation. I decided, however, to allow all of those who attended to participate, acknowledging the African value placed on relationships and the undue offence it may cause in turning others away. The African proverb “umuntu akalahlwa” (author unknown), meaning “a person is never rejected”, captures this sense of respect for others. Reflecting on this, the concerns about the group size proved unfounded and the group interacted well.

4.5.2 Translation and Transcription

This conversation was videotaped, in order to assist in the process of transcription and identification of speakers. The data considered in this study is limited to the verbal component of these recordings, which was translated and transcribed into English by a Shangaan-speaking transcriber. While translation from Shangaan into English may mean that some information is lost, it allowed the participants to converse in their native language. The potential loss of some information in translation is thought to outweigh the difficulties the participants would have had in expressing themselves in English and the subsequent disregard for the importance of language in African identity negotiation. Attention now turns to what shall be done with the information gained from the group conversations.

4.6 DATA ANALYSIS

The translated and transcribed video recordings were then analysed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a technique that explores both implicit and explicit ideas within the text, going beyond the words themselves. As one of the most frequently used techniques of data analysis, it is particularly useful in extracting meaning from the text in the form of themes (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012).

Themes in the data have been defined as a “recurring pattern ... conveys something significant about what the world (or the particular aspect of the world being discussed) *means* to a person” (McLeod, 2011, p. 145, *emphasis in original*). What kinds of themes emerge depend on the framework from which the analyst is working. With social constructionism as a theoretical foundation, attention is not only to the ideas expressed by the participants but also to how the group comes to agree or disagree on the issue of Mozambican identity (Stewart, Shamdesani, & Rook, 2007). How the Mozambican identity is constructed amongst the participants will be explored together with what is actually said about the topic.

The process of conducting thematic analysis has been divided up into six phases by Braun and Clarke (2006). Each of these phases will briefly be discussed in relation to this study.

Phase One involves becoming familiar with the data. This takes place through immersing oneself in the data, reading it and re-reading it, and taking notes of any immediate codes that come to mind. For this research, it was particularly important for the transcriptions to be read many times because this was the first understanding I had of what was spoken about in the conversation, due to it being conducted in Shangaan.

Phase Two involves the generation of initial codes. Attention at this stage is given to one's first impression of potential codes from Phase One, as well as a more rigorous examination of the codes arising from the data. These codes are smaller units of analysis than themes, which tend to be broader and encompass several codes. Patterns in these codes are also attended to, with specific text segments assigned to each code. This was done manually without the assistance of computer software.

Phase Three organises the codes identified in Phase Two into broader themes, keeping track of which codes fall under which theme. Themes are also organised according to which main themes might encompass sub-themes. These themes were organised using a mind-map.

Themes at this stage are only considered to be candidate themes, until they are refined in Phase Four. Themes were reorganised in terms of internal homogeneity (similarity among aspects of one theme) and external heterogeneity (distinctions between themes). Emphasis in this phase is given to the ability of the themes and data extracts to form an overall coherent picture.

Phase Five develops from this coherent picture. The authors speak about 'define and refine' as the aim of this stage. Each theme is defined in terms of the essence of the theme, and the data is refined in evaluating its contribution to the theme. Themes are considered in terms of the meaning that they hold for the participants, and the relationship they have to one another. This was made explicit through the use of a detailed codebook.

Phase Six involves the documentation of the final themes, found in Chapter Five. The meanings of each theme, as well as the excerpts of the data that reinforce these themes are included there.

This six-step guideline provides a relatively easy, although flexible, structure for conducting thematic analysis. It provides the researcher with direction in gaining access to what is understood as Mozambican identity and to the processes that take place in the process of negotiation.

4.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Throughout this chapter, the emphasis has rested upon the choice of the African worldview as an epistemological paradigm and the implications that this has for the choices made regarding methodology. Decisions regarding a qualitative research philosophy and a research method called group conversations were justified in line with this framework. The process of data collection was then reflected upon, as was the process of data analysis. Although the latter is the procedure that led to the final themes and discussion of this study, it was the process of gathering this data and the choice of method that distinguishes this study from others in the field.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF THEMES AND INTEGRATION WITH THE LITERATURE

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The group conversation generated interesting and relevant ideas regarding the participants' sense of belonging in South Africa. These varied between distinguishing themselves as a positively conceived national group, and downplaying these differences when considering xenophobia in South Africa. Before these are discussed in detail, a brief background to the participants is provided, in order to better describe the composition of the group. The four themes are then explored in depth with regard to both the literature already discussed and the new literature introduced.

5.2 BACKGROUND TO THE PARTICIPANTS

The composition of the participant group involves only male participants who had immigrated to South Africa in their youth. Specifically, the participant group was made up of twelve men. These men varied in age, ranging between 22 years and 51 years old. This provided the researcher with a diverse group of Mozambican foreign nationals, in various positions within the Mozambican community. The President and the Treasurer of the Freedom Park Mozambican community were present and participants in the study, together with other members of that community. These participants had been living in South Africa for between 2 and 29 years. The age distribution as well as the average period each age group had been living in South Africa is included in the table below:

Table 5.1 Participant profile

Age range (years)	No. of participants	Average time spent living in South Africa (years)
20 – 29	5	9.4
30 – 39	2	14.5
40 – 49	3	18.7
50 – 59	2	27

Considering the demographics of the group, a number of ideas emerge. It appears that Mozambican immigrants enter South Africa at a young age, with the 20 – 29 age group living in South Africa for the least amount of time, and the oldest age group living in South Africa for the longest duration. It can therefore be presumed that Mozambican immigrants are more likely to enter South Africa in their youth.

The participants also indicated that most of them have family living in South Africa. Ten out of twelve participants have family in South Africa, hypothetically forming part of the support that the participants receive from the broader Mozambican community. This becomes important when considering the sense of support that the participants have expressed, discussed in the first theme below.

With regard to the participants' experience of xenophobia, only 4 out of 12 participants felt that they themselves had been victims of xenophobia in South Africa. However, 6 out of 12 participants knew a fellow Mozambican who had been a victim of xenophobia. What was meant by a victim was left deliberately vague, in order to evaluate whether the participants saw themselves as victims, regardless of what it meant to be victimised. In leaving this question vague, the participants could include both verbal and physical victimisation. This has relevance for how one chooses to react to this victimisation, discussed specifically in the fourth theme.

This summary of the demographic information provides the reader with some descriptors of the participants and the community that they were drawn from. The Mozambican foreign national community appears to include people of different ages, who immigrated to South Africa before the age of 35. In this time, 8 of the 12 participants have not felt that they were victimised as a result of xenophobia, although 6 out of 12 participants know countrymen who have been victims. They also appear to have relatives living in South Africa, and they all belong to the larger Mozambican community found in Freedom Park. This description has implications for the themes that emerged in the conversation.

The participant group was made up entirely of men. The sole reliance on the male voice may mean that the experiences of women and their contribution to the construction of identity are missed in this study. An interesting follow-up study could explore how Mozambican women come to understand their identity in the xenophobic South African society.

Secondly, it is interesting that relatively few participants seem to have experienced xenophobia in a direct, personal manner. This may be better understood considering the context within which the sample group was drawn. Perhaps in a community that supports and shelters their fellow foreign nationals, experiences of xenophobia may be lower than if one were living apart from the community.

Thirdly, the involvement of three authority figures in the participant group may have impacted how the group members felt they should respond. With Mr. A. as a community leader, and the President and the Treasurer of the community also taking part in the group conversation, responses from those other community members may have been biased somewhat towards a positive construction of their community.

The above three considerations form part of the larger analysis of the research data, and provide the frame within which the themes should be understood. The themes below therefore derive from an all-male group, participating in a seemingly supportive Mozambican community within South Africa.

5.3 SUMMARY OF THEMES IDENTIFIED

The group conversation generated interesting ideas around the participants' sense of belonging in South Africa. These were conceptualised in terms of four broad themes, each with several sub-themes. These will briefly be summarised here, before they are explored in more detail.

The participants showed a strong sense of national pride and love for their home country. They constructed their Mozambican heritage as overwhelmingly positive, and two forms of support for this positivity were identified. Firstly, the participants reflected on the value of their Mozambican community in recognising them as Mozambicans. They also felt that their community afforded them some protection from xenophobic attacks, as well as financial support in times of trouble. They reflected on the community's ability to link them with home, and on the strength the group had as a whole.

Secondly, the participants found confirmation of their national pride in the support they have from their own government. The Mozambican government serves to assist them in times of trouble, and to help them with their documentation. This went a long way to ensuring their sense of legitimacy in South Africa.

Not only did the participants see their Mozambican heritage as profoundly positive, but they also highly regarded the prototypical Mozambican identity. This identity was not only positively constructed, but seemed to emphasise the particular positive characteristics that were related to work. Work seemed to be very important to the participants and their motivation for living in South Africa, and their identity appeared to be constructed in line with the work dynamic.

The participants might see themselves in a positive light, but they also showed concern with how others perceived them. Specifically, they expressed concern with how locals understood their reasons for leaving Mozambique, and again work was emphasised in explaining their relocation. They also showed concern with how the criminal actions of some individual Mozambicans reflected back on them as a group.

Finally, the Mozambican identity was de-emphasized when the conversation became centred on xenophobia. The participants spoke less about their Mozambican identity and instead emphasized the categories that drew Mozambicans and South Africans together. In referring to the categories of black foreigners and Africans, they re-drew the boundaries around their membership group to include South Africans and remove the differences between themselves Mozambicans and South Africans. These themes will now be discussed in more detail.

5.4 DISCUSSION OF EACH THEME

5.4.1 Theme 1: Pride in Mozambican Heritage

One of the most prominent themes found throughout the group conversation involves the sense of pride that the participants expressed with regard to their Mozambican heritage. The group showed enormous regard for their home country, and this was expressed continuously throughout the group conversation. This national pride was related to both a love for their home country and for their Mozambican heritage. This national pride was reflected in statements such as:

Male Speaker (MS) 6: “Mozambique is our country where we were all born and we love it. We are here in Johannesburg because of employment. If it was not for work, we would not be here. We love our country of origin. Even South Africans know how busy the route to the Mozambique border is. We go in and out of the country. It is a country that we love.”

MS 4: “It does not help hiding yourself that you are Mozambican. I shall not hide myself, I am Mozambican, I am proud of it.”

The positive view of Mozambique and the sense of pride attached to one’s Mozambican heritage discussed by the participants here reflects Crush and Pendleton’s (2007) earlier findings, where 90.2% of their respondents felt proud to be Mozambican.

The participants’ positive view of their heritage and their desire to be recognised as Mozambican seemed to be tied to two sources of support that they receive as Mozambican foreign nationals living in South Africa. Support in various forms comes from both the Mozambican community living within Freedom Park, and the Mozambican government.

5.4.1.1. Support from the Mozambican community

The support that the participants received from their Mozambican foreign national community was one of the most common sub-themes that emerged from the group conversation. There were also a number of different forms of support that the community provided its members. These will be discussed as part of the broader sub-theme, and include providing recognition as a Mozambican, protection from xenophobic attacks, financial support, and providing members with a connection to home and support in times of trouble.

5.4.1.2 Providing recognition of Mozambican heritage

One of the functions that the Mozambican community has for its members is that it recognises them and their heritage as something to be proud of. A few participants commented that they no longer have to hide, or pretend to be something that they are not.

MS 5: “We must meet and know each other. Gone are the days when we would change our identities and pretend to be South Africans.”

MS 1: “Being a Mozambican in this gathering, helps us a lot in our daily lives. Instead of having to hide ourselves. Because if we hide ourselves, when troubles arise, our fellow countrymen would not know that something bad has happened to one of us.”

For these participants then, belonging to their community acknowledged them as Mozambicans with a shared past and heritage. They did not feel the need to hide or deny their heritage, but instead could acknowledge it as a group. This reflects one of the needs that are met by migrant communities (Hannerz, 1996); that of providing an individual with dignity

in belonging to a group that is positively perceived by its members. The participants' Mozambican identity was acknowledged and validated by their community

5.4.1.3 Protection from attacks

While Mozambicans are positively perceived by their fellow nationals, the participants recounted incidents of xenophobia that leave them fearful for the future in South Africa. While this will be discussed later on in the chapter, the participants reported feeling that belonging to the Mozambican community provided them with some protection from attacks, and made them feel safer. In the initial stages of the conversation, it was hinted at in a way that indicated that those who are not part of the community are vulnerable. However, it was later spoken about more freely once the question regarding xenophobia had been introduced. The fear regarding future attacks and the reliance upon community for protection was found in a number of extracts:

MS 5: "During difficult times, we are able to show a united front and those who attack us realise that we are a solid unit and decide not to attack us."

"What I know about us Mozambicans, we are able to unite and stand firm. As they keep saying that when Mandela dies, they will chase us away and we do not know when Mandela will die. What if they indeed intend to chase us away when the old statesman dies? What I ask of us as Mozambicans is a solid unity... We should not fool ourselves that this war is over, we should keep in mind that when Mandela dies, the war will start again."

Community as a source of safety has been identified in previous studies (Buyer, 2008; Sinclair, 1999), and was reiterated by these participants. The community as a source of protection points towards one of the ways that Mozambicans are coping with the xenophobia in South Africa. Another interesting tactic used by the participants living with the threat of future attacks is reverting to a more global membership category. This is discussed later in Theme 4.

5.4.1.4 Financial support

The Mozambican community had become so important in the lives of its members that the community members had literally invested in themselves. The support received from the community seemed to be material as well as non-material.

MS 1: “We, as Mozambicans, we have managed to form a community saving scheme, which is called Inkomu Mozambican Society. Whereby we save money for tragic events as such, this unites us as Mozambicans.”

Contributing towards financial support was therefore one of the ways that Mozambicans exercised their national identity. This saving scheme was intended to be for Mozambicans, by Mozambicans, and was a manner in which national identity had become part of everyday life for these participants.

5.4.1.5 Providing a tie to home

Emphasising the value of the community and delineating the community along national lines had the additional supportive function of providing community members with a link to their home country and the family that have remained there. The participants highlighted the negative impact on Mozambicans who do not have these connections with home.

MS 4: “It helps us a lot, let us encourage others to be part of this unity. It is difficult when something bad happens, if someone gets in an accident, for example. There is not even one person who is able to inform the family back home because the person is not known.”

The link between the community and the participants’ home country was also found to be valuable by Shea (2008). The community appeared to function as a connection with people’s lives before they moved to South Africa, linking them to their loved ones and their lives back home.

The participants reiterated the value that they placed on belonging to their Mozambican community, and the many supportive functions that it played in their lives as Mozambicans. The community connected them with their home country and provided them with a space where they were acknowledged and recognised as Mozambicans. They were also afforded protection and financial support from this community.

Conversely, they also reported a more figurative strength that was derived from their large network. This strength from community relates to the African communal way of being, and the interdependence emphasised in the African worldview.

5.4.1.6 The community as a source of strength

An African proverb, mentioned in the group conversation by one of the participants, sums up the value that the Mozambican community has for him. This proverb, translated into English, means “One twig alone is easy to break. Many twigs bound together cannot be easily broken” (author unknown).

MS 1: “So, I say it is well that we gather as Mozambicans to help each other with the challenges we face every day... There is an old saying that says a bunch of woods cannot be easily broken. So if you are not part of this gathering, you will not be able to get help if even during trouble times you will not get help because you are a loner. When we are together, we are stronger.”

The extract above clarifies that the community supports its members in challenges that they may face, both as ordinary people and as Mozambicans. Particularly, the participants felt that they could rely on their Mozambican counterparts in times of trouble more than on South Africans.

MS 12: “It is indeed nice being proud of who we are. Because if we live without knowing each other and we are from the same country and something bad happens, you cannot go to your neighbour and seek help because you think the person is not Mozambican... So, it is very important that we meet and be a unit.”

This extract links the participants’ sense of national pride with knowing and relying on other Mozambicans. This community then seemed to play an important role in the daily lives of the participants, supporting and affirming them both in daily challenges and in their identity as Mozambicans. The link between the community and the identity of the person confirms Cohen’s (1985, p. 110) understanding of community as “the compass of individual identity; it responds to the need to delimit the bounds of similarity”. From the African perspective, this philosophy is captured in the Sesotho proverb, “motho ke motho ka batho”, meaning “A person is a person because of other people” (author unknown).

In identifying themselves as Mozambican, these participants relied on those who were similar to them in this regard for support. If, for example, their identities as construction workers were prioritised, support from fellow Mozambicans would not contribute towards this identity. Perhaps they would look to their fellow construction workers for assistance in times of trouble, and not their countrymen. However, these participants emphasised their

Mozambican community as consisting of those similar to themselves, and participated in and benefited from this community in a number of ways. This effectively tied their identity to the Mozambican community to which they belong. Their community was therefore a large contributor to their identity and the sense of pride they felt as Mozambicans.

5.4.1.7 Support from the Mozambican government

The patriotic love the participants have for their home country and the pride they feel in their Mozambican heritage is not only encouraged by their community, but also by the Mozambican government itself. The participants seemed to rely, to quite a large extent, on the support they receive from their government. The government's assistance with documentation and availability in case of emergency has allowed them to feel safe and protected while they are living in South Africa.

MS 5: "We feel it is much better now because our government has issued us with travel documents and there is no need for us to hide anymore."

There seems to be some appreciation for the recognition their government has given them in supplying them with formal documentation, and the freedom from being deemed "illegal" immigrants that this brought. Beyond this, though, is a sense of support available from the government in times of need.

MS 4: "But when we are a unit, we can be able to seek help from our government".

MS 5: "What I ask of us as Mozambicans is a solid unity. So that should anything bad happen to us, we are able to contact our government to intervene".

These two extracts depict the participants' reliance on their government for help in times of difficulty or xenophobia. Their strategy in the event of difficulty is to call upon their government for assistance, which seemed to be viewed in a very positive and reliable light. This respect was also reflected in casual conversation held after the meeting. Posters with Mozambican leaders were on the walls of the facilitator's home, and they showed great respect for their past and present leaders.

It seems therefore that there were two sources from which Mozambican foreign nationals living in South Africa have derived their deep love for their home country and their Mozambican heritage. The Mozambican community in Freedom Park provided their members with the support and assistance that maintained a positive image of what it means to

be Mozambican. The Mozambican government, on the other hand, contributed towards the participant's understanding of their rightful place in South Africa, and their security in knowing they would be supported in the event of difficulty. These two factors together contributed towards the participants' very positive view of their home country and of their heritage.

5.4.2 Theme 2: A Mozambican Identity and Work

5.4.2.1 A positive prototype of the Mozambican identity

In the discussion around how this group of Mozambicans conceptualised the Mozambican identity, a number of positive qualities were emphasized. The participants saw Mozambicans as being respectful, forgiving, hard-working, law-obeying and self-reliant. This conveyed a very positive view of the Mozambican identity.

MS 4: "I know a lot of things that are good about us... I know a lot of people who are very skilful, who are literate and are quick learners. So, I know a lot of good things about Mozambicans."

The participants spoke about fellow Mozambicans in very positive and affirming terms, using characteristics that were praised and positively regarded.

MS 1: "What are the good things about Mozambicans? First thing is respect. Mozambicans have respect for other people. We are people who love learning. We are a forgiving nation. We have been through a civil war but we were able to sit down and reconcile. We are now here gathered facing xenophobia in South Africa. It is a very sad tragedy, we have not retaliated because we are forgiving people.... We are hard workers, we do all kinds of jobs including dangerous ones. We do everything with determination... over and above, Mozambicans are respectful people who obey laws and love working. We are not afraid of any job."

MS 5: "We came to work here and as Mozambicans we are very skilled and we've been trained for work, and what we do is very good and we do each and every thing very well."

In listing these characteristics and agreeing with them, the participants painted a very positive picture of the Mozambican identity. While the participants' perceptions of fellow Mozambicans was very positive, their perception of South Africans was far more ambiguous.

It appears that the treatment they had encountered from South Africans was mixed, including both positive and negative elements. Participants indicated that while not all South Africans were bad, they generally perceived them in a negative light.

MS 12: “You cannot go to your neighbour and seek help because you think the person is not Mozambican.”

MS 5: “But we don’t live peacefully with South African people... we encountered problems here... we meet them and we can see in their eyes that they don’t like us. Those people that we live with take advantage of us that we are not from here. You can work and don’t get your money, it’s not good to work and not get paid. They want to show you that you are an outsider and you are not from here. And they will not consider your case, they will just send you to someone else and you will do ups and downs for your money. And if you go to court, it’s your money from your own pocket and because of that you will withdraw the case. But not all of them are bad but there are those who are very good, but that’s what we face with issues like that.”

“But there are those who’ve joined people from here (South Africa), they do the wrong things and if they are caught they involve us as well and we don’t do bad things like that.”

From these extracts, it can be seen that the participants’ view of South Africans was quite negative, compared to the positive view they had of their own group. They saw South Africans as unhelpful, exploitative, unjust, exclusive and involved in criminal activities. These characteristics were not applied universally to all South Africans, although the overall conception of South Africans appeared to be negative.

A overall negative view of South Africans could be confirmation of what Landau (2008) calls ‘tactical cosmopolitanism’. In painting a negative picture of South Africans and a positive picture of themselves as a national grouping, the participants placed themselves in a superior position. Not only was this position elevated above South Africans, but it deliberately prevented assimilation into South African culture. Tactical cosmopolitanism allowed the Mozambican to claim the advantages of belonging, such as finding employment, while still remaining separate from South Africans. Tactical cosmopolitanism is discussed further in Theme 4.

5.4.2.2 Social Identity Theory

Another viewpoint regarding motivation for creating a positive social identity for one's own group when compared with outgroups is found in Hogg's (2006) discussion of Social Identity Theory. When one's social group becomes salient, then one's own self-esteem may become linked to the group's social identity. Therefore, in constructing a positive social identity for the Mozambican group, one's own sense of value is elevated as a member of this positively-perceived group. The desire for a high self-esteem may be a factor in explaining the Mozambican group's positive distinctiveness when compared with the South African group.

A positive Mozambican identity could be a consequence of the xenophobic environment, where Mozambicans may feel threatened and their self-esteem may be at risk. Perhaps in this environment, their group identity is particularly salient and their need for a high self-esteem particularly important. This may account for the very positive conception of the Mozambican identity, as an attempt to elevate one's self-esteem in a threatening xenophobic environment.

In Social Identity terms, the Mozambican identity described above can be understood as the prototype that this group exhibits. Hogg (2006, p. 118) defines a prototype as "a fuzzy set of attributes (perceptions, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours) that are related to one another in a meaningful way and that simultaneously capture similarities within the group and differences between the group and other groups". Hogg suggested a second motivation for constructing a positively distinctive group, which is uncertainty reduction. In attempting to reduce the uncertainty that one feels about where one belongs within the social world, a positive prototype informs the appropriate behaviour and attitudes for members of that group. The individual is therefore provided with characteristics and behaviours he or she is expected to exhibit, reducing the uncertainty he or she feels about how to behave. One's social world therefore becomes more predictable and one's worldview is confirmed by others within this group. This may be especially relevant in the uncertain xenophobic environment within which Mozambicans construct their identity.

The participants' evaluation of themselves has been discussed in contrast with their evaluation of South Africans, and a general positive distinctiveness has emerged that sets the Mozambican identity above the South African one. Attention will now be given to the specific characteristics that were discussed and agreed upon in the conversation.

5.2.2.3 A Mozambican prototype is strongly linked to work

In exploring the characteristics highlighted by the group further, it became evident that these qualities were for the most part related to jobs and employment. Attributes such as respect, self-reliance, obedience to the law, determination and hard-working were typical of those characteristics valued in the workplace. They also appeared to emphasize a high standard of work.

The extracts discussed at the opening of the discussion on this theme emphasize literacy, skill and hard work. Many of the other participants repeated the emphasis placed on qualities related to the workplace.

MS 5: “We came here in South Africa to work and we have respect...We came to work here and as Mozambicans we are very skilled and we’ve been trained for work, and what we do is very good and we do each and every thing very well.”

MS 1: “Mozambican nationals are hard-working people... Mozambicans have descended here in South Africa in the 1800’s, Mozambicans have contributed a lot to the growth of this country, and we have contributed to all the beautiful work you see in this country. Why are we today hated when we have worked so hard for this country?”

MS 2: “Some people from Mozambique are qualified for the jobs they do here, some ...have their qualifications. They work and the little they earn they save up and open their own shops, and then people say, ‘They are taking our jobs’. They (South Africans) do not go to the firms and look for jobs.”

By and large, the characteristics that were put forward by the participants related to their work and their attitudes towards it. They appeared to have constructed their identity around their employment, emphasising these characteristics as part of what distinguishes them from South Africans.

Hogg (2006) explains the choice of attributes emphasized in the prototype in terms of the metacontrast principle. The metacontrast principle accentuates the differences between groups and minimizes the differences within groups (Tajfel, 1959). In terms of his discussion, emphasizing work-related attributes may be motivated by the desire to increase the difference between the ingroup (Mozambicans) and the outgroup (South Africans). Work-related attributes could therefore be the area where Mozambicans feel that they are

favoured over South Africans, and by emphasising these attributes, they increase the contrast between Mozambicans and South Africans.

Secondly, according to the metacontrast principle (Hogg, 2006), attributes chosen are not necessarily typical of the average Mozambican, but rather describe ideal members of their group. This may account for why the attributes point towards a very idealistic and positive conception of Mozambican people.

A third point in the application of the metacontrast principle is that the prototype emphasized can change over time and context (Hogg, 2006). This means that emphasising work-related characteristics may be appropriate and suitable to the context now, but should the conditions in society change then different attributes may be emphasised for the Mozambican prototype.

It appears then that at this time, employment is a very important motivation for why Mozambicans live in South Africa. A number of participants emphasised that they were in South Africa to work and improve the living conditions for themselves and those remaining relatives back home.

MS 6: “We are here in Johannesburg because of employment. If it was not for work, we would not be here.”

MS 8: “It is because of our poor economy and the civil war that we have suffered in our country that we are here.”

MS 5: “When we leave for Mozambique, we save and buy valuables for our families to keep them alive. We are not here to destroy but to work for our families and return home for the holidays to be with our families.”

MS 7: “We came here because of hunger.”

Working in South Africa seems to be part of the heritage that Mozambicans have in South Africa, and could account for why it was emphasised by so many of the participants. Emphasis on their strong work ethic seems to fit with their narrative for why they came to South Africa and what role they had played in the South African economy in particular, and its society in general. It is therefore appropriate for them to distinguish themselves as hard workers when compared with South Africans.

MS 4: “Our forefathers have always worked in the mines here in the Gauteng Province and everyone has always been welcome. The province has grown since then until recently when people start hating foreigners as if they have run away from their own countries of origin.”

The Mozambican identity was therefore positively conceived by these participants, particularly with regard to their value in the workplace. This is relevant to both their narrative in explaining their presence in South Africa and in the broader South African society, where they were perceived as stealing jobs (see Theme 3). Emphasizing positive work characteristics could assist them in explaining their economic successes in a different way.

5.4.3 Theme 3: Concern with How Others Perceive Mozambicans

Throughout the group conversation, the participants appeared to be concerned with how they were perceived by others. While the second theme addresses how Mozambicans saw themselves, the participants also showed concern for what others thought of them. It seems that while they thought highly of Mozambique as a country, and of Mozambicans as people, there remained some concern over what others thought.

Specifically, the participants expressed concern over how their reasons for leaving Mozambique were perceived, and also about how some individuals might reflect badly on the group as a whole. These two areas of concern will now be discussed in more detail.

5.4.3.1 Perceptions of reasons participants left Mozambique

The participants in this study showed concern over others’ perceptions of why they had left Mozambique and come to South Africa. This became evident while they were discussing their sense of pride in being Mozambican and their love for their country.

MS 4: “My country is very important, I did not run away. It is our right to move wherever we want to seek better life.”

MS 5: “It is all truth, our being here is not because our country is not good. It is our economy that is not in a good state.”

MS 9: “Leaving our country of birth to be somewhere else does not mean that where we come from is not good. It is just an interest of working somewhere else.”

The extracts above indicate the participants' need to justify why they left their home country, and their anxiety over what others might perceive to have been their motivation. They seemed to want to avoid being seen as deserters who left Mozambique for a better country. They expressed great love for their country and they held it in high regard. For this reason, they described their immigration as economically motivated and their presence in South Africa as secondary to being at home. In this way, they could avoid being seen as deserters but could construct themselves rather as saviours for their relatives back home.

Problems could arise when Mozambicans emphasise these economic motivations when discussing their reasons for leaving home. This is because one of the common beliefs held by South Africans is that foreign nationals steal their jobs (Nyamnjoh, 2006; South African Migration Project, 2008). This perception was also reflected in the group conversation.

MS 2: "In short, there is a saying that Mozambican people are taking jobs meant for South Africans, whereas in reality, some people from Mozambique are qualified for the jobs they do here, some ... have their qualifications. They work and the little they earn they save up and open their own shops, and then people say: they are taking out jobs."

MS 1: "Why are we today blamed when we have worked so hard for this country? Why should we be blamed for the country's high unemployment?"

There seems to be a sense of injustice in these extracts; injustice based on being unfairly criticised for taking South African jobs. However, this is contrasted with the economic motivations they have for moving to South Africa that are found both in this study and in another study (McDonald, Zinyama, Gay, de Vletter, & Mattes, 2004). Combine this tension with a Mozambican identity that is strongly tied to work, and it appears that there is a delicate balance that Mozambican foreign nationals keep between moving to South Africa for economic purposes and being seen as "job stealers" (SAMP, 2008).

They seemed to explain this contradiction in terms of their right to live and work in South Africa. A number of participants discussed their right to seek better opportunities for themselves and their history of employment in South Africa. They also used examples from their own country to explain their sense of injustice.

MS 4: "It is our right to move wherever we want to seek better life."

MS 1: “We ask the government that yes even if there is poverty, it is not fair to look at foreigners and treat them as the cause of poverty. Mozambicans have descended here in the 1800’s, Mozambicans have contributed a lot to the growth of this country, and we have contributed to all the beautiful work you see in this country.”

MS 2: “In Mozambique we have jobs in mining industry, gas and coal mines. When you arrive there, you will find South Africans working whilst there are unemployed Mozambicans who do not hate them and say they are taking their jobs, let us attack them and their belongings. If this is happening in Mozambique, it would be all over the media that Mozambicans are xenophobic. We do not attack anyone, we welcome everyone and people are in peace there.”

From these extracts, it becomes apparent that the participants did not wish to be seen as job stealers, and they believed that this perception of them was unjust. While they identified with their role as workers in South Africa, they did not believe that they should be blamed for unemployment as a whole. When South Africans assign foreign nationals the identity of “job stealers”, their identity as they understand it is questioned (Buyer, 2008). These participants had constructed an identity around a good work ethic, and the label of “job stealer” contradicted this identity. Buyer suggests that such a public rejection of one’s identity can result in increased withdrawal into the national group, and a lack of integration into society.

The impact of this public rejection could perhaps be understood through the application of Social Identity Theory. According to this theory, if the in-group is negatively evaluated, this poses a threat to one’s own self-esteem. One reaction to this threat could be the challenging of these negative conceptions in order to protect one’s own self-esteem and the social identity of the ingroup (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). In attempting to rectify the image South Africans have of Mozambicans as job stealers, they aim to increase the public perception of their group and therefore raise their self-esteem. The participants in this study could be employing this position in describing a positive Mozambican identity that contradicts the “job stealer” label.

The concern that Mozambicans show for how their group is perceived in the job market is one of two concerns the participants showed in considering how their group was evaluated by outsiders. The second involves a consideration of the impact that certain “bad” Mozambicans have on others’ perceptions of greater Mozambican group.

5.4.3.2 “Bad” Mozambicans

The participants in this study highlighted the impact that some members of their group had on the perception of their group as a whole. Specifically, they dwelt on those Mozambicans who were not conforming to what the group deemed acceptable, and how these individuals were influencing the way Mozambicans were perceived.

MS 4: “So, I know a lot of good things about Mozambicans. So, it is an individual who does bad things to paint an image of a group. There are laws that guide us and those who are on the wrong side of the law go to jail”.

It was mentioned in Theme 2 that Mozambicans saw themselves as law-abiding. This extract therefore reiterates this sense of obedience to the law that is important to Mozambicans. Those who do not conform to these norms were seen as separate from the group, but reflecting badly on the group nonetheless. This fear was repeated a bit later:

MS 4: “In other cases you find one Mozambican who has been involved in criminal activities, then all of us are perceived as criminals whereas it is just one person. Nevertheless, even if this happens, it does not take away our identity as Mozambicans.”

Again, there was concern over some members of the Mozambican population who do not practice the obedience to the law that the group emphasised in their group prototype. However, the Mozambican identity is not given up when the group is perceived in a negative light. Instead, this participant made it explicit that he still considered himself a Mozambican, even when there were negative labels associated with members of the group.

This may be an example of what Hogg (2006) speaks about regarding less-prototypical members of the group. He says that providing that the group membership is salient, and that there is agreement upon a group prototype (evident in the second theme), then those who conform to the prototype are popular and those who conform to a lesser degree are less popular with the group. The latter would be the “bad” Mozambicans that the participants felt reflected badly on their group. These individuals who are marginal in-group members could be used by members to describe what is not typical of the group prototype, underlining their group prototype even further.

In fact, this is what was done by these participants. They use the examples of “bad” Mozambicans to emphasise how these individuals deviate from the accepted group prototype. This is evident in the previous two extracts, and most notably in the one below.

MS 1: “What is not good about Mozambicans is as we are all humans, there are some Mozambicans who are not genuine, in some other instances, you find a person bringing a fellow Mozambican into the country to sell or work and not even provide accommodation. And the person suffers in the end, that is what I’m not happy with. It is just one of those things. But over and above, Mozambicans are respectful people who obey laws and love working. We are not afraid of any job.”

In this extract, the participant spoke about Mozambicans exploiting one another, and concluded with reiterating how this was not compliant with the group prototype. Respect, obedience to the law and a good work ethic were once again emphasised in highlighting what behaviour is considered appropriate for a Mozambican.

The Mozambican population face a number of threats to their identity while living in South Africa. They are confronted with a threat to their identity as hard-workers, when South Africans perceive them as stealing their jobs. Secondly, they are confronted with the negative impressions others have of Mozambicans that are based on experiences of one or two individuals. However, these threats seem to have little impact on how Mozambicans perceive themselves. They see themselves as hard-workers who do not steal jobs but have a right to enter the job market and improve their lives. As a group, they believe that they are respectful, law-abiding occupants of South Africa with a few non-conforming members that only serve to underline the norms of the greater majority.

5.4.4 Theme 4: Appeal to “African-ness” in the Face of Xenophobia

The above three themes have highlighted the participants’ emphasis on their nationality as an important contributor to their sense of identity. Interestingly, when the conversation turned towards the topic of xenophobia, there was a shift in the way the participants chose to speak about themselves. Up until this point, the participants spoke about their country and their nationality, highlighting the distinction they hold as a group living within South Africa. The questions around xenophobia prompted a shift in the categories that the participants’ subscribed to. The categories drawn upon in this new sense of belonging include the category

of a black foreigner, and the category of an African person. The use of both of these more inclusive categories will now be discussed in more detail.

5.4.4.1 Belonging to the “black” category

One of the memberships that the participants drew upon when discussing xenophobia was that of a black foreigner. This was spoken about specifically in contrast to a white foreigner, who the participants felt were not subjected to the same xenophobia that they encountered. A couple of extracts depict this shift.

MS 3: “There are white people who come and work here but the attacks are only directed towards black foreigners. We have no idea what has caused this war. It does not mean that being a black foreigner you must be subjected to this hate, only black foreigners are attacked and this does not happen to white foreigners who also come here to work.”

MS 2: “Xenophobia is only directed towards us black people.”

These extracts demonstrate how the participants seem to have made a shift in how they identify themselves. Before the conversation turned to xenophobia, the participants spoke about their home country and what made them different from South Africans. However, once the topic changed to xenophobia, the participants started speaking in terms of “us black people” and not “us Mozambican people”.

The participants, in highlighting their membership to the group of black foreigners, pointed out that white foreigners were not treated the same way that black foreigners were. This has been discussed in Chapter Three and is reflected in the literature in a number of studies (Harris, 2001; Matsinhe, 2011; Neocosmos, 2006; Peberdy, 2009). While this discriminatory treatment is perhaps part of the lived experience of the participants, this theme focuses more on the adoption of a new category of membership than the difference in xenophobic experiences of the two groups.

The shift that the participants made had the effect of situating them within the broader category that includes all black foreign nationals, not only Mozambicans. They were therefore not singled out on the basis of their nationality but rather on the basis of their skin colour. If only black foreign nationals were targeted in xenophobic behaviour, then it was not their “Mozambican-ness” that was problematic but rather their blackness. They might

therefore encounter less of a challenge to their positive construction of their Mozambican identity by constructing their xenophobic experience along the colour lines. Their positive view of themselves as Mozambicans remained somewhat intact.

One of the possible impacts of reverting to the broader membership category of “black foreigner” could be the preservation of the positive Mozambican identity that was discussed in Theme 2. The impact of shifting to a more inclusive category will be explored in more detail with regard to the shift to the African category.

5.4.4.2 Belonging to the African category

Another interesting shift in the way the participants spoke about themselves emerged when they referred to themselves as “Africans”, and South Africans as “fellow Africans”. It became evident in a number of extracts that the participants not only re-classified themselves as “black foreigners” but also as “Africans”. Up until the conversation shifted to talk of xenophobia, the participants spoke of themselves as Mozambicans and of other Mozambicans as “fellow countrymen”. The move towards emphasising the shared category of “African” came almost immediately after introduction of the xenophobia subject.

MS 4: “Xenophobia has intensified in this province we are in and it has now spread to other places. What causes xenophobia: hate towards foreigners, when people look at a fellow African and treat you like an animal?”

This extract was taken from the first response after the question regarding the impact xenophobia has on the Mozambican identity was introduced. Not only does it draw upon the African category, but goes beyond this to call upon the far broader category of human being, in comparing the treatment to that of animals.

MS 2: “The President should teach his citizens that foreigners are not here to hate people. Africa belongs to Africans. We need to unite and be free to visit other African states.”

MS 12: “It is indeed needed that the South African government teaches its citizens that Africans should be united... We are the same kind, we are all Africans.”

It appears then that a second shift was made, from “fellow countrymen”, which highlighted nationality, to “fellow Africans”, which highlighted the foreigners’ and locals’ belonging to the larger African continent. This can serve as a metaphor for what the participants have

done in choosing to categorise themselves within this larger category. Just as the African continent unites all African states under one banner, so reverting to the African category removes the lines of difference between Mozambicans and South Africans and places them within the shared African category. Similarly, this shifts the emphasis from the colonialist way of dividing up Africa into countries, to uniting Africans in a post-colonialist way. In doing this, similarity between the two sides of the xenophobic violence is found in drawing on the shared African category.

5.4.4.3 Understanding this shift in terms of theory

Landau (2008) found a similar trend in the literature and in her field experience. She speaks about the reliance of migrants on a Pan-African identity when confronted with a xenophobic environment, similar to what was identified in this study. Participants in one study she reviewed (Kihato, 2007) propose allegiance to the African continent and not necessarily a country. She also speaks about the impact this has in highlighting the connections between foreigners and locals when drawing on the continental membership that both groups hold. This reliance on an African identity has the impact of destroying the boundaries that are constructed between foreigners and South Africans and creates an identity where neither party is constructed as the “other”.

It also seems that identity is then more fluid than it first appears. The identity of the participants in this study may be more flexible, with the participants able to adopt multiple identities at one time. In calling upon the African identity at this point in time and in the context of xenophobia, the participants may legitimise the existence of Mozambicans in South Africa. In explaining how this takes place, I once again rely on Social Identity Theory.

The desire to categorise oneself to a specific social group is thought to be more prominent when intergroup comparison is encouraged (Hogg, 2006; Oakes, 1987). The xenophobic context could be one such environment that provokes intergroup comparison between one’s own national grouping and another. This means that one’s membership to the Mozambican group may be highlighted in the current South African context.

Working from this hypothesis, the second assumption of Social Identity Theory is considered; that of the standing that the group has in society on self-esteem (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Considering the experiences Mozambicans have described both in this study and in others (Crush & Pendleton, 2007), it can be argued that the Mozambican national group is viewed in

a somewhat negative light by local South Africans. This is a threat to the self-esteem of those who identify themselves as part of this group; a trend already identified and addressed in this discussion. Therefore, according to Social Identity Theory, in order to avoid the low prestige associated with the Mozambican group in the xenophobic context, the members may shift their group membership to a category more positively conceived. This may explain why group members who previously identified themselves as Mozambican and proudly so, shift their membership to groups such as black foreigners and Africans when faced with xenophobia. Important to note though, is that it does not seem to be one identity or the other. The participants describe themselves as both Mozambicans and as Africans, pointing towards multiple identities.

In ascribing to the African category, both the Mozambican nationals and South Africans are placed within the broader, inclusive category that highlights the similarities of the groups and ignores the differences between them. In doing this, Mozambicans could be considered more legitimate citizens of South Africa as “Africa belongs to Africans”. This provides the Mozambican with a sense of belonging because although he may not be in his home country, he belongs in Africa and Africa belongs to him. This sentiment is one expressed in the idea of the African Renaissance.

5.4.4.4 The impact of the African Renaissance

Emphasizing one’s African heritage could be a reflection of the African Renaissance ideology that has become more popular since Thabo Mbeki was President of South Africa. Simplistically, the African Renaissance calls for the cultural, political and economic revival of Africa, led by South Africa (Johnson, 2007). This ideology seeks to unite Africans in furthering the development of the continent.

While this is an admirable aim, the African Renaissance has been criticized for being in contradiction with the idea of the ‘New South Africa’ (Harris, 2002). Harris’ discussion of this contradiction with the ‘New South Africa’ highlights the different borders that each of these ideologies emphasises. One cannot emphasise both national (South African) identity *and* African identity.

Johnson (2007) points out that in his view, the African Renaissance idea does not resonate in the South African legislation, discussed in detail earlier. The exclusionary legislation that once again emphasises South African identity or citizenship, contradicts the image that the

African Renaissance suggests, of South Africa being the leader in spurring the continent to new heights. How can economic revival be led by South Africa if its borders are so strictly regulated?

And so it seems that the participants of this study live in a country where they are both marginalised and included, both accepted as Africans and rejected as foreigners. Perhaps this confusion explains their last gasp effort to call on their African brothers to unite with them, instead of against them. Up until this change in the conversation, Mozambican identity had been so important to the participants, to the point where they felt they could rely on no one else except their countrymen. However, confronted however with discrimination, they drew on their African identity, emphasised in the ideology of the African Renaissance, for protection.

5.4.4.5 An invisible migrant?

The discussion of two different identities, Mozambican and African, asks the question as to which identity is the 'real' identity for the participants. However, 'real' requires a belief in one truth, something that social constructionism disregards. Instead, a diversity of realities and contexts is accepted as valid in this paradigm. The question is then, how do these fluid or multiple identities impact upon the Mozambican foreign national?

The application of multiple identities may assist Mozambican foreign nationals to attain the tactical cosmopolitanism spoken of earlier. They may be able to create a distinct identity that is Mozambican and superior to the South African identity, and yet claim African identity in ensuring that they attain the benefits of drawing on African heritage. In doing this, they avoid the "outsider" label, which would deny them access to the benefits of belonging.

This may however have a negative impact on their visibility in the country (Papadopoulos, Stephenson, & Tsianos, 2008). In being neither entirely included nor fully excluded, the foreign national may become whatever he needs to be at the time. The participants seemed to be Mozambican at some times, and African at others. The identity shifted as necessary, making them at all times not an outsider, but also not visible.

It appears that while the Mozambican identity was generally agreed upon by the participants, it was not the only identity to which the participants subscribed. Their emphasis on more inclusive categories and the appeal to their "African-ness" when speaking of xenophobia highlighted the fluidity of identities in South Africa. These participants showed an

adaptability that allowed them to be both distinctive from, and similar to, those who threaten them.

5.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In summary, the participants in this study displayed a number of positions that assisted them in determining where they belong in South Africa. They showed a strong sense of national pride in their Mozambican heritage, and a corresponding positive view of the Mozambican identity. The participants do not however live in a vacuum, and typical of most people, showed concern for what others thought of them. This has particular relevance in a xenophobic society, where negative evaluations have dramatic consequences. As a strategy in mitigating these negative consequences, they employed multiple identities that allowed them to gain some sense of belonging to the African continent. In a country where a sense of belonging is important for all within its borders, the identity one chooses to adopt is crucial in determining one's positioning in South African society.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUDING REMARKS

6.1 REFLECTING ON THE PROCESS

The previous chapter highlights the academic learning that took place throughout the process of this study. It speaks about how Mozambicans come to understand themselves in a society that struggles to accept them, and provides the reader with information regarding the construction of Mozambican identity. However, consistent with the social constructionist paradigm, the researcher's subjective experience forms part of the research process and it also needs to be reflected upon. This reflexivity is appropriate because just as the participants construct their identities in a social context, so too is the researcher or psychologist unable to view the information shared in this study in an objective way (Anderson & Goolishian, 1992; Gergen, 1985). This final chapter therefore shifts its focus from the constructions of the participants, to that of the researcher.

As a young, white woman living in the Northern suburbs of Johannesburg, this research signifies a move into a very different space. My everyday reality is drastically different from that of my participants. While every effort was made to adopt the relevant worldview in working with the participants, my own Western worldview cannot be removed entirely from the process.

Conducting research in Soweto was a significant step away from my normal life. I found myself feeling safe in an area often considered extremely dangerous. I found myself sharing meals with people who had very few financial resources. However, I also found generosity that I had never before encountered, a selflessness and willingness to help that I felt I did not deserve. It is these contrasts between my reality and that of the participants that highlighted, for me, the social constructionist assumption of multiple realities or 'truths' (Hoffman, 1992).

I had also been permitted to enter what felt like a sacred space. Mozambicans living in this country do not experience the safety and security that they think they deserve, and this made the fact that they permitted a white South African woman into their meeting incredibly interesting.

My construction of reality and of the research process had also undergone some shifts that impacted on the rationale for some of my research decisions. In particular, this relates to the

realisation that in order to add real value to the academic world, this study had to be conducted in line with those whom it studied.

The African Epistemology class, in the first year of my Masters course work, ignited a curiosity in me to consider the topic that had interested me for years from a different angle. It is this class, and my supervisor, who prompted my thinking to explore alternative and different ways of knowing and being (Serequeberhan, 2003). While I believe that this has been invaluable in this research project, it continues to be helpful in my everyday life as an Intern Clinical Psychologist working in Soweto. Being able to appreciate how Africans come to understand themselves and their world is an invaluable tool for the therapist.

This research journey has been more than a dissertation. It has been a growth experience, from reading the literature about a different worldview, to travelling and joining a different world and context in Soweto. Having reflected briefly on my own subjective experience, I turn now to summarise the experiences that the participants have shared with me.

6.2 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

It appears from the above data analysis, that there is more to the Mozambicans living in South Africa than has been previously seen. Four themes emerged from the group conversation that highlighted the ability of the group to adopt multiple identities.

The group responded initially with the importance of the Mozambican identity, and the positive view of both their country and their Mozambican community. They spoke about the different kinds of support that the Mozambican community provides, highlighting recognition, protection, financial support and a link with home as especially valuable. They also spoke about the support they receive from the Mozambican government and the security this provides in times of difficulty.

Secondly, they spoke positively about the Mozambican identity and what it means to be Mozambican. Interestingly, this identity was constructed around employment and characteristics they value in this area. This may be understood in relation to the reasons that Mozambicans give for being in South Africa, which is predominantly work-motivated.

Thirdly, the group showed concerns for how others see them. Specifically, they were concerned about being seen as “job-stealers”, while they see themselves as hard workers who have a right to participate in the South African economy. This was further complicated by the

participants' concern for how some Mozambicans create a bad impression by becoming involved in crime. This has implications for how their Mozambican identity is perceived by others, and is linked to the xenophobic attitudes of many South Africans.

Finally, this xenophobic society seemed to prompt the group participants to rely on two identities that they share with South Africans; the black identity and the African identity. These broad, inclusive identities were used as a way of overcoming xenophobia and calling for unity amongst Africans. The shift between identities may be an indication of a more fluid identity than was initially thought, and may ensure that the participants cannot be entirely labelled as outsiders. However, this fluid identity may mean that the participants in this study adopt whatever identity they need to at the time, perhaps making them somewhat invisible.

The four themes identified point towards a certain flexibility in identity that was not initially considered. There appear to be advantages to seeing oneself as a Mozambican and therefore able to rightfully gain access to the support that this community and its government provide. On the other hand, there also appear to be times when the Mozambican identity is swapped for the more inclusive African identity, allowing the participants to claim the economic and social resources tied to the shared African heritage.

6.3 IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The themes above indicate that the categories of “*makwerekwere*” and locals are not as fixed, from the Mozambican standpoint, as one would first imagine. Those who are discriminated against are able to find support and strength within their community for their Mozambican identity, while at the same time adopting the more inclusive identity, reducing the experience of discrimination.

This has implications for strategies that the government and other advocacy groups can employ in addressing xenophobia. At the time of writing, there seems to be little indication of any primary or secondary interventions relating to xenophobia. At this stage, the only visible response to xenophobia seems to be the *ad hoc* protection afforded foreign nationals by the South African Police Services when incidents occur. As has already been mentioned, the police are at times a medium through which the xenophobic discourse is carried out, and so their protection may be less meaningful than intended.

Instead, or perhaps in addition to these strategies, the African Renaissance discourse could be used to counter it. Reinforcing the shared identity of “African” may provide a way for the

divide between those born in South Africa and those considered to be foreigners to redraw the boundaries to include both groups. Using the African Renaissance philosophy as a tool, there seems to be the possibility that the divide between locals and foreigners may be significantly reduced on a primary intervention level. This is perhaps the most valuable contribution made by this research study.

This study was concluded shortly after the passing of Nelson Mandela, South Africa's first democratic President, who advocated reconciliation and tolerance among all South Africans and Africans in the continent. During this study I came to realise that not only was Nelson Mandela a freedom fighter for black South Africans, but his patronage seems to have been adopted by many who fall outside of that category. In this study, the participants mentioned several times that his conciliatory discourse (although he was not politically active at the time) gave them a security they felt they would lose when he died. At the time of writing, no serious incidents had made their fears a reality. Therefore, it would be interesting to explore where, if anywhere, foreigners now find their sense of security.

A second opportunity for further research lies in the extent to which other nationalities adopt the African identity. This could also be explored relative to the amount of discrimination the group experiences, and the relationship between the discrimination and the adoption of an African identity. These results could then be compared to local South Africans, who do not experience discrimination on the basis of their nationality.

The information gathered in this study has potentially valuable implications for how South Africans go about changing the xenophobic discourse prominent in our society today. Suggestions were made to emphasise the African Renaissance discourse as an alternative discourse, operating on the primary and secondary levels of intervention. It would also be interesting for future research to explore the psychological impact of Nelson Mandela's death on a community that relied on him for security. Thirdly, research that explores the importance of the African identity in different national groups and the relationship between this and the discrimination encountered by the group could bring some more insights into the phenomenon of xenophobia.

6.4 CONCLUDING THE CONCLUSION

The role of the researcher in social constructionism is to partner with the participants in the shared generation of knowledge. This study has proven to be an attempt to do just that. In considering my own role as researcher, I have reflected on the research process occasionally throughout the study, and finally in this chapter. I was not only a facilitator in the construction of the knowledge this study revealed, but I was in many ways a participant as well. I felt a mixture of feelings, from uncertainty, to insecurity, to a sense of unity, at all times being challenged to move beyond my own reality and into the space of the “other”.

In documenting this journey, the possibility may exist for alternative ways of deconstructing the xenophobic discourse that affects foreign nationals living in South Africa. Within Former President Thabo Mbeki’s African Renaissance philosophy lies the potential for a unifying discourse that runs contrary to the xenophobic emphasis on the “other”. Under this philosophy, locals and foreign nationals may find the economic and social cohesion that South Africans have been hoping for since the advent of democracy in 1994.

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