Participation in Anti-Immigrant Violence: Evidence from Alexandra, South Africa

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Why did thousands of ordinary South Africans take part in the May 2008 wave of violence against foreigners? This paper tests a dozen hypotheses using data from an original survey of a representative sample of residents of Alexandra, where the violence began and where it reached its greatest intensity. Measures of participation in the 2008 attacks were collected using a method that ensured that respondents' answers were private, thus reducing response bias. Alexandra residents who perceive that group entitlements (locals' or foreigners') have been violated; who believe that violence is acceptable; who support an opposition party; or who have social ties to other participants are more likely to having take part in the 2008 attacks. There is no evidence supporting explanations for participation such as xenophobia, material self- or group-interest and being male, young or Zulu.

South Africa's explosion of anti-foreigner violence in May 2008 continues to provoke both dismay and debate. Our dismay stems not only from the deaths, injuries, rapes and thousands of displaced people but also because the attacks "revealed cracks in the country's legal order and social compact" as Landau (2012, 2) put it. Our dismay is deepened because the experience of countries such as India and Nigeria has been that communal violence tends to recur and infect electoral politics (Scacco 2010; Wilkinson 2004). If violence between social groups becomes an entrenched feature of South Africa's electoral cycle, the consequences for the consolidation of democracy are dire.

These concerns have led a large number of scholars and observers of the South African political scene to offer explanations of the 2008 attacks.[1] However, despite the proliferation of analyses our understanding is still limited. This, I believe is due to two lacuna. First, existing research has

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[1] See, most notably, the two volumes edited by Landau (2012) and Everatt (2010).

focused on the ecological level of analysis—communities, groups and leaders—and taken the participation of thousands of ordinary people for granted. As I argue below, this mass participation is perhaps the most puzzling feature of the 2008 attacks. Secondly, and as a consequence of the ecological level of analysis, no researchers have yet collected a dataset of a representative and substantial sample of residents of one of the areas affected by violence. We thus have lacked the data to understand why some people took part but many others did not.

This paper aims to contribute to a more rounded understanding of the events of 2008 by investigating why people chose to participate or not in the violence. The analysis is based on an original survey dataset collected from a representative sample of 497 residents of Alexandra, in Johannesburg, where the violence began, where it was most intense (Monson and Arian 2012) and where tensions remain (Quintal 2011). To reduce the risk of social desirability bias, the survey made use of a special technique to guarantee the privacy of respondents when asking about their participation in the attacks of 2008.

The data are examined in three ways. First, I present estimates of the percentages of Alexandra residents who took part in various anti-immigrant behaviors ranging from joining up with a mob to assaulting another person. I then examine how participation varies across demographic categories such as language group, employment status and party support. Finally, in an attempt to understand the factors that separated participants from non-participants, I use logistic regression to test twelve hypotheses for why individuals took part.

There is some support for five of these hypotheses. First, those who believe that violence is an acceptable means to an end are more likely to have taken part in 2008. Second respondents who believe that foreigners are getting more than they deserve, that locals are getting less or—more generally—that group entitlements have been violated are also more likely to have participated. Third, the number of social ties to other participants, and fourth, the political alienation resulting from support for an opposition party are both also associated with a greater probability of participation. Finally, older people (those aged 50 or more) are less likely to have taken part, but the young did not participate to a greater extent than the middle-aged. Hypotheses that participants were motivated by xenophobia, the opportunity to loot or the desire for jobs or better housing are not supported. Being male, a hostel-dweller or Zulu are also of little importance in understanding who took part and who did not.

The 2008 Anti-Immigrant Attacks

South Africa is no stranger to intergroup conflict. In the post-apartheid era, however, this conflict has extended along a new frontier: between locals and immigrants, often those from other African countries. Data from the 1995 World Values Survey, for example, show that South Africans are the most xenophobic nation of any included in the sample (Mattes et al. 1999). This intergroup antipathy has manifested in a steady stream of hate crimes committed against African foreigners, often in the form of rough justice meted out by a crowd (Harris 2004).

One such incident of mob violence against immigrants occurred on the evening of May 11th 2008 in Alexandra, a densely populated slum near the heart of Johannesburg.[2] An armed mob in the largely Zulu-speaking "Beirut" area of Alexandra went door-to-door searching for foreigners. Anyone who could not pass their test—which was to provide the Zulu word for "elbow"—was beaten.

[2]This brief account draws heavily on the more detailed discussion in Monson and Arian (2012).

Two were killed that first night.

In contrast to previous incidents, the violence only intensified the following nights. By the 14th of May, Alexandra was in uproar, with thousands of residents toyi-toying,[3] attacking people believed to be foreign and clashing with police. Over the next few days, violence and the destruction and looting of property also began to appear in other shantytowns in and around Johannesburg, including Diepsloot, Tembisa and Thokoza. By the following week, the violence had spread to downtown Johannesburg and parts of Cape Town. Finally, after three weeks, a measure of calm returned, leaving 62 people dead, 670 wounded and 100 000 displaced.[4]

Understanding the 2008 Attacks: From Events to Participation

The traditional approach to explicating intergroup, ethnic or anti-immigrant violence has been to situate the analysis at the ecological level, to treat violence as an event, and to construct explanations out of group or community-level concepts or variables (e.g. Dancygier 2010; Olzak 1992). Existing research on the 2008 attacks has similarly taken a "top-down" approach and sought explanations in community- or group-level factors. For example, based on interviews conducted just months after the attacks, Steinberg (2008*a*) argues that the roots of xenophobia lie in zero-sum competition between locals and foreigners over jobs and government houses. Fauvelle-Aymar and Segatti (2012) find supporting evidence in their statistical analysis of demographic data; ward-level income inequality, they note, is correlated with the occurrence of anti-foreigner violence.[5]

Another strand of research on the 2008 violence emphasizes the motives of community leaders rather than groups. Misago (2012) concludes that the leaders of community policing fora—informal, local policing structures that were set up after the fall of apartheid to help rebuild shattered community-police relations (see Steinberg 2008*b*)—were often involved in organizing the attacks. These leadership positions, although informal and quite circumscribed in their authority, provide numerous opportunities for the extraction of rents from residents seeking policing or other government services (Misago 2012). The organization of violence can thus be seen as an attempt, by leaders, to consolidate their positions of authority and their sources of income.[6]

These studies have afforded us valuable insight into the causes of the 2008 attacks, but paradoxes and unanswered questions remain. For example, while community leaders may have stood to benefit from the attacks, why did thousands of people join in? Participation is dangerous, risky and without obvious material reward.[7] Positing feelings of deep antipathy or hatred as the motivations of participants does not resolve the problem either because the presence of such powerful

[3]The toyi-toyi is a protest dance, often accompanied by singing or chanting and frequently seen at political rallies and gatherings.

[4]Zimbabweans were particularly likely to be victims (UN News Service 2008) but Mozambicans, Malawians and—at least in the Cape Town area—Somalis were also attacked.

[5]These accounts have an intellectual forbear in the theory of realistic group conflict (Campbell 1965). They also display an echo of Olzak (1992), who argues that attacks against African American migrants and Asian or European immigrants in the turn-of-the-20th-century United States were triggered by increasing labor market competition in sectors that had previously been ethnic niches.

[6]The notion that collective violence is a byproduct of the competition for power between leaders is a long-standing theory in the study of conflict and violence. Wilkinson (2004), for example shows that Hindu nationalist party leaders in India resort to organizing religious violence, or at least allow it to occur, when their electoral fortunes are threatened.

[7]Only slightly more than one percent of the survey respondents stated, in their answers to a question on this issue, that "some" or "many" participants had been paid.

sentiments would make anti-immigrant violence virtually endemic in South Africa. Hatred is one of the factors to be explained, not the explanation itself.

Similar paradoxes afflict explanations that rely on group-based material conflict. It is not clear why individuals would take the risks of participating for rewards such as the provision of work opportunities and housing that are public, and thus could just as easily be taken up by non-participants.[8] While people living in affected areas may justify the violence after the fact as caused by conflict over jobs and houses, these narratives of blame may simply be rationalizations offered for behavior that has other motivations.

In sum, while ecological-level analyses are useful, they only give us a partial view of why intergroup violence occurs. A number of scholars have thus recently turned to individual-level accounts of participation in collective violence in an effort to peer inside the "black box" (Humphreys and Weinstein 2008; Scacco 2010). Understanding the 2008 South African attacks similarly requires an analysis from "below" as well as "above"; from the perspectives of participants as well as the more familiar perspectives of leaders or groups.

Explaining Participation in the 2008 Attacks

The question of why so many people participated in 2008 has not been explicitly addressed by scholars, but a number of hypotheses are suggested by existing research. Another set of hypotheses can be drawn from the broader literature on participation in political violence. In all, twelve hypotheses regarding individual participation in the 2008 attacks are discussed in this section and tested against the dataset in the next.

These hypotheses are the social-psychological explanations of (1) a perceived violation of group entitlements, (2) the belief in the acceptability of violence and (3) xenophobia; the sociological explanations of (4) social ties, (5) being male and (6) level of education; the economic explanations of facing (7) collective and (8) selective material incentives to take part; the political explanation of (9) political alienation; as well as several explanations that are unique to the location of Alexandra: (10) the insider-outsider divide, (11) being a Zulu-speaker and (12) living in a hostel.

Perceived violation of group entitlements. A number of researchers have suggested that, behind the violence, are widespread sentiments that foreigners do not deserve the same status, welfare and rights as locals. By moving to South Africa and making a living, foreigners are then seen to violate these group entitlements. For example, Landau (2012) situates the attacks within an historically rich understanding of the alien in South Africa's apartheid history, while Nieftagodien (2012) leverages the concept of the autochthon—the indigenous inhabitant of a space who believes that he or she has some special entitlement, or some claim to a privileged set of rights.

A more general framework for conceptualizing these perceptions of deservingness and entitlement is provided by Herbert Blumer's (1958) theory of group position. As Bobo and Hutchings (1996, 955) interpret the theory, "[f]eelings of competition and hostility emerge from historically and collectively developed judgments about the positions in the social order that in-group members should rightfully occupy relative to members of an out-group." The concept of group position requires four situational perceptions: the level of welfare and status believed to be enjoyed by the in and outgroups, and the level that each group deserves to enjoy. The former set of perceptions

[8] In other words, the expected rewards of collective violence—an increased supply of jobs, etc.—are public goods, which are non-excludable. The expected costs of participation are however, private and borne by all participants.

follow from observation of everyday life and the formation of perceptions regarding who gets what. Blumer argued that the latter set, the set of group entitlements, are shaped by historical forces.

Members of a group may then believe that group entitlements are violated for two reasons: first, when the outgroup is believed to have "risen above their rank" and accessed resources they do not deserve; second, when the ingroup's actual position is incongruent with the more lofty position that they believe they are entitled to. To the extent that the actual and deserved positions of both locals and foreigners are felt to be congruent, individuals are hypothesized to be less likely to participate in violence against that group; individuals that perceive that either or both groups' entitlements are out of sync with their actual level of status and welfare are, however, hypothesized to be more likely to participate.

Belief in the acceptability of violence. Several authors have argued that South Africa's history of intergroup and state violence has instilled a "culture of violence" (Hamber 2000; Kynoch 2005). Alexandra has been particularly prone to both sorts of violence: the late 1980s saw a deepening insurrection against the apartheid state, while the area was also heavily affected by the partisan violence of the early 1990s (see Bonner and Nieftagodien 2008). Thus, to the extent that a culture of violence exists, it would be very likely to be found in Alexandra.

From a micro-level perspective, this culture of violence translates into a set of normative beliefs regarding the appropriateness of violence as a strategy. Those believing that violence is an acceptable means of achieving some goal are thus hypothesized be more likely to participate in violence against foreigners.

Xenophobia, defined here as a form of prejudice directed against foreigners, was quickly implicated in popular accounts of the 2008 attacks. Prejudice and xenophobia are frequently regarded by scholars as determinants of discrimination and support for exclusionary policies (e.g. Scheepers, Gijsberts, and Coenders 2002), but are seldom tested as a reason for taking part in intergroup violence (Green and Seher 2003). The hypothesis is that the more xenophobic the respondent, the more likely that she took part in the 2008 attacks.

Social ties. A large body of sociological research on "resource mobilization" has focused on the factors that enable people to be mobilized into participation in collective political action (McAdam 1986; McCarthy and Zald 1977). One of the primary mechanisms that pull people into collective action are social networks that feature numerous horizontal ties and reciprocal bonds between individuals (Scott 1976). Unsurprisingly then, a number of studies of participation in forms of collective political action such as protest (Gibson 1997) and ethnic violence (McDoom 2011) find that having friends, acquaintances or family members who take part makes one more likely to do so. In the South African context, the hypothesis is similarly that greater ties to other participants should be associated with a greater likelihood of participation; on the other hand, attending church services, and thus having ties to people who are unlikely to take part, is expected to render one less likely to participate.

Male. Being male is often linked with violence, both criminal and political. There are several explanations, from the contrasting perspectives of nurture and nature, that link masculinity to violence. In the corner of "nature", evolutionary theorists point to biological mechanisms such as sexual selection and levels of testosterone (Wilson and Daly 1985; Hudson and Boer 2002), while constructivists regard genders-specific norms concerning male honour and violence (Kaufman 1987) as the mechanism. Regardless of the reason, the hypothesis is that being male is associated with a greater probability of having participated in 2008.

Level of education. There are a number of mechanisms through which education could af-

fect participation in violence. Education (1) inculcates egalitarian and liberal values; (2) increases cognitive complexity and reduces dogmatic thinking; (3) sorts people into social classes with their attendent values systems; and (4) increases the value of labour market skills (Nie, Junn, and Stehlik-Barry 1996). All point toward an expected decrease in the likelihood of taking part as one's level of education increases.

Age. Violence is frequently associated with youth, especially young males (Wilson and Daly 1985). Youth is associated with risk-seeking behavior and greater competition. Younger residents of Alexandra are thus hypothesized to be more likely to take part in anti-immigrant attacks.

Collective material incentives. Residents of the affected areas quickly and recurrently point to resource competition between locals and foreigners as the reason for the violence, and (Steinberg 2008*a*), in particular, has agreed. Three forms of competition stand out: those who compete with foreigners for jobs, government houses and for customers are hypothesized to face collective incentives to participate in violence against foreigners. These three collective incentives are particularly likely to be held by people who are (1) unemployed, (2) living in low quality housing or (3) work in the streets of Alexandra as informal traders.

Selective material incentives. Within the economic literature on collective action, the classic explanation for participation is selective incentives: some material benefit that selectively rewards participants or selectively punishes non-participants (Olson 1965). In contexts of mob violence, the most readily available source of such selective rewards is looting. Other scholars have noted that the value that one attaches to looted goods—the degree to which one is incentivized to participate—is a function of one's own level of welfare (Humphreys and Weinstein 2008). The higher an individual's socio-economic status, the lower the marginal utility, the lower the incentive to loot, and thus the lower the likelihood of participation.

Political alienation. Misago (2012) argues that violence tended to occur in areas where large numbers of residents supported parties other than that of their elected local councillors or representatives. Such residents are politically alienated because they lack a trusted channel through which grievances can be expressed and addressed. Political alienation, in turn, produces perceptions that grievances are unmet, that local authorities are hostile, and perhaps even that the government lacks legitimacy. Frustration, scapegoating and violence are the hypothesized result. Given that all electoral wards within Alexandra were (and still are) held by ANC councillors, being a supporter of a party other than the ANC is expected to result in political alienation and an increased likelihood of participation in the 2008 attacks.

Insiders vs. outsiders. Nieftagodien (2012) argues that the violence can be seen as a continuation of the conflict between insiders and outsiders that has marked Alexandra since the 1950s. Insiders were initially property owners but in later years came to be more generally those who had lived in Alexandra longer. They saw the continued influx of migrants as a threat to their possibilities of regaining title to their properties or being allocated other government housing. Those who have spent a greater proportion of their lives in Alexandra are thus hypothesized to be more likely to have taken part in 2008.

Zulu-speakers and hostel-dwellers. Some informants interviewed by Misago (2012) blame Zulus and hostel-dwellers (two populations that overlap a great deal) for starting the 2008 attacks.[9] Based on these claims, those who speak Zulu as a first language or who live in a hostel are hypothesized to be more likely to have taken part in the violence.

[9] I heard similar allegations during my initial interviews in the area in 2010.

Data and Methods

Existing research has examined some of these explanations for mass participation in the 2008 attacks, but has either used small convenience samples or "top-down" historical methods. While this paper is the first to explicitly investigate participation in the attacks of 2008, it is also the first to examine a dataset consisting of a substantial representative sample of individuals that includes both those who took part in the violence, and those who did not.

The Survey

The data were collected using a public opinion survey of a representative sample of 497 adult South African residents of Alexandra. The survey was conducted in the old area of Alexandra[10] in May 2011. Respondents were sampled within randomly selected clusters, then within stand and finally within household. The sample was also stratified by housing type and gender. One call-back was permitted for non-contact but no substitutions were permitted.[11] All statistical results are weighted to adjust for unequal probabilities of selection into the sample.

Four highly experienced interviewers—all black South Africans who lived in other parts of Johannesburg—were recruited from a local survey firm. The interviews were conducted in or near the respondents' homes in Alexandra using a face-to-face method. The questionnaire was translated into two languages, one from the Nguni group of languages (Zulu) and one from the Sotho group (Tswana) in addition to English. Interviewers were fluent in both these languages, and were instructed to use the language with which respondents were most comfortable.

Some 8% of the sample ($N = 45$) were not in Alexandra at the time of the 2008 attacks. These respondents were excluded from the analysis that follows, leaving a final sample size of 452. Missing data values are imputed using the method of multiple imputation (see Rubin 1987).[12]

Measuring the Key Variables

The outcome of interest is individual participation in the attacks of 2008. The biggest challenge in gathering such data is overcoming respondents' reluctance to disclose potentially incriminating information about their behavior. To mitigate these concerns as much as possible, I used a method designed by Scacco (2010) for her research on participation in religious riots in Nigeria. Five questions were asked on participation: whether they had (1) joined in the toyi-toyi, (2) threatened or intimidated anyone, (3) looted, (4) harmed anyone, or (5) destroyed any shacks during the attacks of 2008. Respondents received a small card with five rows of the letters "A", "B" and "C", and were asked to circle the letter that corresponded to the correct answer for each question.[13] When all five questions had been completed, respondents were then asked to seal the card in an envelope that

[10] That is, the area bounded by Wynberg Road in the South, Vasco Da Gama Street in the North, First Street in the West, and the Jukskei river in the East.

[11] The response rate (AAPOR #3) is 69.2%.

[12] Two of the survey items resulted in 5% or more missing responses: the evaluation of foreigner's deserved position and party support.

[13] The response set was as follows: "If you did this and feel that it was the right thing to do, make a cross on the 'A' next to the number '1' (2, etc.). If you did this and regret it now, make a cross on the 'B' next to the number '1'. If you did not do this, make a cross on the 'C' next to the number '1' ". Responses were recoded as dichotomous; having performed the behavior in question received a value of 1, otherwise 0.

had been provided, ensuring that their responses remained hidden from the interviewer. The interviewers reported that respondents were quite comfortable in answering questions on participation in this fashion. Whether this is due to the method used, or the lack of remorse that is often evident after an episode of intergroup violence is unknown.

Just over nine percent ($N = 44$) of the sample who were present in Alexandra during May 2008 reported performing at least one of the behaviors in the 2008 riots, 4% ($N = 23$) reported that they went no further than joining in the toyi-toyi and 1.4% ($N = 9$) claimed to have performed all five behaviors (See Figure 1). Given that the 2005 Alexandra Benchmark Survey estimated the number of adult South African residents of Old Alexandra to be 179 000 (CASE 2005), my results suggest that as many as 16 000 people took part in some form of anti-immigrant behavior in 2008 (95% C.I. = 11 000 – 24 000).

In the analysis that follows, participation is operationalized as having taking part in any of the five anti-foreigner behaviors. The distinction between a highly aggressive behavior, such as assault, and a less aggressive behavior, such as toyi-toying, is less stark than what it might seem. Firstly, the formation of a mob makes violence more likely; simply joining in with the mob thus helps enable violence, whether one wields a weapon or not. Secondly, whether an individual actually assaults someone or only joins in the toyi-toyi is partly a matter of chance that is determined by whether that individual finds herself face-to-face with the target of her antipathy and with a weapon in hand. The key distinction, in short, is whether the respondent took part or not in one of the anti-foreigner mobs in 2008.

Participation is measured by asking respondents to think back to their actions in May 2008 while most of the explanatory variables were measured by asking people about their current situation or attitudes.[14] Because of the risk that having participated in 2008 altered respondents' attitudes in 2011, the only variables included in this analysis are those that are fairly stable over time. Demographic factors like gender and age are the most reliable in this regard, but there is reason to believe that the three social-psychological variables are also stable. Group entitlements are, following Blumer (1958), shaped by historically-developed and collectively held beliefs about the rights and status that each group in a society deserves. Subscription to the culture of violence is a similarly persistent variable (Kynoch 2005). Xenophobia (or more generally, prejudice), shaped as it is by predispositions and early socialization, has been shown to be quite stable over the course of a few years (Miller and Sears 1986). In short, we can be reasonably confident that these set of explanatory variables are not unduly influenced by reverse causation induced by the experience of participation in the 2008 violence.

The measurement of many of the explanatory variables is quite straightforward (see the Appendix for item wording and coding details). The measure of violations of group entitlements, however, does require some discussion. This variable was constructed out of four separate items: the status and level of welfare that both locals and foreigners were thought to actually enjoy, and the levels to which each is thought to be entitled. The measure is then calculated as follows: $(\text{Entitled}_{\text{local}} - \text{Entitled}_{\text{foreigner}}) + (\text{Actual}_{\text{foreigner}} - \text{Actual}_{\text{local}})$. Violations of group entitlements, in other words, measures the cumulative distance that both locals and foreigners must move to get from the current intergroup situation to the one that is normatively desirable.

[14] The reason for this measurement strategy is that these data were collected primarily to test a theory regarding participation intentions. See Claassen (2012).

Results

As a first cut at the data, I use bivariate cross-tabulations of participation and various demographic and socio-economic factors. Figure 2 displays these cross-tabulations in the form of graphs: each point shows the proportion who participated within each gender, age, etc. category. A quick consideration of these figures shows that the hypotheses regarding the effects of gender, age, education, employment status, socio-economic status, home language and housing type on participation in the 2008 attacks are not supported by the survey data. While men are slightly more likely to have taken part than women and hostel-dwellers more likely to have participated than those living in other kinds of housing, these differences are not statistically significant. Factors such as the level of educational attainment show no relationship at all with participation.

One variable—party support—does show a clear bivariate relationship with participation. ANC supporters are the least likely to have participated, those supporting no party at all are twice as likely, while those supporting an opposition party are four times as likely.[15] The difference between ANC and opposition supporters is one of the few statistically significant differences in this set of figures.

While these bivariate effects are a useful first look at the data, they may be misleading because many of these variables are correlated. For example, some sources implicate Zulu residents of Alexandra in the 2008 attacks, but those who speak Zulu as a first language are also more likely to live in hostels, to support opposition parties, be newcomers to the area and be unemployed, all of which have also been linked to participation in the attacks. In the rest of this paper, I thus make use of logistic regression technique for complex survey data (see Lumley 2010), which permits a multivariate analysis where the associations between one variable and participation can be estimated while controlling for all other variables. This logistic regression model includes all the demographic and socio-economic factors examined in Figure 2 but also the social-psychological variables. The results are presented in Table 1.

Social Psychological Explanations

Five of the variables show associations with participation that are significantly distinguishable from zero; two of these are the social psychological variables of violations of group entitlements and beliefs in the acceptability of violence. Perceiving that locals are receiving less that what they are entitled (e.g. because of extensive unemployment) or that foreigners are exceeding their entitlements (e.g. because jobs are thought to be for locals only) is associated with an increased probability of having taken part in the 2008 violence. As I argue elsewhere (Claassen 2012) the power of such perceptions stems from their relationship with feelings of injustice and consequently, anger. Anger, in turn, triggers violent behavior by increasing the desire for confrontation and diminishing the role that risks and costs play in decision-making.

Believing that violence is an acceptable strategy also increases the likelihood of having participated. Participation in the 2008 attacks can thus indeed be traced back, in part, to subscribing to a culture of violence. Such beliefs reduce the normative costs associated with intergroup aggression, and thus help overcome psychological resistance to violence (see Collins 2008).

[15] Opposition party supporters largely consist of Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP, 31%) and Democratic Alliance (DA, 37%) supporters. Both subgroups shows elevated levels of participation. The small sample sizes within each of these subgroups, however, renders it inadvisable to split the sample further.

Because logit coefficients, such as those presented in Table 1, are not straightforward to interpret, the effects of the four significant variables are also shown in Figure 3 using a method that may be more intuitive. These figures depict the increase in the predicted probability of participation (y-axis) as the value of the variable in question changes over the x-axis, while holding all other variables constant at an average level. A consideration of this figure shows that a move from the low to the high range of both social psychological variables is associated with a dramatically increased probability of having participated in 2008. However, since there are few individuals with extreme values of either variable (near 0 or 1), it is more advisable to consider the effects of these variables over the range of 0.2 to 0.8 or so. Using these values, the figures reveal that moving from a low to a high value for perceived violations of group entitlements is associated with the probability of having participated increasing from close to zero to about 10%. The corresponding results for beliefs in the acceptability of violence are in increase of about 6% (5% to 11%) in the probability of having taken part.

The final social psychological hypothesis concerns xenophobia. The coefficient for this variable is small relative to the standard error, showing that the effect is, for all intents and purposes, zero. While beliefs regarding the entitlements due to foreigners are associated with xenophobia, the latter has no independent effect on having participated in 2008. Beliefs about entitlements are more powerful because their violation results in perceived injustice and anger; they are "hot" attitudes. Xenophobia is a colder intergroup attitude that perhaps results in withdrawal or avoidance of foreigners as opposed to confrontation.

Sociological Explanations

Two of the sociological hypotheses are supported by the data. The number of friends and acquaintances who known by respondents to have taken part in 2008 is strongly related to respondents having taken part themselves. This finding echoes other research on participation in political protest (Gibson 1997) and intergroup violence (McDoom 2011). The third panel in Figure 3 shows the size of this effect: knowing no-one at all who participated is associated with a probability of having participated oneself of around 4%; this increases to about 15% when one knows 20 or more people who took part. Church attendance, however—which we can think of as exposure to networks of people who are likely to demobilize one against violence—shows no independent effect on participation.

The multivariate results of the logit regression show that age did play some role in determining who took part in 2008: those aged 50 or more are less likely to have participated than those aged 18–24 (the omitted reference category). It is not quite the case that only the young took part, however, because there is no statistically significant difference between the age groups 18–24, 25–34 and 35–49. This result thus speaks not about the disquiet of youth, but rather the passivity of the old.

The other effects confirm what was first seen in the bivariate figures: the demographic factors of gender and education are largely unrelated to having taking part in the violence. The effect of being male is positive, but falls short of being significantly differentiable from zero.[16] Education has no effect whatsoever when all covariates are included in the model. There are, of course, few (2%, $N = 8$) respondents who hold a university degree. Gibson (2004) also finds that education has

[16]Additional analyses, available from the author, show that there is no conditional effect of age and gender; i.e., being young *and* male is not associated with a greater likelihood of having participated.

no effect on racial reconciliation amongst his African sample, perhaps due to the illiberal nature of apartheid education.

Political Explanations

The final variable that is significantly associated with having participated in 2008 is supporting an opposition party (versus supporting the ANC). The fourth panel in Figure 3 shows that when all other variables in the logit model are considered and held constant, opposition party supporters are predicted to have about a 10% likelihood of having taken part in the anti-foreigner violence. ANC supporters show a lower probability of participation of around 4%. Thus, controlling for the other covariates included in Table 1 roughly halves the relationship between opposition party support and participation from that observed in the simple bivariate plot in Figure 2. The effect of opposition party support is still significant however, as Table 1 indicates.

The mechanism behind this effect, following Misago (2012), is hypothesized to be the political alienation of being an opposition party supporter in an area served by ANC local councillors (with the mayor, provincial premier, national president, etc. also all being ANC representatives). This mechanism also explains why those who do not support any party were no more likely to have participated than ANC supporters: their lack of support for any party suggests that they are less alienated from political channels *per se* than from politics altogether. Such individuals are unlikely to be frustrated because they have given up expecting much from government.

The significant effect of opposition party support might suggest a more insidious mechanism: could this evidence mean that the violence was organized by competing politicians for electoral reasons? The circumstances of the 2008 attacks make this possibility very unlikely, as I argue below.

Violence is used within the context of electoral competition for two reasons. The first, as Wilkinson (2004) has detailed in the Indian context, is when politicians use intergroup violence to shift the domain of electoral competition from the bread-and-butter issues of welfare, government services, corruption, etc., to matters of group identity and intergroup animosity. A careful consideration of the political context of the 2008 attacks, however, shows that this mechanism is not at all likely as an explanation. The only party that could conceivably stand to gain from activating the local-foreigner cleavage is the ruling party, whose leaders might be interested in distracting voters from their record on bread-and-butter issues. Yet the evidence shows that ANC supporters are the least likely to have participated in the attacks.

Leaders also utilise violence before elections for a second reason—to ethnically cleanse an electoral district of supporters of another party so as to influence the elections in that district, as occurred in Alexandra in the early 1990s (Human Rights Watch 1995). Once again, however, the context of the 2008 attacks are not consistent with this hypothesis. This mechanism predicts that violence be deployed to change the partisan character of particular districts. Yet the districts that feature in national elections in South Africa (which were held a year after the violence) are very large: the nine provinces and the country as a whole. To significantly alter the electorate of Gauteng province, where Alexandra is located, requires the displacement of tens, if not hundreds of thousands of supporters of particular parties from the province. In contrast, the 2008 attacks were highly local, chose their targets based on country of origin, and did not result in a mass exodus of voters. We can thus be reasonably confident that this party support variable is measuring the effects of political alienation, and not the effects of partisan machinations.

Economic Explanations

The first set of economic hypotheses concerns collective incentives to take part in violence against foreigners. Locals who are unemployed, work as informal traders in Alexandra or who live in low quality housing may all stand to benefit materially if foreigners were targeted with violence and driven out of Alexandra. None of these subgroups, however, show any greater likelihood of having taking part. The reason is perhaps because outcomes that might be expected to follow from violence—an increased supply of jobs, customers or government houses—cannot be restricted to only those who took part in the violence. In other words, collective incentives result in a collective action problem (Olson 1965).

The second economic explanation for participation is the selective incentive of looting, which, unlike collective incentives, is a material reward that is restricted to participants. Socio-economic status, the measure of the marginal utility that a person would attach to looted property, shows no association with participation in 2008. The poor in Alexandra did not participate at proportionally higher rates than those better off. There is no evidence then that looting was the motivation for participation. Indeed, Steinberg (2008*a*) noted that looted goods were actually burnt (and foreigner's shacks destroyed).

These results show that material self-interest played little role in determining who took part in 2008. Categories of residents who might be thought to be able to benefit from the violence—the poor, the unemployed, those who make their living as informal traders, and those living in shacks—are no more likely to have participated than others.

Context-Specific Explanations

We turn to the final set of hypotheses, the explanations for participation that follow from circumstances that are specific or unique to Alexandra. Despite the role of Zulu ethnicity in the 1990s violence in Alexandra, Zulu-speakers are no more likely to have taken part in 2008 than residents who speak other first languages. Second, controlling for all the other variables, living in a hostel also turns out to have no discernable effect on having participated in the 2008 attacks. Even if the attacks originated with hostel-dwellers (Monson and Arian 2012) residents of other areas in Alexandra clearly joined in. Finally, those residents who have spent a greater proportion of their lives in Alexandra—the "insiders"—are no more likely to have taken part than newcomers to the area.

Conclusion

This paper aimed to fill in some of the gaps in our understanding of the 2008 anti-immigrant violence in South Africa by focusing on why thousands of people took part. To what extent, then, do the findings of this study extend beyond the question of individual participation and have some bearing on the broader question of why the attacks occurred at all?

There are three points of contact between my findings and the extant literature on the 2008 attacks. First, the importance that I attribute to group-based entitlements squares with Landau's (2012) and Nieftagodien's (2012) arguments that historically-shaped notions of the alien, the outsider and the autochthon have come to play an oversized role in intergroup relations in South Africa. However, we should be careful not to overstate the singularity of the South African experience. In even the most egalitarian settings, immigrants are widely believed to lack the same entitlements as

locals; the right to work, for example, is everywhere restricted. Moreover, mob violence against immigrants or other ethnic groups occurs in places with divergent histories including, in recent years, China, Kyrgyzstan, Kenya and Nigeria.

Second, while the attitudes toward group entitlement and the acceptability of violence help motivate participation, they also help to clarify the role that leaders play in organizing violence. Communities where foreigners are widely believed to have exceeded their entitled positions and where violence is an acceptable political strategy are ripe for anti-foreigner mobilization should community leaders be so inclined (and Misago (2012) shows that they often are). When a large number of people hold inegalitarian beliefs about what foreigners deserve and subscribe to a view that violence is acceptable, leaders do not have to do much convincing. They simply have to organize a gathering where, amongst the collective, passions can spill over into violence.

Finally, my findings also resonate with the claim that the attacks are a result of zero-sum competition over public resources. While group entitlements are, of course, shaped by historical forces, the perception of violation additionally requires a comparison between the entitlement and the actual material conditions of groups—who has jobs, houses, etc. Although I find that the personal component of this competition—being unemployed or living in a shack—is not associated with participation in the violence, the sociotropic component of resource competition—the sense that one's group is hard done by and the other group is prospering—may well be one of the main factors that influence the perception that group entitlements have been violated. Thus, while existing research has emphasized that the attacks of 2008 were partly about "who gets what", this study adds that the attacks appear to also be about "who deserves what".

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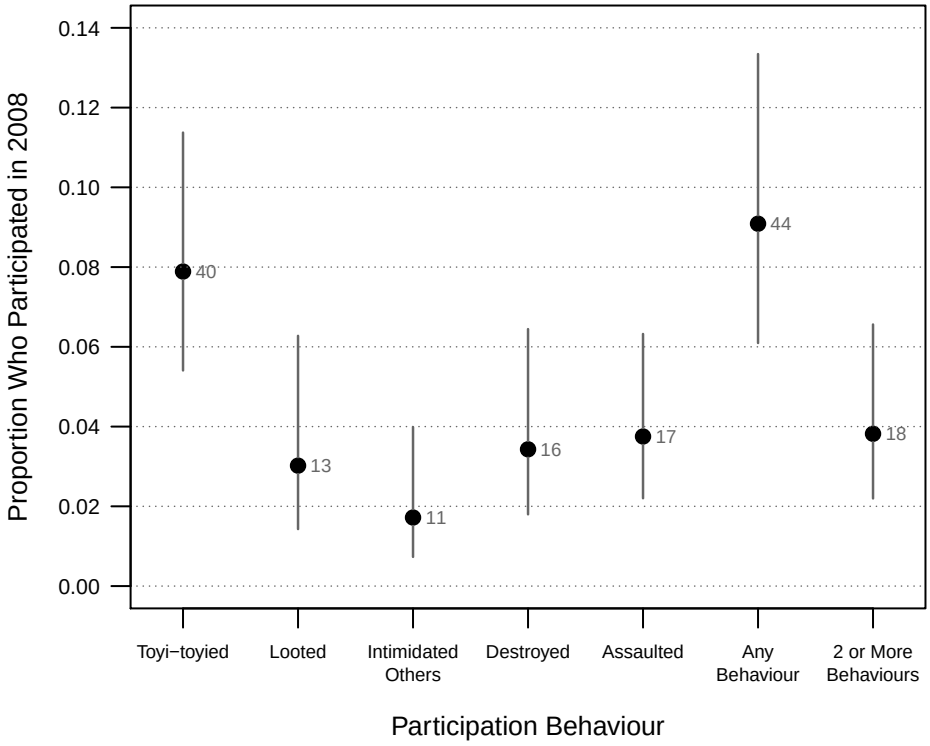
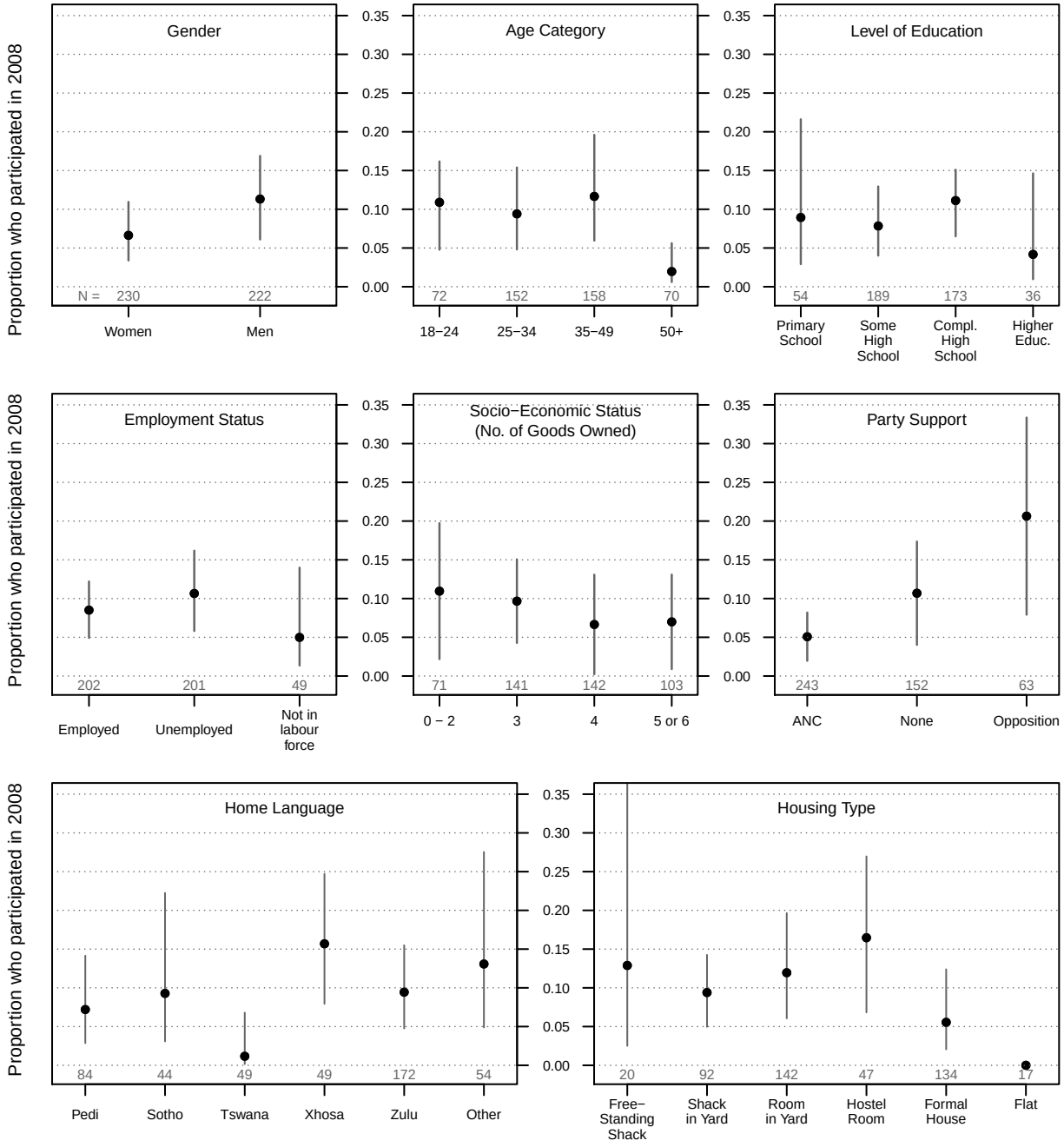
Figure 1. Prevalence of Various Anti-Immigrant behaviors in 2008



$N = 452$. Participation by behavior. Black dots are the proportion who reported performing the particular behavior in 2008. Grey lines are the 95% confidence intervals indicating sampling error. Numbers in grey are the number in the sample who reported performing the particular behavior.

Figure 2. Participation in 2008 Within Demographic Categories



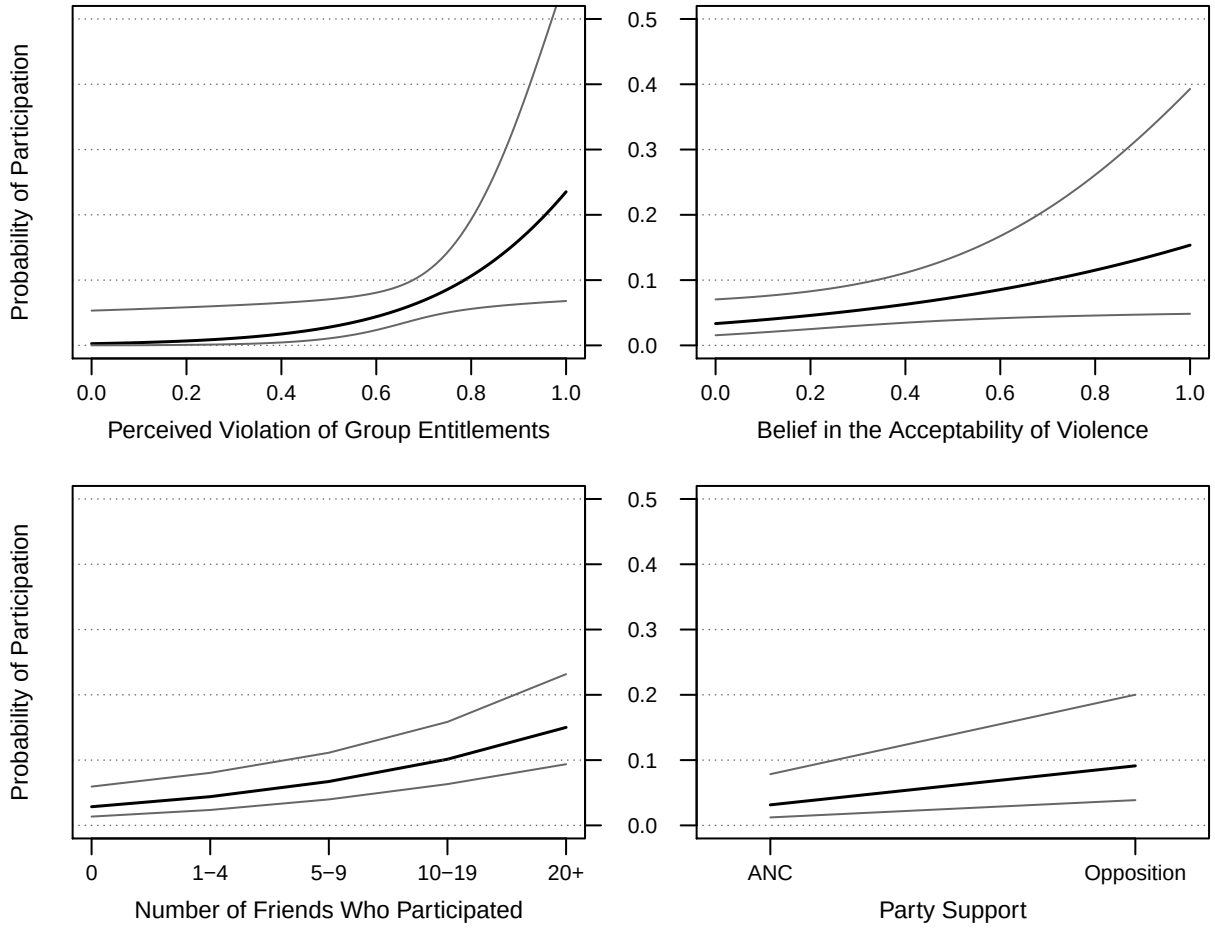
$N = 452$. Black dots are the proportion who reported participating within categories of 2nd variables. Grey lines are the 95% confidence intervals indicating sampling error. Numbers in grey are the sample size within the particular category.

Table 1. Multivariate Analysis of Determinants of Participation in the 2008 Attacks

	Coef.	Std. Err.
Social psychological hypotheses		
Violations of group entitlements	4.73	$(2.22)^{*}$
Belief that violence is acceptable	1.66	$(.83)^{*}$
Xenophobia	.21	$(.64)$
Sociological hypotheses		
Social ties: no. of friends who participated	.45	$(.09)^{***}$
Social ties: church attendance	.06	$(.25)$
Gender: male	.71	$(.54)$
Age: 25-34	$-.46$	$(.75)$
Age: 35-49	$-.32$	$(.58)$
Age: 50+	-1.78	$(.89)^{*}$
Level of education	.12	$(.39)$
Economic hypotheses		
Employment: unemployed	.34	$(.29)$
Employment: not in labour force	.18	$(.77)$
Employment: informal trader	$-.11$	(1.67)
Lives in shack	.41	$(.55)$
Socio-economic status	.09	(1.88)
Political hypotheses		
Party support: none	.61	$(.67)$
Party support: opposition	1.13	$(.48)^{*}$
Context-specific hypotheses		
Proportion of life in Alexandra	.37	$(.86)$
Lives in hostel	$-.02$	$(.68)$
Zulu	$-.16$	$(.44)$

$N = 452$. $^{***}p < .001$, $^{**}p < .01$, $^{*}p < .05$. Survey logit models estimated using pseudo-maximum likelihood, with design-based standard errors in parentheses.

Figure 3. Predicted Effects of Significant Explanatory Variables



$N = 452$. Dark lines indicate the predicted probability of participating in violence across the observed values of each explanatory variable, with all other variables held at their means. Grey lines are the 95% confidence intervals indicating sampling error.

Appendix

Table A-1. Descriptive Statistics

Variable Name	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.
Participation in 2008	.08	.28	0	1
Violations of group entitlements	.60	.14	0	1
Xenophobia	.55	.30	0	1
Perceived acceptability of violence	.18	.21	0	1
No. of friends who participated	1.03	1.66	0	4
Church attendance	2.58	1.16	1	4
Male	.53	.50	0	1
Education	2.46	.79	1	4
Age: 25–34	.33	.47	0	1
Age: 35–49	.31	.46	0	1
Age: 50–99	.17	.37	0	1
Socio-economic status	.59	.22	0	1
Unemployed	.45	.50	0	1
Not in the labour force	.11	.32	0	1
Informal trader	.03	.16	0	1
Lives in shack	.25	.43	0	1
Party support: none	.34	.47	0	1
Party support: opposition	.14	.34	0	1
Proportion of life in Alexandra	.66	.35	0	1
Zulu	.37	.48	0	1
Lives in hostel	.05	.23	0	1

Estimates are weighted by the inverse of the probability of selection into the sample.

Table A-2. Item Wording

Participation in the 2008 attacks. For the next few questions, you will be filling in your own answers on a separate card to ensure your privacy. When I read out each question, you must mark your answers yourself on your card. For each question, you must make a cross. So if the 1st answer I read is the right one for you, then make a cross on 'A'. If the 2nd answer is the right one for you, make a cross on 'B'. If the 3rd answer is the right one, make a cross on 'C'. Many people from Alex were involved in the attacks on foreigners in 2008. Can you tell me if any of the following things happened during those attacks? (I did this and feel that it was the right thing to do, I did this and regret it now = 1. I did not do this, not living in Alexandra at the time = 0). (1) Did you join in the toyi-toyi-ing and singing? (2) Did you threaten or intimidate anyone into joining in? (3) Did you steal any things from a foreigner's shack? (4) Did you physically harm any foreigners? (5) Did you destroy anyone's shack? Scale: Any affirmative response for (1) though (5) = 1; otherwise = 0.

Violations of group entitlements. Imagine that society is a ladder like on this card. Some people have a high position in society and get lots of respect from others. We can say that these people are at the top of the ladder. Other people have a low position and get little or no respect from others. We can say that these people are at the bottom of the ladder. (Bottom = 1 – Top = 7. Don't know = missing.) (1) Where do you think South Africans living in Alex are on the ladder these days? (2) Where do you think South Africans living in Alex should be on the ladder? (3) And now what about the foreigners? Where do you think the foreigners living in Alex are on the ladder these days? (4) Where do you think the foreigners living in Alex should be on the ladder? Scale: $((2) - (4)) + ((3) - (1))$.

Perceived acceptability of violence. (1) Do you agree or disagree that sometimes it is acceptable for the community to use violence to achieve its goals? (Strongly agree = 5. Agree = 4. Uncertain, don't know = 3. Disagree = 2. Strongly disagree = 1.) (2) Do you agree or disagree that talking is usually the best way to resolve conflicts between groups of people? (Strongly agree = 1. Agree = 2. Uncertain, don't know = 3. Disagree = 4. Strongly disagree = 5.) Additive scale; reliability = 0.82

Xenophobia. (1) How uncomfortable do you feel around the foreigners? (Very = 4. Quite = 3. A little bit, Don't know = 2. Not ... at all = 1.) (2) How close do you feel to most of the foreigners? Additive scale; reliability = 0.70.

Number of friends who participated. How many of your friends and relatives participated in the attacks of 2008?

Church attendance. How often do you attend a place of worship like a church? (All of the time = 4. Some of the time = 3. Rarely = 2. Never, Don't know = 1).

Education. What is the highest level of education you have personally achieved? (Primary school = 1. Some high school but no matric = 2. Finished matric, artisan's certificate = 3. University degree, Teacher's college diploma, Technikon diploma, Some other post-matric diploma = 4.)

Employment status. Which one of these statements best describes your working life? (Working full-time, part-time, for myself = Working. Not working–housewife, student, retired, Unemployed–not looking for work = Not in the labor force. Unemployed–looking for work = Unemployed.)

Informal trader. What is the job that you have now or used to have? ("vendor", "street vendor", "tuck shop", "spaza shop" = 1)

Socio-economic status. Do you or anyone else in your household own a ... (1) TV? (2) cell-phone? (3) fridge? (4) microwave? (5) computer? (6) car? (No = 1. Don't know = missing. Yes = 0). Scale estimated using a 2-parameter logistic item response model. Scale reliablity = .87

Party support. Which of these political parties do you like the most? (DA, IFP, COPE, UDM, PAC, other = Opposition party. I don't like any party, don't know = None. ANC = ANC.)

Proportion of life in Alexandra. (Number of years respondent has lived in Alexandra) / (Respondent's age).