Post-Apartheid Xenophobic Violence and the Crisis of Development in South Africa

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Abstract

This study interrogated Post-apartheid xenophobic violence and the crisis of development in South Africa. Xenophobia is one among several possible forms of reactions generated by anomic situation in the societies of modern states. In this context, South Africa is seen as one such good candidate for society in a condition of anomie. The underlying causes of xenophobic violence in South Africa are complex and varied which include poverty and unemployment, the character of South African state, legacy of apartheid policy and corruption. Xenophobia has to do with contemptuous of that which is foreign, especially, of strangers or of people from different countries or cultures. Xenophobia manifests in different regions and communities with devastating effects on the affected foreign nationals living in South Africa and the system. The research work aimed at examining the crisis of development in South Africa as a result of Post-apartheid xenophobic violence. Qualitative research design and thematic data analysis were considered appropriate in the course of this work. Relative deprivation theory (RD) which argues that psychological factors of relative deprivation is a key factor in explaining social unrest is used as a frame of analysis.
Keywords: Apartheid, Migrants, Poverty, Violence, Xenophobia

Introduction

Before 1994, immigrants from other parts of Africa and beyond faced discrimination and violence in South Africa. After the attainment of majority rule in 1994, immigrants felt that the incidence of xenophobia would reduce but on the contrary, the incidence of xenophobia increased. Between 2000 and March 2008, at least 67 people died in what was identified as xenophobic attacks. In May 2008, a series of attacks left 62 people dead; 21 of those killed were South African citizens (International Organization for Migration, 2019).

Between 2010 and 2017, the immigrants' community in South Africa increased from 2 million people to 4 million people (SAHO, 2019); in 2015, another national wide spike in xenophobic attacks against immigrants, in general, promoted several foreign governments to evacuate their citizens. In 2019, a study conducted by SAHO revealed that 65% of South Africans viewed immigrants as parasitic and a burden on society because they had come to take jobs and social benefits and that 63% of South Africans thought that more immigrants were involved in criminal activities than other groups (SAHO, 2019).

In its attempts to overcome the divisiveness of the past and build more new forms of social cohesion, the South African government embarked on an aggressive inclusive national-building project. One unanticipated by-product of this project has been a growth in intolerance towards outsiders and violence against foreign citizens and African refugees. This problem has become increasingly common and communities are divided by hostility and suspicion. Following the riots and murder of the Africans in 2017, violence again broke out in 2019 (SABC, 2019).

Due to wars, political unrest, economic hardship and hostilities in most African countries, some Africans and non-Africans migrated to South Africa in search of safety and a better life. Some were denied refugee status but others from contiguous countries like Mozambique were, on technical grounds, allowed to settle in the Bantustan or black homelands created during the apartheid system. Unrest and civil war also drove a large number of Congolese to South Africa. Many of these Congolese became illegal migrants. Over time, the host communities began exhibiting xenophobic attitudes towards refugees such as denying them access to the primary healthcare to which they were technically entitled (Ezeji, 2020). The commonly exhibited attitude of Police officers against foreigners in cities like Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban is not encouraging; most of the undocumented migrants in those cities were allegedly accused of involvement in crimes

despite lack of statistical evidence to substantiate the claims. Such a misperception as well as the vulnerability of illegal migrants led to abuse, violence and extortion (Michael, 2019).

Therefore, the focus of this work is on the post-apartheid xenophobic violence in South Africa. It inquires into the factors responsible for the attacks on the black African migrants and the developmental crisis it generated.

Objectives of the Study This work has the following objectives which it intended to achieve. The objectives are to: (a) Explore the specific character of the South African state and how it affects the phenomena of xenophobic violence (b)Assess poverty and unemployment conditions of Black South Africans and how this interface with xenophobic violence in South Africa

Conceptual Framework

Various definitions have been given to the concept of "xenophobia". The term derives from Greek word "Xeno" meaning unknown and "phobia" described as fear (Buthelezi, 2016). Broadly, xenophobia is defined as strong dislike and fear of those who are regarded to be the unknowns. The unknowns denotes the notion that a person is not the citizen of the recipient country or is a foreigner, therefore, there must be some hostility that is imposed on them (Tafira, 2020). The occurrence of this criminal activity committed by citizens on foreign nationals is considered xenophobic. Crime is considered xenophobic when joint violence and discriminatory attitude is specifically targeted at people of a certain group based on a perception that they are outsiders (Misago, 2015).

As noted by Solomon and Kosaka (2016), xenophobia is prevalent among countries that are undergoing transition; xenophobia in South Africa initially occurred following the period of independence in 1994 (Chimbga and Meier, 2016). Foreign nationals from Zimbabwe, Malawi and Mozambique who were living in Alexandra, Johannesburg were assaulted during the period of 1995 (Hendrickse, 2017). It is no doubt that this misconduct had existed in the past, however, it was perpetuated after the country gained democracy. This became prevalent during the 2008 incidents. The incidents lasted close to a month, from the 11th to 26th May 2008. The xenophobic attacks led to the death of 62 people of which 21 were South African citizens (Misago, 2015); about over a hundred thousand foreign black African nationals were displaced and a massive destruction of foreign owned businesses was experienced (Chimbga and Meier, 2016).

Review Relevant Literature

In keeping with our objectives of the study, this work reviewed existing literatures on factors fueling xenophobic violence in South Africa. The South African state can be defined by its robust industrial and mineral based economy and its tortured racial history. The contemporary South African state began in June 1994 with the first non-racial elections in the country's history. This followed 200 years of racially defined economic development and white minority regimes propped up first by colonialism, later by authoritarianism and ultimately by the quasi-military structure known as apartheid.

According to World Bank indicator (2020), South Africa has a population of nearly 53 million people. It is a very large country with 1.2 million square kilometers, roughly twice the size of Texas or France. South Africa is divided both racially and linguistically. There are four major racial groups in the country, and most individuals speak at least one of nine (9) major African languages. The largest group, 79% of the population, is African. The next largest group, classified as white or European, constitutes 9.1 percent of the population,

with a so called mixed race group (people of mixed European, Asian and African heritage) accounting for a further 9 percent; non Africans speak either English or Afrikaans as a first language just; just under 3 percent of the population is of Indian or Asian heritage including people from China and Japan (Chapman, 2016).

South Africa is one of the most urbanized and highly industrialized countries in Africa; over 61% of South African's population is urban and the country continues to rapidly urbanize. According to Crush (2014), rural South Africans who total just over 20 million people are overwhelmingly poor. Though it has high levels of educational development and health care capacity, it has one of the most unequal distributions of income in the world (Harris, 2016). An important issue at this point is to examine the specific forms class antagonism and class exploitation in a capitalist society like South Africa has taken. This is essential because South African state is firstly, a product of capitalism and it exists on the basis of the fact that it is a specific form of capitalist exploitation which is based on the extraction and expropriation of surplus value. This hinges essentially on capitalist social relations of productions. The South African political society is considered as a peripheral because the state constitutes a direct instrument of capitalist accumulation (Sujata, 2020).

For proper understanding of context in which conflict situations arise in Post-apartheid South African state, Laudau (2015), posits that in peripheral state of RSA, there is accretion of powers of control and regulations over the dominant class in the hands of powerful state; the dominant classes do not have direct control over the state. The overdeveloped state has powers that are beyond its functions. The fact remains that being a state emerged from apartheid, the foreign bourgeoisie make up the powerful elements in the class structure of the RSA state; because of the economic desires and needs, the external bourgeoisie used the state and its instruments to subjugate and suppress South African indigenous social classes.

The treatment of black migrants by black South Africans is indicative of the subjugation and internalized racism. Welissglass (2020) argues that the pattern of internalizing and transferring racism-insults, criticisms, slurs and violence- are rooted in genocide, slavery, subjugation, conquest and exploitation. When people are hurt and not allowed to heal through emotional release, they are pulled to re-enact the hurt on someone else. This follows the logic that the abused becomes abusers. Black South Africans were greatly disadvantaged by the apartheid regime that objectified them as inferior. Legislations were used to ensure that black South Africans were treated and conceptualized as second class people, unworthy of rights. The exclusion that they suffered is now being projected into migrants. Nyamnjor (2017) argues that migrants are targeted because of their blackness by a society where skin colour served as an excuse for whole categories of discriminating practices. This provides a plausible explanation of why negative sentiments are directed at African migrants, other African nationals and some South African sympathizers. It also explains why black shopkeepers from the African continent and not Pakistanis or Chinese shopkeepers are targeted. Laudau (2015:36) confirms this assertion in the following statement: In rural areas, one sees a lot of Pakistanis and Chinese shopkeepers but they are not being killed- it seems to be taken as a special affront when a foreign black person owns a business.

Coupled with the fact that the government has not delivered on promises made in 1994, this internalization has manifested itself in name calling like Makwerekwe,

NgwaNgwa and host of other derogatory names; the creation of negative perception of migrants and in extreme cases violence. No wonder, Sujata (2021) stated that xenophobia is an open access. They target Somalis, people from Burundi, Zimbabwe, Nigeria and host of other black African nationals. Abudul (2021), in his effort to a holistic definition of xenophobia, sees xenophobia as a more than the irrational hatred of foreigners; the reason is that after the 1994 elections, there were promises made to the people and they did not get that. So they think that the little they have are being shared with people from African countries who have come to South Africa, and they do not want that; they believed their jobs and women are being taken which is a misconception. In reaction to this, Seeking &Natras (2015:34) argued that poor service delivery, dysfunctionality and poverty contributed to these attacks on the foreigners.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this work rested on Relative deprivation. Relative deprivation theory is a variant of social evaluation theory. It formalizes the relationships between social comparisons leading to outcomes unfavourable to the individual or the individual's membership group and variety of behavioural outcomes. Thus, RD theory, especially fraternalistic varieties addresses Categorization-Identity-Comparison (CIC) theory directly. In CIC theory, individuals evaluate their social identifications and social identities by comparing the membership group with some referent other; if the evaluation proves to be negative, the individual experiences relative deprivation and is motivated to one of several possible behaviours, ranging from changing membership in the negatively evaluated group to changing the dimensions of comparison (Pettigrew, 1967).

The major proponents of this theory are Samuel Stouffer, Ted Gurr, Walter Runciman and Davis. Stouffer (1949) initiated with his study of the American soldiers a theoretical direction, followed by Davis (1959) and Runciman (1966) that treats RD as a result of an intergroup comparison and uses it to explain social phenomena. Runciman culminated this specification of RD in intergroup terms by distinguishing fraternal from egoistic RD. In an extensive study of the British working class, Runciman found his respondents typically made comparisons between their friends and relatives within their own social category rather than broad comparisons between their group and other groups.

Runciman (1966) contends that only fraternalistic RD and its attendant feelings of social injustice can instigate social action. In the same vein, Caplain and Paige (1968) maintained that fraternalistic RD was responsible for riot participation by black Americans than egoistic RD. In a similar research, Mann (1983) found same when studying the protest orientations of a sample of unemployed persons in Australia. Pettigrew (1967), in his work concluded that fraternalistic RD was a much stronger predictor of black unrest in the 1960s than was egoistic RD and that the greatest reluctance to support black political candidates and the most negative images of black candidates were found among those whites who were fraternally, not egoistically, deprived.

Accordingly, Gurr and Crosby (1970) reformulate RD in individualistic terms and emphasize egoistic rather than fraternalistic RD. For Gurr, RD is a perceived discrepancy between an individual's subjective value expectations and value capabilities. Value expectations denote the goods and conditions of life to which individuals believe they are rightly entitled; and value capabilities refer to the goods and conditions of life they think they are capable of attaining. Gurr (1970) states that relative deprivation may occur when expectations remain constant but capabilities decline; expectations increase but capabilities decline; and expectations increase while capabilities remain stable; increase in expectations

without increase in level of capabilities result in relative deprivation which manifest in violence.

Relative deprivation theory suggests that the psychological factor of relative deprivation is a key factor in explaining social unrest. The feeling of relative deprivation derives from the subjective feelings of dissatisfaction based on the perception that one is getting less than one entitled to. This gap between reality and aspiration means that it is likely that social unrest will develop (Harris, 2017). It is because this feeling of deprivation has its origin in socio-economic that are placed in this grouping.

Research Methodology

The method of research design focused on the nature of the study as well as the structures, conditions and procedures relevant to the study. Thence, the main concern at this stage is on the identification of the key variables, methods of data generation and analysis and the research format. The independent variables in this research were the nature of state, poverty and unemployment, while variable considered dependent in this research was xenophobic violence.

For this research work, the research design chosen was that of a qualitative research design. This was chosen to conduct a descriptive and explanatory study on Post-apartheid xenophobic violence and the crisis of development in South Africa; in order to carry out this research work effectively, content analysis and thematic data analysis were adopted. A qualitative study was considered necessary because the study was geared at systematically and logically examining problematic issue under study.

However, the research is located in the broader research of xenophobic violence in South Africa. The thematic data analysis was used to validate what the current body of research explained. Furthermore, the research design and methods yielded valid answers to the chosen research questions and threw more light on the explanatory value of current xenophobic violence in South Africa.

Poverty and Unemployment Condition of Black South Africans

The policy frameworks that have shaped the South African growth path are not simply neo-liberal rather, they constitute a complex mix of free market and social democratic elements (Seeking &Natras, 2015). These elements are organized around a nationalist project of modernization through global economic integration that seeks to use the benefits of globalization and economic growth within a broadly redistributive project (Seeking & Natras, 2015)); this project was not informed by an understanding of the downsides of economic integration. The ANC's redistributive programme focused on the centrality of racial rather than class divides, and the largely urban based, middle class policy makers of ANC had little real understanding of the realities facing black rural South Africans and urban migrants.

The neo-liberal policy innovations and protective re-regulation were deployed in a package intended to serve the interest of nationalist modernization and redistribution. In the last years of Apartheid era, the extensive system of regulatory and fiscal protection that had sustained commercial white agriculture from the 1940s onward was already in the process. Under the ANC, this was accelerated partly in order to ensure access for South African products to overseas markets, but also in the hope those inefficient white farmers, who supposedly owed their survival to Apartheid era market distortions, would be shaken out of the system, creating opportunities for emergent black farmers (Hall, 2017). At the

same time, a sweeping package of legislative measures was passed to protect the labour rights and entrench the tenure rights of farm workers (Ewer t& Du Toit, 2018). The effects, however, was the opposite of what was intended. In the aggregate, access to over sea's market did benefit South African agriculture; but these benefits were largely captured by those who had already leveraged in the system and who were able to compete in global markets (Ewert& Du Toit, 2018).

Similar changes soon took place downstream among food processors and retailers (Igumbor et al, 2018). The growth of market power in input and output markets in turn encouraged concentration in the productive sector itself. Both in over sea's market and locally the growing importance of economics of scale within the value chain governance created strong pressure towards scale; creating an environment in which survival as a productive enterprise required farmers to get big or get out (Mather, 2019). Over the course of 20 years, the total number of farming units operating in the South African commercial sector were reduced almost by half dropping from around 60,000 in 1994 to 35,000 in 2013 (Okuniola et al, 2016). Food production is increasingly dominated by a small number of large consolidated farms and food processors; in 2015, it was estimated that some 80% of the food in South Africa's retail outlets are produced by the 20% of the farmers (Cousins, 2016).

The dynamics resulted in an overall reduction of the employment creation capacity of South African agriculture. The legislation created to protect workers' rights and farm worker tenure did little to hold back the tide. In fact, they seem to have exacerbated those tendencies, as farmers responded to labour market re-regulation by retrenching all but the most essential workers from their permanent on-farm labour force and pre-emptively evicting workers to prevent the establishment of long term tenure rights (Du Toit& Ally, 2020). In the first ten years after apartheid, there were 940,000 forced evictions from commercial farmlands, and a total of 2.3 million farm dwellers were displaced-people pushed off the land, not by the racist processes of Apartheid dispossession but by the normal dynamics of capitalist economic growth (Wegerif et al, 2016).

A similarly depressing impact on local employment generation follows from the penetration of rural landscapes by large, national or international supermarket retailers with tightly governed, highly integrated and centralized distribution network; not only does this encouraged a race to the bottom in local markets, crowding out local entrepreneurs and shopkeepers but their supply chains often bypass local producers (Peterseen, 2021). In many of South Africans rural areas, therefore, including those that feature relatively dynamic forms of large scale commercial farming, primary agriculture makes a relatively small contribution to local employment, while the local non-farm economy is de-linked from agriculture; and dependent on fiscal transfer and service industries (Neves &Hakiziimena, 2015).

A sociological analysis of the nature of inequality in South Africa fifteen years after the coming of democracy reveals a class structure strikingly similar to that which pertained at the end of Apartheid; at the top was an upper class consisting of 17% households that together commanded 55% of income; below them is an intermediate grouping, the 46% of households that belong to the lower middle class and the organized industrial working class; this is another 35% of household income. At the bottom of the hierarchy are the households belonging to some fragmented and marginalized underclass- precarious workers, farm labourers, the landless rural poor, and those surviving at the fringes of the

informal economy. Together, these groupings making up some 35% of South African households that earn about 10% of household income (Seekings &Natrass, 2015).

A significant number of this underclass is composed of poor and landless people who had migrated to towns and cities; sometimes in search of jobs but increasingly do seek access to some of the benefits and services the state offered. Many of these are farm workers and ex-farm workers living on the commercial farm lands, informal shanty-towns and RDP settlements around smaller urban centers. The greatest concentration of poverty, however, is still to be found in the former Bantustan areas (Nobel et al, 2019).

Crucially, the limited livelihood prospect of all these marginalized populations-the rural pensionarat, displaced farm workers, and mobile per-urban migrants- are all shaped by the formal and informal links that continue to connect urban and rural economies. One important part of this dynamics is constituted by the spatially extensive value chains, distribution networks and payment systems that allow players in the urban economy to colonize economic opportunities, access market and lock in customers in the rural areas (Philip, 2020).

According to Neil (2016), it is hard to comprehend the current crisis without fully accounting for the circumstances that shaped South Africa's socio-economic and cultural-historical background. Putting these factors together, Zondi (2018) says that it is the way in which indigenous black South Africans inhabitants on the outskirts of towns, in response to intolerable socio-economic conditions such as cries against overcrowding and bad settlements, unemployment, poverty and neglect, blame outsiders for their plights.

The cause of poverty in rural South Africa stem from historically generated power inequalities. These have not been substantially altered by the configurations of power which have emerged since the transition to democratic rule. Taking the long view, one can observe a shift in the class basis of the state from the infamous alliance between gold and maize (Trapido, 2019); to one dominated by an alliance between industrial, financial and mining capital in the 1970s and 1980s, with landowners playing a less important role. In the 1990s, there has been a further weakening of landowners, particularly the small landowners who have been squeezed out the farming sector by rising real interest rates, and a rapprochement between capital and the small, African middle class.

In 1994, ANC introduced Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), which was geared towards addressing some of the most glaring inequalities of the apartheid era and the imperatives of the political settlement which underplay the transition to democratic rule. The RDP did not envisage large scale redistribution in most sectors, though it did make a commitment to a major land reform. It planned for ambitious programmes of house construction and service provision, as well as making commitments to address economic imbalances and democratize the economy (Trapido, 2019). The New government made a significant impact on provision of infrastructure, housing and services to both urban and rural South Africans. Racially based restrictions in the labour, housing and land markets were removed and there is now formal equality of opportunity in the education system (Mario, 2016). The RDP was abandoned in 1996 and replaced by a neo-liberal "growth, employment and redistribution programme", which aimed at boosting jobs and growth through promoting exportation and privatization. This shift of emphasis was intended to make the South African economy more attractive to foreign direct investment, expand exports, make the public finances more sustainable and stimulate economic growth.

Employment fell during the 1990s and early 2000s and rose slightly only in 2005. Jobs in manufacturing and mining which have long been central to the livelihoods of many working-class families mirrored these trends. Manufacturing employment fell from 1.49 million in 1994 to 1.35 million in 2003, rising slightly to 1,28 million in 2004 (Stats SA, 2015), mining employment fell from just under 800,000 in 1984 to just 600,000 in 1994 and 450,000 in 2004 (Department of Minerals and Energy, 2015). Employment in mining and quarrying continued to decline between 2004 and mid-2005, rising slightly thereafter (Stats SA, 2015).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Xenophobic attacks against African migrants in South Africa are unique in because of its selective nature in terms of looting, killings and destruction of properties. The study identifies that the evils of xenophobic violence in South Africa is largely motivated by factors such as legacy of apartheid policy, poverty, unemployment and political corruption. The violence is compounded by the inability of the various political administrators at the local, province and centre to address the problem of rooted discriminations, resentment, feelings of usurpation of indigenous land and denials of adequate social by communities that perceive themselves as the true owners of the land. These factors have combined to prolong the violence being perpetrated, especially against lives and properties of innocent African nationals and migrants in South Africa. The xenophobic violence against other black African nationals living in South Africa is becoming a cog in the wheel of development in South Africa and need to be sincerely addressed.

 Based on report of the study, it is recommended that government should create an environment devoid of any form of socio-economic and political discrimination; the various existing state institutions should be geared towards serving the interests of the populace not that of the ruling political class; there is, also, an urgent need to address the alarming rate of poverty and unemployment among the South African youths by establishing youth empowerment programs really designed to empower the teeming black South African youths with skills for self-employment.

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