

## **Apartheid Legacy in Post Apartheid Xenophobic Violence and Crisis of Development in South Africa**

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### **Abstract**

*The study examined how apartheid legacy has contributed to post-apartheid xenophobic violence and crisis of development in South Africa. A qualitative research approach and explanatory research design was adopted for the study. One research question and one research hypothesis guided the study. Data was also collected through interviews, textbooks, archival materials, journals, internet, government gazettes, periodicals, newspapers, conferences and seminar papers, magazines, etcetera for the analysis of the variables under investigation. The research interview questions were content validated by an expert in the field of social research while discriminatory method was used to ascertain the reliability of the data collection instruments. Qualitative tool such as the narrative analytic technique was adopted for the data analysis. Findings revealed that apartheid legacy contributed to xenophobic violence in South Africa. The study concluded that legacy apartheid related issues have combined to prolong the violence being perpetrated, especially against lives and properties of innocent African nationals and immigrants in South Africa. It was recommended that the communities that are already identified to be very violent need to be steadily giving properly reorientation aimed at shunning discrimination and any act that is capable of harming and destroying lives and properties.*

**Keywords:** *Apartheid Legacy, Post-Apartheid, Xenophobic Violence, Crisis, Development, South Africa.*

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### **Introduction**

The legacy of apartheid is conceived as a legacy of inequality, including but are not limited to economic inequality, social inequality and political inequality, and unequal evolution of South African political culture. It is believed to be traceable to disproportionate political orientation and consciousness among the South Africa's four main racial communities, such as: Africans, whites, coloured and South Africans of Asian origin. Throwing more light to this, James, (2022) argues that while most of while communities were exposed with experiences

necessary for developing the attitudes and skills necessary to play the role of a citizen in a democratic state, most South Africans (black majority) were neither taught democratic values nor allowed to gain the experience necessary for participation in democratic politics. This gap created undue discriminations among the various categories of inhabitants and citizenry. Supporting this, International Organization for Migration (2019) posits that before 1994, migrants 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 (Bernstein, 2019).

Due to wars, unrest, economic hardship and hostilities in most African countries, some African and non-African 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. Overtime, 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).

In January 1995, the immigrants from Malawi, Zimbabwe and Mozambique living in the Alexandra Township were physically assaulted for several weeks as armed gangs identified suspected undocumented migrants and marched them to police stations in an attempt to clean the Township of foreigners (Human Science Research Council, 2018). In September 1998, a

Mozambican national and two Senegalese citizens were thrown out of a train. The assault was carried out by a group returning from a rally and the group blamed foreigners for unemployment, crime and the spread of AIDS (Human Rights Watch, 1998). In 2000, seven foreigners were killed in Cape Flats over five weeks in what Police described as xenophobic murder possibly motivated by the fear that outsiders would claim property belonging to locals. In the last week of 2005 and first week of 2006, at least, four people, including two Zimbabweans died in the Olievenhoutbosch settlement after foreigners were blamed for the death of a local man; shacks belonging to foreigners were set ablaze and locals demanded that Police remove all immigrants from the area. Attacks on foreign nationals increased markedly in late 2007 and it is believed that there were, at least, a dozen attacks between January and May 2008. The most severe incident occurred on the 8 of January, 2008 when two Somali shop owners were murdered in the Eastern Cape Town of Jeffrey Bay and East London (Human Science Research Council, 2018). In March 2008, seven people were killed including Zimbabweans, Pakistanis and a Somali national after their shops and shacks were set ablaze in Atteridgeville near Pretoria; it resulted in the death of several people and hundreds were injured (SAHO, 2019).

In all of this, there is no clear study that clarified the role that apartheid legacy has played in compounding the issue of violence in South Africa. It is based on the foregoing observation that the current study is on the apartheid legacy in post apartheid xenophobic violence and crisis of development in South Africa. It aimed at enquiring into how apartheid legacy has been contributing to the reoccurring post apartheid xenophobic violence and the developmental crisis it generated in South Africa.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Since mid-2000s when the incident of attacks on foreigners occurred in South Africa, the country has witnessed hundreds of xenophobic related riots and violence. According to Mayaka (2019), on 12th May, 2008, a series of riots erupted in the Township of Alexandra leading to the killing of two people. Recent studies showed that migrants across South Africa face many difficulties ranging from discrimination and prejudice to outright violence and intimidation, with xenophobia being at the centre stage (Hickel, 2020). The hostility and violence directed at foreigners have become integral features of everyday life in cities like Johannesburg, Pretoria, Port-Elizabeth and Cape Town. It is hard to establish the ill-treatment of migrants because the available evidence consists largely of sensational media accounts due to apartheid legacies and misleading orientations (Camaroff, 2016).

In addition, Crush (2018) documented a daily pattern of violence perpetrated against foreign black migrants by South Africans residing in Cape Town informal settlements, whereby refugee communities were forced off their dwellings and their property looted by South Africans. Attacks on black African immigrants were reported in Mashumelele in Cape Town in 2006 and Mother-well in Port-Elizabeth in 2007; shops owned by Somalis were burnt and looted, and shop-keepers killed because of business competition (Camaroff, 2016). To this end, this study interrogates the apartheid legacy in post-apartheid xenophobic violence and crisis of

development in South Africa.

### **Research Question**

1. To what extent is apartheid legacy fuelling xenophobic attacks against African migrants in South Africa?

### **Research Hypothesis**

1. Apartheid legacy contributed to xenophobic violence in South Africa

### **Literature Review**

#### **Apartheid Legacy and Xenophobic Violence in South Africa**

Apartheid has had a disastrous impact on South Africa's political culture. As Esterhuysen (2020) notes, apartheid left its mark on three fundamental dimensions of the South African political system: its value systems, structures and political culture. Similarly, De-Lange (2018) agrees that a lingering apartheid memory continues to restrict the development of trust and allegiance in the new political dispensation and its institution. Most South Africans (the black majority) were never allowed to practice the values vital for democracy; so it would not be surprising to find that vast inequalities in democratic values characterized contemporary South Africa, especially in the early days of the transition. As the well-respected Mamphela (2020) notes, the military culture that came with guerrilla warfare added to the entrenchment of an authoritarian culture. The political culture that evolved was antithetical to democratic principles and practices that embody respect for individual rights and tolerance for different viewpoints.

Moreover, differences in attitudes toward democracy may be a product of state public policy (the force) (Ellis, 2015); such differences may hold profound consequences for the consolidation of South Africa's democratic transition. According to Matles (2016), it is not surprising that earlier research has pointed toward important differences in the beliefs, values and preferences of different segments of the South African mass public; for instance, after discovering that attitudinal commitments to democracy in South Africa are not widespread, Thiel (2015) is, especially, critical of black South Africans, arguing that South African blacks attached as much as importance to narrowing the gap between rich and poor as to having regular elections, party competition, free speech and minority rights; although, it is not exactly clear why they assumed that economic equality is necessary in competition with democratic governance (Taylor, 2016).

The Native Land Act (No.27 of 1913) was the first major piece of segregation legislation passed by the Union of South Africa and this limited the amount of land which black people could own to 7% of the total land in South Africa (Scheepers, 2019). This was later increased to 13% under the 1936 Native Trust and Land Act. This own-able land was limited to specific reserves outside of which black people were prohibited from buying or owning. In the same vein, Robert (2022) maintains that 93% of the total land in South Africa was reserved for whites, who at that time made up less than 20% of the total population. Because the land in the native reserve areas were under communal tenure overseen by African chiefs, it could not be bought, sold or

used as surety; thus severely limiting the ability of black people to create wealth and access funding for entrepreneurship or personal development. Black people who did move to reserves often could not find enough fertile lands to use for crops and were restricted to small parcels of land not significant enough for commercial farming. Black farmers were also denied any government aid in the forms of loans and as a result found it impossible to compete with white farmers who could use improved technology and expand their farm land. The reserves/homelands, served essentially as labour reservoirs, housing the unemployed and releasing them when their labour was needed in white South African (Robert, 2022). In reacting to this assertion, Schreiter (2022) posits that the Land Act effectively dispossessed and locked black people into servitude.

The legacy of land dispossession continues today with the recent land audit claiming that black people own less than 2% of rural land and less than 7% of urban land. The legacy of the 1913 Native land Act must not only be measured in terms of the actual act of dispossession, as significant as that is, but perhaps more significantly in the legacy which that dispossession was designed to create legacies of generational wealth and resources, educational and social mobility, better access to health and welfare services, increased access to job and wealth creation opportunities, as well as the subsequent access to more and better land which land ownership opened up; thus expanding and increasing the circles of wealth and access to opportunities for the initial white land owners.

The Bantu Educational Act, No. 47 of 1953 enforced separate and unequal education on racial grounds. Essentially this act enacted into law an education for servitude for black children (Wilson, 2015). Hendrick Verwoed, the then Minister of Native Affairs argued that black education should be inferior to that of white education as black people should only be trained for unskilled labour. The Bantu Education Act saw more black children attend school; it was with the aim of creating a permanent underclass of labourers of black people (Wilson, 2015). The conditions and resources in which black children were to be educated were thus wholly disproportionate and unequal as compared to white children. The legacy of decades of inferior education has meant a legacy of structural under-development for black, Indian and coloured schooling, which has had a knock-on effect of early school leaving thus continuing the somewhat inevitable cycle of unemployment, crime, low-paying manual labour and generational poverty. This very legacy which the Bantu educational system was designed to promote the permanent underclass dependent upon the white mining and industrial sectors for employment and survival; also, was intent to create a permanent sense of inferiority among black people.

The apartheid laws such as Mines and Work Act No. 25 of 1926 and Minimum wages Act were designed to prevent black people from competing with white people for certain categories of jobs. Skilled labour was generally reserved for whites only, although coloured were also permitted to perform some skilled labour jobs. The monopoly on skilled labour created not only greater prosperity for the white population but the means by which to ensure the increase of that prosperity and an employment market which guaranteed them favourable employment and opportunity for progression (Scheepers, 2019). Both the skills and the prosperity which those skills brought enabled further material prosperity, further access to increased skills development

and career advancement as well as access to better educational opportunities and health care. The higher skill lands, as well as, increased wealth brought with it increased societal influence in order to further increase prosperity and ensure a legacy in which that prosperity and privileges can increase inter-generationally. The legacy of job reservation can be felt today not only in the skills and wealth accumulated through inter-generational job-security but also in terms of ability to acquire property in desirable areas, social capital found in networks of relationship with others who have access to opportunities and resources, increased educational opportunities for children and other family members, ability to travel and enjoy family holidays, the disposable income to invest or secure inheritance.

Apartheid laws not only bestowed innumerable privileges of wealth and opportunities on white people; it also systematically impoverished and marginalized the black majority. Many of the inequalities created and maintained by apartheid still remain in South Africa. The country has one of the most unequal income distribution patterns in the world; approximately 60% of the population earns less than R42,000 per annum; whereas 2.2% of the population has an income exceeding R360,000 per annum (Wikipedia,2015). Poverty in South Africa is still largely defined by skin colour, with black people making up around 90% of the country's poor population; subsequently, the government has implemented a policy of Black Economic Empowerment; 80% of farming land still remains in the hands of white farmers (Wikipedia, 2015). Race still remains a major factor in the way South Africa is governed. In September 2006, the ANC government demanded that every employed person in South Africa sign a race classification document; in this document a person had to classify himself or herself as white, Indian, coloured or African. The reasons given by the government was that the classification was necessary to see if companies followed the ANC's policy of black economic empowerment.

### **Research Methodology**

The study applied a qualitative research approach and adopted explanatory research design for logic and systematic examination of issues based on research propositions and analysis of generated data. The study relied on qualitative type of data and consulted a lot of documentary sources for data. Data was also collected through interviews, textbooks, archival materials, journals, internet, government gazettes, periodicals, newspapers, conferences and seminar papers, magazines, etcetera for the analysis of the variables under investigation.

The research interview questions subjected to content validation by an expert in the field of social research. He examined the design in terms of importance and appropriateness of the contents before the final draft of the instrument. On the other hand, for reliability of the instrument, the researcher adopted the item discriminatory method on selected xenophobic violence in South Africa. This ensured that the relationship between the key variables of the study were properly examined and confirmed reliable.

Qualitative tool such as the narrative analytic technique was adopted for the data analysis. This ensured a detailed description and interpretation of observed events and interactions in the study.

## **Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussions**

**Research Question 1:** To what extent is apartheid legacy fuelling xenophobic attacks against African migrants in South Africa?

**Respondents' views based on how legacy of apartheid policy has impacted on South Africans attitudes towards foreigners, especially, the black African migrants**

A respondent argued that apartheid policy had a serious impact on the life of an average black South African. According to her, apartheid policy institutionalized racial segregation, creating separate and unequal living conditions for different racial groups. Non-white individuals were systematically disadvantaged in terms of access to education, health-care, employment and housing while the white minority enjoyed privileged status and better resources. . in the same vein, another respondent agreed with the assertion made by the other respondent ; he posits that the apartheid government implemented forced removals , forcibly displacing millions of non-white individuals from their homes and communities. These forced removals disrupted social structures, destroyed established neighborhoods and caused immense hardship for those affected; the policy designated specific areas as “homelands” or Bantustans” for different racial groups. Those areas were often economically marginalized and lacked adequate resources and infrastructures. He further stated,” Apartheid introduced a segregated education system that perpetuated inequality; non-white students received an inferior education with limited resources, poorly trained teachers and curriculum designed to reinforce racial hierarchies “.

According to Goodman (2017), the end of apartheid was supposed to be a beginning of new era and change in the socio-economic and political life of the people but it was not as expected. Ms. Judith Sikade, 69, envisioned escaping the townships, where the government had forced black people to live. She aimed to find work in Cape Town, trading her shack for a home with modern conveniences. For more than two decades, Ms. Sikade has lived on the garbage-strewn dirt of cross-roads Township, where thousands of black families have used splintered boards and mental sheets to construct airless hovels for lack of anywhere else to live. In the history of Civil-rights, South Africa lays claim to a momentous achievement- the demolition of apartheid and the construction of a democracy; but for black South Africans, who account for three-fourths of the nation of roughly 55 million people, political liberation has yet to translate into broad material gains. Apartheid has essentially persisted in economic form. This reality is palpable as turmoil now seizes South Africa. Enraged protesters demanded the ouster of President Jacob Zuma over disclosures of corruption so high-level that is often described as state capture, with private interests having effectively purchased the power to divert state resources in their direction; the economy keels in recession, worsening an official unemployment rate reaching nearly 28 percent (Goodman, 2017:10).

Underlying the anger are deep-seated disparities in wealth. In the aftermath of apartheid, the government left land and other assets largely in the hands of predominantly white elite. The government's resistance to large-scale land transfers reflected its reluctance to rattle international investors. Millions of black South Africans are chronically short of capital needed to start business; less than half of the working age population is officially employed. The governing

party, the African National Congress (ANC), built empires of new housing for black South Africans but concentrated them in the Townships, reinforcing the geographic structures of apartheid. Large swaths of the black population remain hunkered down in squalor; on land they do not legally own. Those with jobs often endure commutes of an hour or more on private mini-buses that extract outsize slices of their pay-checks (Goodman, 2017). Therefore, apartheid policy has had a serious impact on the life of an average black South African.

**Hypothesis 1:** Apartheid legacy contributed to xenophobic violence in South Africa

### **Apartheid legacy and xenophobic violence in South Africa**

Like every other factors considered in the quest for reasons why African migrants were attacked in South Africa, the effect of apartheid policy was not left out. Apartheid was a system of racial segregation and discrimination that was in place from 1948 to 1994. The word “Apartheid” actually came from Afrikaans meaning apartness; it was a policy enforced by the South African government which aimed at maintaining the political, economic and social dominance of the White minority population (Goodman, 2017). During apartheid, people in South Africa were classified into four racial groups, namely: White, Black, Coloured (mixed race) and Indian/Asia. These classifications determined where people could live, work and study. The government created separate areas called “homelands” or Bantustans” for each racial group; but resources and opportunities in these areas were severely limited compared to what the white population had access to (Sadler, 2019).

According to Sadler (2019:8), the government introduced a bunch of discriminatory laws that ensured the separation and oppression of non-white individuals; the government also imposed pass laws, which restricted the movement and rights of non-white individuals. Black people had to carry passbooks containing personal information and permission to enter certain areas; if they failed to produce a valid passbook they could be arrested, thrown in jail, or even deported. Based on the foregoing, apartheid legacy contributed to xenophobic violence in South Africa.

### **Conclusion**

Xenophobic attacks against black African nationals in South Africa are very unique because of its looting, exploiting, killing, vandalism and selective nature. The study identifies that the evil of xenophobic violence in South Africa is hugely motivated by apartheid legacy. The violence is compounded by the inability of the various political administrations at the centre, provinces and local levels to address the problem of rooted discriminations, resentment, feeling of usurpation of indigenous land and denials of adequate social by communities that perceive themselves as the true owners of the land. These legacy apartheid related issues have combined to prolong the violence being perpetrated, especially against lives and properties of innocent African nationals and immigrants in South Africa. The xenophobic violence against other African nationals living in South Africa is becoming a cog in the wheel of development in South Africa and need to be sincerely addressed.



## Recommendations

Based on report of the study, it is recommended that the apartheid policies aimed at promoting peace should not only exist in the books. It should be sincerely implemented without any form of prejudice against any community or race. The communities that are already identified to be very violent need to be steadily giving properly reorientation aimed at shunning discrimination and any act that is capable of harming and destroying lives and properties.

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