

Political Economy and the Dialectics of Xenophobia in Post- Apartheid South Africa

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Abstract

This article addresses the question surrounding the political economy of the dialectics of xenophobia in South Africa. Hinging on qualitative methodology, data was drawn from both primary and secondary sources using key informant interviews, focus group discussion and archival materials respectively. Field evidence and data that was interrogated and analyzed thematically using content analysis, revealed that internal discontentment and contradictions in South Africa including social and economic inequalities, corruption, leadership deficit, poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and political rhetoric that opportunistically pit indigenous, economically less privileged South Africans against foreign Africans that are in South Africa to eke out a living and carry out their legitimate economic businesses, underpin the political economy of the xenophobic violence in South Africa. It is therefore recommended that the prevailing socio-economic conditions in post-apartheid South Africa, must be conscientiously addressed in order to address the problem of xenophobia.

Keywords:

xenophobia, political economy, dialectics, inequality, materialism, South Africa

Introduction

The recurring manifestation of xenophobia in post-apartheid South Africa has attracted various academic studies, especially with regards to its causes and motivations. In recent times, foreigners in South Africa, mostly black Africans, continued to be erroneously linked to drug trafficking, prostitution, and armed robbery by South African citizens. Furthermore, the perception that foreign African workers largely occupy jobs meant for South African locals has also been one of the singsongs of South African xenophobes in perpetrating xenophobic attacks against their African brothers and sisters. Expectedly, African foreign migrants from Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Kenya, Uganda, and Nigeria populate the mining and retail sectors in South Africa. The informal sector in South Africa, which includes dry-cleaning services, restaurants, car-wash services, taxi services,

day-care services, and other businesses, is widely considered to be the standard. It is a sector that is largely dominated by the black foreigners at the expense of most indigenous South Africans who live in the townships and suburbs. This development reflects an arrangement where the foreign market-dominant African few, whom have got the material resources, time, skills and know-how, dominate indigenous South African majority whom have been historically disadvantaged under apartheid, in the economic or market circles in South Africa, due to inferior levels of education. The disadvantaged and dominated majority cum South African citizens constantly see the market-dominant African foreigners who happen to be the minority as threats and obstacles to their supposedly rightful claims to what is perceptively considered theirs (Chua, 2004). And thus, these dominant minorities must be subjected to indigenous South African majority's own dictates within the market and economic structure. Given the economic opportunities that abound and the liberalist market structure in South Africa, it is easier for individuals who are not citizens but who possess the resources, skills and literacy to thrive and establish their business ideas. This has constantly put the dominant minority African foreigners in an endless battle of economic resources with the South African indigenous citizens. The long years of apartheid equally contributed to the current manifestation of xenophobia in South Africa through its discriminatory economic, social and educational policies that deprived and relegated the South African indigenes to the background. The draconian apartheid policies of the South African government prior to 1994, consequently brought about illiteracy amongst indigenous South Africans, and further entrenched the culture of violence amongst black South Africans. Thus, South African citizens view minority African foreigners as threats, and a stumbling block hindering them from taking what is naturally theirs by virtue of their citizenship. This, combined with the apartheid government's land confiscation and sale of land to white farmers, as well as Bantustan education and segregated housing policies, further impoverished black South Africans in post-apartheid social and economic contexts (Adesina, 2019; Akinrinde, 2020). The post-apartheid dispensation, which held the promise of significant social change in the conditions of the South African blacks, turned out to largely be a ruse. The perception of receding expectations occasioned by the preponderance of slum residences, ongoing land dispossession, high unemployment among the black population; and the increasing influx and economic dominance of foreign migrants who compete with South Africans for jobs, now act as motivating factors for the increase in xenophobic sentiments amongst the indigenous South African blacks.

Although Campbell (2009) was of the view that globalization has resulted in increased international mobility and migrations, Crush and Ramachandra (2009) have argued that public rhetoric geared towards stigmatizing and vilifying migrants, under the pretext that they were responsible for the prevailing socio-economic conditions in South Africa, has given more impetus to xenophobic sentiments. One of the effects of globalization is that it has facilitated international migration. Consequently, migrants were often pitted against indigenes mostly in their respective quest to meet their economic and material needs. For Brown Harris, the manifestation of xenophobia may not be fully appreciated without an adequate understanding of the prevailing socio-economic conditions in the country that readily spur South Africans into scapegoating black foreigners (Harris, 2002). This, for Harris (2002), is exacerbated by the ignition of xenophobic rhetoric by some South African officials. Corroborating Harris's position, Adesina (2019) reiterated not

just the culpability of the growing discontentment and harsh trappings of globalization across the globe, but also the prevalence of unemployment, social vices, crimes and other economic unpleasantries in South Africa that readily trigger South Africans' frustrations and xenophobic resentment towards black foreigners in South Africa.

On the other hand, the revelations from South Africa's Deputy Commissioner, Dr. Bobby Moroc of the South African High Commission in Nigeria, have been different. For the diplomat:

“There are some facts we must appreciate about South Africa. No doubts, Africa and most especially the frontline states supported South African people in their time of need. Nigeria, despite not being a frontline state based on geography, rendered brotherly support to the anti-apartheid struggle. This is to tell you that South Africa's history whenever it is being said will never be complete without Africa, and even Nigeria. However, we must recognize that South Africa came from a bitter past; a past where its shores were closed against the rest of the world; a past where the black South Africans had one common enemy: the whites; a past where seclusion, discrimination, exploitations, dehumanization, crimes and apartheid were the orders of the day. On the dawn of new hope, a new faith, and a new belief in 1994, the once secluded rainbow nation opened its borders to the rest of Africa and the world in general. The hope occasioned by the defeat of the apartheid system was celebrated by all. The influx of people from all walks of life into South Africa created two versions of immigrants in South Africa: the legal or documented migrants and the illegal or undocumented migrants. Crimes and other criminal activities thus found a fertile ground amongst the undocumented migrants. In connivance with some elements amongst the South African people, some of the undocumented migrants became drugs mercenaries and promoters of scams, frauds, prostitutions and human trafficking. Most South African youths had thus been rendered useless as a result of the prevalence of these crime-chains and drug cartels and merchandise in South Africa. Whilst being conscious of their bitter past and how much blow crimes of these nature can deal on a nation, some South African people resorted to taking laws into their hands in their bid of preventing the reoccurrence of the past” (KII/Diplomat/Abuja/2019).

It is therefore important to appreciate and reckon with the prevalence of crimes and undocumented migrants in the rise of xenophobic resentment amongst some South African people. While acts of xenophobia in any guise are legally at variance with the letters of South African law and international law, it is believed that a holistic examination of the interplays of the triggering factors of xenophobia in South Africa would be necessary in addressing it. Poverty and limited access to social and economic resources by South African masses are, for Bobby Moroc, of great concern. The majority of South Africans from the rural areas and townships are believed to have felt sabotaged by “outsiders” that are now competing with them for the limited resources in the land, without minding the fact that they are the rightful heirs to the thrones. Since South Africa is a rainbow nation that provides great opportunities to both indigenes and non-indigenes and since the constitution states that South Africa belongs to those who live there, it is incumbent on the South African government to address the growing social and economic disparities. Though attempts to counter poverty have intensified, the increasing level of poverty should be of great concern to the South African government.

Contextually, there abound several contexts to how the politics of xenophobia is manifesting in South Africa. Basically, xenophobia could manifest in the form of a physical attack and attitudinal posture (Adesina, 2019). However, evidence from the field reveals several contexts in which xenophobia had been manifesting in South Africa since the emergence of democracy. It could manifest in the form of a feeling that can either be overt or covert. In another instance, it may manifest in attitude, character, behaviour, thoughts, speeches, actions or attacks which is the most prevalent and common. For instance, it was reported by a United Kingdom based newspaper that the Zulu King, Zwelithini may have equally been culpable in xenophobic outbursts in South Africa when he, on March 20th 2015, remarked when addressing a cheering South African crowd that: “Let us pop our head lice. We must remove ticks and place [them] outside in the sun. We ask foreign nationals to pack their belongings and be sent back (News-24, 2019).”

Whilst one may be tempted to restrict the manifestation of xenophobia to the usual physical attacks, evidence attests to the attitudinal and non-physical dimensions of xenophobia. As captured on video in 2019, the South African Deputy Police Chief was recorded commenting on the overcrowdedness of black foreigners in South Africa, it is almost incontestable to reckon with the existence of the non-physical dimension of xenophobia in South Africa. Similarly, most South African officials have been criticized for equally being culpable in the breeding of xenophobic attitudes and sentiments. This, as evidenced in a campaign video by President Cyril Ramaphosa, they do by conscious and deliberate inciting and whipping of their peoples’ sentiments against the perceived misdeeds of black foreigners in South Africa (News-24, 2019). In any event, inciting and presumed hate rhetoric by some elements among South Africa’s political class usually geared towards scoring political advantages or relevance from the electorate may not directly be responsible for the xenophobic attacks but most certainly, they contributed to existing xenophobic instincts and frustrations of the South African people.

The Political Economy of Xenophobia: A Theoretical Statement

Karl Marx popularized the political economy theory in an effort to understand why there were always the “Haves” and “Haves Nots” in any given society. The primacy of economic conditions as the driver of all modes of politics, according to Marx, is materially dialectical (Marx, 1992). Possession and accumulation of capital, which typically leads to extreme domination of the materially affluent minority over the poor majority, remains the primary motivator for all social disputes. The implication of this economic situation is that the conflict between the materially affluent and dominant minority (the “Haves”) and the materially deprived majority would continue. The material and economic inequality between these two groups was also the cause of constant conflict. The fierce struggle between the materially privileged and dominant few and the materially deprived majority was informed by the scarcity of material and economic resources within society (Akinrinde, 2020).

The relevance of the political economy theory in illuminating the politics and incessant manifestation of xenophobia in South Africa is self-evident. The theory captures the underlying politics in the continuous and constant material struggle between the foreign market-dominant minority and

the dominated indigenous market majority, who happen to be the South African citizens (Chua, 2004). As a free market democracy, South Africa encourages foreign direct investment and other forms of business ideas from foreign investors. Within this context, foreign individuals that possess the material and economic resources to invest and set up businesses in the country are permitted within the free market democratic framework. This does not undermine the rights and liberties of indigenous South African citizens to also invest, set up businesses, or take up economic activities in their homeland. As a free market economy and democracy, the South African government only formulates policies and has not been able to ensure egalitarian and equal opportunities for all in the market and economic realms. The material and economic relations between market-dominant minorities (the affluent black foreigners with vast capital) and indigenous South African majorities (who have been socially, educationally, and economically oppressed) has often resulted in market-induced conflicts, which typically turn out to be xenophobic, as in previous experiences elsewhere. These foreign ethnic minorities who, for a variety of reasons, tend to politically dominate the “indigenous” majorities around them have tended to be more educated, materially and economically capable to compete with the indigenous South Africans, the majority of whom are mostly uneducated, socially and materially deprived.

Basically, market-dominant minorities can be found all over the world. Not only in the Philippines, but across Southeast Asia, the Chinese are a market-dominant minority (Chua, 2004). In 1998, Chinese Indonesians dominated approximately 70% of Indonesia’s private sector, including all of the country’s largest conglomerates, while accounting for just 3% of the population (Chua, 2004). Similarly, in Burma, the economies of Mandalay and Rangoon have been totally taken over by Chinese. In South Africa, foreign African nationals are already becoming a market dominant minority. In a more complex context, the same is true in Brazil, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Latin America as a whole. In West Africa, the Lebanese and Chinese have become market dominant minority. The Croats also were a market dominant minority in the former Yugoslavia, using the same rationale. Market dominant minorities are regarded as the free market democracy’s Achilles’ heel in the view of Chua (Chua, 2004). Markets accumulate capital, often spectacular wealth, in the hands of a small but powerful minority, while democracy strengthens the political power of the poor majority (Chua, 2004). In these conditions, the promotion of free market liberal democracy becomes an engine of potentially catastrophic xenophobia and its latent violent politics, which pits a resentful and an economically frustrated “indigenous” South African majority against the affluent foreign black minority. The attendant market-induced confrontation and social conflicts played out in different countries across the globe including Indonesia, Sierra Leone, Venezuela, and Zimbabwe. Similarly, Americans were perceived as the world’s market-dominant minority, wielding outrageously disproportionate economic power relative to their size and numbers. As a result, the United States had become the target of widespread anger and hostility, like that which was aimed at so many other market-dominant minorities around the world (Tar, 2009). Throughout the world, global markets were bitterly perceived as reinforcing the minority’s wealth and dominance. In several societies around the world, like South Africa, that had a market-dominant minority, markets and democracy were not mutually reinforcing. This was because the pursuit of free market democracy produced highly unstable and combustible economic conditions that usually pitted the materially privileged against the materially disadvantaged. Markets concentrated enormous wealth in the hands of an “outsider” minority that had the material and economic

resources to compete, thereby, fomented ethnic envy and hatred among often chronically poor indigenous majorities who did not have the material, social, educational and economic capital to compete in the market. Still, market dominant minorities, along with their foreign-investor partners, invariably controlled the crown jewels of the economy, often symbolic of the nation's patrimony and identity. For instance, oil in Russia and Venezuela, diamonds in South Africa, silver and tin in Bolivia, and jade, teak, and rubies in Burma were chiefly controlled by the dominant minorities (Chua, 2004). The competition for votes among national political actors fostered the emergence of demagogues who scapegoated the dissenting majority against the foreigners, thereby, fomenting xenophobic movements whilst demanding that the country's wealth and identity be reclaimed by the "true owners of the nation." When free market democracy was pursued in the presence of a market-dominant minority; the almost invariable result was xenophobia. This typically took one of three forms. The first was a xenophobic backlash against the markets, that targeted the foreign market-dominant minority and their wealth. The second was a backlash against free market democracy by the indigenous majority favoring more nationalistic policies and controlled market condition that would materially empower the indigenous majority over the dominant foreign minorities. The third, and the deadliest form, was xenophobic violence, sometimes genocide that was usually directed against the foreign market-dominant minority itself. In the contest between an economically powerful ethnic minority and a numerically powerful impoverished majority for economic dominance and appropriation, the majority did not always prevail. The most ferocious kind of this xenophobia was mostly the majority-supported violence aimed at eliminating a market-dominant minority. This has played out since the veil of apartheid system was lifted in South Africa in 1994. The South African Human Rights Commission reported that indigenous South Africans alleged that foreigners were responsible for the increase in crime, and the 'stealing' of South Africans' jobs, houses and women (SAHRC, 2008). "Jobs" in this context shows the primacy of the constant struggle and quest of the indigenous South Africans to get their jobs and other economic and material opportunities back from the foreign market-dominant minority. Given the ethnic dynamics of SA, and in particular the phenomenon of market-dominant minorities, merely "empowering the poor indigenous South African majorities economically" may not be enough to cure the problem of xenophobia as projected.

Poverty, Unemployment and the Politics of Xenophobia in South Africa

Some of the promises that post-apartheid South Africa held from 1994 were, among other things, increased standard of living, high employment rate and improved literacy. These were no doubts, the motivating factors for the general acceptance and support for the anti-apartheid movements during the many years of inglorious apartheid reigns in South Africa. For Omodunbi, a scholar with many years of experience in the study of xenophobia:

The rising level of poverty, unemployment and illiteracy are undergrowth of post-apartheid system. They are prevalent amongst the black South Africans and not the South African whites. Majority of black South African on the streets is mostly unemployed and uneducated (KII/Academia/ 2019).

However, the post-apartheid realities have been far away from the manifestation of the peoples' expectations. This is aptly represented in the Living Conditions Survey (LCS) of 2015 that was

conducted by the South African Department of Statistics which revealed that approximately half (that is 49.2%) of South African adults were living below the upper-bound poverty line (UPBL) (South Africa Department of Statistics, 2015). Of this population of South African adults living below the poverty line, Gauteng and the Western Cape had the lowest proportions of adults living in poverty (South Africa Department of Statistics, 2015). The provinces with the highest numbers of adults living in poverty, according to the Living Conditions Survey by SADS, 2015, were Limpopo (67.5%), Eastern Cape (67.3%), KwaZulu-Natal (60.7%) and North-West with 59.6%. For these four provinces, significantly more than half of their populations were living in poverty. Gauteng and Western Cape therefore ranked lowest in poverty rate with 29.3% and 33.2% respectively.

Coupled with the above revelation, the unemployment rate in South Africa expectedly increased to 29% in the second quarter of 2019 from 27.6% in the previous period. As reported by Trading-Economics in South Africa, it was the highest jobless rate since 2003, as the number of unemployed rose by 455,000 to 6.65 Million. With this new unemployment rate of 2019, South Africa now falls in the category of countries with the highest unemployment rates in Africa with Congo (46.10%), Namibia (33.40%), Angola (29.00%), South Africa (29.00%), Mozambique (25.04%), Lesotho (23.60%), and Nigeria (23.10%) in first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh positions respectively (Trading-Economics, 2019). Intriguingly, the hotbeds and launching sites of the xenophobic attacks had the highest prevalence of poverty and unemployment in South Africa. Towns and suburbs in provinces like Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, North West, West Cape and Eastern Cape witnessed more xenophobic attacks than areas that fared better in Living Conditions Assessments and Employment rates.

Source: South Africa Department of Statistics (Living Conditions Survey)

Evidence demonstrates that most xenophobic attacks had taken place more in areas and townships with alarming rates of poverty and unemployment (Crush, 2008b). This argument is supported by the table below:

Table1: A Brief Litany of Xenophobic Attacks in Post-Apartheid South Africa

S/N	Town	Nature of Xenophobic Attack	Number of Casualties	Year
1.	Alexandra Township	Operation Buyelekhaya (Go back home) (Landau et al., 2005: 30)	None	1995
2.	Pretoria (Occurred in the Train)	Physical Assault of three foreign nationals in a train by South Africans after returning from a rally on the rising level of unemployment (Crush, 2001).	None but varying degrees of injuries sustained.	1998
3.		A Rwanda refugee was beaten up by a South African taxi driver because he foreign (Crush, 2001).	None but heavy injury sustained by victim	1998
4.	A Nation-wide attack	A nation-wide xenophobic attack on black foreign nationals left 30 refugees killed (SABC, 2011).	30	1999
5.	Zandspruit Natal	In August, South Africans burnt down shacks of Zimbabwean foreigners living in the settlement (Parseley, 2008).	None but loss of properties and homes, making the Zimbabwean national homeless and dejected.	2000
6.	Pretoria (Took place in the train).	A Sudanese refugee named James Diop was seriously injured after being thrown from a train in Pretoria by a group of armed South Africans (Lefto-Everett, 2008).	None but victim was badly injured.	2001
7.	Cape Town City	22 black foreign nationals were brutally stabbed in a xenophobic manner by groups of South African xenophobes (Harris, 2002).	None but fatal injuries were sustained by victims.	2001
8.	Botha Ville, Free-State	Zimbabwean and Somali refugees were fatally assaulted and beaten in Botha Ville, Free-State in 2005 (CORMASA, 2007).	None	2005
9.	A Township outside Knysna	A number of Somali shop-owners and traders were chased out of a township near Knysna. Following this xenophobic clampdown, more than 30 shops were damaged (CORMSA, 2007).	No losses of lives but properties were rampantly destroyed.	2007
10.	Cape Town	In August 2007, 13 Somali shopkeepers were found gruesomely murdered in their shops in Cape Town. Nothing was however stolen from these shops (CORMSA, 2007).	No casualty was recorded.	2007
11.	Johannesbourg	Series of coordinated xenophobic attacks that led to the death of 62 persons with more than 6,000 rendered homeless (BBC, 2019).	62 persons were reported dead with more than 6,000 persons rendered homeless.	2008

12.	South Africa	125 Nigerians reported to have been xenophobically deported from South Africa by South African Authorities on an alleged accusation of presentation of fake yellow fever certificate.	No casualty	2012
13.	Durban	Violent xenophobic attacks against african nationals by black South Africans following the Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini's remarks that foreign african nationals were responsible for crimes in South Africa (BBC, 2019)	5 foreign african nationals were reportedly killed.	April, 2015
14	Soweto Town	3 persons were reportedly killed following a violent xenophobic onslaught that ensued initiated by the black South African community against foreign african nationals in the aftermath of the reported killing of a South African Man who had robbed a shop belonging to a Somalian (BBC, 2019).	3 persons reportedly killed	August, 2018
15.	Durban	Xenophobic protests targeting African immigrants erupted in Durban on March 25, 2019. Around a hundred people targeted foreign-owned businesses, forcing around 50 people to take refuge in a nearby police station and mosque. The riot claimed the lives of three people. President Cyril Ramaphosa's speech at the ANC's election manifesto for the 2019 South African general election, in which Ramaphosa pledged to crack down on undocumented immigrants involved in illegal activities, has been blamed for inflaming xenophobia. Both the South African government and political parties condemned the attacks on foreigners (BBC, 2019).	3 were killed.	2019

16. Johannesburg	Following the death of a taxi driver on September 1, 2019, riots and looting targeting shops run by foreign nationals erupted in Jeppestown and Johannesburg. By the third day of September, 189 people had been arrested for looting. During the incident, about 50 businesses, mostly owned by Nigerians from other parts of the continent, were reportedly destroyed or damaged. The disturbances took place in the midst of a nationwide truck driver strike, which was protesting the hiring of non-South African truckers. Amid attacks on foreigners, 640 Nigerians signed up for free flights to Nigeria in September 2019. Refugees staged a sit-in demonstration in Greenmarket Square in Cape Town in response to the riots (BBC, 2019).	12 were killed.	2019
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Source: Compiled by Researcher, 2019

In this table, it is clear that aside from Pretoria and Cape Town, 90% of the areas where xenophobic attacks had taken place currently have the highest rates of poverty and unemployment in South Africa. The unavailability of jobs coupled with the pervasive level of poverty in most of the South African townships, there is however an intense contestation between indigenous South Africans and black foreign nationals (who populate the informal and township areas) over the scarcely available resources. The materialist theoretical foundation of this study, through the political-economy approach, explains the primacy of material and economic resources and substructure in the determination of the nature of the type of politics resulting therefrom. The ensuing conflagration between indigenous South Africans who had been deprived of material, social, economic, and political rights by the apartheid regime for many years and black foreign nationals over employment, trading enterprises, and scarce resources captures the inherent politics of xenophobia in South Africa. This materialist explanation has also been corroborated by Brown Harris in Scapegoating thesis. The scapegoat thesis empirically locates xenophobia within the context of the ensuing South Africa's transition from an authoritarian rule to a democracy (Harris, 2002: 170). The euphoria of freedom and the expectation of improved standard of living as well as the delivery of dividends of self-government/democracy became short-lived. The heightened expectations of South Africans in the post-apartheid state were however cut short by the failures of the ANC-led post-apartheid South African government to deliver the expectations of its people. Limited resources, the growing gap between the poor and the rich and unequal distribution of wealth and increasing poverty have all combined to contribute to the peoples' disillusionment and frustration with the post-apartheid South African state.

Xenophobia as a Symptom of the Dialectical Contradictions in South Africa

The current xenophobic politics, as evident in the preceding analysis in this study, is not actually the bane of peaceful coexistence between indigenous South Africans and African nationals in

South Africa, but rather how the politics is ignored and underutilized for the growth of the South African economy. What is disturbingly striking here is the fact that this politics (the inherent power struggle for the scarcely available economic and material resources) has however degenerated to a violent xenophobic conflict between the indigenous South Africans and their black African counterparts. This development has been compounded by how this politics and its attendant violent manifestation has been attended to or addressed by the South African government, which has largely been reactionary rather proactive.

Essentially, the South African government, through its police, had always intervened to stop the xenophobic rampage, but such attempts had always come far too late to save the situation, confirming the reactionary approach of the South African government to the xenophobic threat. Similarly, the South African Minister of Home Affairs has met with all resident Ambassadors in South Africa on a regular basis to re-assure the safety and security of all persons in South Africa, while his Nigerian counterpart, the South African High Commissioner to Nigeria, has spoken out strongly against incidents he described as embarrassing, while acknowledging the sacrifices made by Nigeria. He promised that his government would do everything in its power to prevent such humiliating events from happening again (BBC, 2019).

Whilst there are immediate triggers and long-term causes of the violent xenophobia in South Africa, much of the efforts that had been committed into addressing the xenophobic pathology by the South African government had chiefly focused on addressing the immediate triggers. Immediate triggers of xenophobia such as economic rivalry between the indigenous South Africans and foreign African nationals, high crime rate perpetrated by foreign African nationals living in South Africa, increasing numbers of undocumented or illegal African migrants in South Africa have been the focus of the South African government's point of reference in its bid to address the problem of xenophobia whilst leaving unattended the long-term causes. Corruption, social and economic inequality, poor leadership and governance, increasing unemployment and prevailing economic frustrations in the nation, lingering apartheid legacies, and a slew of other issues were virtually ignored by the South African government. In fact, it is the conviction of Professor of Defense and International Relations, David Alabi in his thought-provoking interview session that said:

Corruption is like the substructure upon which all other social issues are built upon in Africa. The level of high-profile corruption amongst the South African political elites or class naturally informs the prevailing level of social gaps and inequalities between the rich and poor South Africans, as well as the dwindling level of the economic situations and statuses of most South Africans (Alabi/Academia/KII, 2019).

Former South African president, Jacob Zuma, for instance, had lost an appeal to have his trial over a two-billion-dollar arms deal corruption case halted in a South African appeal court. This was no doubt, a fraction of some of the high-profile corruption cases that have deprived the South African people their desired good life and living standards (Akinrinde and Omitola, 2018). Though, the situation was not by any means different in other African countries, one would have however, thought that South Africa would have set the pace as the harbinger of anti-corruption practices in Africa. For Professor Femi Mimiko:

The approach the South African government had relied upon in addressing the politics and violent manifestation of xenophobia in South Africa has largely been counter-productive. This is because what the South African government has been addressing is nothing other than the peripheries of the triggering causes of problem. The deep-rooted causes such as the growing inequality between the black and white South Africans, the failure of the post-colonial South African leadership to meet the expectations of its people, high profile corruption amongst the South African political elites, and the failures of the ruling ANC in governance still subsist (Mimiko, 2019).

Furthermore:

You cannot build something on emptiness. The nature and kind of post-apartheid state the South African government is trying to construct is such that naturally fuel xenophobic resentments. The post-apartheid South African state has now been built around the rich and privileged minority whilst majority continues to wallow in acute poverty, unemployment and scarcely available social provisions (Mimiko, 2019).

Xenophobia is thus the revolution of the dashed rising expectations of the poor majority South Africans. Whilst Mimiko is equally of the view that immediate measures should be put in place to arrest and address the politics and violent physical manifestation of xenophobia in South Africa by the South African government, he extolled primarily the need for the South African government to prioritize addressing the long-term causes of xenophobia in its land. For him, the constructed post-apartheid South African state that glorifies and concentrates the scarce economic and material resources of the state in the hands of the white minority and their black South African accomplices should be reconstructed with a view to dismantling the inequalities in social and economic relations amongst the people (Mimiko, 2019). In line with professor Mimiko's thought, Professor Adigun Agbaje reiterated the need for the ANC-controlled South African government to strive in meeting the social and economic aspirations of its people (KII/ Academia/2019). This would however address the revolution of the rising expectations of the South African people that had over time been dashed. In other words, this attempt would place the South African government on the footing of pro-activeness, rather than being reactionary in method and approach of addressing the problem of xenophobia.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the politics of xenophobia in South Africa has been indicative of the internal contradictions that plague most free-market democracies, specifically developing African countries that have internalized the tenets of the liberal market system. The prevailing socio-economic conditions in post-apartheid South Africa have therefore constantly pitted most indigenous South Africans against foreign African nationals in a fierce power struggle over the scarcely available social and economic resources in South Africa. Sets of evidence from the field thus point to the culpability of factors such as high-profile corruption amongst the ruling ANC-controlled South African government; ever-rising levels of unemployment, poverty, economic inequalities and gaps between white South Africans and black South Africans; leadership deficit, and high crime rate as pre-cursors to the continued manifestation of xenophobic violence and

politics in South Africa. The responses of the South African government in addressing the politics and violent manifestations of xenophobia have largely been reactionary and yielded little or no results. The consistent manifestations and occurrences of the xenophobic attacks in post-apartheid South Africa between 1994 and 2019 have thus provided a testament to the subsistence of the menace. This is deeply tied to the fact most of the strategies and actions taken by the South African government as shown in this study had largely been targeted at the immediate causes or triggers of the xenophobic menace, whilst its long-term causes overlooked by the government. The capacity of the state to legally prosecute her erring citizens found culpable of the xenophobic attacks, as discussed in this study, is in question for reasons not far-fetched. It is therefore the argument of this study that internal discontent and contradictions in South Africa must be frontally addressed to mitigate the problem of xenophobia.

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