






Undocumented Migration, Xenophobia and The Struggle for Employment in South Africa

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ABSTRACT

This paper highlights the issues associated with undocumented immigration and xenophobic attacks directed at African immigrants in South Africa. The paper employs the scapegoat theory to interrogate the phenomenon under study. This paper solely relies on secondary data. It employs a narrative literature review as a research methodological approach. The paper argues that xenophobic attacks on African immigrants are a consequence of a combination of policy failures in South Africa, and African immigrants, due to their situation (of being undocumented), become easy scapegoats for such policy failures in the country. The paper concludes that the government needs to foster a collaborative approach to address the problem of xenophobia in South Africa. Even though issues such as poverty, inequality, and unemployment contribute to the xenophobic sentiments directed at undocumented migrants, cooperation between various stakeholders will go a long way in reducing tensions between locals and migrants. At the center of this has to be economic growth. However, growth alone will not suffice. There is a need for a concentrated advocacy campaign to help better build communication avenues between locals and foreign nationals; this is key to building a cohesive social environment.

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INTRODUCTION

Immigration can be a vital catalyst for economic growth and development. This paper suggests that immigration if properly managed, could make an essential contribution to the South African economy. The paper argues that immigration could increase the country's potential economic output by increasing the size of the workforce and helping increase productivity.

Migration involves the movement of people from their countries of origin for various reasons (Jackson & Hoque, 2022). However, the unregulated movement of people can become a source of conflict if not adequately managed because people share the same socio-economic ecosystem. In the aftermath of Apartheid, South Africa witnessed an increase in the inflow of migrants from other African countries seeking economic opportunities (Pelser, 1998). Undocumented immigration in South Africa is when a person or persons migrate from their country of origin into South Africa without authorization (no documentation) from relevant South African authorities.

There are currently no official statistics on the number of undocumented migrants in South Africa. However, estimates hover around 2 million to 2.5 million (K. Moyo, 2021; Statistics South Africa, 2021). However, the presence of undocumented migrants in the country has become a subject of debate in the wake of xenophobic attacks directed at African immigrants (Dawson & Fouksman, 2020; Granlund & Hochfeld, 2020; Webb, 2021).

Migrants are being used as scapegoats for the policy failures of the South African government to drive economic growth, create employment, and reduce poverty (Addae & Quan-Baffour, 2022). This iterative policy failure has led to scapegoating, where migrants are blamed for the increasing unemployment, lack of law and order, drug dealing, and many other social ills (Makhathini, 2019). South Africa is one of the most unequal societies in the world, and the country is struggling with the triple challenges of poverty, inequality, and unemployment (Jamieson & Van Blerk, 2021).

Therefore, this paper theorizes that issues such as violent crime, protests, and a lack of sustainable livelihoods in the country result from such policy failures, not migrants. The resurgence of anti-immigrant sentiment inside predominantly low-income South African communities, commonly called townships, has instilled fear among migrants and refugees regarding their security.

A report by the World Bank titled "Inequality in Southern Africa" elucidated the correlation between inequality and racial differences, revealing that a mere 10 per cent of the population possesses almost 80 percent of the wealth (Al Jazeera, 2022). The media and how it portrays immigrants also give rise to tensions. The impact of the media stems from its ability to shape popular

perceptions. Approximately 7% of the nation's population comprises foreign residents, equivalent to 4 million individuals. The media extensively covers their existence throughout the nation, which has incited numerous instances of xenophobic violence (Masuku & Nkala, 2023).

From 1994 to 2021, 796 incidents occurred, leading to 588 fatalities, 1,000 instances of physical assault, and the looting of about 4,700 stores held by individuals of foreign origin. Throughout its history, South Africa has experienced many incidents characterized by xenophobic confrontations between indigenous residents and individuals from other countries (Masuku & Nkala, 2023). The most severe incident occurred in 2015, leading to the closure of numerous firms operated by foreign citizens and their subsequent voluntary repatriation to their respective home countries.

The increased societal hostility towards immigrants has given rise to several organisations, like Operation Dudula and Put South Africans First. These groups assert that their actions involve "community improvement" and "enhancement of opportunities" for South Africans neglected by the national government (Al Jazeera, 2022).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper employed a qualitative research approach through the use of secondary data. This paper utilized a narrative literature review methodology. The objective of this paper was to provide a comprehensive and descriptive examination of existing scholarly literature on the implications of xenophobic attacks on African migrants.

Therefore, a narrative review methodology was deemed appropriate for this purpose. The methodology employed in this paper facilitates a comprehensive description of many narratives and arguments about xenophobia in South Africa. As a result, the research approach contributed to the existing discourse on this subject, offering a more nuanced perspective. The data was collected from reputable sources, including the United Nations, the African Union, and respectable online publications and scholarly journals. The publication year and content relevance served as a guide when choosing the data sources. This study's range of publication years spans from 1998 to 2022.

The search query encompassed keywords such as xenophobia, South Africa, development, implications, and policy. Additional data sources were also utilized, including unpublished dissertations, policy papers, and online newspaper sources that pertained to the research topic. The data was subjected to analysis in a narrative format, employing reflections, arguments, and several narratives to answer the main research problem. Although publications published before

1997 were not included in the selection criteria, their views were still considered to provide a more comprehensive reflection on the topic under study.

Theoretical Underpinnings

This paper is framed around the scapegoat theory introduced by [Burke \(1984\)](#) and propagated by [Girard \(1972\)](#). The theory assumes that one group scapegoats the other for its challenges instead of taking responsibility. South Africa faces a myriad of developmental challenges of poverty, unemployment, and inequality that are submerging the country into one of the most unequal countries in the world .

In 2021, it was reported that the unemployment rate in South Africa had reached 34.4% ([Statistics South Africa, 2021](#)) becoming a significant impediment to inclusive development and the government's poverty alleviation efforts. According to data from the World Bank (2021), food insecurity in South Africa was rife, with an estimated 25% of the population experiencing some form of food insecurity.

Moreover, while successive governments led by the African National Congress (ANC) have, since 1994, invested tremendously in reducing poverty, 55% of the population still lives in poverty, signalling the need to revisit current policies as poverty and inequality have become significant barriers to South Africa's economic growth potential. Inconsistent levels of economic growth, the decay of the local government sector, and labour market difficulties have all been cited as major causes of the sluggish economic growth in the country.

In line with the scapegoat theory, this paper argues that some South Africans blame African migrants for the country's challenges instead of taking responsibility for the situation. According to [Hewitt et al. \(2020\)](#), scapegoat theory asserts that vulnerable target groups are blamed by more powerful groups in society for all societal evils for which they may not be guilty. Instead of trying to find solutions to South Africa's challenges, the blame is being shifted to African migrants, especially those who are in the country illegally.

The national discourse around undocumented migration in South Africa dwells on the social and economic impact that undocumented migration is purported to have on the country. Hostility against foreign nationals has increased in the country, and the perpetrators of this act often justify it in terms of limited resources such as housing, education, health care, and employment in the country, which they argue are now shared with illegal immigrants.

[Adetiba \(2021\)](#) contends that people frequently invent a scapegoat out of frustration; they find a person or thing to hold accountable for their suffering

and poverty. In line with the scapegoat theory, this paper argues that foreign nationals in South Africa frequently become scapegoats for the country's social and economic mishaps.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Undocumented migration pre and post in South Africa: An overview

While apartheid was unjust and targeted the black majority with racial and discriminatory treatment, the Aliens Control Act of 1991 (later amended) was the vanguard of how migration should be handled (SA History, 2016). The Act enforced control and deterrence at the expense of newcomers' rights. According to Klaaren and Ramji (2001), it violated numerous human rights, including the unlawful arrest and detention of undocumented migrants and refugees. Nevertheless, it is essential to debunk the notion that during the apartheid era, no documented migration took place. However, it was a structurally and systematically regulated process. Immigration took place through a "two-gate" policy (T V Lenep, 2019). The front gate was welcoming for the so-called white immigrant, who was not seen as a threat to European culture.

Due to labour demand, the back gate allowed and tolerated unwanted black immigrants to satisfy the country's labour demand, especially in agriculture and mining (T V Lenep, 2019). Under the apartheid regime, the country's land borders were fortified to the core. Electric fences characterised the land borders, the frequent army patrols and units made up of civilians. At the heart of this fortification was the need to keep the unwanted Africans out at all costs, as they were seen as sympathizers to the oppressed black majority (McMicheal, 2012). Sadly, this fortification had total disregard for the human rights of the unwanted black Africans; killings and torture came to characterise the country's land borders. (Klaaren & Ramji, 2001), Worldwide, borders have become militarised, characterised by widespread surveillance where migrants are criminalised, often disregarding human rights (McMicheal, 2012). In South Africa, the end of apartheid resulted in a plethora of legislation that aimed not at securitizing migration but rather regulating it within the confines of the law.

Additionally, these laws should make provisions for refugees and asylum seekers, an element that did not matter to the apartheid regime. These laws were, namely: 1995: Aliens Control Amendment Act; 1998: Refugees Act; 1997: Green Paper → 1999: White Paper → 2000: Draft Bill → 2002: Immigration Act; 2004: Immigration Amendment Act; 2005: Immigration Amendment Act; 2011: Immigration Amendment Act → 2011: Refugees Amendment Act. Maharaj (2002) argued that while political and economic instability has become a contributing factor to the increase in the undocumented entry of immigrants

into South Africa, this has also had severe implications for the country, especially concerning service delivery. Nevertheless, this assertion failed to reflect that, apart from political and economic instability in the region, corruption and maladministration are other elements indirectly facilitating undocumented migration within South African borders. This was reinforced by Steinberg (2005), who contended that all borders and ports were severely suffered from severe understaffing, borders were of poor design, and how they were operated and managed needed to be in proportion with the human and freight traffic.

While arguments around the South African policy space argue for the need for strengthening border capabilities as a deterrent to reduce the inflow of undocumented migrants, restricting the movement of people can be dangerous. This was reinforced by Laine (2018), who contended that walls might appear as an effective deterrent strategy on paper but, in most cases, are not effective. For Laine, people will always be mobile. Even if a wall is erected, attempts to cross it will always be made, driven by various socio-economic and political needs. Sentiments in South Africa regarding undocumented migration have mirrored those of the countries in the European Union (EU) region; the focus has now been on keeping migrants out of South Africa.

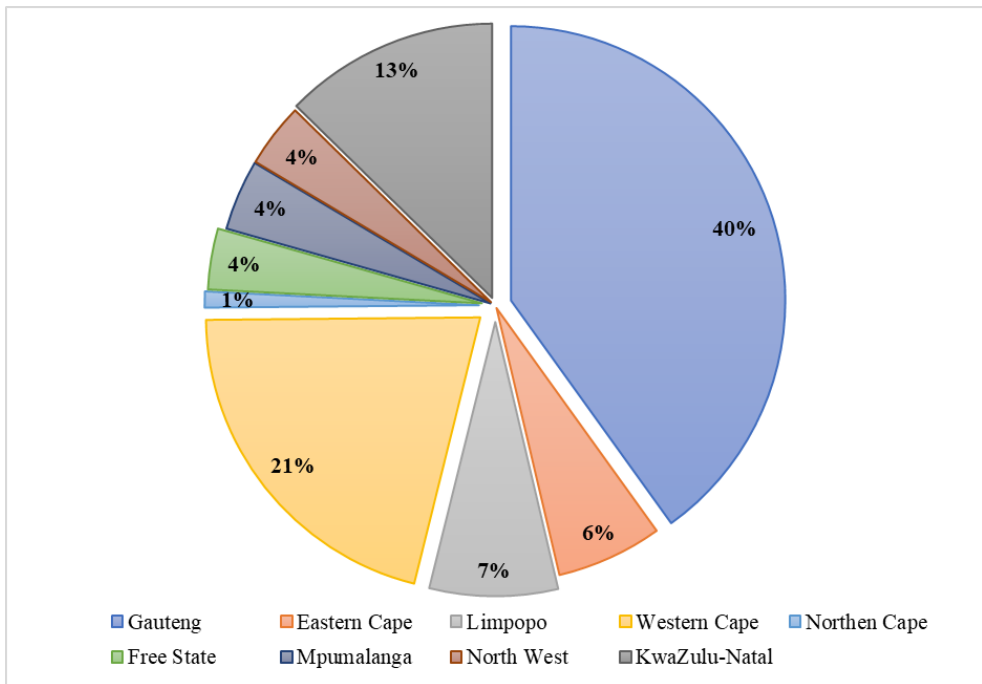


Figure 1: *Xenophobic violence incidents by Province, 1994-2018 (Mlilo et al., 2019)*

Various studies on Xenophobia in South Africa, agree that even though it has become well consolidated in society, there seems to be a lack of effective ways to address it, thus making its occurrence more frequent. One of the major research gaps in government policy is the inability to develop and implement policies that not only deter xenophobia but also consolidate cohesion, peace, and understanding in society.

The contribution of migrants to the South African economy: A case of the Informal sector

South Africa has, over the years, been described as a promised land for migrants who often flee wars, economic hardships, and a lack of employment and opportunities in their native states (Smith, 2015). Upon reaching their destination in South Africa, they face the prevalent socio-economic challenges that South African citizens face in securing livelihood and employment (Smit & Rugunanan, 2014). McDonald et al. (2000) concluded that migration has the potential to intensify regional linkages between African states and South Africa.

Migrants' contribution to the informal sector

It is a given fact that countries across the globe, in one way or another, do have illegal migration activities within their borders, which has given rise to criminalizing migrants. However, it can be debated that migrants offer progressive contributions to economies worldwide with their services and application of labor across different economic sectors.

As a result, the government can generate even more significant revenue since it pays taxes, allowing the state to have more funds to contribute to the nation's growth and development (Sparreboom et al., 2020). Furthermore, migrants contribute not only to the formal sector economy, with the majority of either unskilled or low-skilled, with little or no employment, but they are also forced to apply their trade in the informal sector (Nkrumah-Abebrese & Schachtebeck, 2017). This process also creates jobs for the natives of South Africa, contributing to society's positive welfare (Mlambo & Ndebele, 2020) since the informal sector is often the resort to play trade for those with less informal education and training. However,

South African society has often categorized migrants as a menace to the South African economy, thus downplaying their contributions to the economy as a whole (T V Lennep, 2019). In recent years, strikes and violence have been directed toward migrants, who have been accused of stealing employment from South Africans. This contrasts with the evidence and assertions that migrants

contribute positively to the South African economy and create employment for South Africans. For [Hewitt et al. \(2020\)](#), blaming migrants for the country's social ills is a redirection of anger from the failed government's policies and interventions to uplift the livelihoods of its citizens. These aggravations are justified by economic exclusion and income inequalities, exacerbating insecurities among South Africans. Furthering these tensions, in some circumstances, leaving migrants prepared to offer their ply in the informal sector at an exploitative wage which South African natives will not accept.

In support, [Theodore et al. \(2018\)](#) acknowledged the battle within the informal sector as the battleground for creating a living, as it is the most prominent attraction for migrants to make a living, creating congestion between them and native citizens and further fueling the tensions and insecurities between the two. This again asserts the notion that the lack of effective government policy means there is a likelihood of xenophobia increasing and contributing to the destabilization of the country. Therefore, the gap in policy development in addressing xenophobia is another contributing factor to the difficulty in addressing the problem.

The criminalisation of migrants in South Africa

A study by [I. Moyo \(2020\)](#) investigated undocumented migrants from Zimbabwe. The case study looked at three locations where border management prevailed. [I. Moyo \(2020\)](#) argued that the securitization of borders further perpetuates unorthodox means of cross-border migration. These sentiments are not unique to the Southern African region, as the same can be noted in Europe ([Léonard & Kaunert, 2022](#)), which is inherently known for its integration and free movement practices.

The notion of undocumented migrants must be taken into consideration within the domains of South African politics, where migration is seen as a threat or, more specifically, a security issue. In a country like South Africa with a high unemployment rate, an illegal status further perpetuates the struggle to find employment and make a living. The intensification and negative assertions against migrants in South Africa are primarily due to the intricate economic conditions experienced by citizens ([Solomon & Kosaka, 2013](#)). Consequently, leading citizens to portray themselves as responsible for misconduct and other criminal activities in the migrant destinations—South Africa in this case ([Parkin, 2013](#)),

Amid their illegal status, undocumented migrants face poverty and inequality in society. Since 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has introduced a new dynamic that has put migrants further into vulnerability, exposing them to discrimination,

inequality, and a lack of access to basic services (Burton-Jeangros et al., 2020; Mukumbang et al., 2020).

As a response to issues faced by undocumented migrants, Mukumbang et al. (2020) proposed that the government should create policies that consider the realities of migrants. Fundamentally, there is an opportunity for the South African government to consolidate a collaborative relationship with migrant-led organizations, civil society, international organizations, and researchers working with migrant groups to address the plight of migrants better, especially since the country is a signatory to multiple international conventions that safeguard the rights of migrants and asylum seekers.

Undocumented migrants in South Africa, scapegoating or reality and a policy response.

Globally, attitudes and sentiments toward migrants have changed. They have turned for the worse, characterized by hate and discrimination. Hence, it becomes essential to reflect on what drives these attitudes and what implications they have for social cohesion and inter-continental relations in South Africa. The need to effectively manage migration had become a focal point post-September 11 attacks in the United States when migration became associated with terrorism (Faist, 2006).

Subsequently, securitization policies around migration became the order of the day, driven by one's need to protect one's own and the principle of sovereignty. After 9/11, many states developed new institutions to control migration flows and use them as counterterrorism methods (Umansky, 2015). Today, migration and transnational crime have become focal points on the international security agenda.

In Europe, there was once a time when the idea of open borders was welcomed. However, with the increasing influx of migrants, several institutions took advantage of this momentum to promote controversial migration laws driven by widespread societal pressure, where migrants are viewed as criminals and a misfit with EU culture and values.

Events such as Madrid (2004), London (2005), and 9/11 in New York (2001) gave rise to the securitisation of migration, removing the element of human rights. Even though migration is economically beneficial through remittances and taxes, associating migration with terrorism and crime has hindered countries from leveraging migration for their development.

Nevertheless, it is undocumented migration that has become a policy headache for authorities. Worldwide, although migrants have been credited for their

role in economic development, unregulated migration has been criticized for exerting pressure on government resources. Another argument has been that migrants give rise to competition for resources, crime, and drug peddling. Apart from these, over the years, the negative sentiments surrounding migrants have centred around their incompatibility with their host countries' values, traditions, and cultures, often leading to societal tensions. In South Africa, undocumented migration has become a highly debated issue within the country's political domain.

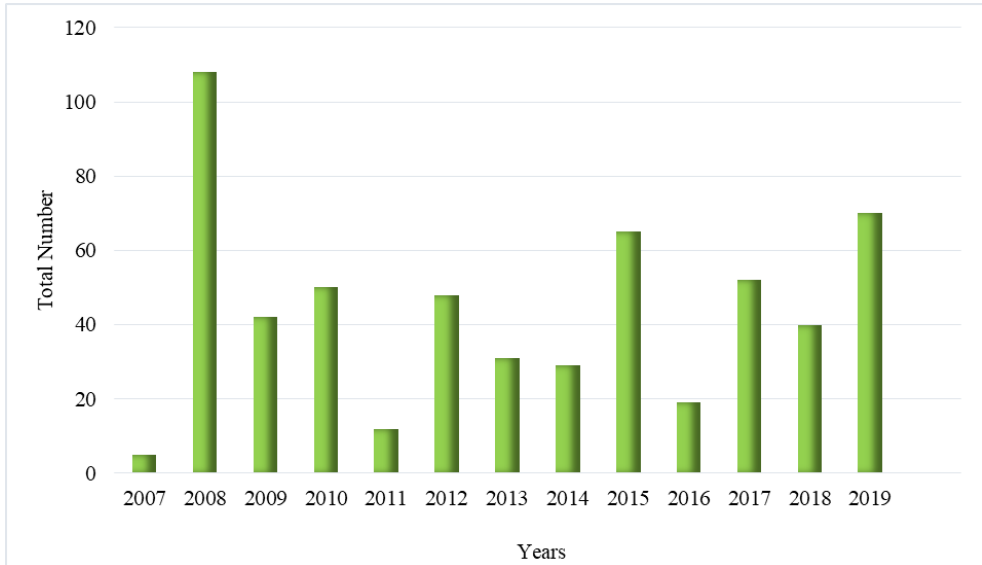


Figure 2: *Threats, Attacks and Killings against foreigners in South Africa (BBC News, 2019)*

However, a World Bank study (2018) shows that while immigrants positively impacted jobs and wages in South Africa between 1996 and 2011, unemployment, inequality, and poverty have often pushed aside the role of migrants in the country's economy. This paper reflects that three main factors give rise to this. Firstly, there is the political factor; when elections are approaching, politicians use anti-immigrant rhetoric to gain votes. They focus their campaigns on migrants, blaming them for poor service delivery, which has not been supported by research.

It could only create tensions between migrants and locals. Secondly, there is the economic dimension; the South African economy is not growing at the pace needed to create and sustain employment; as a result, South Africans do not have jobs, hence observing the influx of undocumented migrants as competition for limited resources. Finally, there is the social factor; migrants are seen as

outsiders, do not care about local values and cultures, and are likely to be involved in crime. Even though research has disputed this, this has not deterred South Africans from observing migrants as outsiders.

There have been studies that have noted the positive contribution of migrants in South Africa. Apart from the World Bank, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OCED) noted that migrants, despite widespread opinion in South African society that they are stealing jobs and competing with locals for limited economic opportunities, this is not the case as migrants have been found to establish businesses and employ South Africans.

Moreover, the presence of migrants in South Africa does not reduce the employment rate of South Africans, further urging the need for a more consolidated approach to managing migration for the country's development ([OECD Publishing, 2018](#)). The Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMG) also stated that while the perception that migrants are stealing jobs has become well entrenched in society, evidence showed that foreign businesses also created jobs for South Africans through direct hire. However, there were arguments that, despite the positive impact of migrants, South Africa cannot ignore its poverty and unemployment dilemma.

Hence, the influx of migrants further adds to these societal challenges ([Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2019](#)). The arguments were that some sections of the undocumented migrant community do not pay for services, are involved in crime, and sell counterfeit goods, increasing tension with locals over economic opportunities and adding to pressure on housing demand ([Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2019](#)). This paper acknowledges that while some sections of the migrant community may be involved in wrongdoing, collectively scapegoating all migrants for South Africa's socioeconomic woes becomes challenging contending with.

However, this trend of blaming migrants is not peculiar to South Africa. In the EU, the argument around the emergence of right-wing parties in Italy, France, Germany, and within the Visa-Grad countries has centred around the need for more robust border policies designed to keep migrants out. Politicians have been at the centre of this. For example, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban stated that "migrant influx into Europe is "a poison," and French politician Marine Le Pen said, "If you come to our country, do not expect that you will be taken care of" ([Kroet, 2016](#); [The Guardian, 2016](#)).

In South Africa, such sentiments have grown since the emergence of pressure groups such as Operation Dudula and the Put South Africans First movement. Their formation was based on the premise that migrants, to a large extent, contribute to the country's social ills. Operation Dulula has argued that

since 2004, we have seen illegal immigrants come to South Africa and take jobs (Wroughton, 2022). The groups assert that undocumented migrants are responsible for rising crime levels, drug dealing, and prostitution syndicates in townships and the inner city of Johannesburg. This rhetoric has infiltrated society and further consolidated the view that migrants are indeed a problem.

The most worrying element has been the lack of a coherent policy framework aimed at addressing the anti-foreigner sentiments that contribute to entrenching themselves in the country. The South African government acknowledges that undocumented migration is fueling societal tensions; however, there seems to be a lack of policy regarding how this can be addressed. While poor and unemployed South Africans see their actions against foreigners as justified, they have diplomatic and economic ramifications for South Africa continentally.

A lack of action to address xenophobia has contributed to retaliatory actions in some African countries against South African multinationals. MTN stores were vandalized in Nigeria, and Shoprite stores were closed in Nigeria and Zambia over xenophobic attacks. Protesters shut down DSTV's main offices in Benue State over the same issue and the killings of 118 Nigerians in the last two years (2017–2019) (BusinessTech, 2019; Obahopo, 2019; Reuters, 2019). Despite these, this paper reflects that there is still no clear-cut policy in South Africa that can address the anti-foreigner sentiment, primarily since politicians sometimes propagate it.

Despite the rebellion against South African multinationals in Africa and the government's plea for cohesion and peace, the paper argues that as South Africa fails to grow its economy, create jobs, and reduce poverty due to a lack of effective policy to manage migration, migrants will always be seen as scapegoats.

DISCUSSION

Over time, South African politicians, security officers, and traditional leaders have expressed different opinions regarding xenophobia. On several occasions, they have also instigated acts of violence. Dr Vusumuzi Sibanda, the President and Chief Executive Officer of the African Diaspora Global Network, expressed concern about the necessity to examine the underlying factors contributing to xenophobia and animosity against fellow Africans in South Africa as a means to tackle the complexities associated with the undocumented migration phenomenon (Mazarura, 2022). In numerous regions globally, where a substantial and often expanding segment of the populace consists of migrants, immigration has emerged as a contentious topic and, to the satisfaction of politicians, a prominent subject during elections.

In South Africa, it is evident that particular individuals within the right-wing extremist and political spheres employ political opportunism and populism as strategies to amplify concerns regarding migration and inadequate service provision (Mazarura, 2022). These actors tend to exaggerate the impact of migrant populations on government failures to meet the needs of its citizens. Sibanda expressed concern with the re-emergence of xenophobic sentiments in South Africa. He posits that this phenomenon is rooted in a strategy of dividing and ruling employed by current and aspiring political leaders, intending to deceive the populace and divert their focus away from substantive governance matters (Mazarura, 2022).

The potential for harmonious coexistence between South Africans and migrants is contingent upon eradicating deeply ingrained prejudices, as exemplified by oversimplified "microphone statements" suggesting that the expulsion of migrants from South Africa would lead to improved job opportunities and service delivery, among other benefits (Mazarura, 2022). Singling out individuals from other countries to divert attention from the government's inability to fulfil its commitments and responsibilities can be considered a fallacious argument.

Moreover, beyond this political rhetoric, there is an unemployment crisis. The spokesperson of the National Union Metal Workers of South Africa (NUMSA), one of the biggest labour unions in the country, Phakamile Hlubi-Majola, noted that the root of the problem is that the ANC government has implemented macro-economic policies that have failed to transform the lives of our people (Dewa, 2022). Under its reign, South Africa has become the most unequal society on earth, with crippling poverty and extremely high unemployment.

Furthermore, besides the aforementioned political discourse, there is a pressing issue of unemployment. According to Phakamile Hlubi-Majola, the spokesperson of the National Union Metal Workers of South Africa (NUMSA), a prominent labour union in the country, the underlying issue lies in the implementation of macroeconomic policies by the ANC government (Dewa, 2022). These policies have proven ineffective in bringing about meaningful improvements in the quality of life for the population. South Africa has experienced a significant increase in societal inequality, resulting in severe poverty and a substantial unemployment rate. The country's Department of Labour, which uses an expanded definition that includes those who have given up looking for work, puts unemployment at 46% (Dewa, 2022). Add to that the devastating economic impact of COVID-19, which resulted in the loss of more than two million jobs in the first three months of the pandemic. In this contentious situation, foreign nationals have become the scapegoats.

Shenilla Mohamed, executive director of Amnesty International, said: "It is easy to blame foreign nationals, refugees, and asylum seekers for the country's high

unemployment problems, but the fact of the matter is that an economy like South Africa cannot rely on local skills alone to grow and create jobs (Dewa, 2022).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This paper sought to contribute to the national discourse about undocumented immigration and xenophobic attacks on African immigrants (both illegal and legal immigrants) in South Africa. The paper relied entirely on secondary data sources, and scapegoat theory was used to interrogate the phenomenon under study. Generally, immigration could be an essential catalyst for economic growth and development. However, South Africa's situation is quite different, as African immigrants are often accused of crime, drug dealing, and competing with locals for limited public goods. This issue has become a complex reality for many African migrants who live in the country. The paper agrees with Addae and Quan-Baffour (2022) that these xenophobic attacks are backward and misguided as they have resulted in lives being lost and the destruction of property, further undermining South Africa as a welcoming and tolerant country. The paper contends that xenophobic attacks on African immigrants result from iterative policy failures in South Africa. Due to their situation, African immigrants become easy scapegoats for such policy failures in the country. The paper concludes that issues such as violent crime, protests, and a lack of sustainable livelihoods in the country result from such policy failures, not because of illegal undocumented immigrants. The paper recommends that there must be a pointed and focused advocacy initiative based on policy and legislation to mainstream the cause against the scourge of xenophobia in the country. This requires a strong and concerted effort from the country's government and other civil society organisations. There is also a need to deal with issues of poverty, unemployment, and inequality in the country, as these are some of the issues that lead to xenophobia.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors unequivocally affirm that there are no existing financial or personal conflicts of interest that could influence the outcome of this study. Additionally, no financial assistance or remuneration has been received for the execution of this research or the composition of this article. We also confirm that we have no direct financial or personal affiliations that could potentially bias the results or interpretations presented herein.

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