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'Amakwerekwere': an assessment of xenophobic sentiment and violence in South Africa

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'Amakwerekwere': an assessment of xenophobic sentiment and violence

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Abstract

Amakwerekwere, is an informal term used by South Africans to identify African foreigners. This is an increasingly popular term in post-Apartheid South Africa, primarily because there has been an apparent increase in foreign Africans entering South Africa. The assumption is that African entering South Africa are somehow coming because they want to take part in the recent democratization and new freedoms of South Africa. In May of 2008, there was an outbreak of violence that started in the township of Alexandra in Johannesburg and spread to other regions of South Africa. The violence was deemed a facet of a trend in xenophobic attacks. However, no sufficient evidence has been provided to indicate that there is direct causality between the violence and anti-foreigner sentiment in the country. In fact, it has become sufficient simply to provide evidence of anti-foreigner or xenophobic sentiment. This inquiry seeks to investigate the ways in which xenophobic violence has been understood in post-Apartheid South Africa, and how legal and political assumptions regarding 'rights' and democratization have been an impediment to improving the social realities of many South Africans.

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Xenophobia in post-Apartheid South Africa

"After climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb."
- Nelson Mandela

The wisdom of former President Nelson Mandela has never been truer for South Africa. As I write, South Africa is about seventeen years into post-Apartheid democracy. No one would refute that this nation has made strides, from the Boer Wars of the late 1800s, to the founding of the union in the early 1900s, the inception of the Apartheid regime and it's dismantling, and now the reign of former leaders of the anti-Apartheid movement - the ANC. However, after such progress unfavorable realities remain: unemployment is hovering around twenty-five percent, fifty-percent of the population lives below the poverty line, access to education remains a challenge for much of the population, and there is a proliferation urban poverty. The objectives of the Reconstruction and Development Acts, which were meant to provide opportunities for South Africans, have been feckless. Instead, an echoing of disparity amongst the people of South Africa persists. Finally, but not in any bit less significant, is the reality of violence. Much of this violence has been claimed to be the result of xenophobic attitudes in the South African population.

Xenophobia – generally understood as an intense irrational hatred or fear of foreigners – has, in recent years, been the misfortune for many immigrants entering South Africa. For weeks this violence pervaded the major metropolitan areas of South Africa and the areas surrounding them. The violence included looting, homicides, and rape of those believed to be foreigners.

The objective of this inquiry is to investigate the assumption that there is direct causality between xenophobic sentiment and the recently occurring violence within South Africa. This chapter will provide a brief overview of the advent and demise of the Apartheid era. Following this will be a discussion of the 'paradox of democratization' and the limitations of attempting to rectify the wrongs of Apartheid through allotting 'rights'. Then, there will be an investigation into migrant life and existing explanations for xenophobic violence.

A Brief History of Apartheid

The Apartheid regime begins with the domination of the National Party in politics in the Union of South Africa in 1948.[1] Policies toward Africans preceding this era were heavily segregationist; however, in the Apartheid era segregationist policies are expanded in order to prevent Africans from participating in South Africa politically and economically. One of the first major steps of the South African government was the transformation from a dominion state of Great Britain into a republic in 1961.[2] This occurrence ceased ties with Britain and resulted in the Republic of South Africa. Accompanying the new governmental structure was

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[1] Thompson, 187

[2] *ibid*, 188

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a new system of representation in which Africans were required to elect a white representative to advocate their interests to the legislature.[3]

Furthermore, Africans were moved out into separate areas called homelands and only allowed to participate in the economy of South Africa as migrant labor.[4] Migrant labor will be explored in more detailing in the following chapter, but African movement (both native and non-native) in the urban areas of South Africans were restricted primarily to working as contract labor migrants. Contracts were notably more infrequent for native migrant laborers than they were for non-native migrant laborers. This came about primarily due to labor opposition that was occurring in the early years of mining (1910-1948), and was incited by labor opposition over wages with Afrikaners.

The implementation of Apartheid policies was favorable for Afrikaners primarily because they were provided more opportunity to participate economically and politically. In some sense this can be understood as the unifying of whites, because it was not until 1948 that Afrikaners were allowed positions in government, mining, manufacturing, commerce, and finance. Afrikaner farmers had received greater support from the government, as long as they only provided wage labor opportunities for Africans. This halted sharecropping and land rental options for rural Africans.

Life for whites in South Africa in this period was comparable to that of middle and upper class whites in any industrialized society, notably Europe and

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[3] *ibid*, 190
[4] *ibid*, 193

North America.[5] Many owned cars, lived in large suburban homes, and had African domestic workers. The government provided schools, hospitals, parks, buses and trains, roads, water, electricity, telephones, and drainage and sewage systems. This white population was also politically engaged, through a heavily monitored press and access to television and radio. They were largely unaware of the social realities of non-white populations (Africans, Coloreds, or Asians).

Africans in this era were forced into homelands. Homelands were essentially a way in which to divide the African population by ethnic groups into smaller territories with the hope that they would develop into smaller nation-states.[6] The intensifying of ethnic identities is an essential way in which those in power in South Africa attempted to maintain dominance over the African population. Strategic attempts to maintain or intensify ethnic fissures amongst the African populations are a recurring theme in the way that the British and Apartheid rulers maintain dominance. Leonard Thompson finds that intensifying ethnic divisions were largely unsuccessful; instead Africans married across these ethnic divisions and ignored the government's attempts to segregate them according to ethnic divisions, and in more recent generations simply consider themselves African. However, Leonard finds earlier that ethnic divisions have never been completely about ethnic identities; instead, they were often about which ethnic groups could provide material benefits and protection. Therefore, many Africans would choose to follow chiefdoms for reasons other than ethnic

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[5] *ibid, 200-201*
[6] Leach, 74

identity.

The end of the 1970s was the beginning of an economic decline in South Africa that prompted the exodus of many white professionals. The emigration of whites made maintaining dominance more difficult because they were largely the majority of the skilled laborers in the country, and the African population was not able to replace them even if the segregationist policies of Apartheid had been repealed. The late 1970s was also a time when South Africa had begun to come under significant scrutiny for Apartheid policies. The American Civil Rights movement had success at obtaining more political rights for American Blacks, and American civil rights activists had begun to advocate on behalf of South African Blacks. The next generation of Blacks, Indians, and Coloreds had become mobilized against the Apartheid regime. Steve Biko, who was a seminal anti-Apartheid activist and martyr, had died in police custody in Pretoria in 1977 also inciting more frustration and violence from rights activist.

Ultimately, this violence culminates in the reality that something must be done to stop it. The white supremacist policies had loss much of there legitimacy, along with the exodus of whites due to increased violence. Scrutiny from the rest of the world, and deep recession had continued to cripple the Apartheid government. The Apartheid government was left with no option other than to begin negotiations with anti-Apartheid movement leaders from the African National Congress (ANC). Leader of the ANC, Oliver Tambo, would have been the central figure leading negotiations with the government; however, while in

exile his health declined significantly. Because of this Nelson Mandela assumed the leadership role of the African National Congress, and led much of the negotiations that resulted in the unbanning of the ANC, the repeal of the Native Lands Act, the Group Areas Act, the Population Registration Act, and the Separate Amenities Act.[7]

The significance in the reform of the Apartheid regime through legal means has placed many issues in the post-Apartheid era in purely legal terms. The repealing of the laws listed in the preceding paragraph wwas certainly a feat; however, this has failed to significantly ameliorate marginalized rural populations from widespread unemployment, inadequate access to services, and has failed to provide a better quality of life generally. Today, the government and policymakers continue to try and solve the problems of South African society by implementing laws and regulations. The post-Apartheid government has only been effective at rectifying the challenges of the Apartheid through the abstractions of law.

The Challenge of 'Rights' and the Paradox of Democratization

The 1990s in South Africa were largely a period of transformation. Of the changes that have occurred legally, the Aliens Control Act from the Apartheid period has remained restrictive. The central underlying assumption has been that the democratization of South Africa has prompted an increase in immigrations into South Africa. One finding when assessing the reasons for anti-foreigner

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[7] Thompson, 208

sentiment in contemporary South Africa is the idea of 'South African exceptionalism', this is simply the belief that democracy in South Africa has resulted in the country as superior to other African nations. The pervasiveness of this belief among Black South Africans is a testament to how mythic the end of Apartheid was. However, many of the issues that existed during Apartheid remain, and the notion that simply proclaiming that one has rights does not actualize into a material benefit or even protections.

The democratization of South Africa would suggest that a discourse on xenophobia might be located in a discussion of nationality. SAMP finds that many respondents are divided when it comes to the issue of 'rights' for migrants who are refugees and asylums seekers. They find:

- ""South Africans are divided on refugee protection with 47% supporting protection and 30% opposed. Nearly 20% have no opinion on the matter."
- "Nearly three quarters are opposed to increasing the number of refugees currently in the country."
- "Two thirds are against offering permanent residence to refugees who have been in the country for more than 5 years."
- "As many as half favour a policy of requiring all refugees to live in border camps. Only 6% strongly opposed."
- "Only 30% agree with allowing refugees to work."
- "And 60% want a policy of mandatory HIV testing of refugees." [8]

Therefore, it is apparent that the issue of nationality and who can obtain citizenship is imperative for understanding the animosity towards foreigners. Nationality is important, not merely for political status, but also for social status. The ability of one to access services requires that one is able to have a 'right' to them by acquiring the nationality, or in the very least legal protections. The SAMP

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[8] Crush, 29

survey focuses primarily on refugees and asylum seekers, which is important because asylum seekers and refugees are provided a social status that allows many of them to claim 'rights' to services in South Africa without necessarily obtaining nationality. This in particular becomes a problem because service delivery in South Africa is often insufficient. This is especially the circumstance in rural areas where a relatively substantial proportion of Black South Africans continue to reside.

However, refugee and asylum seeker status is minor in relation to the size of the South African population of fifty million. Therefore, a discussion of 'rights' has the potential to impede social realities, insomuch as an assessment of social realities becomes pervaded by legal and political assumptions. As stated earlier, simply having the ability to claim a 'right' to something does not necessarily manifest into material protections or resources. This is too often the case with South Africa, particularly because of issues related to being able to ensure resources to everyone in the society. Therefore, nationality does not result in actual resources; this is self-evident when investigating the social realities of immigrants living in contemporary South Africa.

This is ultimately the 'paradox of democratization' in South Africa. It is not merely that the obtaining of 'rights' does not actualize into a material benefit. Instead, claiming material benefits becomes more challenging because the 'rights' accompanying nationality presume that there is a basic standard of living everyone who is a citizen has. Therefore, the emphasis on the legal status of

immigrants in South Africa shifts the focus of government and policymakers from rectifying issues following Apartheid. The rights fulfillment of native Africans being becomes secondary to the issue of regulating foreigners in this circumstance, because the legal assumption is that once they have been endowed with rights to a resource the issue has been solved.

The Apartheid regime regulated the movement of migrants into and out of the country, also seminal to sustaining dominance of the Apartheid regime was preventing native Africans from settling in the urban areas of the country. Patterns of rural-urban movement within South Africa are under-investigated in relations to the distribution of resources, because the legal assumption with the repeal of the Lands Act was that rural dwellers would migrate into the urban areas to find work. Instead, the rural African population has continued to function as migrant labor population, and remaining in these areas has left them peripheral and the central problems of deprivation and inadequate service delivery, which should be central, become peripheral along with the people and the ultimate result is that the most pressing issue becomes xenophobia and the victimization of immigrants leads to the emphasis of protecting their 'rights'.

Explaining Xenophobic Violence

Exacerbating the notion that immigrants are a major problem is that rhetoric and research from policymakers and academics. Research shifts to focus on solutions to society's latest, most significant social problem, which in this instance is: "out of control" immigrations and immigrant's 'rights'. One example of

what happens in this situation is Lyndith Waller. Waller serves on the South

African Immigration Advisory Board and has identified illegal (or as she terms it

"irregular") migrants as the problem in South Africa. She writes,

> "The most striking feature of deportation statistics is their
> consistency in rankings and growth trends. Mozambicans continue
> to pose the greatest challenge – in 1996 they comprised 87% of all
> deportations – but they have decreased steadily to comprise only
> 48.8% in 2004. On the other hand, Zimbabweans – while remaining
> the second greatest challenge – have steadily increased as a
> percentage of the total from 8% in 1996 to 43% by 2004."[9]

For her, the statistics provide enough evidence to determine which populations

pose the greatest threat to South African society. Strikingly, at least from my

perspective, is that she immediately identifies Zimbabweans and Mozambicans

as a "challenge". This completely ignores the history of the presence of these

populations within South Africa and has no interest in understanding why they

enter the country; instead, Waller's interest is singularly that they are the group

entering irregularly. Following the dominance of immigrants as the central social

problem for South Africa, anti-foreigner sentiment arises as the new challenge for

South Africa.

However, finding direct causation between xenophobic sentiment and

violence is challenging, because understanding why someone would commit

such heinous acts is immensely complicated. Instead, claiming that this violence

is motivated by xenophobic sentiment has become a matter of simply providing

evidence that anti-foreigner sentiment is prevalent. Simply making the claim that

xenophobic sentiment exists does not provide sufficient evidence to suggest

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[9] Waller, 2

violence will occur. Deprivation, which is often widely cited as underlying the xenophobic sentiment, is widespread throughout South Africa and often does not prompt violence. Additionally, a particular type of foreigner is being attacked – primarily African foreigner. Therefore, one must consider why this particular immigrant group seems to be targeted as oppose to other immigrant groups. An important consideration in this case is that by claiming this anti-foreigner sentiment is the primary motivation for violent acts presumes that these groups are being targeted solely due to their legal status. Logically this raises the question of why are other immigrant groups not discriminated against in similar ways.

Godfrey Mwakkiagile begins "African Immigrants in South Africa" with the statement:

> "The xenophobic violence has been perpetrated by Black South Africans, prompting some people to describe this phenomenon as the new apartheid - by blacks against other blacks - after the end of white minority rule."[10] [Mwakkiagile 2008; 7]

This statement makes several suggestions that may or may not be accurate. Firstly, the notion that violence is perpetrated solely by Black South Africans is problematic insofar as it homogenizes the native Black population of South Africa and assumes that there are no ties between native South Africans and other Africans. When, in fact, for decades as migrant laborers these groups worked together as labor migrants on mines. The diversity within the Black populations of South Africa often goes unconsidered. Second, while it is true that White minority rule over the political institutions has ended; this does not necessarily mean that

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[10] Mwakkiagile, 7

they do not continue to influence the political and governmental institutions, especially when considering the wealth distribution of South Africa.

Employing the analogy of apartheid to explain xenophobic violence perpetrated against African immigrant populations is extreme. Apartheid was a very structured system of racial and ethnic oppression used by a powerful minority population to prevent the dominance of what became a powerless majority population. This must not be confused with actions that are being carried out by what doesn't seem to be the entire population of Black South Africans. In Jonathan Crush's study "The Perfect Storm: The Realities of Xenophobia in Contemporary South Africa", he conducts a survey in an attempt to measure the level of xenophobic violence in South Africa. One thing Crush measure is the likelihood that the respondents of his survey would "take action against foreign nationals," for this question he finds that only 9% of those surveyed would "use violence against" foreign nationals.[11] [Crush 2006; 38] Therefore, the claim that this violence is perpetrated by Black South Africans, generally, is not the entire truth.

Following the May 2008 attacks, many foreigners were placed in camps to protect them from any further persecution and in the immediacy of these attacks the South African government shunned such acts. South Africa's Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) published a policy report -- *Violence and Xenophobia in South Africa: Developing Consensus, Moving to Action* -- concluding that the violence was attributable to: 1) competition for jobs, housing, and other services; 2) the perception that foreigners were a threat to nationalism;

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[11] Crush, 38

and 3) feelings of superiority of South Africa, as it relates to other Africans.[12] Therefore, the generally accepted stance for the South African government was that deprivation motivated violence. HSRC concludes that migrants lived mostly in fear following the violence and many of them remained in the temporary camps the government set up.

In 1999 and 2006, Crush's surveys found that that xenophobic attitudes were high, but noticed that there were increases in these attitudes when comparing the data from 2006 with those from 1999.[13] However, the increases do not appear to be significant. Two features of this survey paralleled with the HSRC: 67% and 62% of South Africans believes that foreigners 'use up resources' and 'take jobs', respectively. According to an index created by SAMP there is less xenophobia in the provinces Limpopo, Mpumalanga, and KwaZulu-Natal. The three provinces with lower levels of xenophobic sentiment are characteristically more rural and a larger proportion of the native African population resides in these regions than in the urban areas. Work capturing the migrant experience includes in-depth interviews in which migrants identify the perpetrators of discrimination as Black South Africans. Migrants mostly reside in South Africa's major cities, particularly Johannesburg, which is the economic capital of South Africa.

Research conducted on the experience of migrant groups within South Africa suggests that perpetual discrimination leaves many with rather bleak outlooks for their time in South Africa. Many migrants living in South Africa do not

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[12] HSRC, 32
[13] Crush, 8

intend to stay in the country for very long, but many of them are unable to leave because of conflicts in their country of origin, lack of monetary resources to return. Additionally, figures from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees suggest that a substantial proportion of South Africa's migrant populations are refugees and asylum seekers. Perhaps, this reifies the notion that entering migrants are exacerbating existing strains on the South African economy as proposed by the former Minister of Home Affair.

Alan Morris, a sociologist and researcher at Wits University, claims in his assessment on the experience of Nigerians and Congolese in South Africa that the discrimination of these groups can be attributed to these groups being easily identifiable non-native South Africans. Morris' article draws on interviews in order to provide a brief look into the lives of Congolese and Nigerian migrants living in South Africa. He contends, from his assessment that members of both of these groups experience copious amounts of discrimination and their outlooks for life in South Africa were unpromising.[14] Morris asks his interviewees if they plan to stay in South Africa for a prolonged period of time, and many of them express a desire to leave as soon as things in their country of origin are stable and they can afford to return.

The dominant perception of foreigners, in this case Nigerians and Congolese is that they are criminals who are exacerbating the challenges of South Africa. Nigerians are stereotyped as drug dealers and drug traffickers. A great deal of the animosity surrounding these groups has to do with the idea that they are somehow stealing jobs; however, Morris notes that much of this

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[14] Morris, 1120

population works in the informal sector and many of them are struggling to find work themselves. The belief that foreigners are stealing jobs is also widely held according to the survey conducted by SAMP. In 1999, 56% of South Africans believed that migrants were taking jobs, this increased to 62% in 2006.[15] Perhaps this increase was due to the persistence of unemployment.

In Morris' interviews he finds that the three main reasons these groups come to South Africa are: job opportunities, opportunities to study, and fear of political persecution. Morris notes that migrating to South Africa was also relatively easy when many of these groups came in the early1990s when many Nigerians and Congolese entered. These groups now experience crime and violence, police brutality and harassment, unemployment and financial hardships, as well as issues of obtaining proper documentation to maintain their status in the country. Morris attributes the attitudes of South Africans towards these Congolese and Nigerians to their groups being easily identifiable by their physical features and lack of fluency in an indigenous language, the negative stereotypes of these groups, and the lack of education and isolation of Black South Africans during the Apartheid era. Morris concludes that this is a facet of the scapegoating explanation for xenophobic violence. Strikingly, Nigerians and Congolese, while there are such negative archetypes for this group, they do not seem to have been comprised a great deal of those attacked in the may 2008 attacks.

Bronwyn Harris responds to some of Morris' arguments in her article critically. Specifically, Harris assesses three hypotheses proposed for xenophobic violence: Scapegoating, Isolation, and Bio cultural. Scapegoating –

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[15] Crush, 33

which Harris identifies as arising from sociological theory – is characterized by explaining the hostility towards foreigners as frustrations about limited resources (she cites housing, education, healthcare, and employment). Harris finds that with this argument there is no clear explanation as to why this frustration leads to violence and why this violence is directed particularly at foreigners. Secondly, she talks about the Isolation argument, which suggests that South Africans were insulated during Apartheid from nationalities outside of Southern Africa. This hypothesis, Harris argues, does not explain why nationality is the determining feature of the scapegoating. Finally, she considers the Bio Cultural argument, which suggests that physical features of foreigners make them an easily identifiable 'Other.' [16]

However, Harris argues that this still does not explain why it is particularly African foreign nationals that are targeted. White and Asian populations are not targeted to the same extent, and they are also an easily identifiable 'Other', perhaps even more easily identifiable as an 'Other'. Harris concludes that xenophobia is a product of a 'culture of violence' that is engendered in the legacy of apartheid, meaning: violence is a legitimate means through which to achieve certain goals. Therefore, Harris accepts xenophobic violence as a facet of what she terms the 'Post-apartheid project', a host of policies and objectives that arose in post-1994 South African society. The central issue with this explanation is that they emphasize the role of political and social structures and actors without qualifying way social conditions also potentially function to inform the actions of

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[16] Harris, 175

the attackers. Furthermore, it is unclear what violence in the Apartheid era she is referring to.

There certainly has been a history of violence in the country during the Apartheid era and even preceding it; however, the lack of an investigation into this history leaves her argument incomplete. Instead of emphasizing the violent past of South Africa, research has gone in the direction of focusing on immigrations into South Africa somewhat presuming that if there are less immigrants the frustrations over resources will cease. The underlying assumption of this sentiment is that the post-Apartheid era has witnessed a flood of immigrants into the country, and this somehow related to the democratization of the country.

Dorrit Posel reveals that there has not been much rural-urban migration as is often presumed.[17] Posel looks at household surveys in order to determine how much movement there is between rural and urban regions in South Africa. Interestingly, she finds that what is occurring is one person from a rural household will go into the city and work to send back remittances. In fact, she finds that a large proportion of remittances are commonly being sent into rural areas, and she even identifies a period in which this increased in the 1990s. If as Everatt noted earlier migrants often reside in urban areas and there is very little rural-urban migration within South Africa, this would suggests that resources and services are geographically more accessible for migrants. Perhaps migrants in South Africa can access more of the resources of the city than South African citizens living in rural areas. There is also a rise of urban

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[17] Posel, 1

poverty, which in recent years may have become more of a priority than rural poverty.

Regulating the movement of native Africans during Apartheid was essential for the regime's way to ensure that wealth was distributed in a way that favored them. David Everatt writes,

> "The ANC inherited apartheid urban design, which aimed physically to separate white suburbs from black (classified variously as African or colored or Indian) townships. White areas included a tax base derived from nearby industry and services; black areas did not, and prohibitions existed regarding the types of business allowed in townships. White local authorities administered African townships, but residents had to finance their own development. It was a system designed to underprovide for blacks, legitimated by the "grand apartheid" notion that all blacks were "foreigners" in white areas and "citizens" only of their tribal homelands."[18] [Everatt 2000; 224]

Everatt suggests that one essential way to rectify the Apartheid past in the 'new South Africa is through land use planning. He claims that the South African government has not implemented policies that provide greater access for the rural poor. Therefore, accessibility of services and resources, which are often concentrated in urban areas, has not changed much since Apartheid. Moreover, the issue of poverty will not wane with more people in the cities, it is apparent that many South Africans migrating to cities continue to have issues finding adequate housing and employment. In addition, Posel argues that rural dwelling South Africans also may perceive migrating to the city as too risky.

The African population was relied on as a circular migrant labor force during Apartheid and it seems from Everatt and Posel's assessments that this has not changed very much. Africans were restricted to living in rural areas, and African men would migrate to the city to work as miners. This is another reason rural populations

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[18] Everatt, 224

likely have a bleak outlook for even their status in the country. She attributes this to the notion that concerns related to immigrations are a more immediate issue. However, the most pressing issue for the post-Apartheid government should be the conveyance of opportunities for political and economic participation to those marginalized by Apartheid policies and practices, particularly those largely isolated in rural areas. However, the micro-level issues of South African citizens have become difficult to identify because the social realities of South Africans is clouted by legal processes, and this is why the pressing concern is seemingly immigrations. However, in the proceeding chapter, I will explore the historical movement of Blacks into South Africa. Much of what is discovered is that both native and non-native South Africans were largely migrant labor and had to sustain the same type of oppression.

Black Labor Migrants in South Africa

The rationale for xenophobia as directly causal to the violence that has occurred in South Africa posits the discourse of violence in a discourse on immigrations in South Africa. This is why the literature reviewed in the preceding chapter focused primarily on the lives of migrants in their host country. A history of Black movement into, even out of, South Africa is requisite for a discussion of xenophobic sentiment and violence, because any exploration of anti-foreigner sentiment must first consider who the foreigners and their social realities within the country they're entering. Therefore, the second chapter of this inquiry seeks to investigate the history of Black migrations into the territory that is presently the Republic of South Africa. In the previous two decades there has been tumultuous violence within South Africa, and this violence is often presumed to disproportionately affect recent immigrants. It has been proposed that this

violence is the result of disturbingly high levels of xenophobic sentiment in South Africa.[19]

The proceeding chapter will begin with a brief introduction of the British presence in the territory as early as 1820. Following that section there will be a brief discussion of indentured Indians in South Africa, and challenges the British experience asserting dominance. Then, finally, there will be an exploration into the advent of the mining industry and the recruiting of migrant labor. This is of particular importance because migration patterns in the post-Apartheid era are impacted by labor recruiting organizations. For most Africans, being recruited as migrant mine labor was the only legal means through which one could enter South Africa until the demise of migrant labor in the late 1970s. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the ways in which migration patterns have changed and in the post-Apartheid era and begins the discussion of the ways in which South Africa's urban landscape has remained largely unchanged in the post-Apartheid era.

Early British Presence in southern Africa

John Stone's "Colonist or Uitlander" provides an account of the early British migrations. Stone cites 1820 as the first mass influx of British into southern Africa's Cape Colony. A man by the name of Benjamin Moodie is credited with leading this group to the territory.[20] Moodie was a wealthy British man, who had lost a fair amount of his family's wealth due to economic downturn

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[19] Crush, 13
[20] Stone, 42

following the Napoleonic Wars in Britain. He gathered 5,000 British proletarians to migrate by ship to southern Africa. However, Moodie underestimated how developed the agricultural industry was in the Cape Colony and shortly following their arrival many of the British accompanying Moodie breached their contracts and went to work for Afrikaner farmers because they could earn higher wages. This occurrence was the first of several schemes intended for British economic expansion into the southern African territory. The challenge of the British in this instance was that the agriculture market had been fully established, and that the Afrikaner ethnic groups had already dominated it.

It was not until the discovery of diamonds in Kimberley in 1860 that the British were able to take part in the early stages of the formal mining industry, hence economic expansion into southern Africa. First, the British functioned solely as merchants that traded the diamonds. Later, they take part in the actual mining of diamonds and other valuable resources in the region. Kimberley, also referred to as the diamond city, was the site where much of the early mining took place. After some time there were four major mining companies in the city. These companies included De Beers and the Kimberley Diamond Mine, which were the two most profitable. Both whites and Blacks were first there independently shoveling and searching for diamonds. However, it was discovered by scientist that diamonds were also underground, and the British took this opportunity to develop and introduce new mechanism for extracting diamonds.[21] British wealth that came from the trading of diamonds was insecure, primarily because they had

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[21] Thompson, 115

no political authority of the area in which the diamonds existed; therefore, they were unable to make a claim to the diamonds that had been discovered. Kimberley was claimed by the Transvaal and the Orange Free State (Afrikaner republics), the Tswana chiefdom, and the Griqua chiefdom of Nicholas (both Black African tribes). In 1871 the British annexed Griqualand West and convinced Waterboer, the chief, to allow the Griqua territories to become protectorates of the British, which allowed them to claim part of the Kimberley territory.[22]

Although the British now had a legitimate claim to the territory; the problem that was that they had not establish governmental administration; therefore, industrialists and political figures in the territory were able to maintain political control, hence the diamonds, which undermined the British attempt at control. Later in the 1800s there was the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand and the creation of recruiting organizations for outside labor sources. The recruiting of outside labor seems to have be a logical solution to the challenges that the British faced in the past of having others in the territory make claims to the valuable land. Recruiting allowed for restrictions on those working on the mines. Laborers were hired on a contract that would last for three to six months and there was never the challenge of having to provide citizenship or share the profits, they simply paid them wages and returned them back to their home

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[22] Thompson, 117

country.[23] These workers were usually from surrounding territories, and they were largely rural and agrarian.

On the cusp of the twentieth century was the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902); a result of this event was the expansion of the British Empire with the founding of the Union of South Africa in 1910. The end of the Anglo-Boer War marked the inception of British reign in South Africa. The Union of South Africa was not an independent state; instead, it was a dominion state of the British Empire. The Union had to follow British rule and could not implement policies that were not aligned with the interests of Great Britain. The African population was excluded from the mining industry for British profiteering through the use of government. The British had acquired a claim to the territory, but were undermined because of the lack of government structure. The Black labor on the mines had been recruited from surrounding nations. This was likely due to the fact that the government had the most control of the movement of those populations through recruitment organizations. The Union of South Africa provided much more legitimacy for the British; however, the challenge of maintaining both legitimacy and dominance continued to plague them.

Indians and the British Dilemma

An indispensable part of British efforts in the beginning of the 20th century was the control of movement of peoples into the territory. This was primarily due to the British being the least populous group in the region. Native Africans were kept at bay through recruitment organizations and the passage of segregationist

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[23] Wentzel, 172

policies – i.e. The Native Lands Act and other pass laws, which restricted their movement within the union. Indians had been brought into South Africa indentured by the British in the Natal province to offset 'racial complication'[24] by creating more diversity. Peberdy identified 'racial complication' as the central challenge of the British, because native African populations in areas surrounding Natal had outnumbered the British. Therefore, the British brought indentured Indians as an attempt to offset racial homogeneity. Ironically, the British brought so many indentured Indians into Natal that the Indians outnumbered them. This created another challenge to asserting British dominance in the region. Furthermore, their political mobility and educational attainment was threatening to the British because they were not as easily exploitable. Exacerbating this was the inciting of peaceful dissent from Mohandes Ghandi.

The difficult task of the British was creating immigration legislation that would exclude as many Indian people from entering South Africa as they could.[25] In addition, the British were trying to create incentives for immigrations from Britain to the union, and the way they had decided to conduct this was through the development and reconstruction of the territory. Sally Peberdy, in *Selecting Immigrants*, notes that part of the objective for industrialization was to incentivize immigrations into South Africa for British.[26] In "Selecting Immigrants", Sally

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[24] Peberdy, 31
[25] *ibid*, 33
[26] *ibid,* 35

Peberdy cites Lord Milner (the leader of the colonial government of the Transvaal) stating,

> "Obviously the best, and only means of encompassing this end, as well as promoting the influx of British population, which is the only safeguard of our position, is to go ahead as hard as possible, drums beating and colours flying, with the development of the country and its resources."[27]

It is self-evident that the British aspiration was to garner a large enough population to solidify dominance in the region. Although, the more Indians entering, the greater the amount of British they had to try and recruit into the territory in order to avoid 'racial complication'. The recruiting of Europeans had been largely unsuccessful. Moreover, the arrival of Mohandes Gandhi in South Africa further aggravated this existing threat. Gandhi was educated in London and later went to South Africa where he led some of the first passive resistance movement, warranting the concerns of the British. On 16 August of 1908, Gandhi gathered Muslims, Hindus, and Christians in a symbolic pass[28] burning in front of the Hamidia mosque in Newtown (near present-day Johannesburg).[29] This event was emblematic for the use of passive resistance as a form of peaceful dissent. Gandhi was imprisoned for this; however, it clearly left many of the British authorities weary of opposition.

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[27] *ibid*, 35
[28] An important form of regulation was through pass laws, in which passes were required of every non-white person and failing to carry one resulted in imprisonment.
[29] see sahistory.co.za (URL: http://www.sahistory.org.za/20th-century-south-africa/passive-resistance-movements-1906-1989)

Mohandas Gandhi's development of passive resistance and other campaigns incited urgency for the creation of immigration policies that excluded Indians.[30] Preceding the pass burning, the objective of bringing more Indians into South Africa was for the purpose of creating more diversity in the region because native Africans largely outnumbered them and they believed that more Indians would curb the likelihood that the Africans would revolt. In effect, the British were attempting to manage social relations through the movement of people in order to maintain dominance and amass wealth from the industrialization of South Africa. In June of 1913, the Union of South Africa passed the first Immigration Regulation Act of the new government. Gandhi returned to India in 1914 following the passage of the first immigration legislation of the Union of South Africa. The objective of the act was explicitly to limit the movement of Indians within South Africa, and prevent some Indians from immigrating to South Africa.[31] Despite the passing of this egregious immigration policy, Gandhi felt that his work in South Africa had been complete because he left the passive resistance ideology. Passive resistance was also the ideology taken on by the African National Congress (ANC) in the beginning of their anti-Apartheid efforts.

Blacks were perceived as insignificant because their movement was regulated by recruitment organization that had existed since the beginning of the mining industry and even before. Indigenous Blacks were occupied with conflicts

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[30] Thompson,113

[31] See sahistory.co.za (URL: http://www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/immigration-regulation-act-passed-south-africa)

between the chiefdoms and protecting themselves from colonist. Industrialization is cited as complicating the divisions between the chiefdoms. Mission-clergy, successful peasants, and teachers challenged the legitimacy of the chiefs resulting in new challenges for existing hierarchies of the chiefdoms.[32] Fissures amongst African chiefdoms went unnoticed by the British; but they were seminal for the British to maintain dominance. Gandhi's departure from South Africa and the control of movement of persons within, into, and out of the territory provided the British with the power to keep up primacy in the region. Finally, it is evident that increased population control is vital to the maintenance of British dominance.

Africans as a Non-Threat to British Rule

> "For the state, Indians, with all their 'civilisation', education, and business success could never enter the imaginary of the white nation of South Africa. Black Africans were never considered as potential immigrants and so did not appear in immigration debates."[33]

In the above-cited passage Sally Peberdy establishes that Indians were a central threat to the British. However, most striking about the rest of the passage is that Peberdy finds no indication that Africans are considered a potential immigrant group. This is because by 1913 the primary mechanism monitoring Black movement into, even out of, South Africa was the operations of recruitment organizations. The Witwatersrand National Labor Association – or, as some refer to it "Wenela" — became the most prominent of these organizations. Additionally, there was the control of the movement of Africans within the territory through

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[32] Thompson, 113
[33] Peberdy, 34

several domestic policies that limited the movement of Black Africans within South Africa. Some of the most famous of these policies are the Native Lands Act of 1911, which prohibits Africans from purchasing land and virtually destroys subsistence farming. There were also pass laws that prevented Africans, Indians, and Coloured people from settling in particular areas.

Mining in South Africa began in the 1860s when diamonds were discovered in the city of Kimberley – referred to by some as the diamond city. Originally, the British functioned as merchants that would trade the diamonds found virtually by any and everyone who was willing to move to Kimberley and sift through the fields to try and find diamonds. However, it was later discovered by scientists that diamonds were also deep underground as well as on the surface, inducing the interest in underground mining and the beginning of what becomes the predominate industry in South Africa.[34]After some time there were four major mining companies in the city. These companies included De Beers and the Kimberley Diamond Mine, which were the two most profitable. Both whites and Blacks were first there independently shoveling and searching for diamonds.

However, British wealth that could come from the trading of diamonds was insecure, primarily because they had no control of the area in which the diamonds existed, hence they were unable to make a claim to the diamonds that were being found. Kimberley was claimed by the Transvaal and the Orange Free State (Afrikaner republics), the Tswana chiefdom, and the Griqua chiefdom of Nicholas (both Black African tribes). In 1871 the British annexed Griqualand West

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[34] Thompson, 115

and convinced Waterboer, the chief, to allow them to provide British protections to Griqua territories, which allowed them to claim part of the Kimberley territory. Although they British now had a legitimate presence in the territory; the problem that remained for the British was that they did not establish governmental administration; therefore, industrialists and political figures in the territory were able to maintain political control, hence the diamonds, which undermined the British attempt at control.

Wenela was created at the end of the nineteenth century by the Chamber of Mines for the purpose of limiting competition between mining companies in the territory for outside labor sources. The creation of Wenela was prompted by the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand. Preceding to the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand the largest recruiting organization was the Rand National Labour Association, which was later restructured and renamed Wenela. The proliferation of the mining industry required a steady and stable stream of labor. R. Mansell Prothero, in "Foreign Migrant Labour for South Africa," writes:

> "The temporary status of migrants in a foreign country and the control exercised over them in their work and at other times has produced a labour force which can do little to organize itself."[35]

Prothero argues that an inconsistent migrant labor force was more advantageous than a consistent labor force that was native because their presence was by law impermanent. Impermanence and inconsistency was especially important for African migrant laborers who were native to the Union of South Africa. This is

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[35] Prothero, 383

evidenced simply in the difference of term limits for laborers. Native laborers were only given ten and a half month term limits, while non-native laborers were allotted one to two year terms at a time.[36]

Perberdy makes the claim that Indians were the only legitimate threat to British dominance through an analysis of the immigration policy throughout Africa's history. However, this claim is based solely on immigration policies, and the absence of an assessment of domestic policies to regulate African natives and recruiting of African labor migrants does not provide the fullest understanding of the reality. Peberdy does not explore in great depth the mining industry and the ways in which recruiting migrant labor functioned as a way to monitor the movement of Africans. This argument is a clear example of the way that deeming the cause of the violence in post-Apartheid South Africa xenophobic sentiment limits the discourse to merely an assessment of the movements of peoples, in some cases across borders that do not reflect the social realities of the people living in the territory.

The Era of Recruiting

In the years preceding the creation of the Rand National Labor Association, individual mining companies were established in order to recruit labor for work on the diamond mines in Kimberley. At this juncture the agricultural industry in the region was the most developed and established, presenting a challenge for recruiting a great deal of workers to the mines. The tribal-ethnic groups most present on the mines in the 1870s were the Pedis, Tsongas, and

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[36] *ibid* 386

the south Sotho. These ethnic-tribal groups all originated from the Sotho or Basuto ancestry, and there presence in this territory dates back to the fifth century. The incentive for these ethnic-tribal groups to work on the mines was varied. The Pedi ethnic-tribal group had chosen to work on the mines as a way to earn a means to purchase weapons to defend themselves against aggression from other tribes and colonist. Additionally, although to a lesser extent, these groups also used the money earned from mining for bride-wealth. After some time, it becomes apparent that competition between mining companies over labor can be detrimental to the viability of the industry because it had resulted in increased wages. This prompted the creation of the Rand Native Labour Association to centralize migrant labor recruiting in order to limit competition amongst the mines.

In the late 1800s, the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand incited greater demand for labor. Due to an agreement with Portugal, the British began to recruit very heavily from Portuguese East Africa (present day Mozambique). The agreement allowed the Chamber of Mines in South Africa to enter Portuguese East Africa and recruit migrant laborers. Marie Wentzel notes that in the period between 1890 and 1899, the population of migrant laborers from Portuguese East Africa increased from fourteen thousand to ninety-seven thousand.[37] The increasing productivity of the mining industry is undeniable from these figures. In 1900, the Rand Native Labour Association was restructured and renamed the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association ("Wenela"). This new

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[37] Wentzel, 182

organization expands its recruiting efforts through agreements made with colonial authorities in other African countries. Additionally, the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association operated a transportation system throughout southern Africa. This system the primary means through which labor migrants would move into and out of South Africa. This system had included buses, trains, and eventually air travel. Migrant laborers were transported in at the beginning of their contracts, and would immediately be repatriated after their contracts were up. Migrants were typically male and they were often entering from rural areas around southern Africa.

The territories from which Wenela recruited had agreements with the Chamber of Mines, which allowed them to recruit laborers from these particular countries. Contracts were important because they allowed British authorities in South Africa to manage the movement of the labor migrants within South Africa. Additionally, these populations were never allowed to have citizenship or any other legal status; however, many of the recruits spent a significant proportion of their lives in South Africa. Working conditions on the mines are notorious for being dangerous and mineworkers were frequently injured. Additionally, the mines have been the sites of ethnic-based violence. The mine owners strategically house miners in compounds according to their ethnic affiliations. They are also allocated tasks based on their ethnic affiliations.[38] This functioned to prevent the development of camaraderie between the migrants, and the result

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[38] Moodie, 588

was often fighting amongst different ethnic groups on the mines.

The Post-Recruiting Era

In 1904, Wenela made arrangements with the colonial authorities in Njassaland (present-day Malawi) for the recruiting of workers on the gold mines. Five thousand went to work on the mines that year. However, in 1913, the Union of South Africa prohibited the recruitment of labor from any territory that is north of 22 degrees south latitude, because laborers from that territory had a high mortality (often developing pneumonia and lung disease). The ban was lifted in 1937, and the deal between Wenela and Malawi was formalized in 1938.

Following a 1974 plane crash, in which a Wenela plane was transporting Malawian laborers to South Africa and 72 Malawians were killed, the Malawi government stopped external recruiting. Then, again recruiting was allowed in 1977, but in 1988 it was stopped because of a dispute over HIV testing.

In 1973 South Africa signed bilateral agreements with Botswana and Lesotho to recruit labor migrants. A similar bilateral agreement was signed with Swaziland in 1975. Southern Rhodesia (present-day Zimbabwe) initially prohibited blacks from working outside of the country. In 1974, they made a deal with Wenela that allowed the active recruitment of its citizens; however, this was prohibited in 1980 due to Zimbabwean independence.

The presence of Malawians, Zambians, Tanzanians, and Angolans was never substantial on the mines in the union. It is most probable that there were greater costs associated with transporting these populations into South Africa,

and the challenge of them getting sick and dying on the mines makes recruiting from the places listed above less desirable. The Portuguese benefitted greatly from the recruiting that the Union of South Africa did in Portuguese East Africa. The laborers working on the mines in South Africa contributed immensely to the economy there through remittances. As time goes on the proportion of native to non-native laborers shifts, and eventually natives are the majority on the mines.

Mozambique and Lesotho sustained the largest populations on the mines as the shift from predominately foreign laborers to native laborers. Mozambican laborers on the mines declined dramatically after 1975.[39] Lesotho maintains a high proportion of miners on the mines up until 1995. The mining industry transformed in the 1970s because workers were now able to have unionize, there were more health and safety regulations, the compound system had changed. The implementation of these changes turned the migrants into more of a proletarian group, insomuch as they now had the opportunity to make demands. Additionally, there was an amnesty offered to mineworkers in 1995, which would have allowed them to receive permanent residence in South Africa and bring their families. However, only slightly under half of the mineworkers eligible applied. Many of them chose not to apply because of attachments at home and many of them do not desire to be South African citizens. Those who did apply did so for the tax benefits and in order to be able to seek employment in another industry. The largest proportion of those who applied had been from Lesotho.[40]

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[39] Crush, 15
[40] Crush, 16

Although Malawian labor contracts had ceased there 350 of them applied for the amnesty that was offered in 1995.

Following the decline of contract labor Marie Wentzel notes that the impact was that employers of temporary workers had illegal foreign labor supplies to extract a cheap labor force from, and this did not require cross-border recruiting. In addition, the illegal status of these groups leaves them more exploitable and provides a loophole to the rise of labor unions and labor regulation in the Apartheid era. Illegal workers in South Africa worked primarily in the following four sectors: agriculture, the construction industry, transportation services, and tourism. One migrant interviewed by Wentzel states:

> "My father worked on a South African mine for many years. Although he only visited us once a year, he regularly sent us money for schooling, clothes and food. I grew up with the idea that I would also work on a South African mine when I became old enough. Unfortunately there were no vacancies at the mine, but I nevertheless decided to come to South Africa to look for a job. Because my brother and two of my friends found jobs in the construction business, I thought that I would also be able to find a job there."[41]

The above statement gives insight into the way in which "Wenela," through a presence in communities outside of the Union established labor migration as a norm. The involvement of outside labor in South Africa was not limited to simply working in the country; instead, it is apparent from the above statement that working on the mines in South Africa had become an expectation. The above-account is also an example of existing networks in South Africa for those expecting to work in South Africa.   "Wenela" did everything it could to manage

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[41] Wentzel, 173

those entering and leaving the country by having bus depots and other means of

transportation into the country. Eventually "Wenela" had even been coordinating

a fleet of airplanes to bring migrants into South Africa. However, this was clearly

not enough to prevent some from remaining in the country illegally. Employers

benefitted from the ignorance of these migrants. Wentzel interviewed one labor

migrant who was caught illegally in the country, and he stated:

> "I think I was arrested because my Mozambican passport has
> expired. I do not need a worker's permit since I have a Mozambican
> passport. My employer did not ask any documentation. In fact,
> before this arrest nobody in this country ever asked any
> documentation from me."[42]

The above comment is evidence of how entrenched foreign migrant labor in

South Africa had become a social norm. Therefore, the tradition of a migrant

labor system and the end of labor recruiting organizations certainly had

significant impacts on illegal migrants entering South Africa seeking employment.

Although the perception of South Africa for most migrants (76%) was that it

offered better employment opportunities; Wentzel finds that many entering

migrants leave South Africa because they find that there are not many

employment opportunities. She finds in the survey that the three primary reasons

migrants would leave the country are: 'no suitable employment' at 67%, 'no

suitable income' at 49%, and 'poverty and not enough food to eat' also at 49%.

Therefore, this suggests that many enter South Africa and continue to face many

challenges at finding employment. It seems that the only migrant group that has

any chance of successfully obtaining employment in South Africa are illegal

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[42] Wentzel, 174

migrants because they are more exploitable and willing to work for lower wages.

Conclusion

Wentzel writes, "It is commonly assumed that South Africa's democratization has encouraged increased migration to the country from the region, both legally and illegally."[43] As discussed in the first chapter, it is clearly a misconception that the increase in immigrations to South Africa are the result of democratization of the country, primarily because of the assessment in the preceding chapter conducted by South African sociologist. It is evident from turnout rate of those who applied for the amnesty offered in 1995 that being a permanent resident of South Africa is not as desirable as the above-assumption proposes. Furthermore, the finding that anti-foreigner sentiment is unreasonably high would make the country even more undesirable. Again, the claim that Africans are coming into the country because of South African democratization and for citizenship remains unfounded. Migrations have historically been motivated by economic factors, and they continue to be motivated by economic factors. There is, however, a population of refugees and asylum seekers in South Africa, but these populations often have challenges finding employment and the motivations behind their claims for refugee status are related to persecutions in their country of origin. The refugee population as well as the legal migrant population face challenges at obtaining employment partially because of their lack of legal protections.

Dorrit Posel finds, in *Have Migration Patterns Changed,* from an analysis of

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[43] Wentzel , 9

household surveys that many of the rural-urban migration patterns within South Africa have not changed substantially since the end of Apartheid.[44] Although legislation preventing Africans from settling in urban areas has been repealed, many Africans have remained in the rural homelands. Posel tracks this by looking at the income breakdown of rural households, and the findings suggest that many of the rural households' income are comprised of remittances sent from the urban areas. This suggests that the physical challenges to economic mobility and wealth have not been rectified simply by a policy change. David Everatt proposes that an evaluation of the urbanization of South Africa is essential to finding a solution to the lack of access to important resources.[45] Posel suggests that policy changes in the post-Apartheid era have led many policymakers and researchers to emphasize immigrations to an extent that there is no longer any coverage in the national survey of internal labor migrations.

She attributes this to the increase in migrations to South Africa, but particularly the assumption that entering migrants are interested in staying in South Africa. Moreover, I propose that the predominating of immigrations, as a policy concern does not simply affect the data collected in national surveys, but has limited the scope through which the violence of May 2008 has been assessed. Anti-foreigner sentiment is assumed to be the primary issue because the country's dominating issue is immigration, which from previously mentioned studies is unfounded. However, as long as these assumptions exist and are

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[44] Posel, 1
[45] Everatt, 228

disseminated through media and political figures such as Mangosuthu Buthelezi's comments publicly proclaiming immigrants as South Africa's major problem,[46] other factors motivating the violence remain unnoticed. I propose that the next step in an investigation of the violence of 2008 is to take apply a historical approach to understanding violence in South Africa.

The first chapter of this inquiry established that xenophobic sentiment was high in South Africa, and that an underlying cause of this was the consensus among South Africans that immigrants are taking jobs and putting strain on the countries resources. The objective of this chapter was to assess African migrations into South Africa, because establishing a general history of the migrations should suggest some sort of tension between native African laborers and non-native laborers. However, what one finds is that native laborers and non-native African laborers both had a presence on the mines and as Apartheid nears an end, the more native laborers there were on the mines. Therefore, one might expect that as the majority of workers recruited to be mine workers shifts towards more native African mineworkers, there is less hostility. However, this has not been the case. Instead, as I will explore in the next chapter, when evaluating the violence that occurs on the mines it is apparent that this violence is strategic and in some instances had not ended in deaths.

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[46] Mangosuthu Buthelezi is the king of the Inkatha Freedom Party and the former Minister of Home Affairs who blamed the failure of service delivery in South Africa on the perceived influx of immigrants. See Crush, 43

Evaluating Xenophobic Violence

In the first chapter of this inquiry, one of the explanations provided for xenophobic violence was the theory that it is the product of a 'culture of violence'[47] within South Africa that came about stemming from the Apartheid era. However, Bronwyn Harris did not take this discussion any further. It was left merely as a suggestion. One thing that remains clear is that violence has been a facet of South African life for centuries, and it persists. Speculation of whether or not violence is motivated by xenophobic sentiment or simply crime or some sort of tribal conflict; the history, social realities, and political assumptions of the society must first be considered. Historically, this inquiry has established that the movement of Africans – both native and non-native – has been controlled and restricted through recruiting organizations for purposes of British interests in southern Africa. This has impacted social realities for the post-Apartheid era, inasmuch as recruiting has allowed labor migration to become a norm. In addition, the ANC negotiated Black political dominance, initiating a regime shift, resulting in new political assumptions that perpetuate South African superiority. However, when considering social realities there is another story.

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[47] Harris, 176

Since the end of Apartheid, rural African natives of South Africa have continued to function largely as a migrant labor force.[48] Those residing in urban areas continue to reside largely in informal settlements and remain cut off from accessing the services and resources of the urban areas and often face evictions from informal settlements. Unemployment continues to be a major issue that is not only frustrating urban dwellers, but also discouraging rural dwellers from seeking to migrate into the city. This leaves those most likely to need assistance cut off from important resources such as education, healthcare, adequate housing, and in some instances clean water. In addition, the newly inaugurated constitution of South Africa assures resources to the people of South Africa that it often fails to supply. In the midst of such deprivation, immigrations of Africans from other African nations are also a social reality that persists in the post-recruiting era. Many of these immigrants work informally, and some of them even enter clandestinely and work illegally for lower wages than South Africans are willing to.

These circumstances have provided for what many have deemed xenophobic violence incited by deprivation. However, from the preceding assessment of the history of movement of Africans into South Africa, there is no evidence to support the claim that there is direct causation between xenophobic sentiment and the violence that has been occurring in South Africa. In fact, distinctions between native and non-native mineworkers never seem to be emphasized. Instead, the tribal-ethnic affiliations of the mineworkers are what

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[48] Posel, 5

tend to be emphasized as a strategy for maintaining conflict between lower level workers in order to thwart labor opposition.

This chapter begins with a brief review of life and violence on the mines in South Africa, which is primarily comprised of 'faction fights'. Following this I provide an assessment of the types of violent occurrences that have been prescribed as xenophobic with a content analysis of some reports of xenophobic violence in contemporary South Africa. In my assessment of these events I find that although the conflicts are often between native South Africans and foreigners, often the cause is varied; simple dislike or hatred because one is a foreigner is rarely paramount. Finally, I contend that the politicization of xenophobia in South Africa has resulted in the predominance of xenophobia as the motive for violence in South Africa.

'Faction Fights' on South African Gold Mines

Chapter two established a history of labor migrants who enter the Union of South Africa primarily as mineworkers. This section will focus on the ways in which work roles were allocated on the mines. Mineworkers were recruited both outside of the union and within the Union's remote rural territories. The structure of social life on South African mines was organized in such a way that ethnic-tribal affiliations were intensified. Work roles and housing assignments in compounds were allocated according to tribal-ethnic affiliations. Therefore, it seems evident that managers of the mines encouraged some sense of camaraderie amongst different groups. This seems peculiar when considering

that the British were such a small segment of the overall population, and that camaraderie would likely lead to a greater risk of labor opposition. However, the British mine managers benefitted from the existing divisions between the different ethnic groups. Determining which tasks to allocate to specific ethnic-tribal groups was based on stereotypes of these groups. For example, men on the mines from the Mpondo ethnic-tribal group were hired as drillers (machine boys) because of their reputation for having physical strength.[49] The way in which the Mpondo would maintain their status as drillers – which was desirable because it was considered well paid – was by provoking fights with men from other ethnic-tribal groups.

This system of organizing labor results in 'faction fights' becoming a norm, inasmuch as the only way in which mineworkers have agency to. Although the types of work they were assigned was according to ethnic-tribal affiliations, the work groups were mixed which meant that the men had to interact with one another. In order to maintain their status as dominant and be assigned work that was more desirable because of slightly higher pay, men from the different groups would fight to assert their dominance amongst the other ethnic groups. Generally, the Basuto ethnic group, which was native to South Africa, would be the largest population on the mines when they were first opened; however, as time went on their would be more men with other ethnic-tribal affiliations entering. The Basutos would, in order to assert their dominance, pin-prick men from other ethnic groups if that group had begun to predominate in terms of population. This sort of

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[49] Moodie, 592

violence was commonplace on the mines, and because of this stereotypes of the different groups would develop. Therefore, Basutos were considered overbearing and arrogant because of these acts.

Accounts of this sort of violence are fragmented because mine managers suppressed knowledge of this behavior, primarily because this could potentially disrupt recruiting efforts. T. Dunbar Moodie finds in his archival work that the most complete record of mine violence is from 1913 at Crown Mines. This occurrence was prominent primarily because over one thousand workers were killed due to mine violence, and the NRC threatened to halt recruiting for Crown Mines. There was intragroup violence among the African miners, as well as violent conflicts between white and Black miners. The abuse of African workers at the hands of white miners was common according to a white union representative because it was a way of asserting dominance over them.

The African mineworkers were allocated tasks in which they would assist white skilled miners. This work included drilling, digging holes shoveling, and shaft sinking. There were also some positions assisting the white supervisors with keeping the rest of the African laborers in check. This was a particularly desirable position because the wages were slightly higher. The ethnic-tribal group that was chosen to do that type of work was called the 'boss boys'. It was not singularly ethnic-tribal affiliations that provided the conditions for conflict. Instead, the way that work assignments were allocated and the way that different

positions impacted the livelihood of the workers. There were also differences in pay that had an immensely important effect on desirable jobs.

This is important for understanding the way in which ethnic-tribal affiliations were used in conjunction with the manipulation of the allocation of resources as a way in which to provoke conflict between different groups. In contemporary South Africa, xenophobic sentiment is explained primarily as an issue invoked by disparity in the allocation of resources and the lack of jobs. However, the focus of assuaging these problems relies on the removal or limitation of immigrations into South Africa; instead of emphasizing better methods of service delivery and working to ensure political and economic participation of all South Africans. Ultimately, this violence is not organically arising simply because of hatred for foreigners, and there certainly is no natural inclination that leads one to perceive foreigners as a credible threat. The violence that occurred on the mines was not simply about finite resources; instead, it was provoked by the system through which work assignments were allocated. The contemporary violence witnessed against foreigners is also provoked by the way media portrays foreigners and the messages provided from authoritative political figures. The violence that occurred on South African mines amongst African miners was neither about legal status nor building a national identity; instead, it was strategic violence that was used as a method for competing for jobs.

The task of determining whether or not there was an egregious intent in the allocation of work roles is challenging because there is no evidence to

support this claim. However, it seems to obviously be practical, the intentions of mine managers in allocating job tasks do not seem to be as clear. Tasks were divided up according to stereotypes of the different tribal-ethnic groups. This could suggest that that mine managers had malicious intent but, again, there is no evidence to support this claim. Regardless of the intent of the mine managers, violence pervaded the mine compounds. The different tribal-ethnic groups were provided job assignments based primarily on their reputation on the mines. In an interview Moodie conducted of a former mineworker, the respondent states:

> "The Mpondo have a reputation for being trouble-makers but in fact that is because of their pride. They do fight often so as to not be looked down upon. On the job they value their independence – they don't want to be followed about and told what to do. Even the mine captain doesn't push them around if he wants to avoid trouble."[50]

It is evident from the above-statement that this particular tribal-ethnic group used collective violence strategically to benefit them. The Mpondo, on this particular mine, used their reputation as "trouble-makers" to attain jobs as drillers, in which they were paid slightly higher wages relative to the other African workers. This is an example of the way in which violence was used strategically to attain some sort of advantage over the rest of the African mineworkers.

According to Marie Wentzel, there were no legal distinctions between native and non-native African labor migrants until 1963; however, distinctions between the groups were implicit. Moodie finds in his account that the Basutos (a native tribal-ethnic group) originally had a greater presence on the mines in the early 1940s, but as the proportion of non-native mineworkers increased, Basutos

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[50] *ibid*, 588

used collective violence as a way in which to assert some sort of dominance on the mines. They ultimately became known as "pin-prickers", primarily because of their choice of method of violence. Basutos would use sharp objects to prick into the skin of men who belonged to other tribal-ethnic affiliations.[51] This violence was not intended to murder the men of opposing tribal-ethnic affiliations; instead, it was meant to be symbolic of their dominance. Perhaps this violence is an instance of Bronwyn Harris' 'culture of violence' thesis.

This sort of mine violence persisted until the 1970s when mine recruiting diminished significantly. The prevalence of violence as a way in which to assert some sort of dominance certainly continued. Conflicts between the Inkatha Freedom Party and the African National Congress certainly were very violent. ANC members would carryout violence against members of the opposing Inkatha Freedom Party. Ultimately, this violence settled; however, it was often gruesome. The tensions between the two political parties certainly were violent; however, it seems that this is rarely considered in relation to violence in South Africa.

Xenophobic Violence in the post-Apartheid Era

The outbreak of violence in May 2008 has been the most widely cited example of xenophobic violence in South Africa. This occurrence began in the township of Alexandria, and the violence that took place in this particular township ended with two dead and forty injured. The violence primarily affected migrants from Mozambique, Malawi, and Zimbabwe. This occurrence in Alexandria and the spreading of the violence can be considered the formative

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[51] *ibid*, 590

event that prompts the discourse surrounding xenophobic violence in South Africa, and in turn begins the emphasis on immigrations. However, preceding this occurrence there were several events in which there was the claim that the events were the result of direct causality between anti-foreigner sentiment and violent occurrences.

Perpetrators in the riots of May 2008 determined whom they would attack based on whether or not they could perceive them as traditionally South African. However, perceptions of what is traditionally South African are subjective. Perpetrators targeted those who could not speak a native South African language and people who had particular physical features. However, the legal status of those attacked was not the essential concern; instead, perpetrators attacked those that did not align with their conceptions of what is South African and what is not. Perpetrators identified foreigners based primarily on the languages they spoke and other physical features. This is evidenced simply from the reality that of the sixty-seven people killed, twenty-one of them were South African citizens.[52] This suggests that the claim of xenophobic sentiment as causality for violence must be reconsidered.

Simply conducting a textual analysis of the media reporting of violence in which foreigners are attacked or hurt will provide insight into the ways in which the media has emphasized the 'outsider' status of those attacked in reports, and in most cases the investigating officials are often convinced that the motive is xenophobic sentiment even before any investigation is conducted. In one report

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[52] Crush, 17

of seven foreigners who were murdered in one month, the reporter titles the article "Xenophobic attacks: seven die in one month" implying a cause for the death of the seven people killed. However, the author notes that synchronously with the death of the seven foreigners he is reporting on, there was an increase in murders generally.[53] Therefore, it is evident that the violence is hastily being cast as motivated by xenophobic sentiment. The reporter concludes from speaking with the residents that they were afraid of refugees and asylum seekers will take over property and open businesses in their community.

However, in the instance that refugees and asylum seekers are a perceived threat, the legal status of this group – which is ultimately what would make them foreigners – is not the reason they are targeted. The above-instance is an example of how simplistic xenophobia is as a descriptive term for violence. In fact, not only is it descriptively insufficient, but it also impedes a rigorous investigation of what is actually occurring. The case had not even been fully investigated; officials were searching for witnesses and suspects. Therefore, it is apparent just how pervasive the idea that xenophobic sentiment is. The officials are quoted in the article saying they need to find witnesses and suspects, while simultaneously claiming that the violence is a part of a larger trend of xenophobic violence. This displays just how dissociated these two ideas are.

Strikingly, this is a general format for reporting on violence in which foreigners are implicated. It is impossible for perpetrators of violence against foreigners to have any motive other than simply that they hate foreigners. This

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[53] Henda, 1

suggests, at least to me, the pervasiveness of political assumptions in the post-Apartheid era. Even violent acts are interpreted through a lens of political abstraction that prevents investigators and policymakers from understanding violence against foreigners as more than an issue of legal status.

Another interesting facet of this violence is that it seems to often be about maintaining ownership of a territory. In another instance of a report of xenophobic violence, groups of native Black South Africans living in a squatter camp evict Zimbabweans from part of the squatter camp. The South Africans gave the Zimbabweans a 10-day ultimatum, and when they failed to comply they were forced out and their homes and belongings were burned. The article is included as an account of xenophobic violence; however, a more viable solution may perhaps arise out of the earlier-mentioned account of David Everatt. Everatt claimed that transformation of South African society through urban processes must occur. Furthermore, the residents and witnesses of this event themselves provide explanations for why they perceive that this event occurred, which is that a Zimbabwean had shot and killed a South African offsetting violence.[54]

This instance above alludes slightly to the discussion Everatt was attempting to incite about the relationship between urbanization and class formation in South Africa. It seems that it is often disregarded that Apartheid was in actuality a set of very restrictive land use regulations. The Native Lands Act is cited as a formative law for Apartheid legislation. The way in which the Apartheid regime restricted the movement of particular groups was through the controlling

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[54] Ndaba, 1

of land. This is why when Dorrit Posel finds that a large proportion of Black South Africans continue to live as labor migrants; progress of the post-Apartheid regime is scrutinized. The eviction of Zimbabweans from a South African squatter camp does not suggest that they just hate this group and choose not to live with them; instead, this suggests that they are protecting the territory in which they live. They did not murder any Zimbabweans and they did not immediately approach the situation in such a way that was violent and illogical, which is they way xenophobic violence is characteristically anticipated to occur. Furthemore, South Africa behaves in this way and it is not deemed xenophobic. There have been instances in which the South African government decided that they would evict South Africans from living in an informal settlement.

Moreover, Africans directly implicated in violence have made the claim that the violence is not about nationality. In another news report, a group of Somali traders seek protection and help from the South African Human Rights Commission because of attacks that have been perpetrated against them. In this report the regional head of the South African Human Right Commission is quoted stating, "They (referring to the Somalis) are not convinced it is xenophobic attacks."[55] The cursory statement from the regional director suggests that the initial step in an investigation of violence against foreigners is to establish the acts as motivated by xenophobia. The issue with this approach is that in the event that foreigners attacked do not claim that the violence was not motivated by xenophobia there is no objection to framing the violence as such. Therefore, in

[55] Mangxamba, 1

the circumstances of the May 2008 attacks, in which due to panic there were too many foreigners affected to obtain individual accounts, there is no plausible objection to that claim.

The lack of any objection or any account of the victims who were attacked in the May 2008 violence leaves the occurrence completely to the interpretation of the government and media. The dominance of xenophobia as the overarching social problem of post-Apartheid South Africa has in the preceding examples impeded comprehensive investigation of what the causes of violence are, and the result of this has been the narrowing of the scope of explanations. The emphasis of xenophobia as phenomena has, as I stated earlier, shifted the focus of research to contemporary immigrations. The study of immigrations and work on the 'rights' of migrants procures such significance in national discourse that critical domestic issues are overridden by the assumption the most pertinent issues are those related to immigrants. This perpetuates the victimization of immigrants in South Africa, reifying the assumption that immigrants are exhausting South African resources.

The Politicization of Xenophobia in South Africa

The emphasis on xenophobic sentiment shifts the focus of South Africa's problems in a dangerous way, insomuch as the focus becomes regulating who is entering the country as a means for developing a national identity. This is problematic particularly because alleviating the problems of South African natives becomes unnoticed. Furthermore, immigrants as the issue are an unsolvable problem. However, the search for viable solutions is impeded because of the

politicization of xenophobia in South Africa. One example of how pervasive

xenophobic violence continues to be even presently is a recent comment from

Mangosuthu Buthelezi, in which he states:

> "Xenophobic attack has shamed us all. Other African countries contributed their resources, time and energy for our liberation from racial rule and its discriminative tendency. And once we became free, we resorted to attacking them. This shows that we do not appreciate their sacrifice. The entire scenario disgraces us."[56]

King Buthelezi, as he is referred to presently, because he is the reigning king of

the Inkatha Freedom Party (which in many ways is the Zulu political party),

provides this narrative of other Africans helping in the liberation of South Africa

and the help as invaluable to the anti-Apartheid struggle. However, this is quite a

shift from his stance just a few years prior. As the Minister of Home Affairs he

exclaimed that the influx of immigrants was straining the resources of the South

African economy and claimed that this was the reason the Reconstruction and

Development Act had been unsuccessful at providing basic resources to many

South Africans.

Buthelezi and other politicians have repeatedly proclaimed the narrative

above, in which South Africans must unite with their fellow Africans because of

some great sacrifice they made in the anti-Apartheid struggle. However, it seems

apparent that the role of other African countries in the anti-Apartheid struggle was

primarily in the form of allowing political exiles seeking refuge there. Therefore,

the sacrifice Buthelezi is suggesting native South Africans do not appreciate is

something that many of them did not directly benefit from; however, it is a

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[56] Okwe, 1

sacrifice that he and many members of the ANC benefitted from. Ultimately, xenophobic violence has become the latest, trendy political issue to take on. As I stated earlier this posits the discussion of South Africa's central issues in immigrations because their plight is the most pressing. The politicization of xenophobia in South Africa results in the privileging of immigrants in some sense through their victimization.

The anticipation of increased cross-border migration is apparent from Posel's observation, that there was a shift in research to emphasize cross-border immigrations.[57] Precisely why this observation is so important is because it superbly displays the pervasiveness of political assumptions in South Africa. South Africa's triumphs have been accomplished through political means, and while the Apartheid regime was certainly political it was also about aggressively regulating movement and controlling urbanization. However, political assumptions have allowed South Africans to take for granted the repeal of pass laws and the Native Land Act[58], which shaped settlement patterns in contemporary South Africa. Furthermore, to append more complexity into this discussion the homeland system of the apartheid era[59] was intended to maintain a fragmented South Africa, and many rural South Africans continue to reside the designated areas. Therefore, again, there have been few improvements in the lives of South Africans with the granting of rights, and this is largely due to the

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[57] Posel, 4
[58] Feinberg, 81
[59] Pickles & Woods, 634

reification of the political assumption that there is direct causation between

xenophobic sentiment and violence in South Africa.

Conclusion: Considering a 'Right to the City'

In the first chapter of this inquiry, I briefly discussed the 'paradox of democratization' and the way in which democratization and the endowing of 'rights' in South Africa has resulted in the development of political assumptions about how society should be. However, these political assumptions have successfully obscured social realities. What would a solution look like to this problem? One potential approach to reconcile the idealism of democratization and the social realities of the people is the 'right to the city' concept.

The 'right to the city' concept has evolved over the years; it was first proposed by the theorist Henri Lefebvre as a way to summon the importance of making the resources of urban areas more accessible. Moreover, in recent years, urban anthropologist and theorist David Harvey re-conceptualized the 'right to the city' as:

> "The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by the changing city. It is, moreover, a common rather than an individual right since this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanization. The freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is, I want to

argue, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights."[60]

Harvey's conception of the 'right to the city' is proposing that accessing the resources of the city is not simply an issue of being able to extract things from the city; instead, it must be about what he terms "remaking" the city or contributing to the city both as a space and an idea. The urbanization process of South Africa has for far too long excluded the native African population and it continues to do so. Until participating in the further development of the city is an opportunity provided to African natives in South Africa, the spatial oppression of Blacks will persist.

It was apparent in my own experiences in Johannesburg in 2010 that the cityscape was a space for wealthy tourist (due to the 2010 World Cup), white (mostly British) South Africans, and the diminutive Black elite population. Just prior to the World Cup there was an initiative to "clean up the streets" of Johannesburg, in which the homeless were removed from the streets and sent to remote settlements. I personally do not have the answer for what it will take to remake the city, but there must be further investigation into how these social realities can be reconciled with the idealism of Human Rights and Democratization. The problem of South Africa's immigrant focus is that alleviating widespread deprivation of many South African citizens becomes a secondary concern, and ostensibly those for whom the anti-Apartheid movement sacrificed so much are left just making it.

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[60] Harvey, 23

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