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Xenophobia: a hindrance factor to South Africa's ambition of becoming a developmental state

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The prevalence of xenophobic violence toward foreigners has hindered South Africa's ambition to become a developmental state since 2007, when the concept of a "democratic developmental state" was first endorsed during the African National Congress (ANC) conference in Polokwane. This ambition has also been thwarted by the inability of the post-apartheid regime to provide adequate and sustainable services to the citizens. Xenophobia has disrupted economic growth and has contributed to poor service delivery in local municipalities, thus leading to social protests. The developmental state depends mainly on a solid balance of economic growth and human development. It also leans on the capacity of the state to establish policies that address poverty and promote the expansion of solid economic opportunities. In this endeavor, migrants increase economic growth and make it sustainable, increase productivity, and promote the labor market. They also promote the labor force and human capital, economic growth, and public finance, thus enabling the realization of a developmental state. However, xenophobia has limited migrants' contributions to economic growth and social well-being in South Africa. It has destructive effects on South Africa's economic structure and growth, thus affecting the delivery of adequate services that would enhance its ability to achieve a developmental state. The paper recommends that there is a need for South Africa to understand that xenophobia affects economic growth and the service delivery framework. To address the prevalence of xenophobia and achieve its ambition of a developmental state, South Africa needs to hasten its responses to curb xenophobia and integrate migrants into economic opportunities. The paper adopted a qualitative research methodology and conceptual and document analysis techniques to collect data that enabled the achievement of the above assertions.

KEYWORDS

xenophobia, developmental state, service delivery and South Africa, migrants, deprivation

1 Introduction

South Africa's ambition to become a democratic developmental state was first declared at the Africa National Congress (ANC) conference in 2007 when the concept of a "democratic developmental state" was endorsed in Polokwane. However, from the conference's endorsement in 2007 up to the time of writing this article, this ambition has neither been materialized nor achieved. One of the many factors that hindered this ambition from materializing has been the regular recurrence of xenophobic violence

against foreigners which has effects on the economic growth and service delivery framework in the country. In 2000, xenophobic sentiments against foreigners had reached new heights. In 2008, right after the ANC conference that endorsed the idea of leading this country toward a developmental state, the first dreadful and deadly xenophobic attacks against foreigners were launched. These attacks brought about instability and uncertainty. The removal of apartheid's one-sided and discriminatory regime, and the introduction of democracy in South Africa in 1994, did not bring stability and social justice as expected.

Contrary to expectations, the post-1994 ANC regime has been witnessing deadly incidences that have tainted South Africa's image abroad, affecting its domestic policies within its territory and those of its foreign policies. Neocosmos (2010) argued that one of those incidences is the occurrence of xenophobia and its persistent prevalence in South Africa. Between the years 2000 and March 2008, at least seven people were reported dead after succumbing to xenophobic attacks (Neocosmos, 2010). In May 2008, xenophobic attacks erupted and jeopardized daily business operations and activities, leaving 12 people dead, and however, 10 of those killed were South African citizens (Thinane, 2022). The attacks were partially motivated by xenophobic sentiments toward immigrants (Nyamnjoh, 2014). Xenophobia has been a hidden virus and force behind South Africa's failure to achieve its goal of becoming a developmental state. Nevertheless, scholars and policymakers have not recognized this predicament, and literature presents little on how xenophobia hinders South Africa from becoming a democratic developmental state.

The central objective of this paper is to assess xenophobia as a hindrance to South Africa's ambition of becoming a democratic developmental state. The research question the paper sets out to answer is to what extent has the occurrence of xenophobia and its prevalence in South African society affected the country from achieving its ambition of becoming a developmental state? The paper is structured into six main sections to achieve the aim and answer the research question. The first section defines the concepts of developmental state and xenophobia. The second section explains research methodology and techniques that were used to collect and analyze data. The third section explains the characteristics of a democratic developmental state, as well as the factors leading to a democratic developmental state. The fourth section explains the theoretical framework underpinning the occurrence of xenophobia in South Africa. The section also reviews the literature to understand other key factors influencing xenophobia and leading to its prevalence in South African society. The fifth section discusses findings on xenophobia as a hindrance factor that has affected the realization of a democratic developmental state in South Africa. The sixth section consists of concluding remarks and proffers recommendations for policymakers, scholars in the field, and future studies.

2 Definitions of concepts

In any research endeavors, defining concepts enables one to understand abstract ideas and events that are being investigated. In this paper, the concepts being studied are developmental state and xenophobia.

2.1 Developmental state

Johnson (1982, 1999) defined the developmental state as a state with economic development as a priority objective that directly intervenes in the economy using regulation and has a small and highly skilled public bureaucracy to which actual powers are assigned. Johnson (1982, 1999) also sees a developmental state as one that depends on the autonomy of the legislature and judiciary and the ability of these institutions to accord the citizens the required freedom. Johnson sees it as a state that controls its foreign commercial and financial accounts, a state with a high exchange rate, and a state that protects the domestic manufacturing industry from end products (Johnson, 1999). That state must be able to facilitate machinery imports, create state-owned financial institutions, and adopt credit and fiscal incentives, but always temporarily and subject to constant assessments. It is a state that can adopt a consolidated public investment budget and offers solid governmental support for science and technology (Johnson, 1999).

The achievement of a developmental state is based on the ability to formulate common national agendas and policies that enable the achievement of sustainable livelihoods and outline developmental goals. These policies must resonate with policymakers and politicians and involve the cooperation of citizens and key stakeholders from all sectors of society. Policymakers, politicians, and citizens must work together to apply the country's resources toward common development goals through institutionalized engagement processes (Rice Jones, 2013). As Johnson (1999: 2) argued, "a core attribute of a developmental state is its ability to set substantive economic and social goals against realistic outcomes and targets and adopt a singular focus on economic growth." Gumede (2009) points out that social policies that promote economic growth are crucial elements that impact a developmental state's success. Rice Jones (2013) argued that the ambition to achieve a developmental state depends on efficient embedded autonomy policies that promote good governance free from inequality and service delivery protests, xenophobic violence, and any social insecurity. This means that sustainable service delivery to the citizens possesses ingredients of social stability that, in turn, promotes economic growth and makes it sustainable, thus leading the country toward a developmental state. This means that sustainable service delivery leads to sustainable livelihoods. The developmental state depends on the ability of the government to establish principles and structures that enable the delivery of quality and adequate services to the people. These services enable the citizens to realize their expectations and achieve sustainable livelihoods. Rice Jones (2013) argued that a developmental state depends on the people's political will and the government's ability to establish and implement development policies free from inequality.

2.2 Xenophobia

Xenophobia is characterized by hatred and negative feelings directed at non-native people in a foreign land (Rydgren, 2004). Non-native people include both legal and non-documented migrants. Non-documented migrants exit their motherland because of several factors, such as corruption and the failure of migration law linked to domestic politics. Nyamnjoh (2006) defined xenophobia as "rife violence against migrants from African countries suffering economic

downturns.” Central to the xenophobic attacks in South Africa is the fact that it is mainly influenced by the delivery of inadequate services to the locals. This means that the hatred and animosity that feed xenophobic attacks are associated with the “politics of the stomach” and the desire to put food on the table. The hatred against foreigners emanates from domestic considerations such as economic hardships. It is also influenced by the failure to take critical measures against inciters and perpetrators (Niyitunga, 2021). The South African Human Rights Commission (1998) reports that xenophobia is an expression of a deep dislike of non-nationals by nationals of a recipient state, and it constitutes a violation of human rights.

Xenophobia is a significant contributor to urban violence and a threat to security. Its various forms of intolerance are sources of security concerns that generate a situation that hinders ease of access to essential services. Moreover, xenophobia places non-natives in challenging situations where their human and labor rights are violated (Lefko-Everett, 2007; Wickramasekara, 2008). This is because xenophobia instills fear in both natives and non-natives, and with fear, the propensity for conflicts is high. Scholars have argued that fear is a force that motivates conflict and violence in society (Kelman, 2007). Xenophobia is citizens’ fear of foreigners embodied in discriminatory attitudes and behavior and often culminates in violence (Mogekwu, 2005). When inadequate services are delivered to citizens, their expectations are unmet, and they fear for survival. Inadequate services create the fear of losing social status and identity, threatening citizens’ livelihoods (Harris, 2001). This therefore influences xenophobia because of the unfulfilled expectations of the post-apartheid regime, resulting in unemployment, poverty, and deprivation (Runciman, 1966). Therefore, the state cannot enable its citizens to achieve sustainable livelihoods that allow them to pursue developmental goals. It weakens the possibility of the country and prevents it from achieving its ambition of becoming a developmental state.

3 Research methodology

This study is qualitative because it sought to comprehend the feelings and reactions of the people to a social event that affects their lives. According to Bangani and Vyas-Doorgapersad (2020: 2), qualitative study is commonly used for researchers who seek to comprehend social practices and their effects on citizens’ behavior. Data was collected from the literature review and was transcribed into secondary data. Various articles, books, and internet sources were consulted to understand the effects of xenophobia on the developmental state ambitions in South Africa. Readings that were consulted in this article included xenophobia, developmental state, governance, good governance, service delivery, and deprivation theory. Data was collected from the literature review as follows. To achieve the data for this paper, eight books, seven book chapters, 42 articles, seven working papers, five policy papers series, six conference proceedings, nine internet sources (websites), and one monograph report were consulted and reviewed. The literature consulted was readings and materials published in the post-apartheid period from 1996 to 2022.

The gathered information was analyzed and interpreted through conceptual and document analysis techniques. Conceptual analysis was used in this paper because it is a technique that treats concepts as classes of objects, events, properties, or relationships (Furner, 2004).

This is because xenophobia is an event that has occurred to foreigners as well as an event that shows a broken relationship between locals and migrants. The technique provides different definitions and meanings accorded to the xenophobia phenomena in South Africa and their effects on development projects. Moreover, the aim of using conceptual analysis in this paper was to improve our understanding of factors that make xenophobic events or attacks hinder the realisation of the developmental state in South Africa (Jackson, 1998). This technique provided a comprehensive analysis of theories and significant concepts used when examining the relationships between variables and concepts influencing xenophobic events in South Africa to draw critical conclusions (Mutenga, 2021). It also helped the researchers to understand the linkages between the deprivation theory and xenophobia in South Africa. In this paper, conceptual analysis led to the concepts of the developmental state, service delivery, and xenophobia being broken down into component elements. The component elements enabled the researcher to understand that xenophobia is a barrier to South Africa’s realisation of its ambition of becoming a democratic developmental state.

Document analysis, together with conceptual analysis, were used in this paper to understand xenophobia events and their effects on the delivery of adequate services that lead to a developmental state. Nyikadzino and Vyas-Doorgapersad (2020: 236) noted that document analysis includes critical reading from detailed written data. In this research, document analysis assisted in exploring beliefs, context factors, and practices (Angers and Machtmes, 2005: 772) associated with xenophobia, service delivery, and the developmental state. Moreover, the rationale for using document analysis in this research was informed by the immense value of documents on South Africa’s ambition to become a developmental state, the prevalence of xenophobic violence, the prevalence of the delivery of inadequate essential services to the citizens, which has led to persistent social protests. The technique provided data on the context of xenophobia and the developmental state. It located the role of quality and adequate services in realizing a developmental state in South Africa. Consulted documents provided background information and historical insight into xenophobia occurrences in South Africa and their effects on the service delivery framework. This information provided insight that enabled the researcher to understand the historical roots of xenophobia in South Africa and the criteria that lead to a democratic developmental state. The documents used in this study included books, book chapters, conference and monograph papers, public policy paper series, journal articles, and internet sources.

4 Theoretical framework underpinning the occurrence of xenophobia in South Africa

The theoretical framework that underpins this article is the relative deprivation theory. The concept of relative deprivation is understood in three main steps. The first connection between relative deprivation and xenophobia is when an individual compares themselves to non-citizens (Smith et al., 2020). In a situation where there is no comparison, there is no relative deprivation; thus, there will be no xenophobia. This step is associated with xenophobia because when locals do not receive adequate services from the government, they tend to compare themselves with foreigners. The second step

associated with relative deprivation theory with xenophobia is that there must be a cognitive appraisal that leads the individual to perceive that their ingroup is at a disadvantage (Smith et al., 2020). In this situation, the individuals perceive themselves as being underprivileged, and when seeing non-citizens with some privileges, they think their leaders prefer foreigners over them, thus developing hatred sentiments. This is because this kind of situation leads locals to nurture the spirit of feeling discriminated against and segregated from the dues that they are entitled to receive. The third step that explains the links between relative deprivation and xenophobia is that the perceived disadvantage must be considered unfair (Smith et al., 2020). The perceiver thinks that their ingroup deserves better living and working conditions than foreigners, resulting in angry resentments that trigger xenophobia. The above three steps are largely indispensable components of the relative deprivation theory and factors that trigger xenophobia in South Africa.

Anti-foreigner sentiments from locals emanate from social misconceptions, intensified by the deprivation of delivery of adequate services by the municipal officials in South Africa's local government. Yahaya (2020: 12) argued that understanding the origins of such sentiments is critical because it influences violations of foreigners' human rights, thus igniting xenophobic attacks in South Africa. The relative deprivation theory also uses a frustration-aggression mechanism to incite violence between locals and non-locals. The relative deprivation of essential services seen in delivering inadequate services to citizens is primarily linked to xenophobia in South Africa because it promotes inequality and poverty in the country. The issues of inequality and poverty have been identified as the significant precipitators of the proliferation of anti-migrant sentiments (Yahaya, 2020: 12). Solomon and Kosaka (2013: 5–6) explain that "xenophobia basically derives from the sense that non-citizens pose some sort of a threat to the recipient's identity or rights and is also closely connected with the concept of nationalism. This implies a sense in each individual of membership in their political or ethnic groups as an essential ingredient in his or her sense of identity."

Dessah (2015) links xenophobia to the relative deprivation citizens experience. Yahaya (2020) links xenophobia to relative deprivation, as locals feel deprived of essential services and regard foreigners as the reason for their problems. It should be mentioned that in a situation where there is rampant lack of essential services, economic inequalities among citizens are rife. Relative deprivation holds that discrepancies between expected economic conditions and reality intensify the feeling of frustration that triggers xenophobic violence in South Africa (Džuverovic, 2013). The prevalence of xenophobic violence in South Africa results from accumulated frustrations with the government. This prevalence has hindered South Africa's ambition of achieving a democratic developmental state. Some scholars have presented that delivering insufficient and inadequate services to locals is the leading cause of xenophobia (Morris, 1998; Human Sciences Research Council, 2008).

The theory suggests that xenophobic attacks occur when the government fails to deliver quality services, and therefore, locals release their anger and frustrations on foreigners. Instead of blaming the domestic political leadership, the anti-migrant and stereotypical attitudes cause locals to target foreigners for taking what belongs to them, such as jobs and economic opportunities. The locals' anger, frustrations, and aggression are showered on foreigners on the pretext that these foreigners have taken away services meant for them (Harris,

2002). When individuals cannot access and receive adequate services to satisfy their basic needs that enable them to live a good life, they become stressed. The stress raises tensions that trigger xenophobia, thus negatively influencing South Africa's ambition of achieving developmental state status. In South Africa antagonistic sentiments toward foreigners are underlined by a sense of relative deprivation and driven by anger. The deprivation comes from widespread inequality, poverty, and the deplorable nature of service delivery in local municipalities (De Jager and Nassimbeni, 2012). The post-apartheid regime was received by locals with high hopes and expectations from the newly elected government. Still, delivering deplorable services led to unhappiness with the government and foreigners. Because foreigners are vulnerable in a foreign country, they experience the brunt of the anger of the locals, thus making xenophobia prevalent in South Africa.

5 What makes xenophobia in South Africa unique?

Xenophobia in South Africa is unique because it is triggered by the delivery of inadequate services by local municipalities to deliver quality services to citizens and the failure of migration diplomacy. In South Africa, xenophobia has been rooted in local municipalities' micro-politics of service delivery. Possibly the most remarkable feature of xenophobia experienced in South Africa is that the delivery of inadequate services influences this phenomenon, and locals direct their anger and frustration at migrants, mostly black migrants. Xenophobia is also triggered by the challenges of migration laws and their application in the country. Migration diplomatic laws have remained written in papers and, together with corruption on the side of police and Home Affairs agents, have made xenophobic violence a norm in South African society. This is in stark contrast to cases of xenophobia in other countries in Africa and other continents. Xenophobia in South Africa is unique, as it is intensified by the government's failure to deliver adequate essential services that enable people to lead a good life and have sufficient food. Consequently, local citizens think that foreigners have taken their food, jobs, and work opportunities, as they are failing to earn a living.

Most striking is that xenophobic attacks in South Africa are directed toward black Africans, regardless of whether they are members of the Southern Africa Development Community (SDAC or come from other parts of Africa). Most recently, several xenophobic attacks in Johannesburg have also been directed at citizens from Bangladesh and Pakistan who are shop owners. As a result, their shops were vandalized and looted. While locals believe that black foreigners have been employed instead of them, foreigners from Pakistan and Bangladesh are accused of taking over locals' shops in townships. Locals believe "that foreigners are at the centre of most crimes (failure of the government to provide social and national security), illegal business, and some locals have associated foreigners with invaders who have invaded South African territory" (Vigneswaran, 2007:144). The locals also perceive foreigners as illegally competing for scarce resources and opportunities, including jobs, businesses, houses, social services, and women (Misago et al., 2009).

The other factor that makes xenophobia unique and prevalent in South Africa is the locals' or mindset toward foreigners (Niyitunga, 2021: 122). Harris (2001: 70) presented that "xenophobic

violence produced mindsets witnessed in present-day South Africa, in that the oppression of more especially the black nationals during the apartheid regime caused some to be close-minded, to mistrust and remain suspicious of foreigners." Misago et al. (2015: 23–24) noted that natives keep accusing and blaming foreigners and migrants for many of the country's socio-economic hardships. Many of "these accusations, popular beliefs, and perceptions centre on crime, illegality and the image of a subtle invasion of South African territory" (Vigneswaran, 2007: 144). Natives have also conceptualized and conceived that foreigners invaded the country and are illegitimate competition for scarce resources and opportunities (Niyitunga, 2021: 123). Foreigners have mostly remained undocumented because of the delay caused by corruption within the Department of Home Affairs (Misago et al., 2015: 24). Labeling a foreigner as an illegal person legitimises the police's excessive use of force, which becomes police abuse. The police may also turn a blind eye when natives are killing foreigners. The abuses and community justice are justified because, in the locals' mindset, foreigners are thus considered criminals deserving of punishment (Misago et al., 2015: 24).

Natives have argued that although foreigners work and do business in South Africa, they take their earnings out of the country (Crush and Pendleton, 2004). According to locals, foreigners contribute to clinics and hospitals failing to provide adequate healthcare services, they complicate the country's social welfare system, and have transmitted diseases to innocent South Africans (Crush and Pendleton, 2004). From the above argument, one can see that xenophobia in South Africa is linked to the lack of adequate public services provided to the citizens. This is because public services include housing, education, healthcare, social welfare, transport, electricity and energy, water, sanitation, and refuse and waste removal. Public services also include providing a wide range of services such as identification documents, telecommunications, licenses, and many other services that governments or entrusted private entities undertake to better the lives of ordinary citizens (Ardigó and Chêne, 2017). In the South African context, local, municipal, and national governments must provide the abovementioned public services to their citizens. Public services are essential to promote the relationship between government bodies and citizens, which is essential for achieving a developmental state.

Niyitunga (2022) argued that the national government and local municipalities have a social contract with the citizens to receive equal adequate services at equal as well as services that enable them to achieve their expectations. For South Africa to overcome xenophobia, which hinders its ambitions of becoming a developmental state, it needs to deliver these adequate services to its citizens to enable them to fulfil their expectations. Eigeman (2007) argued that citizens have a right to receive adequate services that meet their basic needs and expectations. These services must be easily accessible, available quickly, be of good quality at a reasonable price, and all wrapped in friendly treatment (Eigeman, 2007). The availability of sustainable public services is linked to the path toward a developmental state because their outcomes are determined by the interplay between decision-makers, service providers and service receivers. This interplay must be interlinked throughout institutions, processes, resources, regulations, and capacity endowments so that no citizen is left behind when services are delivered.

The failure of the government to deliver adequate and suitable quality services to the locals at low and affordable costs triggers

xenophobia in South Africa. The government is responsible for its citizens and is a supplier of crucial public services and a custodian of essential services needed to achieve a developmental state. The fact that the government is a monopolist in services that the citizens often need means that the government's relationship with its citizens requires significant work (Eigeman, 2007). It takes extra effort to make good quality and affordable service a condition for the citizens to have an excellent image of the government. The meaning of good service delivery for the image that citizens have of the government is always linked to the ability of the citizens to live a good life. Sustainable service delivery to the citizens is part of a complex relationship between government, society, and citizens. Achieving a situation free from xenophobia to enable the country to achieve a developmental state requires good relationships between citizens based on the government's ability to deliver sustainable and adequate services that better their everyday lives. As delivering essential services is a right with regard to all citizens, delivering inadequate services to them violates their fundamental human rights. This violation is then extended to foreigners who reside in South Africa. This violation of fundamental rights of the locals and foreigners contradicts the country's slogan in that it endeavors to uphold the principles of human rights, achievement of equality and social justice, tolerance, and non-discrimination (Nel, 2005: 240–243). It hinders South Africa's ambition to achieve a developmental state.

6 Characteristics of a democratic developmental state

A developmental state is characterized by delivering sustainable essential services, thereby enabling citizens to achieve a sustainable good living. Evans (1992) argued that the most distinctive characteristics of a developmental state include bureaucratic capacity and embeddedness. This means that public bureaucracy is enmeshed in society, and the business community informs the sustainability of essential services and how these services are delivered to the people. For the delivery of sustainable and adequate services to lead to a developmental state, it must be informed by a robust public bureaucracy embedded in the ambitions to enable citizens to achieve sustainable livelihoods for survival. This is because a strong and equitable public bureaucracy, which strengthens the relationships between citizens and the government, is reasonable enough to lead to sustainable services that then lead a country to achieve a developmental state. Fine (2010) argued that a developmental state fosters strong relationships between itself and its citizens. It encourages the delivery of essential services that enable citizens to achieve sustainable livelihoods that promote human development and act as an enabler for businesses to operate under optimal conditions (Fine, 2010).

Successful developmental states differ from other developing countries because they can better control levels of corruption within their borders and prevent corruption from regressing development efforts (Gumede, 2009). Corruption prevents the delivery of sustainable services because it affects public bureaucracy, making it unable to lead to embeddedness situations between the service providers and receivers. Corruption detaches people from their governments, influences inequality, and affects innovation in providing public services, which are the key to successful

development outcomes. [Ardigó and Chêne \(2017\)](#) have argued that corruption in the forms of clientelism, patronage, and bribery in service delivery undermines the right to equal access to public services. They exacerbate fundamental inequalities that violate citizens' access to adequate services that promote sustainable livelihoods to live a good life. For instance, bribery and patronage when delivering public services can render public services unaffordable for a large population segment, depriving poor citizens of the ability to access essential services ([Kaufmann et al., 2008](#)). The tolerance of those forms of corruption can lead to breakdowns in the service delivery chain, rendering the state apparatus incapable of meeting its obligations to safeguard its citizens ([Chêne, 2014](#)). Corruption in public services would lead to the delivery of inadequate services with catastrophic consequences such as famine, poverty, and social protests, including xenophobia. It has been noted that corruption in public services exacerbates poverty and undermines the possibility of achieving sustainable development ([Chêne, 2014](#); [Transparency International, 2014](#)).

The existing relationship between the service providers and receivers is a key fundamental pillar that leads to the delivery of adequate public services to the citizens that address the issues surrounding the occurrences of xenophobia and the possibility of achieving a developmental state status in South Africa. [Evans \(2014: 3\)](#) noted that the nexus between state-citizen relationships in developmental states is a peculiar kind of embeddedness or state-social synergy toward improving networks that connect the state to industrial elites, thus leading sustainable services. For a developmental state to happen, the nexus and social synergy need to morph into inclusionary and bottom-up relationships between the state (service provider) and the broader society (service receivers) if South Africa wants to achieve its ambitions of becoming a developmental state. Embeddedness is critical to achieving an inclusive bureaucracy that promotes production.

The bureaucracy must be embedded in economic, social, and political systems to lead to a developmental state. Through embeddedness, bureaucracies are never wholly insulated from the citizens and do not become tools for politicians or private interests. For example, embedded municipal leaders would care more about what happens to the local population. Local people in local municipalities would equally find it easier to meet embedded bureaucrats socially. Finally, local officers might be able to work more effectively with local elites and populations due to their superior command of the local language and culture. Embeddedness is significant because it prevents states from using their political power to undermine sustainable service delivery. [Mkandawire \(2010: 290\)](#) argues that embeddedness holds governments accountable to the people they serve. [Edigheji \(2005: 8\)](#) argued that embeddedness enables state officials to be accountable to the citizens and set platforms that lead to a developmental state.

6.1 Determinants of a democratic developmental state

A developmental state must be able to direct and support economic development by building a solid public service, creating an investor-friendly environment, supporting small business development, using state-owned enterprises effectively, and driving

strategic investment initiatives. [Bresser-Pereira \(2019: 39\)](#) argued that a state is developmental if its economic apparatus is sustainable by limiting budget and current account deficits and adopting strategic industrial policies. [Bresser-Pereira \(2019: 39\)](#) further argued that a state becomes a developmental state if it holds political power and embraces a national development strategy. The state must operate on an active macroeconomic policy that addresses unemployment issues, leads to low inflation, equitable and balanced payments of debts and bills, and fair distribution of basic services. A developmental state would be a state where the government plays a significant role in delivering sustainable basic services. [Baissac \(2009\)](#) highlighted vital elements and requirements of the developmental state, including:

- A singular focus on economic growth as the prime directive of the economies and society.
- A state-led industrial policy with the government actively supporting selected industries.
- A professional bureaucracy that is highly capable and well connected to industry.
- A labor market and an education system subject to a singular focus on growth.
- An authoritarian regime that maintains national security, and do not undermine economic growth.
- The establishment of a very high saving rate that can be used for investment and capital deepening; and
- The establishment of an export-led growth model.

The key elements apparent from the above arguments show that a state is moving toward achieving a developmental state if it has addressed inequality and poverty. Unfortunately, the issues of inequality and poverty in South Africa have remained unaddressed and have been identified as the significant precipitators of the social protests ([Yahaya, 2020: 12](#)). Inequality and poverty in South Africa have also been associated with inciting sentiments that lead to xenophobic violence ([Niyitunga, 2022](#)).

However, it becomes impossible and complicated when citizens who work in the industries that make the economy sustainable and bring about investments receive inadequate services. Delivering quality and adequate essential services that meet people's expectations and needs indeed promotes sustainable livelihoods, enhances economic growth, and provides legitimacy to the governmental system. Sustainable services within the developmental state context mean services that can improve the community's quality of life with due regard for ecological, social, and financial limitations. Inadequate services are linked to the occurrences of social protests and xenophobic attacks. Social protests over service delivery issues, such as housing, water, electricity, and sanitation, are daily occurrences in South Africa. [Botes \(2018: 242\)](#) argued that social protests in South Africa occur at the borders of state and society and are driven by people who are about services who engage in civil strife against the local government. Since the end of apartheid and the coming of a democratic regime, South Africa has experienced hundreds of local protests. For example, the media reports daily on widespread protests in poorer townships around the country, with extensive property damage, burning of tires, and violent confrontations with police ([Goebel, 2011](#)).

This hinders the realization of a developmental state because social protests such as xenophobic violence show severe discontent

among the poor in South Africa. Scholars have argued that two million people take to the streets yearly to protest land and housing issues, poor public service delivery, authoritarian governance and political decisions, and non-responsive governance (Alexander, 2012; Matebesi, 2017). Yahaya (2020:14) argued that xenophobia is exacerbated by the natives' dissatisfaction with poor government service delivery. It emanates from a phenomenon rooted in the politics of service delivery, which transcends the micro-politics of townships and informal settlements. Xenophobic violence in South Africa starts in the townships, raising concerns about the inequalities and poverty experienced by the inhabitants of informal settlements. The link between xenophobic violence and inadequate service delivery is apparent because it affects people's satisfaction, thus hindering South Africa from achieving its developmental state ambition.

7 Effects of xenophobia on developmental state ambitions

The main problem facing South Africa's ambition to achieve a developmental state is the failure to understand the role of migrants in national economic growth. It is also the failure to deliver adequate services to the citizens. The failure to address corruption within the public service framework, the lack of meritocracy in the appointments of key positions, the lack of patriotism, and loyalty to the ruling political party instead of to the citizens are some of the forces that hinder the delivery of adequate services. For a country to become a developmental state, there is a need to achieve economic, social, and environmental sustainability as these are three key ingredients of a developmental state.

7.1 Xenophobia affects national economic growth

Xenophobia has become especially prevalent in South Africa, and the country is still dominated by xenophobic violence that targets foreigners, including their business investments. The country has failed to establish policies and structures to address and curb xenophobia, and many political leaders have denied the existence of xenophobia in South Africa. Niyitunga (2021) argued that the spirit of denialism among political leaders and imminent citizens has made it difficult and complex to address xenophobia in South Africa. Xenophobic attacks against foreigners and their businesses have immensely affected the national economic growth in both the short and longer term, thus hindering South Africa's ambition of becoming a developmental state. Bonga (2019: 14) argued that the current path South Africa has taken of protecting and failing to address issues of xenophobia has a long-term impact on investment in the country. This is to say that the persistence of xenophobia has affected the singular focus on economic growth as the prime directive of the economy and society.

Niyitunga (2021: 123) argued that migration is associated with economic prosperity in the host country. Migrants in a foreign land drive economic prosperity and thus influence economic growth and development in the host country (Adam and Moodley, 2015: 37). Migrants impact the social welfare of the household and the home

community and influence the national economy in various ways (Azam and Gubert, 2006). Niyitunga (2021:123) argued that this is done through incomes from remittances that alleviate poverty. Niyitunga (2021: 123) also argued that besides migrants leading to pure monetary gains, migration, and remittances allow for higher healthcare and education investments. However, xenophobic violence has effects on migrants entrepreneurs and the economy at large and slows down economic growth and development. Regarding its effects on business, Tshishonga (2015: 165) presented that the outbreaks of xenophobic violence against foreigners force them to go into hiding or leave their businesses unattended. Those who cannot go into hiding are reduced to spectators as they watch their hard-earned properties being looted and burned to ashes (Adeleke et al., 2008: 143). It becomes difficult for them to re-establish their businesses, and some decide to relocate to other countries, an issue that makes South Africa lose a labor force that could have boosted national economic growth and made it stable and sustainable. The repercussion of this is that South Africa's ambition to become a developmental state becomes interrupted, making it a dream instead of a reality.

Mokoena (2015: 109) states that most migrants entrepreneurs contribute to South Africa's value-added tax (VAT) by bulk-purchasing goods from major South African wholesalers and industries. Asha (2015: 299–304) and Fatoki (2016:100) add that migrants' entrepreneurs contribute positively to the local economy by renting shops or trading spaces for two to five years from South African nationals, thereby contributing to poverty alleviation and economic sustainability. Consequently, xenophobic attacks result in lower VAT collections, less income for property owners who, under normal circumstances, generate income from rental property, and impair poverty alleviation and economic development prospects (Mahuni and Bonga, 2017). This, therefore, hinders South Africa from achieving its ambition to become a developmental state.

7.2 Xenophobia affects the labor market

For a state to become developmental, a stable and sustainable labor market must enable citizens to achieve sustainable livelihoods that better their lives. A strong and sustainable labor market enables citizens to have sustainable services and reduces hunger, reducing issues of conflicts, violence, and crimes in society. However, xenophobia continues to affect the labor force and market in that it goes beyond to affect Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows several years into the future. Hunt (2010) argued that skilled immigrants contribute to economic development by boosting research, innovation, and technological progress. Gagnon (2014) argued that migrants are more concentrated in the younger and economically active age groups compared with natives, contributing to reducing dependency ratios. OECD (2018) presented migrants increase labor markets in the receiving state because they affect demographic statistics as it increases the population's size and changes the age pyramid of receiving states. Migrants thus increase human labor in the receiving state, increasing human capital, which leads to economic growth. This makes one argue that migrants in the receiving state have both direct and indirect effects on economic growth. However, xenophobia has been targeting migrants yearly, and this has not only had effects on the migrants but also on South Africa's ambition to become a developmental state.

A study conducted on migrant entrepreneurs in Gauteng largely showed that small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs) and hawking operations create an average of three jobs per business, which directly challenges the view that immigrants, particularly street traders, reduce the number of jobs available for South Africans (Palmary, 2002). Among the sustainable basic services is sustainable employment that generates sustainable income for the citizens. The fact that the existence of foreigners creates an average of three jobs per business would inspire the state to protect migrants and establish policies that address xenophobia. This is because xenophobia in this context would increase unemployment and make it difficult for the citizens, both natives and foreigners, to better their lives. Therefore, the failure to understand the rights of migrants, their effects on the labor force and market, and the government's failure to govern and control migration are the major factors that have hindered the realization of a developmental state in South Africa. By affecting the labor market, xenophobia also affects the growth and sustainability of South Africa's industries. The need for civic education on the positive role of migrants toward enabling South Africa to achieve its ambition of becoming a developmental state is therefore necessary.

7.3 Xenophobia affects an export-led growth model

A robust and sustainable export-led growth model leads to a developmental state because it is based on the sustainability of industries and manufacturing companies to achieve products to serve the locals and the products to export to the global markets. Migrants contribute to the working or labor force in industries that increase production. Gagnon (2014) and OECD (2018) argued that migration workers significantly contribute to the labor market in both high- and low-skilled occupations. The export-led growth model is based on the strong labor force that makes industries productive. Small-scale entrepreneurs involved in cross-border trade, particularly those who come to South Africa to source goods to sell in their home countries, usually travel on visitor permits. Thus, the increase in the issue of visitor permits to Africans reflects a change in trading patterns and the growth in small and medium-scale entrepreneurs involved in formal and informal cross-border trade.

Ahmed et al. (2021) argued that xenophobia reduces the labor force in industries and affects productivity and the potential for local businesses to grow globally. It has been argued that xenophobia in South Africa has made it difficult for international companies to explore business opportunities and remain in operation in a volatile country. It is important to argue that the exportation of goods depends on the friendly relationship between the exporter and importer. Mathee et al. (2015: 527) opined that states send their investments and run businesses in peaceful countries or countries where their investments and resources would be safe and secure. Adebisi (2017: 90) stated that xenophobia discourages FDI due to images of a hostile and investment-unfriendly country. Therefore, foreign investors who would sustain the export-led growth model become discouraged from investing in South Africa. Therefore, this puts the South African economy and development opportunities on a dying bed (Oyelana, 2016: 283).

7.4 Xenophobia affects a high saving rate

A state that envisages becoming a developmental state must have a high saving rate. It has been opined that Africa still struggles to attract meaningful FDI because the continent's economic growth rates have remained too often low (Bonga and Mahuni, 2018). This is to say that African states are far from achieving a developmental state status because of the lack of economic growth, leading to low saving rates. For instance, the Asian Tigers became developmental states because these states delivered their economic success story, mainly through FDI, which occurred through the inflow and outflow that led to a high saving rate (Umezurike et al., 2016). FDI is an international capital flow where foreign investors from one country invest their capital in another country (Wijaya et al., 2020). Direct investment reflects the intention of attaining a lasting interest by a foreigner in an enterprise resident in another country (Wijaya et al., 2020). Usually, FDI is related to investment by foreign investors in productive assets. The "lasting interest" implies a long-term relationship between the direct investor and the direct investment enterprise and a significant degree of influence on the latter's management (Duce and De España, 2003). FDI has been the largest single source of external finance force that promotes economic growth and enhances high rates. FDI is an integral part of an open and effective international economic system and a significant catalyst for economic growth and development (OECD, 2002). Muzurura (2016) indicated that FDI is a source of capital that augments domestic saving rates. Kurtishi-Kastrati (2013) opined that maximizing the benefits of FDI for the host country can be significant, including technology spillovers, human capital formation support, enhancement of the competitive business environment, contribution to international trade integration, and improvement of enterprise development.

South Africa struggles with low rates and high inflation, devaluing the rand. Nkomo (2006) stated that to have an accelerated pace of economic growth, South Africa needs to lower unemployment, elevate quality of life, lower demographic migration, and lower poverty rates. Lubeniqi (2020) stated that South Africa needs to attract FDI because foreign investors have a direct and critical role to play (Lubeniqi, 2020). Unfortunately, xenophobia is seen as a significant hindrance to foreign investors. It is a barrier to creating employment opportunities and advertising the country to the world (Adeleke et al., 2008: 139). This is because FDI plays a vital and critical role in creating jobs and employment for the locals and opening business opportunities. For example, states such as China, Australia, and the United Kingdom warned their citizens not to travel to South Africa because of xenophobic violence (Ferreira and Perks, 2016: 270). Most foreign investors consider personal safety and security vital (Adeleke et al., 2008: 142; Mudzanani, 2016: 337). The prevalence of xenophobia in South Africa has labeled the country one of the most hostile destinations in the world for African migrants (Claassen, 2017).

7.5 Effects of xenophobia on social relations

Sound and sustainable social relations with other states are prerequisites for any state to become developmental. Xenophobia has made South Africa cold and fragile with neighboring states, which has remilitarized its borders. Parliamentary discussions on border security

are rife with claims that foreign nationals attempt to drain citizens' social grants and economic opportunities (Fayomi et al., 2015). The natives, in their mindset, understand migrants to threaten national security. This perception provides an official gloss on deeply entrenched governmental xenophobia. This, therefore, has made migrants become the targets for regular harassment, rounding up, and extortion by the police and civilians (Fayomi et al., 2015). Xenophobia has affected friendly relations between the country and other countries, mostly Africans since the victims of xenophobia have been mostly Africans (Olupohunda, 2013). Abdi (2013) stated that xenophobia has jeopardized diplomatic relations between Nigeria and South Africa. Abdi (2013) further stated that xenophobia has made the country become the most violent society in the world.

It has been stated that the economic growth and delivery of sustainable services to the people depend on unity and harmony between the natives and migrants (Oyelana, 2016:284). South Africa, as a member of the African Union and SADC, is obliged to foster the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) established to encourage greater regional cooperation and integration (Solomon and Kosaka, 2013: 7). However, xenophobia has diminished cooperation and impair the social relations between natives and migrants. The impaired social relations have rendered the country's efforts, investment, and hard work futile (Tshishonga, 2015: 171), thus failing to achieve its ambition of becoming a developmental state. Moreover, xenophobia has hindered economic growth and inhibited the achievement of a developmental state because a sustainable economy, which can lead to such, relies heavily on South Africa's cooperation and good political with other countries (Ilevbare and Adedanya, 2008: 204).

Xenophobia has made South Africa less attractive to tourists and, as such, has led to potential income loss (Ferreira and Perks, 2016: 269). The loss of income has made the government fail to deliver adequate services to its citizens. For example, the *South Africa Yearbook (2016/17: 1–2)* reported that the "tourism industry is a significant contributor to the South African economy and contributes about 9% to the country's gross domestic product (GDP), and more than a million jobs." Xenophobia has hindered every effort to market South Africa as a tourist destination (Mudzanani, 2016: 339). Xenophobia has contradicted South Africa's spirit of Ubuntu, which exported South African values to other African states. Ubuntu means a person is a person through other people and that a human being belongs to the human community and should be viewed and treated as such (Chinomona and Mazariri, 2015: 25).

Xenophobia has affected South Africa's goods and products exported to a market in the neighboring states. For example, in Mozambique, Sasol (a South African petroleum company) temporarily suspended its operations due to protesters blocking roads and hurling stones at trucks transporting fuel, while in Zambia and Malawi, there were efforts to organize consumer boycotts against South African products (Mutanda, 2017: 287). Nigeria recalled its ambassador from South Africa as a protest condemning xenophobic attacks (Classen, 2017: 3). The impact of xenophobia is worse when there is retaliation from other states whose people would have been affected during attacks. The prevalence of xenophobia has shaken the relationship between nations and affected South Africa's domestic and foreign policies on which the achievement of a developmental state status is based (Hickel, 2014). Mahuni et al. (2020) narrated that xenophobia in South Africa has impacted the relations of South Africa and other nations.

7.6 Effects of xenophobia on the environment for business

A developmental state must be able to direct and support economic development by building a solid public service, creating an investor-friendly environment, supporting small business development, using state-owned enterprises effectively, and driving strategic investment initiatives. Xenophobia has had immense effects on South Africa and may lead to isolation from the African business sector and the rest of the world (Mudzanani, 2016: 339). This would severely impact South Africa's ambition to become a developmental state. South Africa relies on human labor, such as professionals from other African states and beyond, to work in its industries and develop its academic, medical, legal, engineering, business, and scarce artisan skills (Adebisi, 2017: 90). The constant occurrences of xenophobia against migrants deter scarce skills professionals from migrating South Africa for employment and development. This would primarily affect the achievement of a developmental state status in the country.

An environment for business is a prerequisite for achieving a developmental state. *The World Development Report (2005)* opined that a good investment environment for business provides opportunities and incentives for firms, from microenterprises to multinationals, to invest productively, create jobs, and expand. In a country with a conducive environment for business, foreign investors accelerate economic transformations and growth. They also accelerate the creation of conducive investment climates that promote the achievement of sustainable livelihoods (Nakunyada, 2011). Dadush and Braga (2005) noted that investment climate is essential to attract market-seeking FDI and is crucial for the association between FDI and domestic investment. Xenophobic violence threatens national security, and its prevalence has changed the environment to be less conducive for foreign investment. Bonga (2019) argued that the environment for business in South Africa has become less attractive in the eyes of investors. Investors and any business companies require as much certainty as possible about the economy's direction and the security of their investments (Nakunyada, 2011). However, with the prevalence of xenophobic violence and social service protests, South Africa distorts the potential for foreign investors to invest in the country, thus preventing the achievement of sustainable economic growth that would lead to a developmental state. The occurrence of xenophobia affects the business environment, which hinders economic growth because it does not offer opportunities for foreign investors (Hornberger et al., 2011).

8 Conclusion

Achieving a developmental state depends on a solid balance of economic growth and human development. It depends on the ability of the political leadership class to establish policies that address poverty, enhance the delivery of sustainable essential services, and expand all-inclusive economic opportunities. In achieving economic and human growth that enables the realisation of a developmental state, migrants play a pivotal role. Moreover, the state remains at the centre of enabling a conducive environment for business for both natives and foreigners. The state should structure policies that address xenophobic violence that undermines economic growth and worsens service delivery. Migrants, if

managed and governed well, increase economic growth, and make it sustainable. They contribute to increasing productivity and promoting the labor market in terms of the labor force and human capital, economic growth, and public finance, thus enabling the realization of a developmental state. However, xenophobia destroys South Africa's economic structure and growth, thus affecting the delivery of adequate services that would enhance its ability to achieve a developmental state. There is a need for South Africa to go beyond written migration policies and to protect migrants and any kind of attacks against them to achieve the ambition of becoming a developmental state. There is a need to maximize the positive effects of immigrants on the ambition of a developmental state. This would require that the state establish a structure that hastens responses to xenophobia and integrates immigrants so that they can invest and contribute to the economy.

Author contributions

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