Social Discontent or Criminality? Navigating the Nexus Between Urban Riots and Criminal Activities in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal Provinces, South Africa (2021)

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Post-apartheid South Africa is characterized by the proliferation of public protests, which occur in various contexts. These include urban riots that are typically carried out by individuals who live in residential areas who are relatively politically, socially, and economically marginalized. In this perspective, the study seeks to navigate the nexus between urban riots and criminal activities in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal provinces of South Africa. This will be performed by looking at the recent urban violence that erupted in Johannesburg and Durban cities of South Africa following the arrest of the former president of South Africa Jacob Zuma on 7 July for contempt of court. As a result of the incarceration of Zuma, his supporters took to the streets to demand for his release, ending in protests which quickly evolved into widespread lootings, vandalism, and an outbreak of violence that denoted elements of criminality. The two provinces, Gauteng (the country's economic hub) and KwaZulu-Natal (on the east coast), bore the brunt of this violence. What began as a call for the release of Jacob Zuma transpired into something that was heavily coordinated, controlled and, to a larger extent, dangerous, and perhaps the worst post-apartheid urban riot. However, behind these riots, there are seeds of discontents that triggered these violent riots and these include: the frustrations of hungry and cold people whose prospects were already constrained by the coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, rising inequality between rich and poor, unemployment, intra-party tensions, and ANC-factionalism, including stereotypical Zulu nationalism and racial tensions in South Africa. On the other hand, the riots that occurred in both KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng were accompanied by criminality such as looting, torching, and burning of private and public properties and, to a larger degree, murder of civilians. Findings are that the urban riots in both Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal provinces have resulted in human (in)securities such as exacerbation of poverty, food and fuel shortages, effects on the health sector (amid the COVID-19 crisis), loss of lives, and increase in unemployment. Methodologically, the study relies on a mixed method of research and content analysis.

Keywords: urban riots, Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal provinces, Jacob Zuma, relative deprivation, criminality, urban (In) security

INTRODUCTION

Urban riots and protest actions have become defining features of post-1994 South Africa. This is to say, riots in South Africa have been used as a means of political expression toward the new ANC-led democratic government (Centre for the Study of Violence Reconciliation Society Work, 2011, p. 19). In their sense, riots are known to be civil disorder that are characterized by intense violence exerted against people in authority (power) or property (Gilje, 1998, p. 312). In their occurrence, riots are seen through a herd behaviour and collective action, which imply that many people partake in the riots and thus leading to civil unrest (Gilje, 1998, p. 312).

At the roots of them, riots are known to erupt as a result of perceived grievances that people feelings have not been adequately dealt with by their government (Miller, 1998, p. 312). As such, there are numerous factors that compel the masses to participate in riots, and these include poor living conditions, oppression by the government, high taxation, ethnic diversity, religion, and differing views on a sporting activity (Gilje, 1998, p. 312). However, in the context of South Africa, a number of factors remain as challenges that continue to plague the country and, thus, s to urban riots, and these include rapid urbanization and high levels of unemployment, poverty and inequality, along with uneven service delivery and unaccountable governance and intra-party tensions (Lancaster, 2016, p. 1).

The argument made by Gilje (1998, p. 312) is that riots are mostly accompanied by violence, vandalism, and destruction of both private and public properties. Meanwhile, these can also be directed to certain specific targets according to existing grievances and according to people's mind, and ultimately shape their attitudes and perception about their political leaders or public representatives. In this context, in July 2021, South Africa witnessed a wave of riots which spanned from Durban to Johannesburg cities, resulting in looting, burning, and destruction of properties and infrastructures. Although, these riots were exerted under the pretext of demanding the release of Jacob Zuma who was incarcerated, the article argues that there is more to blame than the incarceration of the then president of the Republic of South Africa.

This is said in light of the reality that South Africa has been dealing with economic and social turmoil since the dawn of democracy in 1994 (Nagel, 1974, p. 465). In support of the aforementioned argument, Liv Torres, director of the Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies at New York University's Center on International Cooperation, explained the #ReleaseZumaRiots by the following statement: "What has been growing over years and years has been both an increasing level of tension and anger." Torres, as quoted by Natalie Musumeci who reported on *Business Insider* (2021), went further and asserted that "Anger among the poor that the promises they were given during the transition to democracy about delivery of jobs and future hopes have not prospects at all of getting jobs and future hopes have not been kept, basically" (Musumeci, 2021).

The indictment of former president Zuma can be regarded as a tick required for the bomb to detonate (Smith, 2021). Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the rate of youth unemployment in South Africa was already high, with high-rising number of hunger. On the other hand, the gap between the haves (rich) and the have-nots (poor) increased, thus depicting South Africa as an unequal society, hence triggering a reminder of pre-apartheid times in the country (Smith, 2021). In South Africa, approximately half of the adult population is living below poverty line (Musumeci, 2021). In addition to this, Torres noted that in parts of South Africa, "a big majority of African youth have got no prospects at all of getting jobs" (Musumeci, 2021). Thus, it is argued that these frustrations and tensions have been increasing over the last decade. Hence, the imprisonment of Zuma, who refused to cooperate with the set commission on the inquiry on corruption, is "basically the last thing that ignites a lot of anger and frustration around the country" (Musumeci, 2021).

The article argues that socio-economic and political factors in South Africa such as poverty, high crime, high inequality, feelings of broken promises that coincided with COVID-19 that led hundreds of thousands people to lose their jobs and livelihood, along with little prospects for the future, corruption by politicians, and politics of impunity, serve as indicators that highlight South Africa was in a volatile situation even before Jacob Zuma was imprisoned (StatsSA, 2021b).

The prevalence of these socio-economic and political factors served as a breeding ground for an outbreak of the July 2021 riots in South Africa. Consequently, the government was not prepared for the eruption of riots of such magnitudes and, thus, ended up deploying more than 20,000 military personnel to assist the overly stretched South African Police Services (SAPS). As a result of the July 2021 riots, businesses that were responsible for employing locals were completely destroyed, and majority of them did not have insurance, which led to their closure, especially small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs) (Smith, 2021). Often times, as argued by Alexander (2010, p. 37), failure by governments to provide adequate services to the constituents and lack of accountability by local councilors and municipal officials tend to strengthen these riots (Bruce, 2014, p. 6). In addition, corruption, poor financial management and cadre deployment, predominantly within the ruling party (ANC), have further exacerbated the plight of people who live in poverty and worsened the inadequate provision of services to marginalized communities (Breakfast et al., 2019, p. 108). Against this backdrop, this article navigates the nexus between social discontent and criminal activities in South Africa, with particular focus on #ReleaseZumaRiots which were heavily visible in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal provinces during the month of July in 2021. This study is conducted in order to fill the gap in the literature on urban riots and protest actions in South Africa, because many studies have succinctly addressed the relationship that exists between urban riots that are typically triggered by social discontents, which are often accompanied by criminal activities in the course of protest actions. This article aimed to fill the research gap in the areas of urban riots and (in)securities in South Africa.

This article conducted a qualitative literature assessment, and for its design, the study is descriptive and explorative. Hence, the article delves into a narrative of the urban riots that occurred in both Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal provinces, South Africa,

with a perception of presenting an in-depth analysis of the nexus that exists between social discontents (grievances) and criminal activities driven by greed dynamics. In essence, the article provides a deeper understanding of how the grievance factor (social discontents) instigates riots in urban communities, and how these riots tend to be used as a mechanism for criminal activities in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal provinces. The article intents to address three related objectives, *viz.*, to explain the context of the July 2021 riots in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal provinces, to critically analyze the nexus between urban riots and criminal activities in July 2021, and to provide an analysis on how urban riots pose a threat on human security in South Africa. The guiding assumption of the article is that the urban riots in South Africa tend to result in human (in)security, and that there are factors instigating these protests that have characterized the post-1994 democratic South Africa.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This article is premised on the Greed vs. Grievances school of thought and human security perspective. The greed vs. grievances theory is chosen precisely, because it assists in justifying the prevalence of social conflicts in South Africa. Although the greed theory argues that a civil conflict is driven by greed (private incentives), the grievances theory takes a position that it is grievances (injustices) that instigate collective actions such as riots and protest actions. In this regard, the article posits that, oftentimes, the presence of grievances in societies tends to serve as a breeding ground for greed to prevail. Moreover, the human security perspective aids in explaining the effects of urban riots on South Africa's national security and development. Because, unlike traditional security that places its focus on the protection of territory (state) from external threats, the human security perspective focuses on the protection of human lives, species, and the environment at large. In the following section, the article delves into the greed vs. grievances theory of explaining the onset of civil conflicts in the post-apartheid South Africa.

Greed as a Conflict Driver

In quest of explaining the causes of civil conflicts and collective actions, scholars have employed the two phenomena, namely, the greed theory and the grievances theory (Collier and Hoeffler, 1999). The theory of greed resonates around competition over natural resources, and this is postulated by Collier and Hoeffler (2005, p. 12), who argued that economic factors are perceived to be drivers of conflict. Thus, in most cases, it is the "greedy behavior" of rebels who organize themselves as insurgents against a particular government (Collier, 2005).

The arguments made by Collier and Hoeffler (1999; 2001) suggest that the greed theory resonates around economic agendas in the context of abundant natural resources. This is eminent where there are opportunities to exploit and loot abundant natural resources that tend to inspire rebels to instigate collective actions such as riots and revolts (Collier, 1998, p. 8). In this context, urban riots can be instigated purely by greed, taking into account the benefits that can be attained either during the course of the riots from quasi-criminal looting and private incentives

that supervene if the rebellion emerges as victorious from the control of state (Collier and Hoeffler, 2002b, p. 4). In addition, the probability of the rebellion is likely to increase as benefits rise relatively to the cost of war (Collier, 1998, p. 8).

In furthering their arguments, Collier and Hoeffler (1999) concluded that it is not grievances that instigate collective actions such as riots and rebellions but opportunities to exploit existing natural resources that inspire rebels to initiate and perpetuate a rebellion (Collier et al., 2004, p. 256). Moreover, a combination of three factors that lead to greed-motivated violence were identified by Collier and Hoeffler (1999), and these includes abundance of natural resources, large proportion of young men, and low levels of education in society (Collier and Hoeffler, 1999). In terms of recruitment of rebels, the greed theory argues that the recruitment of rebel groups is made possible by the existence of low levels of income and little prospects for development, which ultimately serve as an indication of grievances (Sorli, 2002, p. 28). In addition to that, Sorli (2002, p. 28) went further and asserted that poverty serve as a cause for rebellion, accompanied by low levels of employment opportunities, lack of income (GDP per capita), and relatively few prospects for a better future (hence, a decline in economic growth) (Murshed and Tadjoeddin, 2007, p. 6; StatsSA, 2021c). In South Africa, for instance, more than half of the country's 60 million people is subjected to poverty, as they live below the poverty line (StatsSA, 2021a). While more than 20% is food-insecure (Africa News, 2021). Meanwhile, StatsSA (2021a) reported that economic growth in South Africa has been very minimal, and this is reflected upon a gross domestic product (GDP) growth of mere 1.1% during the 1st quarter of 2021, making a reflection that the country's economy was 2.7% smaller than it was in the first quarter of 2020 (StatsSA, 2021b).

Ballentine and Nitzschke (2003, p. 4) then proposed a theoretical approach termed "state-centric," which focuses on shortfalls of governments to perform their functions, such as creating employment opportunities and promoting education among its youth; these governments are prone to witnessing civil conflicts such as riots and coups (Ballentine and Nitzschke, 2003, p. 4). In essence, political approaches see conflict as something that result from state weakness, which is characterized by lack of ability to monopolize force, maintain order in its sovereign territory, and improve resources in order to finance public goods, which could translate into erosion of legitimate authority and the potential of government to effectively perform good governance (Ballentine and Nitzschke, 2003, p. 5).

In studies on civil conflicts, a lot of focus has been paid to economic basis as a trigger for rebellion (Collier and Hoeffler, 1999). Hence, riots can be instigated purely by greed, especially when taking into account the amount of income that can be achieved either during the course of a riot or after participating in a riot (Collier et al., 2009, p. 12). Furthermore, the assertion provided by Murshed and Tadjoeddin (2007, p. 4) is that any theory on greed should be based on economic motivations that enable violence and criminality to take charge. According to Olson (1996), belligerents in war for resources in countries that are rich in natural resources could be acting in ways that Olson (1996) referred to as similar to those of "roving bandits." These bandits' interest is not to preserve the state or its people, but

their interest is based on the intent to loot any economic valuable resources at their disposal, unlike "stationary" bandits (Olson, 1996). Stationary bandits are known to seek power in order to control their state and try to maximize their own profit by encouraging political, economic, and social stability, which shall promote growth in their newly controlled domain (Olson, 1996).

In light of the foregoing narrative of greed as a driver of collective actions such as riots and revolts, the article argued that greed serves as an instigator of riots because of economic benefits that come with participating in these riots. Thus, to avoid the free-rider problem, only those who participate in riots are likely to benefit from economic incentives and private rewards. In the following section, the article delves into the grievances theory as an instigator of collective violence such as urban riots and protest actions.

Grievances Theory as a Conflict Driver

In its nature, the grievances theory is known to provide reasons behind internal conflicts such as protest actions and riots. According to Collier and Hoeffler (1999), grievances are best defined as "justice seeking." Meanwhile, scholars such as Akerlof and Kranton (2000) argue that the grievances theory mainly involves issues of identity and group formation. Hence, central to grievances are identity and group formation, Akerlof and Kranton (2000) further asserts that an individual's utility may simply be related to his or her identity, in essence, the relative position of the group in which individuals identifies themselves with in the social pecking order (Collier and Hoeffler, 2002a, p. 8).

The theory of grievances comprises indicators such as economic inequality and ethnic or religious divisions (Collier and Hoeffler, 2002a, p. 6). Oftentimes, these indicators can serve as a breeding ground for grievance; hence, lack of democratic practice might channel these grievances into urban riots. In addition, these indicators would predict rebellion (Collier et al., 2006). On the other hand, Collier and Hoeffler (2002a, p. 6) postulate that conflict risk can be fueled and determined by the history of a given society. Thus, once a conflict has occurred, it creates a legacy of hatred; consequently, this hatred exacerbates an intra-state conflict (Collier and Sambanis, 2005). As a result of this, some societies like Gauteng province and KwaZulu-Natal province are doomed to a cycle of repeated urban riots that pose a large threat to national security (Collier and Hoeffler, 2002a, p. 10). Consequently, these reflects a true form of violent crimes, because criminals tend to justify their actions under the pretext of ethnic, religious, or class divisions (Collier, 2000, p. 840).

In the following analysis, the article discusses the sub-themes of the grievances theory, relative deprivation (relative deprivation *vis-à-vis* J-curve), horizontal inequality, identity, and intergroup hatred in civil conflicts. Relative deprivation as a sub-theme of the grievances theory unfolds as follows.

Relative Deprivation

The concept of relative deprivation can be traced back to "ancient Greece" where Aristotle was of the view that deprivation is the ultimate driver of a revolution, as he held a belief that deprivation was caused by "inequality" (Richardson, 2011, p. 1).

In studies on urban riots and protest actions, relative deprivation explains the subjective dissatisfaction resulting from one person's relative position to the position or situation of another person (Gurr, 1971, p. 2). Relative deprivation plays a significant role in strongly influencing both behaviors and attitudes of people (Gurr, 1972, p. 2), and this includes experienced amounts of stress in communities and political views. To a larger extent, relative deprivation, with its influence, is often listed as the reason for the emergence of social discontents resulting from political grievances. For one, these grievances may breed terrorism, urban riots, civil wars, social protests, and any other form of social deviation (Gurr, 1972, p. 2).

The theory of relative deprivation is closely linked to the work of Gurr (1970) who explained it as the difference between what an individual or group think they deserve and what they actually have or receive in reality, the significant difference between individual's ambition and personal achievement (Taylor, 1982, p. 23). For instance, achievement of educational certificates raises hopes and aspiration of young people; meanwhile unemployment will cause disappointment and might result in formation of conflict movements (Murshed and Tadjoeddin, 2009, p. 15). Collier and Hoeffler (2002a, p. 7) posits that relative deprivation has formed the basis of various "grievance" explanations of civil unrest such as urban riots, whereby riots are linked to discontents stemming from deprivation of political, economic, or social interests (Collier and Hoeffler, 2002b, p. 18).

Janse (2020) argued that relative deprivation is a subjective dissatisfaction that seems to be troubling many people. This dissatisfaction is caused by the comparison between one person's situation and other's situation. Often times, individuals exposed to relative social deprivation feel that they deserve to have or receive the same as others (Gurr, 1971). This is influenced by the pressure imposed by society, because others may not feel equal when they miss things (Janse, 2020). In essence, Walker and Pettigrew (1984, p. 303) stipulates that these comparisons are relative because they are compared according to existing standards that are not absolute.

Furthermore, Gurr (2015) conversely argued that most actions of violence employed by a group of people have negligible effects on political life. However, some of these acts have been enormously destructive of human life, resulting into human (in)security, including on political institutions. Gatto et al. (2018, p. 2) posit that the relative deprivation theory is, at times, considered to be one of the central theories for the explanation of intergroup conflicts perpetuated by grievances existing in between them. As such, one major assumption of the relative deprivation theory is that a person's or groups' satisfaction is partially related to their objective circumstances while being focused on their condition relative to other persons or groups that exists around them (Gurr, 2011, p. 2). Consequently, in such situations where grievances exist between people or groups, relative deprivation takes a position that unfavorable comparisons can instigate feelings of deprivation that shall ultimately lead to rebellion by the deprived group (Gatto et al., 2018, p. 2).

The argument provided by Crosby (1976, p. 86) is that deprivation is relative, not absolute. Hence, people tend to

feel unfairly treated or insufficiently compensated when they compare their present situations to some standard of reference (Crosby, 1976, p. 86). In furthering her arguments, Crosby (1976, p. 86) itemized five necessary and sufficient preconditions that define a person who is in a state of relative deprivation: when an individual sees others possess a desirable X, wants X; feels entitled to X; thinks it's feasible to attain and accumulate X; and does not blame him/herself for not having access to X (Walker and Pettigrew, 1984, p. 304).

Consequently, if all the mentioned five preconditions are not met, what are likely to emerge from that are different emotions such as disappointment, indignation, and jealousy (Walker and Pettigrew, 1984, p. 304). Useem (1978, p. 53) quoted Karl Marx, who wrote that:

> "A house may be large or small; as long as the surrounding houses are equally small it satisfies all social demands for a dwelling. But let a palace arise beside the little house, and it shrinks from a little house to a hut" (Useem, 1978, p. 53).

Moreover, in addition to Karl Marx's writings, Crosby (1976, p. 86) argues against the reality that the richer one becomes, the poorer one feels. Furthermore, Sorokin (1925, p. 72) made a comparison and claimed that the poverty or wealth of a man is measured not by what he has currently but what he used to have before in comparison to what others have presently. It is no surprise that scholars like Hibbs (1973), Collier and Hoeffler (1998; 2001), and Hauge and Ellingsen (1998) argued that poverty and protest action are related; therefore, they are inseparable. Poverty-stricken countries are prone to host hungry, unemployed, and dissatisfied populations who will resort to protest actions such as riots as a means of expressing their discontents (Hartley, 2014). Hence, the riots that transpired in both Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal provinces in July 2021 had some connotations of relative deprivation, and this was revealed through a series of looting of goods ranging from food to home furniture. For one, prior to the July 2021 riots, South Africa was challenged by socio-economic factors such as high poverty levels, unemployment (with estimated 49% of youth unemployment), poor service provisions, and income inequality, which all denote the elements of relative deprivation (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2021).

In light of the foregoing, the article has discussed relative deprivation as a cause of protest actions and urban riots. This is said against the reality that when people feel deprived of social, political, and economic benefits, they are likely to express their dissatisfaction through a series of riots in order to get the attention of the authorities, predominantly government institutions. In the following section, the article delves into relative deprivation *vis-à-vis* Jacob Davies' hypothesis of J-curve.

Relative Deprivation *vis-à-vis* the J-Curve Hypothesis

The study of Davies (1952), who championed the J-curve hypothesis, is closely linked or related to relative deprivation.

The J-curve hypothesis of Davies (1952) is known for its attempt to explain the association of improving the conditions and social discontents of constituents in a defined territory (Taylor, 1982, p. 24). In the assertions made by Taylor (1982, p. 24), revolutions often erupt when a sharp reversal follows prolonged improvements. Thus, Davies (1952, p. 6) outlines the psychological mechanisms involved in the process, and these are: expectations that serve as a representation of extrapolation from prior experiences (Taylor, 1982, p. 24); when previous successes have promoted increased expectations but "actual need satisfaction" declines, the gap between "us" and "them" may become intolerable and, thus, result into revolutionary activities (Taylor, 1982, p. 24).

Venter and Bain (2015) supported the above statement through the literature they composed, as they wrote on deconstruction of the term "revolution." According to Venter and Bain (2015, p. 6), a revolution will take place in situations where a population concludes that its situation is unsatisfactory and, thus, undesirable to a point that it cannot stand it anymore (Venter and Bain, 2015, p. 6). Hence, in such cases, in quest of mitigating their situation, the society rises up and dismantle its oppressors and their political structures (Davies, 1962, p. 6). In the existence of a prolonged period of objective economic and social development, which is followed by sharp reversal, revolutions are most likely to occur (Davies, 1962, p. 6). Thus, in most cases, political stability or instability is dependent on the state of mind and mood in a society (Davies, 1962, p. 7); satisfied people who are poor in goods, status, and power can remain politically quiet, and their opposites can rebel, just as, correlatively and more probably, poor dissatisfied people can revolt, and the satisfied rich people can oppose and be against the revolution (Davies, 1962, p. 7).

In essence, Davies (1952, p. 7) contended that it is people's dissatisfied state of mind rather than the material and tangible provisions of sufficient or insufficient supplies of food, shelter, equality, or liberty that produces a revolution (Davies, 1962, p. 7). Like what common sense suggests, if people are happy when times are good, they should become happier when times get better; as such, the more development in society, the more increase in expectations (Taylor, 1982, p. 25), and failure to meet expectations shall lead to discontents in society, thus increasing the chances of rebellion (Davies, 1978, p. 1358).

With regard to psychological assumption, societies have some idea of what they ought to be receiving during the course of their general lives (Venter and Bain, 2015, p. 6). Societies that find themselves confronted with a situation that reveals a growing gap between what they are receiving and what they ought to be receiving (Davies, 1974, p. 609), and with the differences growing wider and wider and having a clear depiction of the gap between the rich (the haves) and the poor (the have-nots), a population is likely to rise up and revolt (Venter and Bain, 2015, p. 6). Furthermore, the J-curve by Davies (1962, p. 6) indicates that the prevalence of modernization leads to a rise on people's expectations. Venter and Bain (2015, p. 8) postulates that if the reality of a person does not keep track with their expectations, the gap between the two tends to become larger and larger and
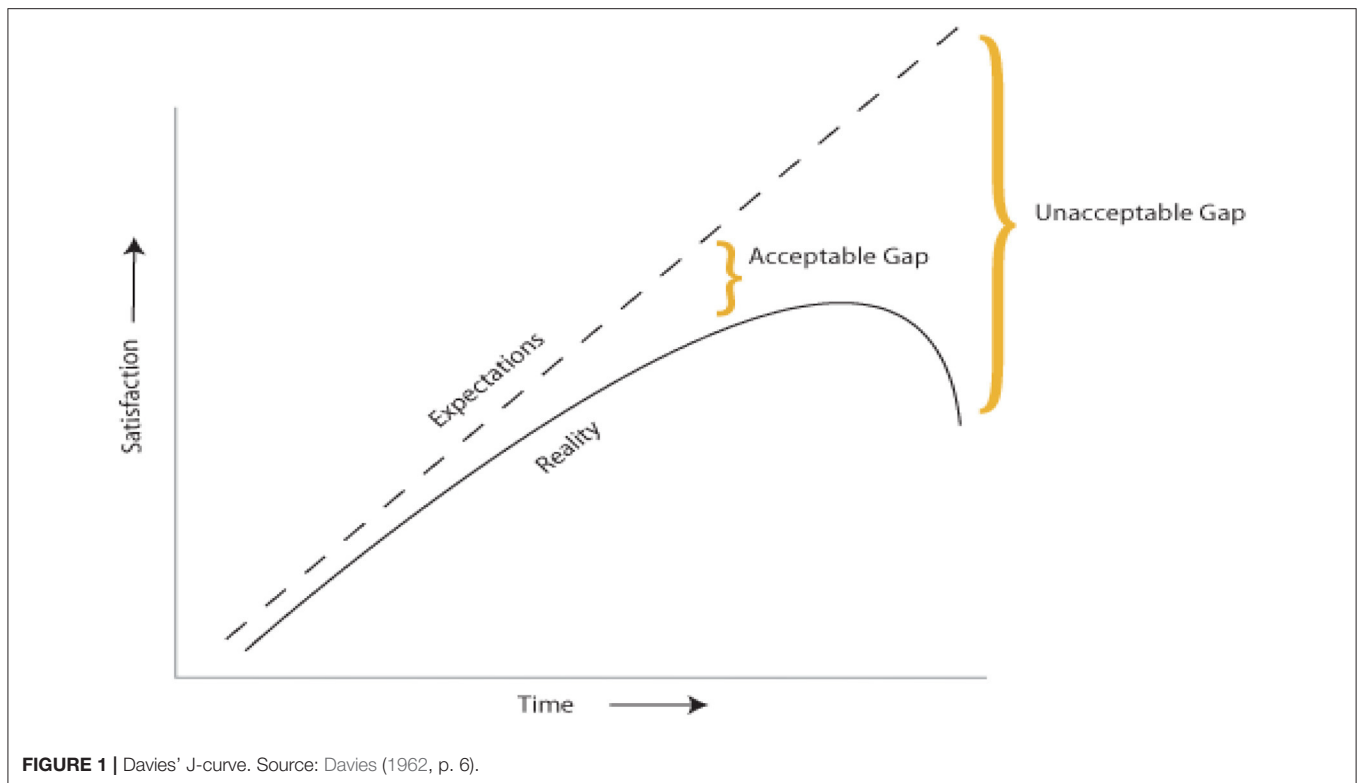
FIGURE 1 | Davies' J-curve. Source: Davies (1962, p. 6).

ultimately increase the potential of revolution to take place, as indicated in **Figure 1**.

In the context of assessing urban riots, Davies (1962, p. 10) strikes a more confident note where he states that rebellion is perceived to have come as a result of the same J-curve of expectations that are first gratified and, thus, lead to frustration (Miller et al., 1977, p. 966). In essence, relative deprivation and the J-curve by Davies complement each other in explaining the onset of a conflict as a result of perceived grievances by a society, and this is made possible by the expectations that people have, which are contradicted by the realities they are exposed to Davies (1962, p. 6) and Gurr (1974, p. 22).

Moreover, the psychological foundation provided by Davies (1962) in his J-curve, replete with the theory of relative deprivation, as Davies notes "Political stability is ultimately dependent on a state of mind, a mood, in society. Thus, satisfied or apathetic people who are poor in goods, status, and power can remain politically quiet and their opposites can revolt" (Davies, 1962, p. 86–87). In this case, relative deprivation can, thus, be regarded as an individual's experience; hence, relative deprivation can take place only if people perceive themselves to be deprived (Miller et al., 1977, p. 967).

The grievances theory, with its sub-theme relative deprivation, explains that conflict is instigated by discontents that people feel when they compare themselves to persons relative to them. As such, the gap that exists between persons is likely to spark grievances, as people who are relatively deprived shall seek any means necessary to acquire material gains (Ibid). This was supported by the argument provided by Jacob Davies with his J-curve hypothesis, which was used alongside relative

deprivation as drivers of social protests and riots. Consequently, such "grievances" emanating from feelings of injustice will spark greedy behavior, as those who are deprived will launch a rebellion in order to loot resources that will uplift their socio-economic status. In this case, a civil conflict will be eminent between those who are in control of resources (that can mitigate grievances) and those who want to claim control of the resources since they have been relatively deprived of equal access to the resources.

In the context of what occurred in both Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal provinces, South Africa, is that people who felt poor and marginalized embarked on a series of lootings of shopping complexes and car garages, which denoted elements of criminality. They used the incarceration of the former South African president Jacob Zuma as the pretext of rioting; however, the article argues that the jailing of Jacob Zuma coincided with South Africans' grievances such as poverty, unemployment, inequality, and lack of prospects for the future; thus, people used the July 2021 riots as a means of acquiring material gains in order to alleviate their socio-economic status. In this perspective, relative deprivation and the J-curve by Davies are relevant in this context, since they explain the onset of a conflict as a result of perceived grievances by a society. This is made possible by the expectations that people have, which are contradicted by the realities they are exposed to Davies (1962, p. 6) and Gurr (1974, p. 22).

The following section of the article discusses other sub-themes of the grievances theory, horizontal inequality and intergroup hatred. Both of these sub-themes explain how inequality in society can lead into group formation, which will ultimately lead to intergroup hatred.

Horizontal Inequality and Civil Conflict

In the explanation of civil conflict, horizontal inequalities between groups in a society can be classified according to ethnicity, religion, linguistic differences, and tribal affiliations (Collier and Hoeffler, 2002a, p. 16). As such, these are known to be important causes in contemporary civil unrest and sectarian strife, although they do not perpetuate routine violence. To a larger extent, the idea of horizontal inequality may overlap with the nation of relative deprivation, which also serves as a sub-theme of the grievances theory (Collier and Hoeffler, 2002a, p. 19).

The theory of grievances places its focus on the importance of justice-seeking in societies (Collier and Hoeffler, 2002a, p. 19). According to Odusola et al. (2017, p. 221), inequalities and poverty serve as important drivers of social exclusion; meanwhile, conflict, social unrest, and instability are its manifestation. Thus, Nagel (1974, p. 452) asserted that the preponderance of a civil war in poor and unequal societies have, for long, been documented in the literature of conflict studies, for instance, the studies of Nagel (1974).

In their argument, Nagel (1974, p. 453) succinctly argues that discontents emanating from political domain and their consequences, which involve protests, violence, instability, and revolution, are dependent not only on the level of economic wellbeing and are focused on the distribution of wealth. Muller (1997) extrapolate that the existence of high-income inequality leads to radicalization of proletariat, enhances class polarization, and reduces the tolerance of bourgeoisie for groups with low income to actively participate in political and decision-making processes.

Marginalization of the poor in society leads to a violent conflict (Collier and Hoeffler, 2002a, p. 13). Meanwhile, Crosby (1970, p. 33) asserted that, normally poor groups in society whose conditions exists because of perceived grievances such as poverty will succeed in using the political contest to ameliorate their economic status. In the context of the July 2021 riots in Gauteng and KZN provinces, it is believed that the riots were instigated by a sense of unfairness (inequality) and not just the levels of service provision. Hence, inequality in society results in grievances and resentment, which sparked the July 2021 social unrest. For example, the long-existing differences in amenities between neighboring communities serve as an indication that the government is unable to meet basic in a rightful manner (Visage et al., 2021, p. 2). This is said because of realities that face the people who live in informal settlements which have been identified as hotspots for protest action (Visage et al., 2021, p. 3). In this case, Collier and Hoeffler (2002b, p. 13) highlighted that one of the indications that the poor are typically marginalized is seen through a high degree of economic inequality. Hence, the relationship between inequality and rebellion is regarded as a close one (Collier and Hoeffler, 2002b, p. 13), because it is the existing levels of inequality in society that perpetuate civil conflicts. In essence, grievances of the poor are believed to be the most popular explanation of a conflict after that of intergroup hatred, which often results in rebellion (Crosby, 1979, p. 33).

Horizontal inequality serves as a breeding ground for a conflict that will emanate, especially if there is prevalence of unequal distribution of resources in a given territory; such is the case in South Africa, as the country is characterized by high income inequality, as denoted in South Africa's Gini-coefficient. In the following section of the article, identity and intergroup hatred will be discussed as sub-themes of the grievances theory.

Identity and Intergroup Hatred

Societies that are heterogeneous in their social setting are often used as a description of civil unrest (Sorli, 2002, p. 21). The narratives and descriptions of civil unrest, as postulated by Lake and Rothchild (1998), argue that civil conflicts are often based on ancient hatred and irreconcilable differences that are seen between people sharing different cultures, ethnicity, religion, and languages. In addition, common history, religion, custom practices, institutions, and awareness of being a unique society serve as main elements that shape cultural identities between different people (Lake and Rothchild, 1998).

The current literature on culture and conflict, as outlined by Lake and Rothchild (1998), indicates that intra-state conflicts generally fall into three categories: primordialism, instrumentalism, and constructivism. Kaplan (1993) asserted that primordialists perceive culture as something that is given and unchangeable. Furthermore, cultural identity is emphasized as having a unique and overriding importance; therefore, conflict, along with cultural division, is natural (Kaplan, 1993). Central to the arguments of primordialists, questions such as "if cultural identities are fixed (unchangeable), how does one then explain the emergence of new identities?" may be posed Also, if cultural differences are conflictual in nature, how does one account for times that cultures do not result in clashes?

On the other hand, instrumentalists argue that in order for the elite to obtain political and economic ends, they use culture as a tool to meet their ends (Sorli, 2002, p. 21). The notion of "ethnic engineering" best defines the nature of instrumentalist's arguments, because it describes a situation where the masses are mobilized into a conflict in accordance with ethnic lines. In South Africa, for instance, the July 2021 riots were instigated by the Zulu ethnic group in KwaZulu-Natal province, a province that served as a strong base for Jacob Zuma support. As such, the stereotypical Zulu nationalism in the province was used as a tool to garner support for the July 2021 riots, which were executed under the call for the release of former President Jacob Zuma (a Zulu leader) who was jailed for contempt of court. Thus, in contrast to primordialists' perspectives, Sorli (2002, p. 21) articulates that researchers in this tradition fall short in considering the point that things such as culture are not something that can be created and, therefore, cannot be manipulated out of nowhere (Sorli, 2002, p. 21). In a nutshell, culture is rooted in the long existing history and tradition of a particular society.

In addition to the two mentioned categories of primordialism and instrumentalism, Sorli (2002, p. 22) adds another category of grievances, which is constructivism. According to Sorli (2002, p. 22), constructivists postulate that differences in terms of culture are not viewed as inherently conflictual (Sorli, 2002, p. 22).

Although culture is perceived as something that is dynamic and changeable, it is also rooted and controlled by individuals in a society as a whole (Lake and Rothchild, 1998).

Constructivists maintain that conflict is perpetuated by a particular type of what can be called "pathological social systems" (Lake and Rothchild, 1998, p. 6), of which individuals have no control. In furthering their arguments, Lake and Rothchild (1998, p. 6) assert that it is the social system that breed and instigate a violent conflict, as such, a conflict is not something that is derived from the will of the people. Hence, it is the socially constructed nature of ethnicity that can breed a conflict; sadly, once erupted, it is likely to spin rapidly out of control (Sorli, 2002, p. 23). Gurr and Harff (1994, p. 82) contend that identity is related to conflict in a way that it is needed for a group to provide a base from which support for rebellion can be mobilized.

Identity, as a source of conflict, was further studied by Smith (1994) who asserted that all persons have multiple identities, and this is dependent on the context that people live in Sorli (2002, p. 23). It is in this sense that the centrality of people's ethnic identity in people's lives can vary, and this does not always serve as a basis for leaders of different ethnic groups to mobilize a conflict Smith (1994). Thus, identity alone is not sufficient enough to serve as a cause for conflict, and quoting Gurr and Harff (1994, p. 83), "when a group within a common identity is discriminated against, it is likely to be aggressive and hostile." For instance, in the July 2021 unrest, when rioters (mostly black Zulu nationals) tried to attack and loot Indian supermarkets in the town of Phoenix in Durban, the Indian community felt discriminated against, as they are often targeted during the protests. Thus, they defended their businesses by physically fighting back against anyone who tried to loot their belongings (Davis, 2021). Consequently, discrimination on the basis of political and economic levels translates into frustrations, which can, again, lead to aggression (Sorli, 2002, p. 24). For instance, if economic and political resource rents are unfairly distributed and seldom in accordance to people's ethnic lines, these attitudes provide a conducive and fruitful base for rebellion (Sorli, 2002, p. 24).

In light of the above narrative, the article has discussed categories of identity and intergroup hatred, which explain the onset of civil conflicts. These categories include primordialism, instrumentalism, and constructivism. These theories explain how identity can lead to group formation in a society. Consequently, as a result of heterogeneity in society, people from different groups can easily develop hatred toward the opposite group, especially if there is high existence of inequality. Thus, in such a situation, a civil conflict shall be eminent, as those who are deprived of socio-economic and political inclusions will embark on a rebellion as a means of expressing their discontents. In the following section, the article will look into the human security perspective as a means of highlighting the nature of modern-day human security and its components.

Human Security Perspective

In the perception of many people, as argued by the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (2016, p. 5), the modern-day world is an insecure place characterized by various threats emanating from the limits of state borders (United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, 2016, p. 5). According to Acharya (2007, p. 492), these threats include natural disasters, violent conflicts, chronic and persistent poverty, health pandemics, and international terrorism, and sudden economic and financial downturns impose significant hardships and undercut prospects for sustainable development, peace, and stability (Acharya, 2007, p. 492).

Moreover, the Commission on Human Security was established in January 2001 as a means to respond to the UN Secretary-General's call at the 2000 Millennium Summit for a world "free from want" and "free from free" (Commission on Human Security., 2003, p. 4). In the Commission's final report Human Security Now, human security is defined as:

> "…to protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfillment. Human security means protecting fundamental freedoms—freedoms that are the essence of life. It means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations. It means using processes that build on people's strengths and aspirations. It means creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood, and dignity" (Commission on Human Security., 2003, p. 4).

Reading the above quoted statement, it is clear that modern-day threats to human security are complex, as they involve multiple forms of human insecurity (United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, 2016, p. 5). In this regard, when these insecurities overlap, they tend to grow exponentially, spilling over into all aspects of people's lives while destroying entire communities and crossing national borders (Acharya, 2007, p. 492). On the other end, Alkire (2003, p. 5) argues that modern-day security is different from traditional security, which places its focus on the protection of state's integrity and sovereignty from any external military threats that sought to ensure the territorial conquest by one group over the other (Acharya, 2007, p. 492). Thus, traditionally, the state remains the key objective of security or the entity that is to be protected against any possible threat (Alkire, 2003, p. 5).

Furthermore, human security can be based on a multi-sectoral understanding of threats that lead to insecurities. As such, in **Table 1**, the article highlights that the notion human security entails a wide understanding of threats, and it includes causes of insecurity related to issues of economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political security.

In its nature, the human security perspective places its emphasis on the existing interconnectedness of both threats and responses when addressing these insecurities (Alkire, 2003, p. 27), because human security threats are mutually reinforcing and interconnected in two ways (United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, 2016, p. 7). For one, they are interlinked in a domino effect; that is to say, each threat feeds on the other (United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, 2016, p. 7), for instance, when taking into account the claim made by Alkire (2003, p. 27), who posits that the prevalence of violent

TABLE 1 | Possible types of human security threats.

Types of security	Examples of main threats
Economic security	Persistent poverty, unemployment
Food security	Hunger, Famine
Health security	Deadly infectious diseases, unsafe food, malnutrition, lack of access to basic health care
Personal security	Physical violence, crime, terrorism, domestic violence, child labor
Community security	Inter-ethnic, religious, and other identity-based tensions
Political security	Political repression, human rights abuses

Source: United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (2016, p. 7).

conflicts can lead to deprivation and poverty, which in turn could result in depletion of resources, infectious diseases, education deficits, etc. Second, due to spillover effects, these threats within a given country or territory can spread widely across the region and subsequently lead to negative externalities for regional and international security (United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, 2016, p. 6). It is in this sense that the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (2016, p. 6) contended that human security approach provides a new way of thinking about challenges the global community face in the twentieth century. Equally so and how the global community seeks to respond to these threats are indicated in **Table 1** (United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, 2016, p. 6).

Modern-day security, unlike traditional security, places its focus on the protection of individuals from any form of threat, unlike traditional security, which prioritizes the protection of territory against external threats and invasion. It is in this regard that the article employed human security perspective in order to highlight security threats that may result in human (in)security. Because, in the course of the July 2021 riots, South Africa's national security was challenged, this was perceived through looting and destruction of properties, which resulted in harm of individuals, and deaths of individuals who were crushed in stampedes, and increased poverty levels due to closure of food supermarkets and shopping outlets. In the following section, the article provides a review of literature surrounding protest actions and urban riots in South Africa.

REVIEW OF THE EXISTING LITERATURE

The post-cold war era has been challenged with protest actions and social unrest, which have become a common feature in most African states. This is often influenced by dissatisfaction with government performance especially in fulfilling their roles and responsibility of ensuring proper development in both local communities and urban settlements (Lancaster, 2016, p. 1). According to Breakfast et al. (2019, p. 110), this dissatisfaction often results in a whole range of protest actions, which take place with varying intensity and effect. In reference to that, one may allude to the spate of protests that took the Middle East North Africa (MENA) region by storm and collectively termed

the "Arab Spring," as it provides dramatic examples of protest actions and social unrest (Breakfast et al., 2019, p. 110).

The assertion made by Abdalla (2012, p. 1) is that in Tunisia, protests were sparked by "…immense socio-economic problems that are at the origin of political revolution." Meanwhile, in 2011, the occurrence of labor protests in Egypt increased in a drastic manner and, thus, resulted in deteriorating economic situation (Abdalla, 2012, p. 1). The argument made by Acemoglu and Robinson (2013, p. 2) is that the plight of Egypt was triggered by corruption and absolute power that was exercised by the "narrow political elite."

Drawing from the perspectives of other scholars, the provision of basic service plays a major role in reducing poverty levels in any society (Narayan, 2000 in Berry et al., 2004, p. 7). In this context, any government that subject its inhabitants to poverty faces great risks of experiencing social protests (Breakfast et al., 2019, p. 110). Hence, throughout the globe, protest actions have one thing in common, and that is social change. It is in this sense that in South Africa, the protest action take a shape of violent service delivery protests that are executed for the sole purpose of changing the socio-economic status of either an individual or a particular group in society (Breakfast et al., 2019, p. 110). It is of key importance to mention that there are vast similarities in factors that trigger a protest action in various countries, namely, relative deprivation of basic needs and services that include water, education, housing, healthcare system, and national security.

As a response to relative deprivation of basic services, Ntlemeza (2014, p. 30) postulates that deprived individuals shall embark on protest actions and produce social movements that can provide immediate leadership to the aggrieved masses during times of their collective struggles (Ntlemeza, 2014, p. 30). This is exerted with a quest to fundamentally change the social and economic relationships in a given society, for example, in the context of the June 2016 protests in the city of Tshwane following the announcement of the mayoral candidate, the former public works minister and African National Congress (ANC) National Executive Committee member, Thoko Didiza. The announcement was not anticipated by members of the ruling ANC in the Tshwane region, because there was already a list containing three names of candidates for the mayoral position that was initially submitted by the region. As a consequence of tensions within the ANC, violent protests emerged in and around the city of Tshwane (Kgatle, 2017, p. 1).

Although the announcement of Thoko Didiza served as a trigger for violent protests around Tshwane in 2016, Gumede (2013, p. 11) is of the view that there are many factors that can be linked to public protests in South Africa. Kruidenier (2015, p. 5) supported the argument made by Gumede (2013, p. 11), as it indicated factors such as extensive poverty, prolonged periods of unemployment, income inequality, access to firearms, pervasive alcohol misuse, fragilities in law enforcement, gender inequality, patriarchal notions of masculinity, exposure to abuse during childhood, and compromised parenting as contributing factors to the social protests (Kgatle, 2017, p. 1). On the other hand, Abrahams (2010, p. 514) stated other factors that contribute to protests, and these include poverty, informed by disparity in income between the rich (the haves) and the poor (the

have-nots), failed if not poor service provision, overcrowding in squatter camps, lack of housing, and widespread unemployment. In furthering their argument, Abrahams (2010, p. 514) postulates that poverty and inequality are the most important social dynamics and indicators that have contributed largely to the burden of South Africa's violent protests.

In order for public violence to materialize, there should be drivers of such public violence that can subsequently be regarded as underlying factors behind violent protest actions (Fukuyama, 2012). Thus, for one to understand drivers of public violence, it is important to take a closer look into the risk factors contained in an ecological framework (Lancaster, 2016, p. 4). This framework is designed in attempts to explain various multilevel risk factors that serve as triggers of public violence (WHO, 2015). According to the WHO (2015), the proclaimed risk factors are related to an individual, his/her lifetime relationships, the community they live in, and societal realities, norms, and standards (WHO, 2015). Lancaster (2016, p. 4) highlights that societal factors comprise of social and economic inequality, poverty, rapid social change, weak social networks, and cultural norms that serve as triggers of violence (WHO, 2015).

The aforementioned factors are believed to be the risk factors responsible for instigating collective violence (Lancaster, 2016, p. 4). The World Health Organization (WHO) lists a number of political factors that are considered specific factors responsible for collective violence, and such factors include lack of democratic processes, unequal access to power, and government corruption (WHO, 2015). Moreover, demographics are also included among factors contributing to public violence, and societal and economic factors such as socio-economic inequality, uneven development and access to resources, high levels of unemployment, high population density, and rapid social change (Lancaster, 2016, p. 5).

The literature on protest actions and demonstrations indicates multiple factors that contributes to them. Among these factors are poverty, unemployment, inequality in terms of distribution of wealth, poor service provisions such as water, sanitation, and power, proper infrastructure, government corruption, and inadequate provision of housing for the poor and needy (Gumede, 2013). Against this backdrop, it is clear from the literature that the ANC-led government, which dominated the South African political landscape for over 27 years, has failed on numerous occasions to provide its constituents with adequate basic services. As such, because of relative deprivation, those who were denied access to basic services ended up resorting to protest action as a means of seeking the attention of their government. Thus, the post-1994 South Africa is characterized by a high number of service delivery protests, which have become a common mechanism of political participation in South Africa.

In essence, the paper explores the gap in literature which is succinctly addressed in urban riots and protests action literature discourse and that is to navigate the nexus between urban riots and criminal activities during the course of protest action in South Africa. In doing so, the article and its findings provided the seeds of discontents in the July 2021 riots in South Africa including elements of criminality in the insurgence of July 2021. As a result of social discontents, protest actions were eminent in both KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng provinces, South Africa. Meanwhile, elements of criminality were denoted during the course of the riots. Consequently, the citizens' expression of their grievances (discontents) included criminal activities during the July 2021 protests that led to human (in)security in both KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng provinces.

Why Is Jacob Zuma a Polarizing Figure in the July 2021 Riots?

Jacob Zuma, who has been a controversial figure for years, was the president of South Africa from 2009 to 2018. When he came to power in 2009, he made promises to end neoliberalism, but instead he facilitated "state capture," the handing over of the levers of the country's economy and policy-making process to private interests. In this context, the Gupta family (a family trio) who, with the help of Zuma, used their network to the President to build wealth and accumulate political power, as the family had power to influence who should constitute the President's cabinet. According to some estimates, Zuma's facilitated state capture cost the South African economy 60 billion pounds ($82.6 billion). Thus, in 2018, Zuma was challenged with pressure to resign as South African president because of government corruption during his presidency, provided that his presidency began not only to pose threat to the viability of the country and its economy but also, most importantly to the ruling party (ANC), because the Zuma presidency was tempering the electoral prospects of ANC. Among other things, Zuma was accused of receiving bribes from his former financial advisor, Schabir Shaik, who was imprisoned for fraud and corruption. In 2016, after Zuma was allegedly accused of squandering state money for personal interests, he was forced to pay back millions of state money that he used for his personal homestead (Nkandla). In a nutshell, the legacy of Zuma's reign is one characterized by scandals, crimes, exploitations and divisions within the ruling ANC.

Context of the July 2021 Riots in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng Provinces

South Africa is challenged by protest actions that continue to be a feature of political life in the country. That being said, Visage et al. (2021, p. 1) note that the country has levels of social protests that are recorded as among the highest for any country in the world, although causes behind these are multiple and more complex than often assumed. Hence, in the context of what transpired in KwaZulu-Natal and parts of the Gauteng province in July 2021, in what is known as the #ReleaseZumaRiots, is an insurrection that is influenced by multiple and complex factors, which will be addressed in the findings and analysis of the article. At this point, the article discusses the context of the #ReleaseZumaRiots, which unfolded in the following manner.

On the period 9 to 17 July 2021, residents of KwaZulu-Natal and parts of the Gauteng province, South Africa, were caught by surprise, as they experienced violent protests and socio-political unrest, which were accompanied by widespread looting of shopping centers and business units as well as torching, burning, and destruction of public infrastructures and private properties (Vhumbunu, 2021). Visage et al. (2021, p. 1) assert that

the scale and severity of the looting and sabotage in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng have brought social protests and civil unrest in South Africa into a popular discourse. In the words of Vhumbunu (2021), these proclaimed sociopolitical riots and violence were instigated by the arrest and incarceration of the former state president, Jacob Zuma.

The former state president was sentence to 15 months of imprisonment by the Constitutional Court of South Africa for defying its orders to comply with summons to appear before the established Commission of Inquiry for allegations of state capture, corruption, and fraud in the public sector and other state parastatals, and for undermining the authority of the Constitutional Court by his casual and scandalous attacks and defense mechanisms (Vhumbunu, 2021). There have been debates on whether the #ReleaseZumaRiots, looting, and sociopolitical unrest were sparked by the incarceration of president Zuma or not. However, the reality is that although the disgruntlement by Zuma's supporters was the trigger of the unrest, the roots of social unrest stretch farther than that (Visage et al., 2021, p. 2). Perhaps it is against this reality that Sbu Zikode, president of shack dwellers movement from KwaZulu-Natal, told the Human Rights Commission in Umhlanga that if the jailing of Jacob Zuma had not been the spark that ignited the malicious and devastating riots in July 2021, "something else would have." This is said against the reality of how fertile South Africa's socio-economic soil is to breed a revolution of poor and hungry individuals (Erasmus, 2021).

It is key to highlight the July 2021 riots in South Africa has tempered with the developments in the country due to disruptions of infrastructure, properties, shopping centers and also the prospects of individual's socio-economic amidst the Covid-19 pandemic which affected individuals lives and livelihood. However, lessons have been learned for future prevention, management, and conflict resolution of social unrest and protest actions in South Africa. Thus, this article examines the nexus between urban riots and criminal activities in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng provinces by reflecting on the seeds of discontents for the July 2021 riots and criminality that ensued during the course of protests while reflecting on human (in)securities that stem from such magnitudes of riots. In the following section, the paper will delve into the findings of the study. These are explored in two distinct sections, one looks at the nexus between the urban riots and criminal activities in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng provinces, and the other examines the impacts of urban riots and criminal activities on human security.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Nexus Between Urban Riots and Criminal Activities in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng Provinces (2021)

The July 2021 riots, which were executed under the pretext of the release of the former state president Jacob Zuma, have sparked debates among scholars, journalists, and civil societies, especially on issues surrounding causes of the July 2021 riots

(Vhumbunu, 2021). There are multilevel factors that serve as seeds of discontents, which triggered the July 2021 riots in both KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng provinces (Visage et al., 2021, p. 2). For one, Smith (2021) argues that South Africa has been battling economic and social turmoil for years. Hence, the incarceration of former state president Zuma was just the tick needed for the bomb to explode (Smith, 2021). Thus, S'bu Zikode, who testified before the South African Human Rights Commission of Inquiry for the July 2021 riots, proclaimed that if the imprisonment of Jacob Zuma had not been the spark that ignited the devastating riots in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng, "something else would have" (Erasmus, 2021).

In light of the foregoing, the article discusses the causes of the July 2021 riots, events that are referred to by some South African citizens as the "darkest hour." In June 2021, at the 47th summit held in the United Kingdom South Africa was the only African country invited. When he was interviewed on the sidelines, President Cyril Ramaphosa proclaimed that he holds a belief that ordinary South Africans had confidence in the ANC-led government, and that as far as governance is concerned, things are looking "pretty good" for his country (Mhaka, 2021). A month later, following President Cyril Ramaphosa's utterances, South Africa witnessed mass riots, looting, arson, and violence, which destroyed businesses and resulted in the death of more than 200 people (Erasmus, 2021). According to Tharoor (2021), what transpired in July 2021 in both KZN and Gauteng province is what happens when the gross inequality that characterizes the whole social stratification boils over. Also, it is what happens when a political landscape comprises of factions and influences of leaders who prioritize their own interests (private incentives) over the integrity of their own country's democracy (Tharoor, 2021).

Contributing factors, which may qualify as root causes of the July 2021 riots that were accompanied by looting, revolve around the challenges faced by the state to resolve the problems of poverty, unemployment, and inequality (Vhumbunu, 2021). Sadly, these factors often create portions of communities that are economically disenfranchised, desperate, and marginalized. As such, these leads to common grievances and shared bonds in the society (collective good), and in response to their discontents, people often engage in survival-motivated violence and frustration-instigated social unrest that are influenced by political battles and intra-party factions within the ANC, especially between the two hostile groups, which are known as the CR17 and RET forces. The former is centered around Cyril Ramaphosa, a trade unionist turned billionaire and the ANC's chief negotiator during South Africa's transition to democracy and, equally, the successor of Jacob Zuma (the former president of South Africa) who represents the Radical Economic Transformation (RET) (Haffajee, 2020).

According to Sarakinsky (2015, p. 66) factionalism is known as the conflict between informal groupings within the party, revolving around particular leaders, as the party's capacity to have control over public appointments. Consequently, in the assertions by Marshall (2005, p. 10), political factionalism serves as one of the most important factors that serve as a breeding ground for political violence and regime instability

(Marshall, 2005, p. 10). From the perspective of the article, the July protests came as a result of factional divisions within the governing ANC.

The supporters of RET are of the view that the internal fight (factions) within the ANC is one that is seen through the battle between those who wish to radically transform the economy of South Africa in favor of the previously disadvantaged Black majority, including White monopoly capital and its Black stooges (Fogel, 2021). Contrary to that is the Cyril Ramaphosa 2017(CR17) faction headed by President Cyril Ramaphosa who became the president of South Africa in 2018 following his narrow win in the ANC electoral conference over Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma (the minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs and Jacob Zuma's ex-wife) at the ANC's elective conference held in NASREC in December 2017. Since his ascendance to power, the ANC has been divided by a factional war within his "reform" faction, which claims to prioritize the restoration of state capacity and good governance by rooting out and combating corruption in government as well as the RET faction (Fogel, 2021).

In his reform project, Ramaphosa sacked members of the RET force in strategic positions both from his cabinet and from party structures, an example of this is the sacking of ANC NEC General Secretary Ace Magashule and the former premier of North West, Supra Mahumapelo (Haffajee, 2020). From this perspective, the imprisonment of Zuma indicated how the RET faction is willing to do whatever it takes to defend Zuma and his faction, thus causing disruptions and turmoil against Cyril Ramaphosa's government as a means to delegitimize his term of office. In his address to the nation, President Cyril Ramaphosa made strong utterances when he described the July 2021 unrest. Although he acknowledged the fact that the authorities were not prepared for violence of such magnitude, he pledged economic support for those who were affected by the riots (Davis, 2021). In the words of President Cyril Ramaphosa "it is clear that the events of the last week were nothing but a deliberate, well planned and coordinated attack on our democracy;" this was taken from the speech presented by President Cyril Ramaphosa following a week of violence and looting that left South Africa reeling (Davis, 2021).

Furthermore, Ramaphosa asserted that the instigators of the violence had intended to "cripple the economy, severely weaken or even dislodge the democratic state, and provoke a popular insurrection." It is clear from the assertions made by President Ramaphosa that the July 2021 riots had enormously damaged the economy at the time when it was suffering from the effects of COVID-19 lockdown. Thus, the president concluded that the unrest would "deepen poverty and cause even greater hardship" (Davis, 2021). The acting minister in the presidency of Khumbudzo Ntshavheni also commented on the July 2021 riots by asserting that "The unrest was orchestrated, instigated and planned… It almost brought our country to its knees" (The Independent, 2021). In addition, Tharoor (2021) points to the fact that government officials labeled the July 2021 unrest as an "insurrection," because the protests were led by Zuma's full-fledged supporters who spread riots in townships in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal provinces. South Africa is a country that is characterized by inequality and unequal distribution of wealth, and this is supported by the World Bank, which ranked South Africa as the most unequal society in the world, with 90% of the country's wealth being under the ownership of 10% of the population, and this constitutes the minority Whites (Vhumbunu, 2021).

According to the United Nations Human Development Report of 2020, 55.5% of South Africans (~30.3 million) are living under abject poverty line (United Nations Human Development Report, 2020). Meanwhile, the country has suffered from severe job losses during the advent of COVID-19 (Vhumbunu, 2021). On the other hand, the Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) Quarterly Labor Force Survey (QLFS) of 2021 highlights that unemployment rate in South Africa stands at 32.5%, and even higher at 46.3% among young people (15–34 years of age). Meanwhile graduate unemployment rate stands at 40% for those between 15 and 24 years of age. News24 (2021) reported that in the first quarter of 2021, the total number of employment in the formal non-agriculture sector declined by 5.4% compared to the levels in March 2020, equating to 552,000 job losses in the sector (News24, 2021). In the argument presented by Fogel (2021), over the years, many have predicted that South Africa, the most unequal society in the globe, would be taken by storm of mass unrest, what can be called our "Tunisia Day." Like the theory of grievances along with its sub-theme horizontal inequality argues, the existence of unequal distribution of wealth in societies serves as a fertile soil to produce civil unrest. Thus, due to the existence of horizontal inequality in South Africa, the July 2021 riots were inevitable, since there is an existing gap between the rich and the poor, which highlights the unfair distribution of wealth.

In South Africa, the majority of people live in poverty, with more than 30% of the labor force being subjected to unemployment while service delivery is deteriorating throughout the country (Fogel, 2021). The government have fallen short in delivering basic services to its constituents, thus denoting its inefficiency in directing developmental policies to its people, and this is influenced by corruption in government, since many politicians use political office as a way to amass wealth and loot state resources. This is entangled with ensuing racial and ethnic divisions, which have led to intergroup hatred, which has consequently exploded into outright violence in some communities such as in Phoenix, an Indian neighborhood in KwaZulu-Natal (Fogel, 2021). The theory of grievances along with its sub-theme identity and intergroup hatred remain relevant in this perspective, because narratives and descriptions of civil unrest are often based on ancient hatred and irreconcilable differences that are seen among people sharing different cultures, ethnicities, religions, and languages.

The assertions made by Gounden (2021) are that the incidents of violent protests were clearly orchestrated and speedily turned into widespread looting and rioting, and were driven by a number of push factors. These include factors such as failure by successive governments to progressively deal with an exponentially growing population that was swiftly urbanizing into unchanged and unresolved apartheid-era spatial development that accentuated race and class, accompanied by slow-growing economy that is

lacking the creation of job or catering for the developmental needs of its rapidly growing population (Vhumbunu, 2021). As a consequence, these tend to lead to increase in poverty levels, unemployment, and inequality in the society due to unfair distribution of resources and wealth (Gounden, 2021).

As a result of these socio-economic challenges facing the country, the government introduced a number of social relief interventions and social protection measures to cushion citizens from socio-economic effects of the novel COVID-19 pandemic. This raft of socio-economic safety nets and protection measures includes South African Social Security Agency Relief grants and Social Relief of Distress (SRD) grants as well as distribution of food parcels, adjustments of pensions for the elderly, and grants for child support, foster children, war veterans, and those with disabilities (Vhumbunu, 2021). Consequently, despite government's efforts to provide socio-economic interventions, they, too, had limited reach, for instance, the program of food parcel distributions was faced with a lot of corruption, as members of the ANC distributed food parcels to individuals who owed their allegiance to the ruling of the ANC while weaponizing the food parcels as a means of punishment on members of opposition parties, as they were relatively sidelined from receiving food parcels. It is in this sense that a substantial section of society remains in socio-economic distress.

Provided the realities of socio-economic challenges in South Africa, these created a fertile soil for protest actions to take place, citizens were frustrated by worsening multilevel risk factors such as poverty, unemployment, food security, and inequality due to COVID-19 which brought about national lockdown measures that tempered individual's socio-economic status and livelihood (Vhumbunu, 2021). Gounden (2021) notes that the lockdowns and their regulation were introduced by the government to curb the spread of COVID-19 and to ease the pressure on health services. Sadly, these lockdowns have exacerbated the multilevel risk factors of socio-economic tension in the South African society (Gounden, 2021) while undermining further the social cohesion and public trust among the constituents and immigrants (Gounden, 2021). According to the South African Department of Health (2021), South Africa was the hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic in the African continent, with a total of 2,919,632 cumulative deaths as of October 2021 (South African Department of Health, 2021). On the other hand, StatsSA (2021b) reported that economic growth in South Africa has been very minimal, and this is seen through a gross domestic product (GDP) growth of mere 1.1% during the 1st quarter of 2021, making a reflection that the country's economy was 2.7% smaller than it was in the first quarter of 2020 (StatsSA, 2021b).

The events of July 2021 and the extent of rioting have exposed South Africa's underlying economic challenges, entangled with high unemployment and poverty rates (Africa News, 2021). In South Africa, more than half of the country's 60 million people are subjected to poverty, as they live below the poverty line, while more than 20% are food insecure (Africa News, 2021). Moreover, The World Bank (2021) classifies South Africa as one of the most unequal countries in the world, as inequality has increased since the end of apartheid in 1994. Against these realities, relative deprivation vis-à-vis Jacob Davies curve explains that societies that find themselves confronted with a situation which reveals a growing gap between what they are receiving and what they ought to be receiving, with these differences growing wider and wider, with a clear depiction of the gap between the rich (the haves) and the poor (the have nots) a population is likely to rise up and revolt (Venter and Bain, 2015, p. 6). Hence, in this sense, the July 2021 riots erupted because of the existence of gap between the rich and the poor, with revolts from the relatively deprived groups who embarked on a series of riots as a means of expressing their social discontents.

In essence, although the July 2021 protests may have been politically driven, the reality is that they were perpetuated by the engrained and acute socio-economic challenges that heavily affected poor people in the country, hungry and frustrated citizens, predominantly in the townships, thus creating a fertile ground for social unrest (Vhumbunu, 2021). For one, it is clear that the hope carried by the people in their government to mitigate their socio-economic challenges has diminished, thus leading to frustration and desperation that compel people to take their discontents to the streets to remove the government or turn into extremists or criminal syndicates to exert their interest and meet their basic needs (Gounden, 2021). These was clearly indicated in the wave of the July 2021 unprecedented protests, looting, and rioting, which remain the worst form of protest actions that have ever occurred in South Africa since the advent of its infant democracy that was established in 1994.

In the arguments made by Visage et al. (2021), the cause of protests, such as the July 2021 riots, is often instigated by a sense of unfairness (inequality), not just levels of service provision; hence, inequality in society results in grievances and resentment, which spark social unrest. For example, the long-existing differences in amenities between neighboring communities serve as an indication that the government is not able to meet their basic needs in a rightful manner (Visage et al., 2021). This is said against the realities that face people who live in informal settlements, which have been labeled as hotspots for protest actions (Visage et al., 2021). What boils the situation over is the fact that rural migrants arrive at cities with high expectations of a better and sustainable life, only to end up living in slums, which is likely to continue for years especially if the government is failing to implement a realistic and stable plan for developing informal settlements (Gounden, 2021). According to Gurr (2011, p. 2) one major assumption of the relative deprivation theory is that the satisfaction of a person or a group is partially related to their objective, while being focused on their condition relative to other persons or groups that exists around them (Gurr, 2011, p. 2). Consequently, in such situations where grievances exist between people or groups, relative deprivation takes a position that unfavorable comparisons can instigate feelings of deprivation that shall ultimately lead to rebellion by the group deprived (Gatto et al., 2018, p. 2).

As a means of expressing their discontents during the July 2021 unrest, on 7 July, rioters barricaded major highways; a large number of long-haul trucks were set on fire and burned along the main arterial road from the port of Durban to Johannesburg (the economic heartland), and this was done in an attempt to destabilize the supply lines and, thus, cripple the already

weak economy of the country (Gounden, 2021). Moreover, in the following 6 days, the rioting and looting of businesses in and around the city of eThekwini (Durban) and parts of Johannesburg accounted for the destruction of 50 billion Rands (US$ 3.3 billion) of commercial properties and goods. Hence, President Cyril Ramaphosa put on record that the destruction of properties and theft of goods cost "billions and billions of rands." This came after the occurrence of over 118 incidents of public violence, arson, looting, and other mechanisms employed during the other unrest, which led to destruction of properties. Thus, Collier and Hoeffler who wrote on economic opportunity in the greed argument, postulated that whenever there is opportunity to loot resources, people will participate in a rebellion because they expect to gain economic incentives and rewards for participating in a rebellion. Henceforth, riots can be instigated purely by greed, especially when taking into account the amount of income that can be achieved either during the course of the riot or after participating in a riot. As Davis (2021) indicates, 161 malls and shopping centers were looted along with 11 warehouses, 8 factories, and 161 liquor stores and distributors. According to the Economist Intelligence Unit, an estimated 10 billion rand (US$ 680 million) was lost in stolen goods, burnt trucks, and destroyed properties (Africa News, 2021).

In this light, the riots and unrest that ensued in both Durban and Johannesburg in July 2021 were accompanied by elements of criminal activities such as looting, arson, and destruction of public and private properties, resulting in losses amounting to billions of rands. In justification of these criminal activities, Collier and Hoeffler (1999, p. 18) argued in their greed theory that greed resonates around economic agendas in the context of abundant natural resources. Hence, this is eminent where there are opportunities to exploit and loot abundant natural resources, which tend to inspire rebels to instigate riots (Collier, 1998, p. 8). In this context, riots can be instigated purely by greed, taking into account the benefits that can be attained either during the course of the rebellion from quasi-criminal looting or private incentives that supervene if the rebellion emerges victorious from the control of state (Collier and Hoeffler, 2002b, p. 4). The July 2021 unrest was heavily limited to the KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng provinces; it is key to highlight that both these provinces account for nearly 50% of South Africa's gross domestic product (GDP). As such, the July 2021 riots were witnessed in these two provinces, as they did not spill over to 7 other provinces (Africa News, 2021). After a week of rioting and looting in July 2021, at least 215 people died in the course of the turmoil, and more than 2,500 were arrested on charges that included theft and vandalism, as reported by the government (Africa News, 2021).

People who died during the July 2021 riots were crushed in stampedes due to chaotic ransacking of shopping stores. However, at least 20 deaths occurred in the Phoenix area of KwaZulu-Natal, where Indian residents protected their neighborhood from suspected intruders, as reported by South African Police Services (SAPS) Minister Bheki Cele (Africa News, 2021). The human security perspective highlights that among modern security threats is loss of life or death. This being the case, the July 2021 riots has had an impact on the security of people in both KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng provinces, which saw the

deaths of more than 200 people during the July 2021 urban riots. Tharoor (2021) stipulates that the acts of killings, including the widespread destruction of small, uninsured businesses in townships, emphasize the bitter irony of this form of orchestrated violence born out of anger and other factors such as inequality. This is said in light of the fact that most victims are poor and dispossessed, and many of them emanate from the Zulu ethnic group, members of the same tribe from which the polarizing figure former president Jacob Zuma draws his popular support (Tharoor, 2021).

The economy of South Africa may sustain a long-term damage following the July 2021 unrest, especially if domestic and international investors perceive the July unrest as a sign that South Africa is not a safe destination for their investments and capital interests (Africa News, 2021). This unrest coincided with South Africa's struggling economy provided that the country was already in recession; sadly, the July 2021 instability is expected to cause the economy to contract even further than it was before. Against all these economic effects stemming from the July 2021 unrest, the hardest hit were South Africa's poor people, many of whom were not able to purchase food at competitive prices from township shopping centers that were closed because of disruptions or even burned down. Moreover, the elderly and people receiving monthly grants were not able to get food from the centers and shopping stores that were closed down, thus leading to food scarcity (insecurity). These realities highlight how the July 2021 riots tempered human security, because food security is one of the types of modern day security, whereas hunger serves as an example of main threats to human security (United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, 2016, p. 7).

It is in this sense that the article delved into the relationship that exists between urban riots and criminal activities, because the presence of the former is often driven by discontents such as relative deprivation of basic services that include water and sanitation, employment opportunities, reduction of poverty, and inequality. Consequently, as a means of expressing their discontents and grievances, the citizens embarked on protest actions that were accompanied by looting, arson, and destruction of private and public properties including infrastructure; as such, this indicates elements of criminality in the course of the protest actions. In the following section, the article will discuss how the July 2021 unrest is related to organized crime by reflecting on the mafia's strategy of fighting back as a means of justifying the fact that the July "insurrection" is nothing but acts of orchestrated, planned, and coordinated form of an attack against the state.

The Mafia's Strategy of Fighting Back

The violence and unrest that ensued and occurred in July 2021 in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng provinces, South Africa can be found in the reaction of powerful, entrenched organized crime groups that are often threatened by legal prosecution and decline in political protection. From this perspective, the actors involved in instigating the July 2021 unrest are linked to organized crimes (Fogel, 2021), and they have utilized public office to establish powerful patronage networks. This came as a result of factionalism within the ANC, because members of

the indigent party have turned their political party into a "war party" (Ardé, 2020, p. 34), fighting and killing each other for position in both government and party structures (Von Holdt, 2013, p. 15). For one, in South Africa, political office has been used as an easy way to accumulate wealth, provided that the ruling ANC is in charge of allocation of resources and their management (De Haas, 2016, p. 44). As the theory of greed postulates, no profitable opportunity will be left especially if the benefits outweigh the cost of protest actions (Collier and Hoeffler, 1999, p. 12) Consequently, members of the ANC are fighting over state resources, thus grouping themselves into factions that represent different interests of groups within the same political party (Ericksson, 2021). In this sense, their battles are driven by self-interests rather than ideology (Fogel, 2021).

In its nature, the mafia strategy refers to the execution of open violence as a means of winning concessions from the state, targeting key public officials, humiliating the government, and transmitting "lawlessness" in order to demonstrate the mafia's power and the state's ineffectiveness (Fogel, 2021). Thus, in a broader sense, the mafia strategy is employed as a means of delegitimizing the government by challenging its monopoly over the use of legitimate force. It is key to indicate that the mafia strategy of fighting back often backfires, bringing about a public backlash and solid support for a state-driven crackdown (Fogel, 2021). For instance, in Sicily, when leaders of Cosa Nostra faced prosecution in the 1980s and 1990s, members of the Cosa Nostra unleashed an orchestrated targeted wave of public violence through car bombings and assassinations (Fogel, 2021). Notoriously, crusading judges Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino were killed with bombs in 1992 following the mafia maxi-trial of 1986–1987, which saw the conviction of 342 Mafiosi (Fogel, 2021).

According to Fogel (2021), the mafia group, which built its strength by establishing itself as a powerful shadow government and had networks stretching from the top of the then ruling Christian Democratic Party right to the Vatican, employed a strategy of open confrontation against the state as a means of protecting itself. Consequently, this strategy ultimately failed in its objective of challenging the state, as it turned the public against it while the government restored order by deploying military personnel. The authorities in Sicily hunted down the top bosses of the mafia group, and this included the infamous boss of all bosses, Salvatore "Toto" Riina (Fogel, 2021). Because of its quest to challenge the state, Cosa Nostra lost not only much of its power but also its position as the top organized crime syndicate in Italy.

In Colombia, in the late 1980's and early 1990's, a similar incident occurred when Pablo Escobar and the Medellin Cartel declared themselves "the non-extraditable" and employed the mafia strategy of fighting back by launching a wave of terror (Fogel, 2021). This came after Escobar and his Medellin Cartel attempted to avoid extradition to the United States; as such, Escobar unleashed a wave of terror by bombings, assassinations, and kidnappings that resulted in deaths of thousands of Colombians. At the end of his wave of terror, after assassinating cabinet ministers, political leaders, and judges, and kidnapping the families of Colombian leaders and even bombing planes as well as government infrastructures, Escobar turned himself in to

the police, with one condition of building a prison where he will be incarcerated (Fogel, 2021).

This request proved a pyrrhic victory; thus, the government responded by moving Escobar to a normal prison. However, when reports circulated about the lavish palatial prison that Escobar built and the murder of two cartel members on the prison grounds, Escobar responded by fleeing prison (Fogel, 2021). Following his escape from prison, Pablo Escobar spent the rest of his life hunted down by the Columbian government, his criminal rivals, and former friends until his death in 1993 (Fogel, 2021). Even with Pablo Escobar, the mafia strategy of fighting back had backfired, the wave of terror and violence that he launched against the people turned the public against him, and his links in the political domain diminished as the number of bullets facing him outweighed the bribes that he normally handed out (Fogel, 2021).

In the context of the July 2021 riots in South Africa, with respect to Jacob Zuma and the Radical Economic Transformation (RET) faction, allegations are that they are attempting to utilize violence to gain concessions from the government instead of staging a classical coup (Fogel, 2021), trying to weaken President Cyril Ramaphosa's government in the advent of 1 November 2021 local government elections (Davis, 2021). Thus, the article posits that Zuma and the RET faction were not aiming for regime change but rather wishing to protect their positions in the party and establish patronage networks; this alone indicates how the ANC has turned into a gangster party, where might is right and big guns are calling the shots (Ardé, 2020, p. 49). In a nutshell, the #ReleaseZumaRiots symbolize more than just the release of the former state president, because the wave of violence and disruptions in the events of the July 2021 riots were absurd. Major highways were barricaded by rioters who blocked major highway roads in Durban, the capital city of KwaZulu-Natal, blocking goods and commodities to be traveled to other parts of the country. Moreover, public buildings were burnt and vandalized, shopping centers were destroyed and looted, motor vehicle garages were burned, and other infrastructures were destroyed. What transpired in South Africa in July 2021 was more than just seeking of justice for Jacob Zuma but was more of an enacted resurrection employed to topple the struggling economy of the country, thus leading to state failure. In the words of Minister of Defense Mapisa-Nqakula, the July 2021 riots can be described as a work of criminal elements, exploiting the desperation of poverty-stricken people, with an element of counter-revolution (Sokupa and Gumbi, 2021, p. 52). It is in this regard that the article looks into the link between urban riots and criminal activities, because what transpired in the July 2021 riots in South Africa is a resemblance that the existence of social discontents in society can be used as a reason to embark in violent protests and execute criminal activities.

However, as seen in the past examples, it is highlighted that the mafia strategy of attack has a tendency to backfire (Fogel, 2021) while attracting widespread support for harsher government crackdowns. For example, in the 7 other provinces of South Africa, which were not looted during the July 2021 unrest, members of different communities stood in solidarity and protected their towns, shopping centers, and malls (Davis,

2021). Moreover, there are indications that the July 2021 unrest had backfired for some of the instigators. However, arresting the culprits would amount to pyrrhic victory if the government fails to restore public trust by executing socio-economic policies that will mitigate the existing challenges of social and economic problems faced by the country. As such, although the priority of the government might be to find those responsible for the riots and hold them accountable, the reality is that failure by the ANC-led government to address the existing social discontents and grievances, such as poverty, unemployment, and inequality, will make South Africa prone to more protest actions and social unrest.

The section has provided an analysis on the mafia style of fighting back, and this was conducted by making reflections on incidents that occurred in Sicily and Colombia, where criminal syndicates who were facing prosecution attempted to challenge the state by launching attacks against their governments. In line with that, the section related these examples to the July 2021 unrest that was politically motivated by factional battles that exist within the ruling ANC. In the following section, the article will analyze the impacts of the July 2021 unrest on human security.

Urban Riots and Urban (In)Security: Impacts of the July 2021 Riots on Human Security

There have been various reports on the assessment to determine the extent and scale of damages that occurred in the July 2021 riots. According to Vhumbunu (2021), the nine days of turmoil in both KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng provinces resulted in loss of properties, such as finance service, farming, telecommunication, and seaports facilities, and food distribution centers, business stocks, employment, livelihoods, and essential services, which include medical and pharmaceutical supplies (in hospitals and clinics), (Vhumbunu, 2021). In addition, the riots tempered government programs such as the vaccination program; it is in this sense that the July 2021 unrest is considered the worst and unprecedented in the post-apartheid era (Africa News, 2021).

The unrest was accompanied by disruption of businesses by looting, arson, and damaging business premises and properties. Consequently, the unrests caused significant financial and infrastructural losses (Vhumbunu, 2021). According to the South African Property Owners Association (SAPOA) report, a total of 3,000 stores were looted, and 1 199 retail stores were damaged as a result of the protests; this included large outlets and businesses (Warby, 2021). Meanwhile, Dludla (2021) stipulates that a total of 161 malls were damaged countrywide, and that 161 liquor stores and distributors, 11 warehouses, and eight factories were extensively vandalized. Sadly, banking services were affected predominantly in KZN and Gauteng, where branches were forced to close (Mchunu, 2021). An estimated total number of 40,000 businesses and 50,000 informal traders were also affected, putting at risk the jobs of close to 150,000 people because of closure of businesses and possibilities of delayed re-stocking and re-opening (Mchunu, 2021).

Furthermore, the July 2021 unrest led to food shortage in and around KZN and Gauteng provinces, because on a national

scale, SAPOA estimated that the extent of the damage was worth R50 billion (Vhumbunu, 2021). The KwaZulu-Natal province lost R20 billion as a result of the unrest. Meanwhile, in Durban alone, R1.5 billion of stocks were lost by various businesses (Mchunu, 2021). Moreover, larger supermarket groups and wholesalers were heavily targeted during the unrest; for example, Shoprite Group Stores reported that out of its established 1 189 supermarkets trading under different names, a total of 200 were looted, vandalized, and burnt in both KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng provinces. This included 69 Shoprite supermarkets, 54 Shoprite Liquor Shop outlets, 44 Usave stores, 35 furniture stores, as well as 6 Checkers supermarkets, one Checkers Hyper, and one Freshmark Distribution Center (Mchunu, 2021). These damages on food stores contributed largely to food (in)security in KZN and Gauteng provinces and under supply of basic commodities in neighboring communities (Vhumbunu, 2021). Consequently, the July 2021 riots tempered food security, ultimately resulting in human security threats such as hunger, because many people were forced to stay for days without having access to buy food.

Among other security threats emanating from the July 2021 riots is that they impacted with the COVID-19 vaccination rollout and disrupted the transportation of medical supplies and delivery of healthcare essentials (South African Department of Health, 2021). In addition, the South African Department of Health reported a loss of about 25,000 vaccine doses during the protest actions, and this came as a result of acts of looting and arson. On the other hand, the July protests impeded the targeted rollout of vaccination of 300,000 people per day, as the government sought to vaccinate 67% of the population by the end of 2021 in quest of reaching herd immunity (South African Department of Health, 2021). Health security was threatened by the July 2021 riots, because people who live with chronic deceases such as TB, HIV/AIDS, and diabetes, in parts of KZN and Gauteng were also affected. Because of the closure of 90 pharmacies in KZN and Gauteng, people could not go and collect their medication (South African Department of Health, 2021). This situation alone denotes that the July 2021 riots resulted in human security threats such as lack of access to basic healthcare (Acharya, 2007, p. 492).

In other areas, communal violence and racial tensions erupted, and these were sparked by vigilantism, as business owners and armed civilians resorted to self-defense, self-protection, and community-based policing. A case in point is the community of Phoenix in Durban, where the official death toll reached 36, with allegations of "race-targeted" attacks on suspected looters (Times Live, 2021). In a nutshell, the July 2021 unrest led to the death of 337 people in both KZN and Gauteng provinces, as of 22 July 2021, whereas more than 3,400 people were arrested on allegations of inciting public violence, murder, arson, and looting (SA News, 2021).

CONCLUSION

This article has provided an argument that protest action is not a new phenomenon in South Africa; as such, the July 2021 riots executed under the pretext of release of the former state

president Jacob Zuma were not a new phenomenon. By critical literature analysis, the article has expanded on various incidents of protest actions since the advent of democracy in South Africa. As depicted, there are multilevel risk factors that serve as triggers of discontents by the general public, and these includes: poverty, high crime, high unemployment rate, violent parental conflicts, weak economic safety nets, etc. These factors often serve as reasons for protest actions to erupt. Hence, in South Africa, prior to the arrest of Zuma in July 2021 due to contempt of court after he failed to appear before the commission of inquiry set forth to investigate his corruption and fraud allegations during his time as the President of South Africa, the country has already been battling challenges such as poverty, rapid urbanization, unemployment, high crime levels, inequality, and racial tensions. As such, these factors contributed largely to the July 2021 unrest, which coincided with people's poor socio-economic status exacerbated by the COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions. Relative deprivation (*vis-à-vis* J-Curve) argues that the existence of socio-economic challenges in a society tends to serve as fertile soil for eruption of riots and protest actions, because poverty-stricken countries are prone to hosting hungry, unemployed, and dissatisfied people who will resort to protest actions such as riots as a means of expressing their discontents. Hence, the riots that transpired in both Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal provinces in July 2021 had some connotations of relative deprivation, and this was revealed through a series of looting of goods ranging from food to home furniture. Hence, the arrest of Zuma served as a trigger for the people to act out their frustrations on their government by embarking on protest actions. It is key to note that among other factors that led to the July 2021 riots is ANC factionalism and intra-party tension. The animosity between Zuma's RET faction and Ramaphosa's CR17 faction has divided the ANC into two blocks within the party. This is argued on the premise that as a means to delegitimize Cyril Ramaphosa's administration, the RET force coordinated a wave of terror through riots in KZN and Gauteng provinces with hopes of crippling the economy. Competition for the control of state resources by both the CR17 and RET factions has served some elements of the greed hypothesis, which articulates that rebels often group themselves into sects that seek to represent similar interests. With this being the case, rebels embark on rebellion because of calculated benefits that come with participating in a revolt. Thus, the July 2021 riots were accompanied by looting, because no profitable opportunity was left to those who participated in the revolt, as argued by the greed theory. Furthermore, the July 2021 riots led to the burning of infrastructures and murder of civilians, leading to human security challenges, supporting the literature on human security perspective that modern-day security threats arise from the denial of people's freedoms and rights such as right to peaceful existence and right to life. However, in closure, the article postulates that too many South Africans remain pushed to the fringes of society. Many have been sucked into a vortex of despondency that often threatens social and political stability. The politics of denial by the ANC needs to reach an end. Moving forward, President Ramaphosa has to prioritize rapidly, establish basic income grants, improve service delivery in townships, root out corruption in government, and implement land reform programs as he has promised in his presidential campaign. For one, failure to do so shall result in further protest actions stemming from grievances among constituents.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author/s.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The author confirms being the sole contributor of this work and has approved it for publication.

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