

From Service Delivery Strikes to Anti-Immigrant March: A Paradigm Shift in the Post-Colonial Discourse of Politics of Belonging in the Twenty-First Century South Africa

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Abstract : This study aims to unravel the myth behind animosity towards foreign nationals in South Africa. Systemic violence against foreign African nationals since 2008 to date necessitates critical research with regards to migration issues connected to social upheavals. Extensive research ubiquitously tagged black-on-black violence as xenophobia or Afrophobia. In all, escalation of violence indicates a connotation of belonging. With unemployment rates approaching a crescendo, other vices have also soared in the same regard. As a result, this present generation seems cynical as the South African state has not fulfilled her obligations towards the indigent population; a situation pitching locals against foreigners. Locals have repeatedly blamed African foreign nationals for the economic downturn, using service delivery strikes to express their grievances. These strikes have continued unabatedly over the years but February 2017 marked a turning point in 'insider-outsider' relations as the strike was now turned to an anti-immigrant march resulting into widespread violence as the police failed to restore normalcy at some point. Over time, migration has been a harbinger of violence against the foreign black population in South Africa. Our paper encourages the state and civil society to invent new peace-building mechanisms to reduce xenophobic orchestrated violence. Our paper also contends that since the political class has hijacked the situation by using the youths for political propaganda during crises periods, a re-education of the political class and a culture of tolerance is inevitable for peace and harmony between locals and foreigners in post-apartheid South Africa.

Keywords : anti-immigrant march, politics of belonging, service delivery strikes, South Africa

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