



## Eclectic Contexts of Xenophobic Workplace Discrimination in Post-apartheid South Africa

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### ABSTRACT

Today, a fresher look at social structures shows that the possibility of living in a socially homogeneous society has lost its credibility (Senem & Arikan, 2018). When any workplace is considered, migrant workers are exposed to both intended and unintended forms of xenophobic workplace discrimination daily in many migrant-receiving countries. Xenophobic workplace discrimination has pernicious and ramifying consequences for migrant workers. This article uses a review of the literature methodology. Xenophobic-driven workplace discrimination towards migrant workers in the workplace may manifest itself through the following forms: institutional discrimination at work, wage discrimination, discriminatory assignment to hazardous jobs, and discriminatory assignment to precarious and 'ghettoized' jobs. Because in the post-apartheid South African context, it is black African migrants who bear the brunt of xenophobic-driven workplace discrimination, these researchers recommend that: firstly, workplace ethics regulating the employment of labour migrants in the post-apartheid context should be guided by Article 1 of the ILO's (International Labour Organisation) Convention Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) of 1958. Trade union federations should utilise their bargaining power to shield migrant workers from forms of workplace discrimination that are xenophobically driven. Finally, the contribution of migrant workers, who are often victims of xenophobic-driven workplace discrimination, constitutes a significant economic dividend that could benefit the country's economic productivity and growth. For this reason, it is of paramount importance for the government, business, and labour to collectively work together to eradicate the scourge of xenophobia as a form of discrimination in the workplace.

### KEYWORDS

Workplace; xenophobia; discrimination; migrants; employment.

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Today, a fresher look at social structures shows that the possibility of living in a socially homogeneous society has lost its credibility (Senem & Arikan, 2018). When any workplace is considered, migrant workers are exposed to both intended and unintended forms of xenophobic workplace discrimination daily in many migrant-receiving countries. What is 'employment discrimination? Article 1 of the ILO's (International Labour Organisation) Convention Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) of 1958 defines 'workplace discrimination' as any distinction, exclusion, or preference made based on race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin, which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation (Ayalew, 2020). In addition, a policy instrument that the United Nations has developed to assist the international community in dealing with immigration is the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and members of their Families whose enforcement came in 2003. This Convention guarantees international migrant workers the following virtues: human rights; basic freedoms; due process; equality with nationals; right to privacy; transfer of earnings; right to information; freedom of movement; equality with nationals, and other rights. This Convention intends to protect migrant workers and members of their families from exploitation, and the violation of their human rights.

Observably, migrant workers are confronted in the workplace by what Dietz (2010) refers to as 'employment discrimination' – differential and unfair treatment enacted consistently towards members of one group, but not consistently across all groups, based on ascribed characteristics such as race, national origin, gender, and so on. Xenophobic workplace discrimination (Freier & Pérez, 2021) has pernicious and ramifying consequences for migrant workers. Therefore, employment discrimination is any form of differential treatment (Dietz et al., 2015) in the workplace based on racial background, national extraction, gender, and so on, which may negatively affect the occupational outcomes of workers. Institutional workplace discrimination of migrant workers is influenced, enabled, and even encouraged by the structures, practices, and dynamics of the organisations within which individuals work (Saucedo, 2009). Beyond the shadow of any doubt, one of the foremost ramifying outcomes of xenophobic workplace discrimination is that it negatively affects the psychological, emotional, social well-being, and physical health of migrant workers, and is also implicated in a multitude of health diseases (Nkimbeng et al., 2021). What are the implications of this on productivity and economic growth? This, in turn, hurts the levels of economic productivity in the host country. Observably, international labour migration involves the movement of economically productive individuals who are usually at the prime age in their working lives. There is a symbiotic relationship between economic productivity, growth, and migrant labour. Xenophobic-driven workplace discrimination of migrant workers may lead to skill underutilization and under-skilling (Rafferty, 2020), thereby hampering economic productivity in the host country.

Opportunely, migrant workers, whether skilled or unskilled, contribute significantly to the host country's economic growth and development (Quak, 2019). Both skilled and unskilled migrant workers could boost economic growth in the receiving countries in the following ways: by expanding the labour force and higher wages; by fostering labour productivity, boosting innovation and complementarities with native workers by increasing diversity in productive skills; and by generating additional tax revenues (Quak, 2019). Specifically, without undermining unskilled migrant workers in any way, skilled migrant workers impact both the production and consumption sides of the receiving economy (Nathan, 2014).

Notably, discriminatory behaviours particularly target migrant workers who are perceived as 'competent competitors' (Krings et al., 2014). Consequently, in diverse workplace contexts, some migrant groups (such as highly skilled) may experience more discrimination (Krings et al., 2014) in the workplace vis-à-vis those who are less skilled. While the above may be popular, these researchers think that the opposite might be true in that the less skilled workers may suffer the same fate. While xenophobic-driven workplace discrimination is ubiquitous and cuts across continents, regions, and countries, it is important to appreciate the following forms it exhibits: institutional discrimination at work; wage discrimination; discriminatory assignment to hazardous jobs; and discriminatory assignment to precarious and 'ghettoized' jobs.

Institutional-level xenophobic discrimination of migrant workers in the workplace is rife in diverse global, regional, and national contexts. Globally, employment discrimination against migrants is frequently exacerbated by racial discrimination against migrant workers owing to their stigmatised social status (Williams et al. 2012). Negi (2013) reported that Latino day labourers (migrants from Mexico and Central America who work in an unregulated and informal market) in America experienced persistent 'minority stress' due to their stigmatised social status – something that could deleteriously impact their psychological well-being. In the post-apartheid South African context, workplace discrimination of migrant workers has taken an Afrophobic bent (Alfaro-Velcamp & Shaw, 2016) with black African migrants bearing the brunt of employment segregation. Moreover, institutional-level workplace discrimination against migrant workers is also manifested in differential wages received by them.

Wage discrimination against immigrant workers occurs in most countries, with immigrants' earnings being considerably lower than natives (Hirsch & Jahn, 2015). Historically, wage inequalities between immigrant and native workers in diverse international countries have been the outcome of many factors that inter alia include, language, culture, quality of education, and discrimination (Nadeau & Seckin, 2010). Globally and regionally, the most economically vulnerable workers (immigrants, and workers on temporary contracts) are over-represented in unsafe jobs, notably in non-essential activities (Basso et al., 2020). Worldwide, there exists corroborating evidence indicating that immigrant workers, relative to native employees, frequently engage in jobs that are hazardous to their psychological, emotional, and social well-being, and physical health. They receive meagre wages, work for extended hours,

usually under worse conditions, are often subject to human rights violations, and are subjected to multifarious aspects of xenophobia, physical abuse, and violence (Moyce & Schenker, 2018). Inevitably, immigrant workers are exposed to adverse working conditions which lead to poor health outcomes, workplace injuries, and occupational fatalities (Moyce & Schenker, 2018). In such hazardous workplace environments, risky, dangerous, and pernicious occupations abound, and these are discriminatorily assigned to foreign national workers. Notably, these are occupations that are injurious to one's health, and may perhaps not be covered by a country's legislative instruments that regulate employee safety and protection in the workplace.

Hewison (2016) contends that 'precarious work' or 'precarity' is labour that exhibits uncertainty, instability, vulnerability, and insecurity where workers are required to perniciously bear the risks of work. Further, forms of 'precarity' include labour that is non-standard or contingent (Hira-Friesen, 2018), seasonal, casualized, informal, and self-employment (Hewison, 2016). Additionally, precarious forms of labour are characterized by routine, flexibility, illegibility, risk, and failure (Sennett, 2000). Irregular employment hinders rational planning in daily life, and the absence of regular employment means that life, including family life, becomes less coherent (Wilson, 1997; Wilson, 2010). Some literature from the international context has argued that newcomers in the Canadian context are lagging in economic integration behind their Canadian-born counterparts since many of them are employed in precarious jobs.

### **Problem statement**

The phenomenon of xenophobic-driven workplace discrimination is ubiquitous, cutting across continents, regions, and countries, and has pernicious and ramifying consequences for migrant workers. Xenophobic-driven workplace discrimination towards migrant workers in the workplace may manifest itself through the following forms: institutional discrimination at work; wage discrimination; discriminatory assignment to hazardous jobs; and discriminatory assignment to precarious and 'ghettoized' jobs. It is therefore topical that research on the manifestations of xenophobic-driven workplace discrimination is undertaken to unearth the possible underpinnings of this phenomenon in the post-apartheid South African context. These researchers contend that stronger compliance with the ILO's (International Labor Organization) Convention (No. 111) Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) of 1958 might help in eradicating the scourge of xenophobic-driven workplace discrimination. Furthermore, the eradication of this scourge could result in a significant economic dividend which could benefit post-apartheid South Africa's economic productivity and growth.

### **Research aim and objectives**

This article aims to identify and describe the eclectic contexts of xenophobic workplace discrimination in post-apartheid South Africa, with the following specific objectives:

- To identify and describe the eclectic contexts of xenophobic workplace discrimination in post-apartheid South Africa.
- To explore various facets of xenophobic workplace discrimination in post-apartheid South Africa; and

- To make recommendations on how to eradicate the scourge of xenophobic-driven discrimination in the workplace.

## METHODOLOGY

The article was based on a systematic review of literature that aimed at generating debate and discourse on the significance of the phenomenon of xenophobic-driven workplace discrimination against migrant workers. Specifically, these researchers utilised a qualitative systematic review method to appraise and compare the quality and strength of findings from different types of literature sources that focused on the topic under investigation. A purposive or judgmental sampling technique was employed for the identification and selection of the rich sources of information that addressed forms of xenophobic workplace discrimination in global and national contexts. This article utilised a qualitative systematic review methodology to extract relevant data from fifty-three (forty-one (77%) scientific journal articles, six (12%) books, and six (11%) other documents which included a discussion paper, and a research report retrieved from journal storages databases, academic books, newspaper articles, and internet news websites that contained information on xenophobic workplace discrimination. The bulk of the information that was utilised to compose our theoretical argument in this article originated from international scientific journals.

In pursuance of the above, this systematic review of literature proceeded along these lines namely: defined an appropriate question, searched the relevant literature, appraised the selected literature sources, compared and synthesized the findings, and composed a new theoretical argument. Key concepts and search terms and phrases such as workplace discrimination; xenophobia; discrimination; migrants; and employment, based on the phenomenon under investigation were used to guide the qualitative systematic review of literature search for relevant information-rich literature sources germane to the research topic. The selected sources of information were further assessed and narrowed according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Only sources of information that were written in the English language, and focused on xenophobic workplace discrimination were considered for this systematic review process. Literature sources that focused on the general scourge of xenophobia and its attendant violent reaction to the presence of foreign citizens in post-apartheid South Africa were excluded in this process of systematically reviewing the literature on xenophobic workplace discrimination. Data gleaned from these sources was analysed using the following themes that constituted the research problem: *videlicet*, institutional discrimination at work, wage discrimination, discriminatory assignment to hazardous jobs, and discriminatory assignment to precarious and 'ghettoized' jobs. To ensure reliability when conducting the literature search, these researchers consistently utilised multiple sources of data to ensure they yielded diverse perspectives pertinent to the research topic. Finally, the selected purposive sample of literature sources was valid in the sense that they exclusively focused on the various facets of xenophobic workplace discrimination.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### *Institutional-level workplace discrimination*

Incontrovertibly, migrant workers arrive in the host country with an indefatigable desire to work to improve their economic livelihood chances. Perennially, most migrant workers move to a foreign country to be employed. Indeed, that is the fundamental and enduring reason precipitating most migrant worker inflows into receiving countries. Observably also, in many countries of the world, migrants tend to put in more hours in the labour market (Friberg 2012). In the ensuing melee, migrant workers are confronted with an array of institutional discriminatory practices in the workplace. Ubiquitously, institutional-level and xenophobic-driven discrimination in the workplace is a mundane occurrence and an ever-present feature in diverse global and national labour markets. Worldwide, episodic bouts of workplace institutional discrimination against migrant workers include but are not limited to the following: institutional discriminatory hiring policies and practices that favour native workers over their foreign counterparts; work organisational practices that impede their full participation (Vasconcelos, 2015), and economic advancement of migrant workers who come from diverse cultural backgrounds; unfavorable treatment, and skill degradation (Guo et al., 2021).

In the post-apartheid South African context, institutional workplace discrimination of migrant workers has taken an Afrophobic bent (Alfaro-Velcamp & Shaw, 2016) with black African immigrants bearing the brunt of employment segregation. For example, institutional workplace discrimination towards Zimbabwean migrants in Johannesburg has manifested itself in the following ways: through poor quality jobs; underpayment (which includes long working hours without commensurate payment); non-provision of benefits (including non-provision of protective clothing and generally proper tools for use in the execution of a task); and sometimes outright non-payment (Hungwe & Gelderblom, 2014). Perhaps, another manifestation of institutional-level form of discrimination directed at migrant workers in the workplace concerns the issue of 'brain waste' (Owusu-Sekyere et al., 2019) - whereby African skilled migrant workers are employed at a level significantly below their level of expertise due to limited job opportunities. Perhaps, the latter practice might be because most job opportunities are proffered to black South Africans as part of the country's agenda to transform the public and private workforces. This is because the erstwhile apartheid regime implemented job segregation based on race.

Evidence from undocumented episodes of blatant institutional workplace discrimination against migrant workers abounds in some institutions of higher learning. Recently, two expatriate academics (one originating from Nigeria, and the other from Canada) - possessing the same qualifications, level of experience, and expertise- were simultaneously employed in the same department as lecturers. The latter was remunerated fifty percent less than his Canadian counterpart. Sadly, his repeated endeavours to seek relief from the authorities, for this form of workplace injustice, were unsuccessful. Additionally, there are also undocumented cases of skilled African migrant workers applying for senior positions in some of these academic

institutions, but when they arrive, are given junior positions despite possessing requisite qualifications and skills. Undoubtedly, institutional-level workplace discrimination has ramifying consequences for the psychological, emotional, social well-being, and physical health of migrant workers. Indubitably, discrimination is implicated in a multitude of psychological and health diseases (Nkimbeng et al., 2021) affecting migrant workers in the workplace. In fact, there is a growing body of empirical knowledge indicating that workplace discrimination has a profound and tormenting impact on the mental and physical health of migrant workers (Williams et al., 2012; Manuel et al., 2017). Regrettably, the harrowing impacts of institutional workplace discrimination go beyond the individual migrant worker.

Unquestionably, when xenophobic-fomented or driven employment discrimination is institutionalised, this inevitably leads to flagrant and egregious violations of the human rights of migrant workers in the workplace. Moreover, institutionalised employment discrimination may galvanize employers to act salaciously, and with impunity, in 'vandalizing' the person and dignity of migrant workers in the workplace. Patently, the institutionalisation of workplace discrimination towards African migrant workers is a back-handed vexation to the spirit of the untapped interventions of Pan-Africanism. The Pan-Africanist ideology adjures African and global countries to embrace the cardinal value of unity and upliftment of African people who share a common destiny and history (Abrahamsen, 2019). In addition, when workplace discrimination against African migrants has become institutionalised, this defeats the spirit and the letter of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – especially, SDG number 8 – 'promote inclusive and full and productive employment, and decent work for all'. Conspicuously, xenophobic-driven institutionalised workplace discrimination extirpates the freedom and the natural right of migrant workers to make a meaningful contribution to sustainable and inclusive economic growth in both the sending and receiving countries.

#### *Wage discrimination*

Xenophobic-driven wage discrimination against immigrant workers occurs in most countries, with immigrants' earnings being considerably lower than those of natives (Hirsch & Jahn, 2015). Incontestably, xenophobic-based wage discrimination against migrant workers is an anathema to the two basic principles of equal treatment: 'equal pay for equal endowments' and 'equal pay for equal work' (Hofer et al., 2017). Inopportunately, in the post-apartheid South African context, xenophobic-driven wage discrimination, foreign credential recognition, and discriminatory hiring practices have created wage distortions and disparities in the salary regimes of work organisations resulting in, amongst other things, migrants being given low wages. Low wages are a form of a 'distortion equilibrium' – meaning that a migrant worker will not be remunerated in terms of the principles of 'equal treatment'. Perhaps, another conspicuous ramification of this form of discrimination relates to discriminatory earnings which have a harrowing effect in that they impoverish migrant workers and family members in host countries.

In documenting the case of Basotho migrant domestic workers – women who migrate from Lesotho for employment as domestic workers in South Africa – Griffin (2011) reports about

the xenophobic-driven exploitability of these foreign nationals which inter alia manifests itself in low and variable wages, unlimited work hours, and minimal leave. These are incontrovertible evidential manifestations of xenophobia-based wage discrimination against migrant workers. This leaves these migrant women economically destitute, and obstructed to remitting money. Perhaps, an episode that starkly epitomizes xenophobic-laced wage discrimination against migrant workers relates to Zimbabweans who worked on farms in the Musina area of South Africa. Since they did not have valid immigration documentation, these migrant workers are subjected to low wages, and to threats of being reported to law enforcement officials (Moyo, 2020). Reiteratively, these are horrific and blatant depictions of wage discrimination that most migrant workers encounter in many post-apartheid South African workplaces.

Discernibly, a lack of valid immigration documentation appears to occasion xenophobic-driven wage discrimination against migrant workers in contemporaneous post-apartheid South Africa. For all intents and purposes, a lack of valid immigration documentation may induce fear of arrest and deportation among migrant workers, simultaneously resulting in their exploitation by unscrupulous employers (Borjas & Cassidy, 2019; Moyo, 2020). Perhaps, the most abominable trick that unscrupulous employers have employed to maintain discriminatory and low wages against migrants, in post-apartheid South Africa, has been to utilise the conjuration of the threat to call law enforcement officials to arrest and deport these workers when the latter complained. What are the outcomes of differential and discriminatory wages received by migrant workers?

Inescapably, xenophobic-driven discriminatory low wages have a harrowing effect in that they impoverish migrant workers and family members in host countries. Consequently, migrant workers and their families end up being imprisoned in perpetual poverty, diseases, and other social ills. Also, discriminatory low wages have the potential to result in the marital dissolution of migrant worker families. Additionally, the differential wages received by migrant workers are disenfranchising and excruciatingly painful to them in that they become purloined of the opportunity to achieve a decent quality of life. On the socioeconomic front, discriminatory and low wages received by migrant workers in post-apartheid South Africa widen the horizons of inequalities which the country is grappling to reduce. Relatively speaking, contemporaneous post-apartheid South Africa has one of the world's highest levels of inequality (Posel & Rogan, 2019). Inevitably, the xenophobic-driven discriminatory practices of paying migrant workers low wages would only serve to magnify and exacerbate the already high levels of inequality in the country. Perhaps, this could explain some of the migrant workers who reside in squalid conditions. Inopportunately, paying migrant workers discriminatory low wages is a grotesque and surreptitious violation of their human rights, and runs counter the principles and the spirit of a 'fair wage'. What is a 'fair wage'? Karl Marx considered a 'fair wage' to be equivalent to an amount of money that would be necessary to meet the basic needs of a worker to maintain herself or himself (Holborow, 2018).

*Discriminatory assignment to hazardous jobs*



Naturally, the search for employment has underpinned cross-border migratory movements of migrant workers in search of job opportunities. Most migrants (documented and undocumented) are recruited for the most unqualified and flexible jobs (Ronda Pérez et al., 2012) that are risky and hazardous. They find themselves desperate to meet their basic needs such that they are compelled to engage in hazardous jobs and occupations. Globally and regionally, the most vulnerable workers such as migrants are over-represented in unsafe jobs, notably in non-essential activities (Basso et al., 2020). Worldwide, there exists corroborating evidence indicating that migrant workers, relative to native employees, frequently engage in jobs that are hazardous to their psychological, emotional, and social well-being, and physical health. Horrifying episodes of migrant workers' injuries or deaths, while engaging in risky and hazardous jobs, proliferate. In the United States of America, it was reported that two Ecuadorian brothers who worked as window washers in New York fell 47 stories when their scaffolding collapsed, and one died, while the other was gravely injured (McFadden & Schweber 2007, in Orrenius & Zavodny, 2009). Another petrifying episode is that of a migrant farm worker who died of heat stroke after picking tobacco in an environment of 110 degrees in North Carolina (Orrenius & Zavodny, 2009). In the post-apartheid South African context, an episode of how migrants become exposed to a hazardous work environment concerns seasonal migrant workers from neighbouring countries who come to work in the gold mining industry. There is evidence that these migrant workers have become exposed to three interrelated epidemics of occupationally related diseases in gold miners: silicosis, tuberculosis (TB), and HIV infection (David Rees et al., 2010). In short, the microorganisms inducing these three pandemics have found a niche in the gold mining work environment employing a substantial number of migrant workers. An apparent outcome of discriminatory assignment to hazardous jobs is that migrant workers, relative to native employees, are frequently forced to engage in jobs that are harmful to their psychological, emotional, physical health and social well-being – they are exposed to 'jobs that kill'. Lastly, the fact that migrant workers are disproportionately engaged in precarious and 'ghettoized' jobs results in them being exponentially exposed to a gamut of labour rights violations, ranging from extreme situations of forced labour to the absence of regulation (Piper et al., 2017).

#### *Discriminatory assignment to precarious and 'ghettoized' jobs*

Patently, precarious labour includes work that is seasonal, casualized, and informal (Hewison, 2016). Typically, migrants, many of whom are informally and precariously employed workers, are likely to be engaged in forms of 'ghettoised' labour characterized by routinisation, flexibility, illegibility, risk, and failure (Sennet, 2000, Sennet, 2007). Hewison (2016) is of the view that 'precarious work' manifests uncertainty and insecurity and is a form of labour where workers are required to perniciously bear the accompanying risks and hazards. Invariably, precarious work involves 'ghettoized jobs' - jobs that migrants perform that native workers do not want to do (Magnano & Zammitti, 2019). Precarity is concentrated in work forms operating outside the scope of formal labour protections (Chun & Agarwala, 2016). This means that migrant workers

disproportionately find themselves working under exploitative conditions in which they are exponentially exposed to a gamut of labour rights violations, ranging from extreme situations of forced labour to the absence of regulation (Piper et al., 2017). Jobs exposing workers to fatalities, jobs that kill inescapably', precarious forms of work continue to imprison migrant workers in obsequious poverty and hazardous employment.

Supposedly, the livelihood strategy of migration is a pathway out of abject poverty (Siddiqui et al., 2021), but for many migrants, the opposite is true. Lamentably, migrant workers have often found themselves mired in a world of work characterized by precarity. Migrant precarity has produced 'new poverty' (Rigg et al., 2016) among immigrant workers' households, and encumbered their ability to form resilient and sustainable livelihoods. Importantly, migration, as part of the process of global capitalist development, tends to deepen the poverty of certain categories of people (Rigg et al., 2016). In short, migrant vulnerability and precarity, induced by the operation of the market economy, leads to the immiseration (Rigg et al., 2016) and pauperization of certain groups of migrants (Leerkes, 2016). Farris (2015) has argued that migrant workers occupy a special place in this 'reserve army of labour'. Since the nineteenth century, migrants have continued to constitute the lion's share of supply of the industrial reserve army (Farris, 2015), a situation enabling employers in the host countries to maintain wage discipline and suppress wages. This agrees with some underpinnings of orthodox Marxist thinking on the role played by the 'reserve army of labour' in pushing down the wages of employed workers

Furthermore, 'ghettoized jobs' jobs attract abjection, and result in stereotyping, discriminatory and xenophobic treatment. Theorizing the abject, Krivesta (1982, as cited in Topak, 2021) contended that it lie outside, beyond the set, and did not seem to agree to the latter's rules of the game. The abject, therefore, was what disturbed identity, and what did not respect borders (Duschinsky, 2013). Abjection was a condition of being wretched, contemptible, unidentifiable, and that which transgresses social-cultural boundaries. The abject was something to be scared of, and it was the impure, ineffable, disgusting, horrifying, illicitly desirable, outside of logic, rejected by classification (Duschinsky, 2013). In fact, abjection was symbiotically linked to impurity. The meaning of abjection did not refer to lack of cleanliness and pure health *per se*, but to a condition in which the exile defied boundaries and transgressed the socio-cultural barriers. The migrant worker, engaged in precarious labour, was abjected, rejected, and jettisoned because he or she did not conform to homeland values and norms.

On a different note, the precarious, 'ghettoized', and insecure jobs performed by migrant workers delay the making of long-term decisions such as starting a family. Regular employment, as opposed to precarious work, which is episodic and insecure, is not simply a way to make a living and support one's family. It also constitutes a framework for daily behavior and patterns of interaction because it imposes disciplines and regularities (Wilson, 1997; 2010). Thus, in the absence of regular employment, a person lacks not only a place in which to work and the receipt of regular income BUT also a coherent organization of the present – that is, a system of concrete

expectations and goals. Regular employment. It determines where you are going to be and when you are going to be there. In the absence of regular employment, life, including family life, becomes less coherent. Persistent unemployment and irregular employment hinder rational planning in daily life, the necessary condition for an industrial economy.

Inopportunately, precarity impedes the integration of migrant workers into the local labour markets. Perhaps this scenario reflects that it may take decades for migrant workers to catch up with native workers and be successfully integrated into the local labour markets in terms of employment rates and earnings (Hooper et al., 2017). This means that migrant workers are more likely to remain precariously lodged on the margins of the local labour markets. Consequently, this may have a harmful impact on migrant workers' biopsychosocial well-being, often triggering feelings of helplessness, anger, and general frustration (da Silva Rebelo et. al., 2018). Moreover, the precarious and peripheral status that migrant workers occupy in local labour markets may be exacerbated and perpetuated by their inability to understand local languages. Indubitably, language in many workplaces plays a crucial role in the differentiation and isolation of migrant workers, and can therefore be used as a wedge of xenophobia. Finally, this precarity and marginalization of migrant workers in local labour markets may affect and delay the overall integration process in the host country's social and economic life.

### **Way forward**

Xenophobic-driven discrimination is a ubiquitous phenomenon plaguing many workplaces in migrant-receiving countries. This is because, in the contemporary South African context, it is black African migrants who bear the brunt of xenophobic-driven workplace discrimination. These researchers recommend that: firstly, workplace ethics regulating the employment of labour migrants, in the post-apartheid context, should be guided by the International Labor Organisation's Convention on discrimination regarding employment and occupation, which was adopted in 1958. The intention of this Convention is to protect migrant workers and members of their families from exploitation, and the violation of their human rights, secondly, there should be a reconsideration of the national legislation regulating labour migration in present-day South Africa with a view to integrating migrant workers into a labour market governed and driven by a human rights culture; thirdly, it is imperative for contemporary South Africa to comply with the prescripts of its equity laws which prohibit any form of discrimination, and to hedge against the risk of litigation which may be originated by migrant-sending countries; fourthly, the trade union federations should utilise their bargaining power to shield migrant workers from forms of workplace discrimination that are xenophobically driven; lastly, the contribution of migrant workers, who are often victims of xenophobic-driven workplace discrimination constitutes a significant economic dividend which could benefit the country's economic productivity and growth. For this reason, it is of paramount importance for the government, business, and labour market to synergistically work together to eradicate the scourge of xenophobic-driven discrimination in the workplace.

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