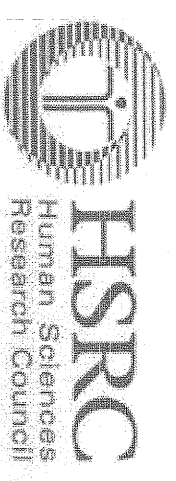


HSRC RESEARCH OUTPUTS
5071

*Violence, Xenophobia and
Housing: policy issues
Presentation to PC on Housing,
Parliament, Nov 2008*

Social science that makes a difference



Advincin Hoalaland

TODAY'S PRESENTATION

- Brief Overview of Research
- Housing as a factor?
- Related issues
- Recommendations
- *Way forward*

Project Co-ordinator: Dr Adrian Hadland, Director,
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HSRC

RESEARCH PROCESS SO FAR

- Violence claims 60 lives and displaces 10,000s+ in May
- Rapid response study within 2 weeks leads to recommendations and responses (first report)
- These fed into a number of processes: Cabinet, Departments, and scholarly conferences and workshops
- HSRC Roundtable in June (UKHC)
- Launch of 2nd Report in Alex in Oct 08

WAS HOUSING A FACTOR IN THE VIOLENCE?

- “The people of Alexandra are worried about the issue of the houses because the department of housing is corrupt, there are people who obtained the forms from 1995 and up to date there are no houses but when you go to extension seven you find foreigners there occupying the houses that were given by the government officials and (this) is causing problems.” - male, Alexandra
- “South Africans are the problem, they get houses and rent them out to foreigners. They even sell them to foreigners” – female, Tembisa
- “It is because the houses are not apportioned legally; people fork out money to get them; I heard that there is a housing department official who sells them for a thousand rand” – male, Mamelodi

WAS HOUSING A FACTOR IN THE VIOLENCE?

- “What I have seen is that foreigners are many in this country and they have access to houses yet we South Africans have been waiting for them for years” – **male, Tembisa**
- “We are not disputing that during our struggle our cadres stayed in their countries but they stayed in designated camps, they were not scattered all over Zimbabwe, running spaza shops or having access to RDP houses” – **male, Tembisa**
- “Government caused this whole thing because we South Africans wait for RDP houses but foreigners don’t because they give government officials money...” – **male, Tembisa**

WAS HOUSING A FACTOR IN THE VIOLENCE?

- YES. The common perception in all three areas where conflict had broken out (Alex, Mamelodi and Tembisa) is that housing issues are a critical trigger of frustration and, eventually, violence.
- This violence is directed at foreigners, usually African immigrants in these areas
- “One of the most consistent areas of friction ... relates to the access to low cost housing, and the dynamics that are unfolding in relation to housing delivery” – HSRC report,

p22-23

RELATED ISSUES

- Housing is a common source of tension, but different triggers and tensions in different local areas (esp informal settlement)
- Gender is a key issue
- Xenophobia is too general and inexact: many of those affected by the violence were South African while Chinese and Pakistanis were also affected
- Other important triggers: service delivery, unemployment, the economy, price of food and transport, crime

RELATED ISSUES

Latest data indicates housing incr NB:

- Poverty is incr, esp in Urban areas
- Rural poor: 62% ('96), 56% (2001)
- Rapid urbanisation from poorer to richer provinces
- Unemployment increasing (8m in '02)
- 50% of households above the poverty line in 1993, now below

(Bhorat, Haroon & Ravi Kanbur. 2006. *Poverty and Policy in South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There are three elements to the crisis of xenophobic violence:

- Implicit elements (culture, attitudes)
- Conducive circumstances (slow service delivery, unemployment, poverty) – often locally specific
- Triggers (catalysts for violence)

A successful long-term strategy needs to address each of these factors

Recommendations (non-housing)

1. National Indaba on Xenophobia is essential
2. Communication (and transparency) is critical
3. Illegality confers vulnerability
4. Speed up other socio-econ rights & service delivery too
5. Involve foreigners in structures, skills sharing and collaboration

Recommendations (Housing)

3. Housing Policy needs to be revisited
 - Time and again the spark for violence and dissatisfaction, esp allocation of RDP houses
 - Need for greater transparency, better communication
 - Audit of RDP housing usage
 - New policy re occupation of state-subsidised RDP housing

Way Forward

- HSRC not a policy-making institution, provide evidence-based research.
- Work so far has uncovered the perceptions of communities and the common understandings of stakeholders.
- Only a few of these are housing experts and recommendations raise more questions than answers.
- Certainly suggests the need for a long, hard look at housing policy most particularly the allocation of RDP houses.
- HSRC could help and is available.

THANK YOU

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