



THE LEGACY OF APARTHEID: EXPLORE HOW APARTHEID'S POLICIES OF SEGREGATION, DISCRIMINATION, AND VIOLENCE HAVE CREATED LASTING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INEQUALITIES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO CRIME

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Abstract

This study investigates the enduring impact of apartheid-era policies of segregation, discrimination, and socio-economic exclusion on contemporary crime patterns in South Africa. Despite the official end of apartheid in 1994, structural inequalities rooted in this historical period continue to fuel high crime rates, particularly in historically marginalised communities. The problem lies in the persistent socio-economic disparities and spatial segregation that undermine social cohesion and foster environments conducive to criminal activity. Drawing on recent empirical research and theoretical frameworks of structural violence and social disorganisation, this study identifies how the legacy of apartheid interacts with current institutional challenges, including diminished trust in policing and fragmented governance. Key findings reveal that apartheid's spatial and economic legacies remain central drivers of crime and that multi-sectoral, integrated policy responses are essential for sustainable crime reduction. The study contributes to the literature by providing an updated, holistic understanding of the co-impacts of historical injustices and contemporary socio-political dynamics on crime. It concludes that addressing crime in South Africa requires coordinated socio-economic development, community empowerment, and police reform rooted in historical awareness and social justice.

Keywords: Apartheid legacy, Social inequality, Economic disparities, Crime in South Africa, Structural violence, Spatial segregation, Community disorganisation, Policing and trust, Socio-economic deprivation, Urban marginalisation.

1. INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

South Africa's contemporary socio-economic landscape remains deeply scarred by the legacy of apartheid, a legally sanctioned system of racial segregation and oppression that governed the country from 1948 until the early 1990s. Despite three decades of democracy, the spatial, economic, and social inequalities engineered during apartheid continue to manifest in persistent poverty, unemployment, and high crime rates, particularly in historically marginalised communities (Du Toit & Mlangeni, 2023). Apartheid-era policies deliberately excluded Black South Africans from meaningful economic participation, quality education, and urban opportunities through mechanisms such as the Group Areas Act, the Bantu Education Act, and forced removals (Seekings & Nattrass, 2022). These systemic injustices laid the foundation for the entrenched disparities visible today.

Recent reports by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA, 2023) and the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC, 2022) reveal that structural inequality remains a defining feature of post-apartheid society. Over 55% of the population still lives below the upper-bound poverty line, with Black Africans disproportionately affected. Informal settlements, high-density urban townships, and rural villages — many of which were designed as sites of racial

containment — are now hotspots for crime, especially violent and property-related offences (SAPS, 2023). These areas often lack adequate policing, infrastructure, and social services, reinforcing cycles of deprivation and insecurity.

Scholars argue that crime in South Africa cannot be fully understood without grappling with the historical roots of inequality (Pillay, 2023; Goga & van den Berg, 2022). Strain theory and social disorganisation theory offer compelling frameworks to analyse how poverty, lack of opportunity, and community fragmentation create environments conducive to criminal activity. Furthermore, critical race theory highlights how the institutional residue of apartheid continues to shape contemporary governance, urban development, and justice systems.

This study explores how apartheid's policies of segregation, economic exclusion, and systemic violence have created long-term social and economic inequalities that contribute to the current crime crisis in South Africa. Understanding this historical context is crucial for developing crime prevention and social development strategies that are not only reactive but also transformative in addressing the root causes of criminality.

2. Background

Apartheid in South Africa, enforced from 1948 to 1994, was a systematic and institutionalised regime of racial segregation and oppression. During this era, the government enacted policies such as the Group Areas Act, the Population Registration Act, and the Bantu Education Act to enforce racial separation, marginalise non-white communities, and entrench white economic and political dominance. Black South Africans were forcibly removed from urban centres, denied access to quality education and economic resources, and confined to impoverished townships or homelands (Seekings & Nattrass, 2022). This deliberate social engineering created structural inequalities that persist into the present democratic dispensation.

Despite the transition to democracy in 1994 and the promises of equality enshrined in the Constitution, the legacy of apartheid continues to shape South Africa's economic and social realities. Many formerly disadvantaged communities remain trapped in cycles of poverty, joblessness, inadequate housing, poor service delivery, and educational deficits. According to Statistics South Africa (2023), the unemployment rate remains disproportionately high among Black youth, and more than half the population lives below the upper-bound poverty line. Furthermore, urban areas that were spatially designed to exclude Black South Africans now suffer from overcrowding, poor infrastructure, and insufficient policing, making them vulnerable to crime (Goga & van den Berg, 2022).

Recent crime reports reveal a concerning correlation between socio-economic deprivation and crime rates. The South African Police Service (2023) reports that most violent crimes, including murder, robbery, and gender-based violence, occur in high-density, under-resourced areas — often in townships and informal settlements born out of apartheid spatial planning. These areas frequently lack functioning schools, healthcare, job opportunities, and social cohesion, creating environments where criminal activity may flourish (Du Toit & Mlangeni, 2023).

Criminologists and social theorists continue to highlight that post-apartheid crime cannot be fully understood without acknowledging historical injustice. Pillay (2023) argues that contemporary social ills, including crime, are embedded in a continuum of systemic exclusion and violence. These structural conditions have resulted in what some scholars describe as a “crisis of broken communities,” where social disorganisation and the erosion of informal social controls increase the likelihood of criminal behaviour (HSRC, 2022).

Understanding the socio-economic and spatial legacy of apartheid is essential for addressing crime in South Africa. This background sets the stage for a deeper investigation into how enduring historical injustices continue to contribute to present-day criminality, and why crime prevention strategies must be both historically informed and developmentally oriented.

3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

South Africa continues to grapple with one of the highest crime rates in the world, with violent crime, robbery, and gender-based violence affecting millions annually (SAPS, 2023). While various strategies have been implemented to address crime — including policing reforms, social development programmes, and national safety frameworks — these efforts often fail to consider the deep-rooted historical causes of criminality. One of the most significant

but under-addressed contributors is the enduring legacy of apartheid's structural inequalities.

Apartheid systematically displaced millions of Black South Africans into impoverished and marginalised townships through racially motivated laws such as the Group Areas Act and the Land Acts. These communities were denied economic opportunities, quality education, and access to basic services. Though apartheid officially ended in 1994, the socio-economic consequences of these policies remain entrenched. According to Statistics South Africa (2023), over 55% of the population still lives in poverty, and unemployment disproportionately affects youth and Black Africans many of whom reside in areas historically shaped by apartheid spatial planning.

Recent studies confirm a strong link between these persistent inequalities and elevated crime rates. For instance, Du Toit and Mlangeni (2023) highlight that crime is especially prevalent in communities where poverty, unemployment, and social fragmentation intersect. The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC, 2022) further argues that these conditions create a “crime-prone environment” marked by weakened community structures, poor service delivery, and limited trust in law enforcement.

Despite the growing recognition of the structural roots of crime, policy responses often remain short-term, reactive, and focused on policing rather than transformation. Pillay (2023) stresses that any sustainable crime prevention strategy must consider how apartheid's legacy continues to shape opportunity, mobility, and exposure to violence in post-apartheid South Africa. Failing to address these structural dimensions limits the effectiveness of interventions and perpetuates cycles of violence and inequality.

Therefore, the central problem this study addresses is the insufficient integration of historical and structural analysis in understanding and responding to crime in South Africa. There is a critical need to explore how apartheid-era policies of segregation, exclusion, and systemic violence have contributed to enduring inequalities that directly and indirectly influence criminal behaviour in contemporary South Africa.

4. AIM OF THE STUDY

The primary aim of this study is to critically explore how apartheid's legacy of segregation, economic exclusion, and systemic violence continues to shape contemporary patterns of social and economic inequality that contribute to crime in South Africa. By investigating the historical and structural foundations of crime, the study seeks to provide a deeper understanding of the long-term impacts of apartheid policies and how they intersect with current socio-economic conditions to perpetuate criminal behaviour, particularly in marginalised communities.

This research also aims to contribute to the growing body of knowledge that supports historically informed crime prevention strategies. As highlighted by Pillay (2023), effective responses to crime in South Africa must address not only the symptoms but also the structural root causes linked to historical injustice. Therefore, this study will provide insights into how spatial and economic inequalities — rooted in apartheid urban planning and economic exclusion — continue to reinforce crime-prone environments (Du Toit & Mlangeni, 2023).

Ultimately, the study aspires to inform more integrated and transformative policy interventions that address both immediate safety concerns and the underlying legacies of inequality, in line

with the developmental goals outlined by the National Development Plan and supported by recent findings from the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC, 2022).

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study is guided by the following key objectives:

To examine the historical foundations of apartheid-era policies — particularly racial segregation, economic exclusion, and spatial dislocation — and how these have contributed to enduring social and economic inequalities.

→ Supported by: Seekings & Nattrass (2022); Du Toit & Mlangeni (2023)

To investigate the relationship between these inequalities and contemporary crime patterns in South Africa, especially in townships and historically marginalised communities.

→ Supported by: SAPS (2023); Goga & van den Berg (2022)

To explore how the legacies of apartheid continue to shape policing, justice, and service delivery, potentially limiting the effectiveness of crime prevention.

→ Supported by: HSRC (2022); Pillay (2023)

To propose historically informed and developmentally aligned policy recommendations for addressing crime by tackling its structural roots.

→ Supported by: Pillay (2023); National Planning Commission (2022)

6. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Aligned with the objectives above, the study will seek to answer the following research questions:

What were the key apartheid-era policies that created long-term socio-economic and spatial inequalities in South Africa?

↳ Links to Objective 1

→ According to Seekings & Nattrass (2022), apartheid deliberately engineered class and racial inequality that still defines access to opportunity today.

How do these historical inequalities correlate with current crime patterns in post-apartheid South Africa?

↳ Links to Objective 2

→ SAPS (2023) data shows that areas previously designated under apartheid planning suffer disproportionately high crime rates.

In what ways do the residual effects of apartheid continue to influence policing, justice, and social development efforts?

↳ Links to Objective 3

→ As highlighted by HSRC (2022) and Pillay (2023), mistrust in the police and inadequate service delivery persist in previously disadvantaged areas.

What policy or crime prevention strategies can be adopted to address both the immediate impacts and historical root causes of crime?

↳ Links to Objective 4

→ Du Toit & Mlangeni (2023) suggest spatial and social transformation is key to long-term crime prevention.

7. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is significant for several reasons, both academically and practically. It addresses a crucial gap in South African criminological research by systematically connecting historical injustice — specifically apartheid-era policies — with contemporary crime dynamics. While crime statistics are routinely reported and debated, there is insufficient emphasis on how deeply rooted structural inequalities, inherited from apartheid, continue to shape the socio-economic and spatial conditions under which crime flourishes (Pillay, 2023).

The research also contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of crime in South Africa by framing it not merely as a product of individual deviance but as a consequence of enduring systemic deprivation. By highlighting the link between apartheid's legacy and present-day conditions — such as poverty, unemployment, informal settlements, and inadequate policing — the study aligns with the perspectives of Du Toit and Mlangeni (2023), who argue that sustainable crime prevention must include developmental and historical dimensions.

Furthermore, the study holds significance for policymakers, urban planners, and the criminal justice sector. It supports a shift away from overly securitised or reactive crime control models toward more integrated, developmental approaches, as advocated in the National Development Plan (NPC, 2022). By proposing historically informed recommendations, the study can help shape crime prevention policies that are not only effective but also socially just and restorative.

The findings of this study will also be valuable to community leaders, NGOs, and civil society organisations working in townships and informal settlements, where crime is both a daily threat and a symptom of broader social injustice. It can provide them with a research-based understanding to advocate for better service delivery, youth development programmes, spatial transformation, and inclusive governance.

Ultimately, this research will contribute to the broader goal of national healing, justice, and social cohesion by acknowledging the structural violence of the past and addressing its long-term impacts in a democratic society striving for equality.

8. GAPS IN THE STUDY

Despite a growing body of literature on crime, inequality, and post-apartheid South Africa, there remain notable gaps in the understanding and framing of crime as a structural and historical issue rather than solely a social or behavioral problem.

Limited Historical Integration in Crime Research

Many contemporary studies focus on crime prevention strategies, community policing, or socio-economic drivers of crime without sufficiently analysing how these issues are rooted in apartheid-era policies (Pillay, 2023). This creates a disconnect between current crime trends and their historical causes. The absence of a deep historical lens leaves policymakers ill-equipped to develop long-term, transformative solutions.

Overemphasis on Policing and Reactive Approaches

Crime policy in South Africa continues to be largely reactive and policing-focused (SAPS, 2023), with less emphasis on developmental or structural crime prevention. While law enforcement is crucial, studies like that of Du Toit and Mlangeni (2023) show that interventions failing to address root causes such as land dispossession, spatial marginalisation, and inequality tend to be unsustainable.

Neglect of Spatial and Economic Legacy in Crime Discourse

There is insufficient exploration of how apartheid's spatial planning — which confined Black South Africans to economically deprived and isolated townships — still contributes to crime by limiting access to services, education, and opportunity (Goga & van den Berg, 2022). This spatial element is often treated as a background issue rather than a central factor in criminological studies.

Lack of Community-Level Historical Perception Studies

Few studies incorporate community narratives or perceptions on how apartheid's legacy continues to affect crime and policing today. This qualitative angle — particularly from the perspective of historically marginalised communities — is under-researched and critical for contextualising statistical data (HSRC, 2022).

Policy Disconnect from Historical Reality

Although the National Development Plan (NPC, 2022) calls for inclusive and integrated approaches to crime prevention, there is a gap in implementation that stems partly from a lack of grounded, research-based understanding of apartheid's continuing impact. More empirical research is needed to bridge the policy-intent and ground-level reality gap.

THIS STUDY WILL ADDRESS THESE GAPS BY:

Integrating a historical-structural analysis of crime in South Africa.

Exploring the spatial and socio-economic consequences of apartheid policies on current crime patterns.

Including both quantitative data and qualitative insights from affected communities.

Offering policy recommendations grounded in history, justice, and development.

9. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is grounded in two complementary theoretical perspectives: Structural Violence Theory and Social Disorganisation Theory. These frameworks provide a robust lens through which the long-term effects of apartheid on crime can be critically analysed.

9.1 Structural Violence Theory

Structural violence, a concept introduced by Johan Galtung, refers to systematic ways in which social structures harm or disadvantage individuals by preventing them from meeting their basic needs. In the context of South Africa, apartheid policies institutionalised structural violence by enforcing racial segregation, economic exclusion, and spatial marginalisation (Galtung, 1990). These structures, although officially dismantled, continue to exert influence through persistent inequality, poor public service

delivery, and lack of economic opportunity in historically disadvantaged communities.

Recent studies affirm the relevance of this theory to contemporary South Africa. Pillay (2023) argues that crime in townships and informal settlements is not random but a manifestation of structural injustices rooted in apartheid-era governance. Similarly, Du Toit and Mlangeni (2023) highlight how apartheid spatial planning created conditions of concentrated poverty and limited mobility, which remain key contributors to high crime rates.

This theory is useful for examining how violence is embedded not just in criminal acts, but in enduring socio-economic conditions that result from historical injustices.

9.2 Social Disorganisation Theory

Developed by the Chicago School of Sociology, Social Disorganisation Theory posits that high crime rates are associated with the breakdown of community institutions, weakened social bonds, and lack of collective efficacy particularly in environments marked by poverty, mobility, and ethnic heterogeneity.

In post-apartheid South Africa, many communities still experience the disintegration of traditional social controls due to forced removals, disrupted kinship systems, and continued underdevelopment (Goga & van den Berg, 2022). These factors contribute to a lack of informal social control, which increases susceptibility to criminal activity. HSRC (2022) also links high levels of social distrust and fragmented community identity to crime proliferation, particularly among youth.

This theory is particularly effective in analysing how the social fabric of communities eroded under apartheid continues to impact their ability to self-regulate and prevent crime.

Theoretical Integration

By combining Structural Violence Theory with Social Disorganisation Theory, this study can analyse both the macro-level structural causes and micro-level community dynamics that link apartheid's legacy to present-day crime. This integrated approach enables a comprehensive understanding of how historically rooted inequalities manifest in modern crime patterns and policing challenges.

10. LITERATURE REVIEW

The legacy of apartheid has been extensively studied in relation to South Africa's social, economic, and political landscape. However, its direct and indirect influences on crime patterns remain a critical area of ongoing research. This literature review synthesizes recent studies that explore how apartheid-era segregation, economic disenfranchisement, and systemic violence continue to shape contemporary crime dynamics.

10.1 Historical Foundations of Apartheid and Structural Inequality

Seekings and Nattrass (2022) provide a comprehensive analysis of how apartheid's institutionalised racism engineered deep socio-economic divides that persist today. Their work underscores how apartheid's spatial and economic policies systematically excluded Black South Africans from quality education, employment, and land ownership, resulting in concentrated poverty and social marginalisation. These conditions form the backdrop for

understanding the socio-economic vulnerabilities that predispose certain communities to higher crime rates.

Du Toit and Mlangeni (2023) further elaborate on the spatial legacy of apartheid, highlighting that townships and informal settlements, often located far from economic hubs, suffer from inadequate infrastructure and service delivery. These spatial inequalities exacerbate social exclusion, fostering environments where crime becomes more prevalent due to limited economic opportunities and social support.

10.2 Apartheid's Legacy and Contemporary Crime Patterns

The South African Police Service (SAPS, 2023) crime statistics reveal persistent high crime rates in areas historically disadvantaged by apartheid's urban planning. Goga and van den Berg (2022) argue that the spatial legacy of apartheid continues to influence crime through the lens of social disorganisation. Their study finds that broken social networks, lack of community cohesion, and poor policing resources in former townships contribute significantly to crime proliferation.

Pillay (2023) situates crime within a broader context of structural violence, showing how the ongoing effects of apartheid's systemic oppression manifest as social unrest and criminality. This approach moves beyond individualistic explanations for crime, framing it as a symptom of wider social injustice and inequality.

10.3 Policing, Justice, and Community Trust

Research by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC, 2022) highlights how mistrust in police services, particularly in historically marginalised communities, undermines effective crime prevention. The legacy of apartheid-era policing—characterised by repression and brutality—has left deep scars, impacting contemporary police-community relations and cooperation.

Du Toit and Mlangeni (2023) note that improving policing outcomes requires acknowledging this history and integrating community-led approaches to rebuild trust and legitimacy. This aligns with National Planning Commission (NPC, 2022) recommendations for inclusive governance and developmental crime prevention strategies.

10.4 Policy and Developmental Approaches to Crime Prevention

The National Development Plan (NPC, 2022) emphasises the need for multi-sectoral interventions that address not only law enforcement but also socio-economic development. Recent studies advocate for policies that target the root causes of crime by improving education, housing, employment, and social cohesion in historically marginalised areas (Du Toit & Mlangeni, 2023; Pillay, 2023).

However, there remains a gap between policy aspirations and implementation, often due to inadequate historical framing of crime issues. Addressing this gap requires integrating knowledge about apartheid's legacy into contemporary crime prevention frameworks.

11. THEMES OF THE STUDY

11.1 Legacy of Apartheid and Structural Inequality

This theme explores how apartheid's institutionalised segregation, economic exclusion, and spatial planning have created enduring

structural inequalities. These inequalities shape access to resources, opportunities, and social services, which influence crime patterns today (Du Toit & Mlangeni, 2023; Pillay, 2023).

11.2 Spatial Marginalisation and Crime

Focusing on the geography of apartheid's legacy, this theme investigates how spatial segregation—such as the isolation of townships and informal settlements—limits socio-economic development and heightens vulnerability to crime (Goga & van den Berg, 2022; Seekings & Nattrass, 2022).

11.3 Socio-Economic Deprivation and Crime Causation

This theme examines the direct relationship between poverty, unemployment, lack of education, and crime. It reflects on how apartheid entrenched socio-economic deprivation that disproportionately affects Black South Africans, thereby contributing to higher crime rates (HSRC, 2022; NPC, 2022).

11.4 Policing and Community Relations

This theme addresses the complex dynamics between historically marginalised communities and the police, shaped by apartheid-era repression and continuing mistrust. It also explores the challenges of community policing and rebuilding trust for effective crime prevention (HSRC, 2022; SAPS, 2023).

11.5 Policy Responses and Developmental Crime Prevention

This theme focuses on evaluating the effectiveness of current crime prevention policies that attempt to address both immediate crime control and long-term socio-economic development. It considers gaps in implementation and the need for historically informed, inclusive approaches (NPC, 2022; Du Toit & Mlangeni, 2023).

12. KEY TAKEAWAYS

Apartheid's Enduring Legacy

Apartheid's policies of segregation, economic exclusion, and spatial marginalisation have left deep-rooted structural inequalities that continue to influence South Africa's social fabric and crime patterns (Pillay, 2023; Du Toit & Mlangeni, 2023).

Structural Violence as a Root Cause

Crime in historically disadvantaged communities should be understood as a manifestation of structural violence, where socio-economic deprivation and systemic exclusion create environments conducive to criminal behaviour (Galtung, 1990; Pillay, 2023).

Spatial Inequality Drives Crime

The geographic legacy of apartheid, including township isolation and underdeveloped infrastructure, restricts economic opportunities and social cohesion, thereby increasing vulnerability to crime (Goga & van den Berg, 2022; Seekings & Nattrass, 2022).

Community Disorganisation and Social Fragmentation

The breakdown of social institutions and weakened community bonds in previously segregated areas contributes significantly to crime, highlighting the need for rebuilding social capital alongside policing reforms (HSRC, 2022).

Challenges in Policing and Trust

Historical police brutality and systemic racism have eroded trust in law enforcement within many communities, complicating crime

prevention efforts and requiring approaches that rebuild legitimacy and partnership (HSRC, 2022; SAPS, 2023).

Need for Integrated Policy Responses

Effective crime prevention must combine law enforcement with socio-economic development, addressing the root causes of crime through education, housing, employment, and inclusive governance (NPC, 2022; Du Toit & Mlangeni, 2023).

Research and Policy Gaps Remain

There is a crucial need for research that links historical apartheid structures directly to current crime dynamics, as well as policy frameworks that reflect this integrated understanding for more sustainable crime reduction.

13. FURTHER STUDIES

Longitudinal Studies on Intergenerational Crime and Inequality

Future research should explore how apartheid-era inequalities and trauma continue to affect multiple generations, influencing crime rates and social behaviour over time. Longitudinal data could offer critical insights into how historical disadvantage perpetuates cycles of crime and poverty (Pillay, 2023; Seekings & Nattrass, 2022).

Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR)

There is a need for studies that engage communities directly affected by apartheid's legacy to document lived experiences and perspectives on crime and policing. Such participatory approaches can inform more culturally sensitive and locally relevant crime prevention strategies (HSRC, 2022).

Effectiveness of Developmental Crime Prevention Programs

Further evaluations are required to assess the impact of integrated crime prevention policies combining socio-economic development with policing. Research should focus on program implementation challenges and successes in historically marginalised areas (NPC, 2022; Du Toit & Mlangeni, 2023).

Spatial Analysis Using Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

Advanced spatial analysis can deepen understanding of how apartheid's spatial segregation correlates with contemporary crime hotspots. This can aid targeted interventions and urban planning reforms (Goga & van den Berg, 2022).

Policing Reform and Community Trust

Additional research is needed to evaluate ongoing police reform efforts aimed at rebuilding trust and legitimacy in marginalized communities, including the role of training, accountability, and community engagement (SAPS, 2023; HSRC, 2022).

14. PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

14.1 Integrated Socio-Economic Development Programs

Government and stakeholders should implement targeted socio-economic programs in historically disadvantaged communities. This includes improving access to quality education, skills development, housing, and job creation initiatives to reduce poverty-driven crime (NPC, 2022; Du Toit & Mlangeni, 2023).

14.2 Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Investment

Urban development policies must prioritise upgrading infrastructure in townships and informal settlements, improving connectivity, public services, and safe public spaces to mitigate the spatial disadvantages inherited from apartheid (Goga & van den Berg, 2022).

14.3 Community Policing and Trust-Building Initiatives

Police services need to deepen community engagement through participatory policing models that foster transparency, accountability, and dialogue. Training programs should focus on cultural competence and historical awareness to rebuild trust (HSRC, 2022; SAPS, 2023).

14.4 Strengthening Social Cohesion and Community Networks

Support community-based organisations and initiatives that promote social cohesion, youth engagement, and informal social controls, addressing social disorganisation that increases crime vulnerability (Pillay, 2023).

14.5 Policy Alignment and Multi-Sector Collaboration

Crime prevention efforts should be coordinated across government departments—such as health, education, social development, and justice—to ensure holistic approaches that tackle root causes rather than symptoms alone (NPC, 2022).

14.6 Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks

Develop robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the impact of crime prevention policies and interventions regularly, allowing for adaptive management and resource optimisation (Du Toit & Mlangeni, 2023).

CURRENT GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL PARTIES AND LEAD PARTY

Cyril Ramaphosa (ANC) Current Government and Leading Party: President:



The ANC, having lost its absolute majority for the first time since 1994, formed a coalition government with the Democratic Alliance (DA), Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), and Patriotic Alliance (PA). Subsequently, six additional parties joined the coalition: GOOD, Rise Mzansi, Al Jama-ah, Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), United Democratic Movement (UDM), and Freedom Front Plus (FF+). This expanded coalition holds 287 out of 400 seats in the National Assembly, ensuring a comfortable majority (en.wikipedia.org+4en.wikipedia.org+4en.wikipedia.org+4en.wikipedia.org+4en.wikipedia.org+4en.wikipedia.org+4).

Key Political Parties in the Coalition

- ✓ **African National Congress (ANC)** – The historical ruling party, now leading the coalition.
- ✓ **Democratic Alliance (DA)** – The second-largest party, holding significant influence within the coalition.
- ✓ **Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP)** – A regional party with a strong base in KwaZulu-Natal.
- ✓ **Patriotic Alliance (PA)** – A smaller party with a growing presence.
- ✓ **GOOD** – A centrist party focused on governance and service delivery.
- ✓ **Rise Mzansi** – A new party advocating for economic reforms.
- ✓ **Al Jama-ah** – A party representing Muslim interests.
- ✓ **Pan Africanist Congress (PAC)** – A party with a history rooted in Pan-Africanism.
- ✓ **United Democratic Movement (UDM)** – A centrist party with a focus on national unity.
- ✓ **Freedom Front Plus (FF+)** – A party representing Afrikaner interests (en.wikipedia.org).

OPPOSITION PARTIES

Several parties form the opposition, including:

- ✓ **Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF)** – A left-wing populist party.
- ✓ **uMkhonto weSizwe (MK)** – A new party led by former President Jacob Zuma.
- ✓ **African Transformation Movement (ATM)** – A party advocating for economic transformation (thegrio.com+12en.wikipedia.org+12elections.org.za+12actionsa.org.za+2reuters.com+2briefly.co.za+2).

Recent Developments

- ✓ **Budget Revisions:** In early 2025, the government faced internal disagreements over proposed tax increases, leading to the cancellation of the annual budget speech for the first time in democratic South Africa's history (reuters.com+2apnews.com+2apnews.com+2).
- ✓ **Policy Reversals:** A proposed VAT increase was scrapped following significant opposition from coalition partners and civil society groups, highlighting the challenges of governance within a multi-party coalition (apnews.com+1ft.com+1).

This coalition government represents a significant shift in South Africa's political landscape, moving away from the ANC's long-standing dominance and introducing a more diverse and complex governance structure.

CO-IMPACT TO THE STUDY: THE LEGACY OF APARTHEID AND CRIME IN SOUTH AFRICA

The concept of co-impact in this context refers to the interconnected and cumulative effects of multiple social, economic, political, and institutional factors rooted in apartheid's legacy that jointly influence crime patterns and community safety in South Africa. Understanding these combined impacts is crucial for holistic interventions.

1. Interplay Between Socio-Economic Inequality and Crime

The persistence of economic disparities, unemployment, and poverty—direct outcomes of apartheid policies—interact with other social determinants such as education, health, and housing. This co-impact creates a reinforcing cycle where deprivation and marginalisation increase crime vulnerability (NPC, 2022; Du Toit & Mlangeni, 2023).

2. Spatial Segregation and Social Fragmentation

Apartheid spatial planning not only segregated populations geographically but also fragmented social networks and access to services. This coalescing of poor infrastructure, limited mobility, and weakened community ties fosters environments conducive to crime (Goga & van den Berg, 2022).

3. Policing and Institutional Trust Deficit

Historical mistrust of law enforcement, stemming from apartheid-era repression, co-impacts current efforts at crime prevention. Lack of community trust in the police undermines cooperation, thereby complicating law enforcement and crime reduction strategies (HSRC, 2022).

4. Policy and Governance Dynamics

Fragmented policy responses and multi-layered governance challenges combine to dilute the effectiveness of crime prevention and social development initiatives. Co-impact here means that without coordination across sectors, efforts may be duplicated or counterproductive (NPC, 2022).

5. Community Resilience and Social Capital

Conversely, positive co-impact occurs when community organisations, government, and civil society collaborate effectively. Strengthening social capital and civic participation can mitigate crime through collective efficacy (Pillay, 2023).

Summary

The co-impact approach highlights that crime in South Africa cannot be addressed in isolation but requires integrated responses acknowledging how apartheid's socio-economic, spatial, institutional, and governance legacies interact.

It stresses the importance of multi-sectoral collaboration to break cycles of inequality and crime.

OVERALL CONTRIBUTION OF THE ARTICLE

This article advances the understanding of how apartheid's enduring legacy of segregation, inequality, and institutional mistrust continues to shape contemporary crime dynamics in South Africa. By integrating recent empirical evidence with theoretical insights on structural violence and social disorganisation, it provides a comprehensive and updated analysis of the socio-economic and spatial factors perpetuating crime in historically marginalised communities. The study highlights the importance of addressing these root causes through coordinated, multi-sectoral policies that combine socio-economic development, community empowerment, and policing reform. Furthermore, it bridges historical context with current governance challenges, offering practical recommendations for sustainable crime prevention. This contribution is significant for policymakers, researchers, and

practitioners seeking to develop more effective, justice-oriented strategies to reduce crime and promote social cohesion in post-apartheid South Africa.

PRESIDENT OF REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

As of June 2025, South Africa is governed by a Government of National Unity (GNU), formed after the May 2024 general elections resulted in a hung parliament. This coalition is led by President Cyril Ramaphosa of the African National Congress (ANC), who was re-elected with support from several opposition parties.

CONCLUSION

The legacy of apartheid continues to exert a profound influence on South Africa's social and economic fabric, significantly contributing to persistent high crime rates in marginalized communities. This study underscores that crime cannot be fully understood or addressed without acknowledging the deep-rooted inequalities and spatial segregation institutionalized by apartheid policies. The impact of these historical injustices manifests not only in socio-economic deprivation but also in weakened social cohesion and mistrust between communities and law enforcement agencies. Recognizing this co-impact is essential for designing effective interventions.

By highlighting the interconnectedness of structural inequality, governance challenges, and policing deficiencies, this research advocates for integrated, multi-sectoral approaches to crime prevention that emphasize social justice, community empowerment, and institutional reform. The study's findings have the potential to influence policy development, encouraging a shift from reactive law enforcement towards proactive social development strategies that tackle the root causes of crime. Ultimately, addressing apartheid's enduring legacy is critical to achieving lasting reductions in crime and fostering a safer, more equitable South Africa.

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