



Road Rage in South Africa: Drivers Aggressive Behaviour

Shaka Yesufu

Department of Research and Development University of Limpopo University str., Turfloop, Sovenga, Limpopo
Republic of South Africa

E-mail: Shakazulu17@yahoo.co.uk

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8002-3074>

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Abstract

Road rage amongst drivers in South Africa has spiraled out of control. In some extreme circumstances resulting in the loss of lives. It problematic in our attempts to separate driver's aggressive behaviour, threats of violence associated it with it, to that found in the wider society. Both are unarguably linked to the other. The aim of this article is to look at the causes of road rage and have the aspiration of finding a lasting solution(s) to the problem. The authors relied on previous literatures carrying out a systematic literature review using thematic analysis approach to analyse the data gathered. Some of the findings of the study are the violence found in the wider society has a correlation to societal violet driver's influences drivers behaviour, drivers lack of education and unwillingness to accommodate other road users, rules of the road needs to be made clearer and readily accessible to citizens in all official languages in South Africa, periodic evaluation of the drivers psychological fitness to drive a car, the criminal judges system should impose stiffer punishment and sentences on road rage drivers. The current Aarto systems fails to give the issue of road rage the urgent attention it deserves. Inadequate support for road rage victims and their families.

Keywords: *Road Rage; Motor Vehicle; Traffic Police Officer; Violence; South Africa*

1. Introduction

South Africa has a road network of 750 000km's, the tenth longest network in the world. The South African National Roads Agency Limited (Sanral) is currently managing about 21 403 km's, of which 84 percent are non-tolled and only 16 percent are tolled Provinces manage about 47 348 km's of paved roads and 157 482 of unpaved roads [1]. In South Africa, the number of reported incidents of road rage has been on the increase trajectory for over the past few years in South Africa. Road rage has become a major threat to safe driving and is being investigated by the MRC-UNISA Crime, Violence & Injury Lead Programme together with the Accident Research Centre at the University of Natal. Road is a

social problem that appears to be increasing all over the world along with traffic congestion and levels of frustration on roads. Road rage occurs when people who are already vulnerable to aggressive outbursts are led to express their rage and - more critically - direct it towards total strangers or motorists.

Many reasons can be attributed or held responsible for rage on roads. There appears to be various reasons for extreme rage. Some people who have a prior history of "blowing their top" might have mental disorders, assaulting others or destroying property owing to rage. There are also other antisocial personalities, those who abuse drugs and alcohol or just your everyday motorist who is psychologically ripe for road rage [2]. Other factors such as limited road capacity, an increase in the number of drivers, cars, & pedestrians, stress, depression, and pent-up aggression may be some of the precipitating factors which create anger and frustration on the road as well.

Certain personality types are more prone to road rage than the others. the second Previous research suggests that the "typical" low self-esteem/external locus of control/low maturity level/low self-control/low impulse control/high anger evoked/etc. the type may be more prone to overt and more serious actions during/following their experience of road rage thoughts and emotions [3].

The term road rage has become common vernacular to describe any displays of anger while driving, although such displays are also referred to as "angry or aggressive driving." Angry or aggressive driving may range from mild displays of anger, such as following too closely on another driver's bumper, to more serious forms of violence, such as physical assault and vehicular homicide. Whereas a considerable amount of attention has been devoted to the assessment and treatment of maladaptive anger in general, little attention has been paid to the specific case of driving anger [4]. Driving anger may be in need of more attention, especially given that anger may be experienced more frequently while driving than during other activities (Parkinson, 2001). The author argues that drivers behaving aggressively to other drivers on our road may be telling a different picture of psychological imbalance or deficiency, people always wanting to express themselves only through the medium of violence and less verbal communication in dealing with disagreements. South Africans are clearly extremely aggressive on the roads. Given the absence of an effective public transport system to deal with diverse demand and geographic spread of potential users, the pressure on South African roads during the morning and evening commute is unlikely to abate, and along with it, the resulting aggression [5]. A similar view is also shared by [6] stating that aggressive driving, also called more commonly as "road rage", is dangerous and negative behavior drivers engage in for a variety of reasons. Oftentimes, the driver is drunk (already making poor decisions), suffering from a mental breakdown or emotional strain, or simply just late and needs to get somewhere fast. Another few examples presented by is that road rage is an illness [7] It is an emotional, cognitive, and behavioural psychiatric disorder just as the antisocial personality (criminal) is viewed as one. Society, at this point, however, seems to tolerate road "ragers" vs criminals. The extreme outcomes of road rage incidents, however, resemble the same as that of a criminal e.g maiming, killing. The author identified other predictor variables for driver aggression and 'other hazardous driving behaviours' based on demography (gender, age, education, and race), with general driving characteristics (driving experience and type of vehicle driven) and with fines, collisions and the carrying of weapons [8].

Four continuum levels of aggressive behaviour were identified as follows:

- (a) Expressions of annoyance (or level 1 aggressive behaviour) refers to mild, verbal and non-threatening expressions of annoyance or self-irritability such as complaining and/or yelling to oneself and/or fellow passengers in response to another driver's behaviour;

(b) Aggressive driving (or level 2 aggressive behaviour) refers to mild, verbal or gestural expressions of anger on the road such as the use of insensitive or obscene gestures and inappropriate and/or excessive use of the horn and lights.

(c) Direct threatening and/or intimidating behaviour (level 3 aggressive behaviour), includes trying to cut another motorist off the road or following or chasing another motorist in anger; and

(d) Direct confrontational behaviour (level 4 aggressive behaviour) may include arguing with or assaulting another motorist. [9].

NATIONAL ROAD TRAFFIC Act No. 93 of 1996

Public Road

"Public road" means any road, street or thoroughfare or any other place (whether a thoroughfare or not) which is commonly used by the public or any section thereof or to which the public or any section thereof has a right of access, and includes-

(a) the verge of any such road, street, or thoroughfare.

5 (b) any bridge, ferry or drift traversed by any such road, street, or thoroughfare.

and (c) any other work or object forming part of or connected with or belonging to such road, street, or thoroughfare."

Under CHAPTER XI of the Act

It deals with reckless or negligent driving, inconsiderate driving, driving while under the influence of intoxicating liquor or a drug having a narcotic effect, and miscellaneous offences.

Reckless or negligent driving

63. (1) No person shall drive a vehicle on a public road recklessly or negligently.

(2) Without restricting the ordinary meaning of the word "recklessly" any person who drives a vehicle in wilful or wanton disregard for the safety of persons or property shall be deemed to drive that vehicle recklessly.

(3) In considering whether subsection (1) has been contravened, the court shall have regard to all the circumstances of the case, including, but without derogating from the generality of subsection (1) or (2), the nature, condition and use of the public road upon which the contravention is alleged to have been committed, the amount of traffic which at the relevant time was or which could reasonably have been expected to be upon that road, and the speed at and manner in which the vehicle was driven.

Inconsiderate driving

64. No person shall drive a vehicle on a public road without reasonable consideration for any other person using the road.

Motor Vehicle

motor vehicle" means any self-propelled vehicle and includes-

(a) a trailer; and (b) a vehicle having pedals and an engine or an electric motor as an integral part thereof or attached thereto and which is designed or adapted to be propelled by means of such pedals, engine or motor, or both such pedals and engine or motor, but does not include- (i) any vehicle propelled by electrical power derived from storage batteries and which is controlled by a pedestrian; or (ii) any vehicle with a mass not exceeding 230 kilograms and 15 specially designed and constructed, and not merely adapted, for the use of any person suffering from some physical defect or disability and used solely by such person

(National Road Traffic Act, Act 93 of 1996)

Road Rage

Road rage is referred to as "incidents of angry and aggressive driving", taking place with increasing frequency on South Africa roads. It is defined as an assault with a motor vehicle or other dangerous weapon by the operator or passenger/s of one motor vehicle on the operator or passenger/s of another motor vehicle or is caused by an incident that occurred on a roadway and is considered a criminal offence [11]. There are a few examples of what is commonly referred to as "road rage" and is usually characterized by behaviours such as verbal swearing, tailgating, cutting someone off, making obscene gestures, flashing headlights and physical violence. In its worst outcome, it can lead to maiming, psychological scarring and even death. The term road rage was coined and popularized by the media in the late 1980s. Road rage has since been defined as hostile behaviors that are directed to other road users, including behaviors such as tailgating or colliding with a lead vehicle [12] "Any unsafe driving behaviour performed deliberately and with ill intention or disregard for safety can constitute aggressive driving. In extreme cases, this may escalate to road rage, which is a violent criminal act involving the intention to cause physical harm," road rage is also used to describe the most serious forms of aggression, such as forcing someone off the road or drawing a gun at another driver [13].

2. Methodology

This study is qualitative research. The author carried out an extensive literature review related to the topic of road rage. Themes and concepts related to the title were explored seeking out emergent themes following a thematic analysis approach. Case studies were introduced by the author corroborate the harmful effects of road rage on citizens, in doing so substantiates the authors standpoint to the road rage problem confronting all citizens.

3. Results and Discussions

Road Rage as Psychological

According to Bjureberg and Gross [14] road rage is a form of intense behaviorally maladaptive anger often cued by driving-related stimuli while operating a vehicle or riding in one as a passenger. According to Van Zyl [15], road rage is considered a psychological illness of human functioning as instigated by the association "between environmental factors such as heavy traffic, and mental thoughts and emotions". Other psychologists and behaviourists name aggression, together with depression, as one of the most general psychological ailments, which are becoming more and more common, that are

suffered by modern man, especially in a “society such as South Africa’s where most citizens have become susceptible to violence and aggressive behaviour. Both family and work demands have placed a high level of stress-related conditions on us. A driver under prescribed medication for depression can easily snapped and resort to violence. Violence has become normalized in South Africa. It has become part of our everyday life. It is difficult to tell any driver that may be suffering from depression. Most people hide their level of psychological problems from people they are not familiar with. I may not be psychological sound but that does not prevent me from still driving my car on the road. Emerging theoretical and empirical advances in the study of emotion and emotion regulation have provided new insights into why people develop road rage and how it can be prevented and treated. Traffic crashes are also associated with elevated levels of psychological distress [16]. A large majority of road traffic crashes have been attributed to human factors, such as fatigue, intoxication, and angry/aggressive driving behaviors [17]. Driving anger is reliably associated with traffic crashes [18]. Concern with anger-related and aggression-related driving behavior has evoked scientific interest for more than 7 decades [19].

Counseling psychologist Jerry Deffenbacher, PhD, of Colorado State University, found that people who identified themselves as high-anger drivers differ from low-anger drivers in five keyways:

- They engage in hostile, aggressive thinking. They’re more likely to insult other drivers or express disbelief about the way others drive. Their thoughts also turn more often to revenge, which sometimes means physical harm.
- They take more risks on the road. High-anger drivers are more likely to go 10 to 20 mph over the speed limit, rapidly switch lanes, tailgate, and enter an intersection when the light turns red.
- High anger drivers get angry faster and behave more aggressively. They’re more likely to swear or name-call, to yell at other drivers, to honk in anger. And they’re more likely to be angry not just behind the wheel, but throughout the day.
- High-anger drivers had twice as many car accidents in driving simulations. They also report more near-accidents and get more tickets for speeding.
- Short-fused drivers experience more traits like anger, anxiety, and impulsiveness. Perhaps from work or home stress, high-anger drivers are more likely to get in the car angry; they also tend to express their anger outward and act impulsively. [20]

Violence

South Africa's culture of violence coupled with high-stress modern lifestyles have led to an increase in road rage. Anecdotal evidence collected by the Automobile Association suggests that South African crimes committed because of road rage are becoming more violent. The high level of testosterone more common in men explains why more men are road ragers than women. In one survey conducted by the AA South Africa amongst drivers in the Johannesburg area concluded that 47.7 percent of respondents reported having children in the car during a road rage incident. It also showed that 47 percent of all road rage is perpetrated by drivers between the ages of 18 and 25 years [21].

Yesufu (2022) in his book titled ‘The prognosis and diagnosis of a violent society’ postulated that the act of violence is normalized in South Africa. People have so used to it and they have come to accept it and put with. Murder rates are very high, violence related annual deaths are very high more than a country at war. The evil apartheid regime that legitimized violence and brute force to oppress the black majority did nothing to psychologically fix the minds of the oppressed majority South Africans. Instead, they concentrated on reconciliation and forgiveness made possible by the promoters of a rainbow nation. The rainbow is a beautiful natural phenomenon and does not possess the sky for over a long period of time. It fades away like a mirage when one tries to appreciate the beauty of it. Apartheid did not only deny the black person of his dignity as a human being, but it has also distorted the psyche and mindset of

black people making them to appreciating violence out of a system that made them to become sub-humans without compassion. If you look at the high murder rates in South Africa today, it explains why one can safely argue that the apartheid violence has not gone away from us. It has become even more callous and monstrous with no explanations given why lives are wasted by killers amongst us. The author argues there must be other acceptable ways of resolving conflicts without resulting in violence either at home, in public, and with other people you may not even know. The government cannot continue to look away to this social malaise of violence plaguing South Africa hoping that society will heal itself from incessant level of violent related incidents. Femicide the killing of women is in another high proportion rates of its own, gender-based violence victims are increasing by the day [22]

Road rage is one of the top reasons you could get killed in South Africa, listed as the one of biggest causative factors for murder in the crime statistics released on Friday .During the presentation of the third-quarter figures for 2021-2022, it was revealed arguments and misunderstandings related to road rage and/or provocation accounted for 1,151 murders. There were also 1,215 attempted murder cases, including road rage incidents, along with 21,188 grievous bodily harm cases for the three months. Whenever a motorist committed a traffic offence such as skipping a red light, cutting off another motorist, overtaking when it was not safe, ignoring a stop sign, or reckless or negligent driving, it caused other motorists to react aggressively[South African Police Report, 2024)

The most recent murder rate figures released by the Minister of Police Bheki Cele paints a very gloomy picture of South Africa seen as country not able to deal with societal violence. The shocking figures of violence related deaths were reported as follows:

- More than 7700 people were murdered in three months, according to the latest quarterly crime stats. During the release of the third quarter crime statistics on Friday, between October and December last year, 7 710 people were murdered – an increase of 155 from the same period in the previous year.

In just three months, more than 7 700 people were murdered across South Africa.

News24 previously reported that there 6 200 people were killed between January and March last year, and 6 945 between July and September. The five police precincts with the most recorded murders during the third quarter period were Inanda in KwaZulu-Natal and Mfuleni, Gugulethu, Nyanga and Khayelitsha in the Western Cape. It is also concerning that of the 268 gang-related murders, 250 of these murders were reported in the Western Cape. He added that 431 murders had been linked to vigilantism and mob justice attacks. Of these, 84 had taken place in Gauteng, 80 in the Eastern Cape and 78 in KwaZulu-Natal. There had also been six mass shootings during the three-month period. The minister said that 22 police officers had been killed between October and December. Ten of them were on duty at the time. In looking at the death statistics presented above, the author is of the opinion that it is high time in the South African government calls for a state of emergency to address the unacceptable high number of these on-going killings. As far as the author is concerned It has been ignored for far too long. These unlawful violent deaths cannot be allowed to go on unnoticed. We just can no longer be bystanders to see our relatives, loved ones being sent to their early graves. The government must be held accountable for its failure to protect all citizens.

Traffic Officers

"Traffic officer" means a traffic officer appointed in terms of the laws of any province and any member of the Service as defined in section 1 of the South African Police Service Act, 1995 (Act No. 68

of 1995), and for the purposes of Chapters V, IX and X and sections 74 and 78 of this Act 15 includes a peace officer.” In South Africa as a whole, it is very difficult to obtain the exact total number of road rage incidents because once the offence is reported, it falls under the jurisdiction of the SAPS and not the road traffic authorities. These offences therefore overlap with other crimes such as assault, assault with grievous bodily harm, attempted murder, damage to property, murder, etc. Most of these crimes fall outside the mandate of traffic officers to investigate.

The author provided the readers with some safety tips on how best road rage can be avoided without resulting in violence or any loss of lives. They are as follows:

1. When you merge, make sure you have plenty of room. Always use your turn signal to show your intentions before making a move. If someone cuts you off, slow down and give them room to merge into your lane.
2. If you are in the right lane and someone wants to pass, move over and let them by. You may be "in the left" because you are traveling at the speed limit - but you may also be putting yourself in danger by making drivers behind you angry.
3. Allow at least a two-second space between your car and the car ahead. Drivers may get angry when they are followed too closely. If you feel you are being followed too closely, signal and pull over when safe to do so, allowing the other driver to pass.
4. Use your horn rarely, if ever.
5. Keep your hands on the wheel and avoid making any gestures that might anger another driver. That includes "harmless" expressions of irritation like shaking your head.
6. If another driver is acting angry, don't make eye contact.
7. Give angry drivers lots of room. If another driver tries to pick a fight, put as much distance between you as possible.
8. One angry driver can't start a fight unless another driver is willing to join in.
9. Drive with your car doors locked and if you see trouble don't leave the safety of your vehicle.
10. Count from 1-10 (it's old and it works!).
11. Don't retaliate by sounding your horn, flashing your lights, or gesturing, this will only aggravate the situation.
12. If you are a victim of aggression take the registration number and report the incident to the police.

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In one report in the Pretoria news, it was reported that a 34-year-old man was recently sentenced to 10 years in prison for shooting a motorist during a road rage incident in Bronkhorstspuit. Manekisi Tinti Mahlangu was convicted of attempted murder and sentenced by the Bronkhorstspuit regional court for the road rage attack, last month. Mahlangu shot a 28-year-old man in the abdomen near the Zithobeni dumping site in the far east of Pretoria in November 2019, according to police spokesperson Constable Munyadziwa Cathrine Ramovha. Ramovha said the attack ensued when the 28-year-old had stopped his car on the road after he was involved in an accident. She said Mahlangu demanded that the 28-year-old

move his car from the road, “the complainant told him that he was in an accident scene, and he cannot remove his vehicle”.

Ramovha said Mahlangu then started to assault the 28-year-old, beating him with his fists,

and the two more men with Mahlangu ganged up to beat up the man. The 28-year-old tried to escape Mahlangu and drove away from the accident scene, but Mahlangu followed him to the dumping site where the shooting happened, Ramovha said. “The victim got out of the car and Mahlangu, who was carrying a firearm, shot him in his stomach.” She said the victim managed to get back to his car bleeding and drove away while Mahlangu continued to shoot, and bullets pierced through his windscreen. Mahlangu was shortly arrested after the shooting following investigations by the police. “The police would like to warn the community about aggressive driving which is a major concern and a real threat to the safety of all road users. In another incident of road rage, the Roodepoort Rekord reported the sentencing of former Johannesburg metro police officer Bongani Silence Baloyi to 18 years imprisonment for murder relating to an October 2019 road-rage incident near Honeydew. This was as Baloyi shot and killed Seja Lawrence Nkwana during a heated argument between the two drivers [24].

In looking at each case above, one clearly sees how people easily become victims of rage. They are barbaric, gruesome, and senseless killings that should have been avoided. It shows the degeneration of human beings paying less emphasis on the value of human life. It continues to bite my imagination how these killings go on without some control. For every innocent person killed in our roads due to road rage is one too many. Motorists travel for fear of road traffic accidents happening, now they have a second, is another fear citizens must also worry about which is that of road rage [26].

TYPE OF ROAD RAGES

Road rage is divided into three distinct types, which are explained by as follows:

1. The Quiet: This type of road rage comprises “Resisting by driving slower, complaining, speeding up or rushing, exercising passive aggressive behaviours”
2. The Verbal: This type of road rage refers to drivers cursing one another, shouting at and insulting one another, beeping the hooter excessively, and showing rude hand gestures
3. The Epic: This type of road rage refers to a driver cutting off another, chasing, fighting, blocking, and using weapons. [25].

The author is opined that one of the main reasons for society not “crying foul” currently is most probably due to the fact that the less extreme outcomes of road rage such as showing the finger, swearing, tailgating, etc. are experienced by most normal people during a period of time. I, therefore, believe that society accepts road rage as normal behaviour and normal outcomes of the stress of driving [26]. It is only when someone gets hurt or killed that such a raged person is deemed as being a criminal/problem to society and needs to be removed/incarcerated [27].

Next, the author explained the concept of anger as a catalyst for road rage. Anger is often thought of as a syndrome that consists of loosely coupled feelings, cognitions, and physiological reactions that are associated with urges to harm some target [28]. Anger ranges in intensity from mild (irritability) to intense rage [29]. Anger that occurs while driving has been termed driving anger, defined as “anger that occurs in response to driving-related stimuli while operating a vehicle or riding in one as a passenger” [30]. One can safely argue that there is a distinction between intentional impulsive aggressive behaviors fueled by

anger and a desire to hurt someone and reckless instrumental premeditated aggressive driving which is not necessarily driven by anger or committed with harmful intent. Emotions are generated through a series of iterative cycles comprising four aspects or stages: (a) a situation; (b) attention that determines how the situation is perceived; (c) an appraisal (resulting from a comparison between a goal set and a situation construal); and (d) a response including subjective experience, physiology, and/or overt behavior.

a. Situation

The most common proximal triggers of road rage include one's progress being impeded (e.g., slow driving), being put at risk (e.g., reckless behaviors of other drivers), and discourtesy or hostility of other drivers. Perceived discourteous or abusive remarks amongst drivers may also act as catalyst or trigger for road incidents. Having a weapon in the car and driving under very stressful conditions are also situational triggers of road rage.

b. Attention

The term hostile anticipation describes an angry person's hypervigilance for signs of other peoples' hostile intent. They suggest that for some people, external stimuli are constantly scanned for signs of potential threat, and then over-interpreted in terms of threat and disrespect, which may in part explain how attention mediates rage. Individuals high in trait anger have attentional biases toward anger-related cues following perceived insult. In a simulated driving context. Anger provoked in one driving situation may transfer across future driving situations since was caused the anger has not been addressed.

c. Appraisal

An appraisal outcome is the result of a comparison process between a goal set (i.e., representation of a desired world) and a construal (i.e., representation of how the world is). Consider, for example, a driver who is overtaken by another vehicle and then gets stuck behind the same vehicle as it slows down. One input to the appraisal outcome may be his goal to be on time for a meeting. This goal set is compared with the individual's construal.

d. Response

Some previous research from both on-road and simulated driving experiments has demonstrated that road rage is associated with increased heart rate, skin conductance, and respiration rate, as well as altered beta-waves and delta-waves [31]. Next, the author looked at a few reported cases of road rage.

Reported cases /incidents of Road Rage

One of the notable cases of road rage was in 2013, when Mandla Mandela, the eldest grandson of the late former democratic president, Nelson Mandela, and a member of the South African parliament, assaulted a high-school teacher (Mlamli Ngudle) in a road rage incident. Mandela was reported to have pointed a gun at the victim, and stomped and kicked him, leaving him with visible injuries. Since the victim had almost hit the car of potential investors with whom he was having lunch, Mandla claimed that he had acted in self-defence. Mandla appeared at the Mthatha magistrate court in the Eastern Cape in June 2015 and was found guilty of "assault with grievous bodily harm, and [he was] acquitted on a charge of pointing a firearm" [32].

Grigor v The State (607/11) [2012] ZASCA 95

In this case, the appellant was convicted by the Benoni regional magistrate's court on a count of attempted murder and was sentenced to six years' imprisonment. The appellant subsequently appealed to the North Gauteng High Court against both the conviction and sentence. The appeal arises from a road

rage incident that occurred on 11 January 2008 along Kirshner Road, Benoni, between the appellant and the complainant. Before the incident, the complainant had just made a U-turn in a driveway and then entered the road when, according to him, he noticed the vehicle driven by the appellant ‘flying up’ behind him in the same direction (and overtaking him). Whilst driving so, an exchange of gestures, consistent with both their perceptions that each had driven in an unacceptable manner, took place between them. Their respective versions of what really occurred differ. At some stage they both alighted from their respective motor vehicles. “The appellant testified that he stopped his motor vehicle first and made what he termed an ‘emergency exit’. He proceeded towards the complainant’s vehicle, which was parked behind his, and he stopped next to the rear fender of his own vehicle.

The complainant also alighted from his own vehicle and advanced towards the appellant and pushed him. The only inference to be drawn from their behaviour at this stage is that they were both angry and ready to confront each other. After this, a fight ensued between them, during which the appellant stabbed the complainant with a knife several times. 43 At the time, the appellant was armed not only with a knife but also had a firearm, which he did not use. The complainant was unarmed. There were no independent witnesses to the fight”. The decision taken by the magistrate was that the application was dismissed because there was no evidence that the incident happened in a moment of anger, and that indeed there had been some form of argument that had led to the stabbing. The magistrate further acknowledged that the appellant had made a mistake but that his action was a serious violation that deserved a sentence because “there were options that could have been taken by the complainant to avoid the incident and concluded that he thus had to face the consequences of his actions”. Attempted murder is the attempt to commit a crime but for some reason, the crime is not completed. A good example can be found in the case of *Grigor v S (607/11) [2012] ZASCA 95*, the accused and the complainant had an altercation after the complainant made a U-turn without paying attention to the accused. The accused overtook him and exchanged gestures, consistent with both their perceptions that each had driven unacceptably took place between them. Both stopped and exited their motor vehicles and during the altercation, the accused stabbed the complainant in the face, chest, abdomen, and right thigh. At the trial, the doctor testified that the complainant could have died from bleeding if he had not received medical intervention. The accused was sentenced to six years imprisonment [33].

Ngobeni v S [2015] JOL 33628 (SCA)

The appellant appealed against the conviction of attempted murder and a sentence of four years’ imprisonment, in terms of s 276(1)(i) of the Criminal Procedure Act 51 of 1977 (the Act) on 11 June 2004, to the North Gauteng High Court (Pretoria). “The factual background is that the complainant and the appellant were driving their respective vehicles from Pretoria City Centre towards Atteridgeville. A road rage of some sort developed between them. It appears from the evidence that they overtook each other on several occasions until they reached Atteridgeville and parked at an Engen petrol station. The complainant alighted from his vehicle and approached the appellant who was seated in his vehicle, to enquire why the appellant drove in a manner dangerous to other road users. The complainant testified that the appellant said words to the effect that is when the complainant turned and walked towards his vehicle when he was shot at from behind. Although the appellant confirms what happened on the road, he states that at the Engen petrol station, the complainant together with two of his passengers approached him, forcefully opened the driver’s side door, and started assaulting him. He started bleeding. He then pulled his firearm and fired a shot in self-defence. He did not realise that he had shot someone. Two other State witnesses were called and largely corroborated the complainant’s version. 44 Furthermore, a medical report (J88) was handed in by consent and the defence formally admitted the contents thereof. It clearly indicates the entry wound as being on the right back near the buttocks of the complainant and the exit wound being on the right front next to the groin. Although there are some contradictions between the complainant’s version and his witnesses these are minor and immaterial. Mokaba who was called by the State confirms that the complainant was shot on his back. This objective piece of evidence taken together

with that of the complainant is sufficient to prove that the complainant was shot at the back. There are contradictions in the appellant's version as well and what was put to the witnesses differs from his evidence. The appeal was dismissed on 29 January 2007 because the statements of the appellant and the witness were contradicting each other, and the judge did not see the need for the appellant to have acted in self-defense [34].

Friend v S [2011] JOL 27620 (GSJ)

In this reported case, the appellant was convicted of assault with the intent to cause grievous bodily harm. He was sentenced to a fine of R6 000- or six-months' imprisonment, of which half was suspended for a period of five years on condition that the appellant was not convicted of assault with the intent to cause grievous bodily harm or of assault committed within the period of suspension. He appealed against both the conviction and the sentence. In the extensive cross-examination, the complainant was not a good witness. Much of his testimony was argumentative, contradictory, and highly improbable. However, the magistrate convicted the appellant, notwithstanding that the state presented evidence of a single witness only. Under section 208 of the Criminal Procedure Act 51 of 1977, the evidence of a single witness can be sufficient to secure a conviction, provided that the evidence is clear and satisfactory. The Court was not satisfied that the evidence of the complainant in this case was clear and satisfactory. 45 The appellant relied on private defence to justify his action. The onus of disproving justifiable defence rests upon the prosecution. There is only an evidential burden upon the accused to advance some evidence of the existence of the requirements for private defence [35].

Ntshasa v S (A249/10) [2011] ZAFSHC 59; 2011 (2) SACR 269

In this case, the accused were involved in a motor vehicle accident whereafter he proceeded to draw his firearm and fired several shots at the driver of the vehicle, whilst she was sitting in her motor vehicle, killing her instantly. The accused was sentenced to 23 years imprisonment. The trial court dismissed as false the appellant's defence that he had acted in self-defence when shooting the deceased and Mr . Shooter and that none of the victims had provoked or in any way threatened him. It found that the collision was due to the appellant's negligence in that he had been driving at an excessive speed and had failed to keep a proper lookout. The trial court accordingly found that there had been no justification whatsoever for the shootings and that the appellant had a direct intent to kill the deceased and Mr. Shooter [36].

In S v EADIE (2) 2001 (1) SACR 185 (CPD)

The accused had been angered by the driver of the other motor vehicle, who had driven rather provocatively and recklessly in relation to the accused. The accused stopped his car, took out a hockey stick and went out and found the other driver in the process of trying to get out of his car. The accused beat up the other motorist with the hockey stick until it broke, whereafter he hit him with fists and booted feet. The other motorist died because of the injuries inflicted by the accused. The accused was a 35-year-old married man with two young children. He had previous convictions. He was sentenced to 15 (fifteen) years, 5 (five) of which were suspended on certain conditions. In the words of the presiding Justices HM Musi, PU Fischer & S Singh, they concurred in agreement that "the message that must reach society is that consciously giving in to one's anger or to other emotions and endangering the lives of motorists or other members of society will not be tolerated and will be met with the full force of the law....must also reflect our revolt at the brutal manner in which the appellant executed an innocent, defenceless woman. A lengthy term of imprisonment is called for and I think 23 (twenty-three) years will be appropriate [37].

Possible Suggestions

- Educate motorists through social crime-prevention programmes and campaigns
- Ensure that traffic lights are working
- Road environment to be improved, more investment in rail networks to decongest our very busy roads.
- Be visible on the roads
- Inform the public about incidents on the road
- Improve public transport
- They must stay calm
- Be considerate
- Respect the rules of the road
- Change their attitude
- Manage their stress levels

Conclusion

Road rage on our road has been left unattended in some instances trivialized without paying due attention to the problem. The violence on our roads cannot be separated from the violence found in wider society. The education of citizens on finding alternate conflict resolution models needs to be rolled out as a matter of urgency. Investments on other means of transport to decongest our roads in South Africa is needed now. The listed cases referred to above are a reminder of the immediate risks and threats that road rage possess to us all. You do not necessarily have to be the driver of motor vehicle on road before you can suffer road rage. In some cases, passengers get caught up in the middle of confrontational incidents. All arguments must not end in violence. The author calls for stiffer punishment for road rage. Aggressive drivers who cannot control their anger should not be on our roads. Addressing the problem of road rage is unarguable a prerequisite for a safer road for us all.

Conflict of interest

The author has no conflict of interest in relation to this article.

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several countries of world motivating me to write more academic articles. To my wonderful family support from Melbourne, Earl, Chelsy, & Brooklyn Yesufu. A safer road is realizable in our generation. More importantly, to Almighty God the creator and giver of knowledge, the custodian of our intellectual abilities.

Dedication

I dedicate this article to my dearest mum Mrs Muni Momodu-Yesufu and my only sister Mrs Ebunlola Balogun-Yesufu who both passed on to glory in 2024. Two pivotal women in my life gone back home to God. The family you left behind miss you both dearly. You are remembered for the love, comfort and endless support given. You both came, saw and departed from this world. Bye Bye Mama and Bye big Sis.

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