



THE IMPACT OF XENOPHOBIC ATTACKS ON NIGERIA-SOUTH AFRICA RELATIONS

Adeleke Olumide Ogunnoiki and Ademola Adefisayo Adeyemi

Graduate, Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Lagos,
Akoka, Lagos State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT: *Nigeria and South Africa are two sub-regional powers in Africa that in no small measure have contributed to the relative peace and security in the region. Geographically located in West and Southern Africa respectively, Nigeria and South Africa, in pursuit of their national interest, have for more than five decades been relating, with their diplomatic, defence, trade and socio-cultural ties having the conflict, cooperation and competition attributes. Since South Africa became a liberal democracy and beacon of human rights in 1994, the influx of documented and undocumented foreigners into the resource-rich country has been a worrisome issue for the indigenes who see them, among other things, as competitors for the few jobs available. Hence, the locals in some of South Africa's townships have aggressively attacked foreign nationals, mostly African immigrants in 2008, 2015 and 2019 to mention a few. This research paper revisits the anti-foreigner violence in the rainbow nation with the aim of pointing out the impact on Nigeria-South Africa relations. The historical approach was adopted for this paper and the qualitative method of secondary data collection. Theoretically, the frustration-aggression theory and constructivism were combined.*

KEYWORD: African Immigrants, Anti-Foreigner Violence, Foreign Nationals, Locals, Nigeria-South Africa Relations, Rainbow Nation, Xenophobic Attacks

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria and South Africa are two countries on the continent of Africa that have gained global attention and reckoning for different reasons. While for instance, Nigeria with an estimated population of 180 million, is globally regarded as the most populous black country in the world, South Africa, with over 57 million people, has gained recognition as the conscience of racial parity on the world stage, having passed through and survived the throes of apartheid for decades before its eventual liberation partly through global help and internal political struggle. Though located respectively in West and Southern Africa, Nigeria and South Africa, have been involved in each other's different spheres of life – social, political and economic (Adebisi, 2017).

“With the dismantling of the apartheid regime and the emergence of constitutional democracy in 1994, immigration inflow into South Africa witnessed a sharp increase particularly from neighbouring African countries” (Ogunnubi and Amusan, 2018:61). As at 2011, the figures of foreign-born people in the country had risen to 2.2 million according to the 2011 South Africa Census (Heleta, 2018). Paradoxically, in resource-rich South Africa, there is poverty and a high unemployment rate which the locals believe hook, line and sinker that the



immigrants, who they call ‘*Amakwerekwere*’ (a derogatory South African word for foreign visitors to a township (Wiktionary, 2019)) are to blame for the economic, plus societal challenges – drug trafficking and rising crime rate, bedeviling the rainbow nation. Hence, foreign nationals, mostly African immigrants in South Africa have occasionally been an object of xenophobic attacks in May 2008, April 2015, March 2019 to mention a few. These infrequent attacks have had a negative impact on the Republic of South Africa relations with its immediate neighbours and a few other African countries one of which is the Federal Republic of Nigeria, a country that for some years now, has received several of its nationals in body bags after they met their untimely death at the hands of xenophobes in South Africa.

In the wake of xenophobic attacks in South Africa, this research paper historically takes a look at the big picture of Nigeria-South Africa relations and how xenophobic attacks in South Africa has impacted the relations between the two sub-regional powers over the years. To achieve this, this paper has been compartmentalised with the following sub-headings: conceptual clarification, theoretical framework, the historical background to Nigeria-South Africa relations, xenophobic violence in post-apartheid South Africa: an overview, the myths and instigators of xenophobic attacks in post-apartheid South Africa, the impact of xenophobic attacks on Nigeria-South Africa relations, conclusions and lastly, recommendations.

Conceptual Clarification

Central to the study of ‘The Impact of Xenophobic Attacks on Nigeria-South Africa Relations’ is the concept ‘xenophobia’ which will be the only concept clarified in this section.

The *fons et origo* of the word ‘xenophobia’ is from two Greek words ‘*xenos*’ (meaning alien, stranger or foreigner) and ‘*phobos*’ (meaning fear). Literally, xenophobia is the ‘fear of a foreigner’ but, the word has a deeper meaning than this. “The term xenophobia is used to describe the dislike for immigrants or people who are different from oneself. As such, the term xenophobia is an outburst of discriminatory ideas, societal stereotyping and prejudices that is most times disguised with the phenomenon of nationalism” (Onyido, 2018:75).

Theoretical Framework

In the basket of International Relations (hereafter IR) theories, no single theory, as a tool of analysis, satisfactorily explains xenophobic attacks in South Africa and the impact on Nigeria-South Africa relations. For this study, there will be a triangulation of theories. The two theories that will be knotted in this research paper are none other than the ‘Frustration-Aggression Theory’ and ‘Constructivism’.

The Frustration-Aggression (F-A) Hypothesis, commonly called the Frustration-Aggression (F-A) Theory, is a seminal theory in Psychology which has been used several times in other fields of study to explain aggressive human behaviour. Central to the Frustration-Aggression theory is the tenet that there is a causal relationship between frustration and aggression. This conviction of a nexus between frustration and aggression was first held by a group of Yale University psychologists – John Dollard, Leonard W. Doob, Neal E. Miller, Orval H. Mowrer and, Robert R Sears in their co-authored monograph: *Frustration and Aggression* (1939). The theory was later revised by Neal E. Miller (1941) and Leonard Berkowitz (1969).



Frustration to the Yale group is “an interference with the occurrence of an instigated goal-response at its proper time in the behavior sequence” (Dollard *et al.*, 1939:7). In other words, it is a situation where the attainment of a desired goal of a person or group of people is hindered. Succinctly, aggression is a “sequence of behavior, the goal-response to which is the injury of the person toward whom it is directed” (Dollard *et al.*, 1939:9).

According to Dollard and his colleagues, “the occurrence of aggressive behavior always presupposes the existence of frustration and, contrariwise, that the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression” (Dollard *et al.*, 1939:1). Neal E. Miller two years later reformulated the original assumption to “frustration produces instigations to a number of different types of response, one of which is an instigation to some form of aggression” (Miller, 1941:338). Berkowitz (1965) on his part pointed out that frustration does not immediately trigger aggression in a person or group of people but, creates a “readiness for aggressive acts” (Shaffer, 2005:275).

In post-apartheid South Africa, the Frustration-Aggression Theory makes us understand that the spike in anti-foreigner violence is as a result of the frustration of unemployed and impoverished locals. Since the goal of being gainfully employed to meet basic human needs and lead a decent life has been hampered over time, the locals have taken out their frustration aggressively on African immigrants whom they claim are getting the jobs that are in short supply in resource-endowed South Africa. While the Frustration-Aggression Theory lenses can only make the user see frustration as the root cause of the aggressive behaviour of South African xenophobes towards African immigrants, Constructivism as a social structural theory takes over in the analysis of Nigeria-South Africa relations.

Exactly 30 years ago, Nicholas G. Onuf introduced Constructivism in IR with his book: *World of Our Making* (1989). However, it was after the dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (hereafter USSR) in 1991, which marked the end of the ideological struggle and arms race between the capitalist Western bloc led by the United States (hereafter US) and the communist Eastern bloc under the leadership of the USSR that, Alexander Wendt developed the theory in his article: *Anarchy is what States make of it: The Social Construction of Power and Politics* (1992) and in his book: *Social Theory of International Politics* (1999). Other notable scholars that contributed to the development of Constructivism are: Emanuel Alder, Friedrich Kratochwil, John G. Ruggie and Peter Katzenstein.

As an IR theory, constructivism, also called social constructivism, adopted the sociological approach in explaining international politics as well as in critiquing traditional IR theories – Realism and Liberalism. Contrary to Kenneth Waltz and other neo-realists’ conviction that the structure of the anarchical international system is determined by the uneven distribution of materialistic capabilities – ‘power’ (e.g. stockpile of nuclear warheads), the Constructivists strongly believe that the structure of international relations is a ‘social construction’ via an inter-subjective process between States producing and reproducing structures of shared knowledge over time (MacDonald, 2015). In other words, the structure of international relations is a product of States social interaction. It is from the social relationship of States that they derive a shared knowledge of each other. This shared knowledge however is not permanent but changes over time. For example, according to Wendt (1995), if both the United Kingdom (hereafter UK) and North Korea announced intentions to build additional nuclear weapons, the reaction by the US and other world powers will be noticeably different. The West will perceive Pyongyang’s decision as a threat due to existing and ongoing



antagonistic relations, while the UK's actions would entice curiosity and investigation but not apprehension (MacDonald, 2015). In a nutshell, Constructivism looks at how ideas and norms shape the identities, interests, actions and behaviour of States in the international system.

Since the post-apartheid era began in South Africa in the year 1994, several African countries have established and sustained diplomatic, economic and socio-cultural ties with the rainbow nation. However, the one too many targeted killings of their nationals in South Africa have created a shared knowledge of South Africa as a xenophobic country. This shared knowledge has immensely shaped the action of the affected African countries, one of which is Nigeria, in their relations with South Africa. Unlike some Southern African countries e.g. Malawi which has evacuated a good number of its citizens from South Africa, Nigeria in recent past made diplomatic moves *vis-à-vis* the reoccurring xenophobic attacks without severing her relations with South Africa.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO NIGERIA-SOUTH AFRICA RELATIONS

The chequered history of Nigeria-South Africa relations can be understood bearing in mind the 3Cs – conflict, cooperation and, competition. On the 21st of March, 1960, apartheid South African police shot dead 72 blacks and left 184 injured in the Sharpeville massacre. This incident before Nigeria's independence marked the beginning of Nigeria's confrontational engagement with apartheid South Africa (Fayomi *et al.*, 2015; Seteolu and Okuneye, 2017).

Following the 'political flag' independence of Nigeria from Britain on October 01, 1960, the government of Prime Minister Abubakar Tafawa Balewa pursued an Afrocentric foreign policy which made the country commit itself to the decolonisation of territories on the African continent and the eradication of racial discrimination and domination. Opposed to the apartheid policy in South Africa, Nigeria during the Balewa administration (1960-1966), campaigned for the suspension of South Africa from the Commonwealth in 1961 (Ebegbulem, 2013; Seteolu and Okuneye, 2017).

On January 15, 1966, Nigeria witnessed its first military coup d'état plotted by 'five Majors' under the leadership of Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu. The coup replaced Nigeria's parliamentary system of government with a military junta headed by the General Officer Commanding (GOC) the Nigerian Army, Major-General J. T. U. Aguiyi-Ironsi. On July 29, 1966, there was a counter-coup that brought the young Chief-of-Staff of the Nigerian Army, Lieutenant Colonel (later General) Yakubu Gowon to power as the Head of State (Ogunnoiki, 2018a).

During General Yakubu Gowon's military regime, Nigeria chaired for the first time, the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid, a position it held intermittently for 20 years – Edwin Ogebe Ogbu (1972-1975); Leslie O. Harriman (1976-1979); Akporode B. Clark (1979-1981); Alhaji Yusuff Maitama-Sule (1981-1983); Major-General J. N. Garba (1984-1990) and Ibrahim A. Gambari (1990-1994) (Tella, 2018; African Activist Archive, 2019). General Yakubu Gowon was later overthrown by a group of military officers led by Colonel Joe N. Garba who brought in the revolutionary leader, Brigadier (later General) Murtala R. Mohammed while he (Gowon) was away in Kampala, Uganda, attending the



Organisation of African Unity (hereafter OAU) Summit on July 29, 1975 (Ogunnoiki, 2018a).

The Murtala/Obasanjo junta provided a safe haven and education to many South African students and political exiles including Thabo Mbeki (who later became the president of South Africa) from 1976 to 1978. In 1976, their regime established the Southern African Relief Fund (SARF) (Tella, 2018). General Murtala R. Mohammed, exactly on the 200th day after he became the Head of State, was assassinated on February 13, 1976, in an unsuccessful coup by Lieutenant Colonel Buka Suka Dimka. Lieutenant General (later General) Olusegun Obasanjo, as the second in command, was made the Head of State (Ogunnoiki, 2018a). During the regime of Lieutenant General Olusegun Obasanjo, Nigeria joined 28 countries in boycotting the 1976 Olympic Games in Montreal, Canada, because the International Olympic Committee (IOC) failed to bar New Zealand's athletes from the games after its rugby national team toured apartheid South Africa. Similarly, Nigeria withdrew from the 1978 Commonwealth Games in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, because of New Zealand's sporting action *vis-à-vis* apartheid South Africa.

Carrying on the radical foreign policy of his late boss, General Olusegun Obasanjo nationalised British Petroleum (BP) to African Petroleum (AP) in 1979 for supplying oil to apartheid South Africa. He also nationalised British-owned Barclays Bank (now Union Bank) and Standard Bank (now First Bank). For all that Nigeria did from bankrolling the African National Congress (hereafter ANC) to the nationalisation of some British companies in the country, Nigeria, though geographically located in the West African sub-region, was numbered in the late 1970s among the Frontline States (FLS) – Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

On December 31, 1983, there was a coup d'état that brought Major-General Muhammadu Buhari to power as the Head of State. The Major General Muhammadu Buhari/Brigadier (later Major-General) Tunde Idiagbon military regime came to an end following a 'palace coup' that ushered the Army Chief-of-Staff, Major General (later General) Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida, to power on August 27, 1985 (Ogunnoiki, 2018a). In 1986, Nigeria was among the 32 African, Asian and Caribbean countries that boycotted the Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh, Scotland, following the iron lady, Prime Minister Margret Thatcher of the UK, refusal to place economic sanctions on apartheid South Africa. During the military junta of General Ibrahim Babangida, "Nigeria betrayed its anti-apartheid posture when it invited the President of South Africa, Fredrick De Klerk to Nigeria in 1992" (Seteolu and Okuneye, 2017:60). Nevertheless, Nigeria and a number of States the world over continued their confrontational engagement with apartheid South Africa.

In the year 1994, apartheid was eliminated in South Africa and the first democratic general elections were conducted from April 26 to 29, 1994. Nelson Mandela of the ANC (the party with the majority in South Africa's parliament) was elected by the parliament as the president of the country on May 09, 1994. The following day, his was inaugurated as the first black president in post-apartheid South Africa. President Mandela served his country as an exemplary leader for only a single term of five years. But no sooner had South Africa, once a Pariah State, been readmitted into the international community of civilised States and its diplomatic relations with Nigeria established in 1994, then Nigeria was ostracised from the international community.



Nigeria's pariah status in the international community was born out of a tragic event during the dictator, General Sani Abacha's regime. This singular event that happened is none other than the hanging of the environmentalist, Ken Saro Wiwa and eight other Ogoni activists on November 10, 1995. The Ogoni-Nine were hanged after they were 'convicted' for the murder of four traditional chiefs in Ogoni Land in 1994. Thus, Nigeria was suspended from the Commonwealth of Nations in Auckland, New Zealand, on the 11th of November, 1995, which the president of South Africa, Nelson Mandela, vehemently supported (see Ogunnoiki, 2018b:44-45). This led to the deterioration in both countries relations and the withdrawal of Nigeria's football team, the Super Eagles (who were the defending champions), from the 20th edition of the African Cup of Nations in South Africa at the behest of General Sani Abacha in 1996 (Agbu, *et al.*, 2013; Seteolu and Okuneye, 2017). The frosty relationship between the two countries was repaired during the military junta of General Abdulsalami Abubakar whose reconciliatory trip to South Africa marked the beginning of a relatively new era in Nigeria-South Africa relations (Fayomi *et al.*, 2015).

In the year 1999, there was a rebirth of democracy in the Nigerian State after many years of military rule. General (Rtd) Olusegun Obasanjo, who contested for the number one seat in the land on the platform of the People's Democratic Party (hereafter PDP), won the February 27, 1999, presidential election and was inaugurated with his running mate, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar on May 29, 1999. In South Africa, it was a landslide victory for the ruling party ANC in the general elections that took place on June 02, 1999. Mandela's deputy, Thabo Mbeki, was elected the president of the rainbow nation by the ANC-dominated parliament on June 14. He was not officially the 2nd president of the Republic of South Africa until his swearing-in ceremony which took place on June 16, 1999.

During President Olusegun Obasanjo and Thabo Mbeki's government, Nigeria-South Africa relations became cordial unlike previous decades of confrontational engagement. In October 1999, South Africa-Nigeria Bi-National Commission (BNC) was established by both countries. The Commission, which meets twice a year, was formed for the purpose of strengthening political, economic and trade relations between Nigeria and South Africa. Heading the Commission is the Vice President of Nigeria and the Deputy President of South Africa (Ebegebulem, 2013). In May 2000, both countries took a step further by forming the Nigeria-South Africa Chambers of Commerce (NSACC), a forum established to promote bilateral trade between both economies (NSACC, 2019). From 1999 to 2007, the trade relation between Nigeria and South Africa registered substantial growth from R181 3578 000 to almost R11 billion in 2007 (DIRCO, 2010).

Trade Flows between Nigeria and South Africa in Rand

Year	South Africa Exports to Nigeria (Billion)	South Africa Imports from Nigeria (Billion)
2006	3, 844,558,956	9,285, 922,352
2007	4, 558, 767,685	12, 480,199,295
2008	7,086,316,112	15,744,361,274

Source: South Africa Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) (2010)



In 2008, trade exchange between the two countries stood at \$2.1 billion which, by the year 2012, had increased to \$3.6 billion (Adebisi, 2017). Currently, Nigeria is South Africa's 7th largest trade partner in Africa. It enjoys a trade surplus because of the volume and value of crude oil export which accounts for 98% of South Africa's import from Nigeria (South Africa High Commission Abuja, 2019). Unlike Nigeria trade relation with her, South Africa has been recording a trade deficit.

That he might take the cordial relations between Nigeria and South Africa to the next level, President Thabo Mbeki paid a State visit to Nigeria (which was the first State visit ever to Nigeria by a South African Head of State in the post-apartheid era) from September 30 to October 04, 2000. During his visit, President Mbeki attended Nigeria's 40th Independence Day celebration and delivered an address to a South Africa-Nigerian Business Forum and to the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA). He also had bilateral discussions with President Olusegun Obasanjo and his Vice, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar and, former military Head of State, General Abdulsalami Abubakar (DIRCO, 2010).

At the continental level, President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria and his South African counterpart, President Thabo Mbeki, cooperated to a great extent *vis-à-vis* the economic development in Africa. Attending the April 2000 G-8 meeting in Japan, Obasanjo, Mbeki, and the Algerian leader, Abdelaziz Bouteflika strongly canvassed for the forgiveness of Africa's debts (Seteolu and Okuneye, 2017). Still on Africa's economic development, President Olusegun Obasanjo was one of the brains behind the setting up of the OAU's New Partnership for Africa's Development (hereafter NEPAD) in 2001 and, the African Union's (hereafter AU) African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) in 2003. Prior to the formation of NEPAD, President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa came up with the Millennium Africa Recovery Plan (MAP) while President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal, the Omega Plan. These two plans were merged on July 03, 2001, at the 37th Heads of State and Government Summit of the OAU in Lusaka, Zambia, to form the New African Initiative (NAI) which later became NEPAD. On July 11, 2001, the continental body, OAU, adopted NEPAD. The following year, the AU did likewise (see Ogunnoiki, 2018b:61).

Obviously, Nigeria-South Africa relations, started on a good note under President Obasanjo and Mbeki. However, what could have caused a fray in both countries diplomatic relation happened. In 2004, two On-Air-Personalities (OAPs) – Revin John and Lloyd de Bruin in a Johannesburg radio station – 94.7 Highveld Stereo, humorously insulted the president of Nigeria, when they said on air that President Olusegun Obasanjo (who was in South Africa for President Thabo Mbeki's second term inauguration on April 27, 2004) probably carried cocaine in his luggage. The two presenters later made an unreserved apology to the Nigerian president and his government after a complaint was lodged at the Broadcasting Complaints Commission of South Africa (BCCSA) by Mojanku Gumbi, a legal adviser to President Thabo Mbeki (News24, 2004; Adebajo, 2007 cited in Umezurike and Lucky, 2015:69; Games, 2013a:23 cited in Seteolu and Okuneye, 2017:63).

While cooperating for the economic development of Africa, the "two regional Gullivers" (Adebajo, 2018) began to compete on the international plane. In 2005, when proposals for the expansion of the permanent seats of a reformed United Nations Security Council (UNSC) were being considered at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), Africa's triumvirate – Nigeria, South Africa and Egypt contended for the slot for Africa (Seteolu and Okuneye, 2017). Considering two criteria – contribution to international peace and security



and, economic might respectively, Nigeria as Africa's most populous country and largest democracy, has irregularly been ranked as one of the top five Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) to the United Nations peacekeeping operations while South Africa is technically regarded as the economic powerhouse of Africa (see Sule, 2013:17; Ogunnoiki 2018c:44).

Nigeria-South Africa relations from 1999 to 2007 no doubt was the 'Golden Age' in both countries relations. The indubitable fact often cited in support of this are, the thaw in both countries relations during President Obasanjo and Mbeki two terms in office and, their cooperation *vis-à-vis* promoting bilateral trade, the transformation of OAU to AU and, the formation of the AU programme and mechanism – NEPAD and APRM for good governance and economic development purposes on the continent.

On April 21, 2007, Nigeria's presidential election was conducted and, Umaru Musa Yar'Adua of the PDP was declared the winner of the controversial election by the electoral umpire, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) (Ogunnoiki, 2018a). In 2008, President Yar'Adua undertook a two-day State visit to South Africa from June 3-4. On September 21, 2008, President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa announced his resignation after the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the ANC recalled him on September 20. President Mbeki was recalled by the Committee after he was found to have interfered in the trial of his deputy, Jacob Zuma, who was facing corruption charges. Hence, Kgalema P. Motlanthe became the interim president of South Africa from September 25, 2008 to May 09, 2009.

On November 23, 2009, President Yar'Adua was flown out of the country to receive treatment for his kidney in Saudi Arabia. Sadly, he gave up the ghost on May 05, 2010. His vice, Dr. Goodluck E. A. Jonathan was sworn-in as the Acting President on May 06, 2010 (Adeola and Ogunnoiki, 2015; Ogunnoiki, 2018a). In South Africa, the ANC won the general elections which held on May 06, 2009. As the party with a majority seat in South Africa's parliament, the ANC elected Jacob Zuma as the president of the country. Zuma, not long after his election, was sworn into office on May 09, 2009.

Under the leadership of President Jonathan and Zuma, Nigeria-South Africa relations took a nosedive. In 2011, Nigeria and South Africa held different positions on two key regional issues. The first issue was on Côte d'Ivoire presidential election. South Africa supported President Laurent Gbagbo who refused to step down after he lost to Alassane Ouattara at the polls in the November 28, 2010, run-off election. Gbagbo's resolve to remain in power was opposed by Nigeria. The second issue was on the embattled Libyan leader, Colonel Muammar Gaddafi. In 2011, during the Arab Spring in the North African country, Nigeria recognised the National Transitional Council (NTC) as the government of Libya while South Africa stood by Colonel Muammar Gaddafi (Kirchick, 2011, Vanguard, 2011; Campbell, 2012, Adebisi, 2017).

In the month of March 2012, South Africa deported 125 Nigerians for possessing 'fake' yellow fever vaccination cards. Nigeria retaliated by deporting 84 South Africans (Adeola and Ogunnoiki, 2015; Ige, 2018). The misunderstanding was quickly cleared up by South Africa and a letter of apology was tendered to Nigeria (Adeola and Ogunnoiki, 2015; Umezurike and Lucky, 2015). Few months later, Nigeria and South Africa competed in the continental body – AU. During the election period for the AU Commission chair, Nigeria on the one hand supported the incumbent AU Commission Chairperson, Jean Ping from Gabon,



for a second term in office. South Africa on the other hand, stood behind its Home Affairs Minister, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, who emerged the winner of the keenly contested election on July 15, 2012. She (the ex-wife of President Zuma), became the first female to head the Commission (Maasho, 2012; Adebisi, 2017; Seteolu and Okuneye, 2017).

On April 16, 2013, President Jacob Zuma paid a one-day visit to Nigeria. Returning the State visit, President Goodluck Jonathan was in South Africa with his retinue from May 06 to 07, 2013, where he addressed the joint sitting of South Africa's parliament. The following year, Nigeria had something to celebrate about *vis-à-vis* her relations with South Africa. On the 7th of April, 2014, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) made known to the public the rebased GDP of Nigeria as \$509.9 billion. This automatically made Nigeria the largest economy in Africa ahead of South Africa and, the 26th biggest economy in the world (Ogunnoiki, 2018a). On a people-to-people relation, South Africa became the preferred destination for a number of secular Nigerian artistes who love to shoot musical videos of international standard. Nigerian artistes – Wizkid, Waje, Yemi Alade, Tiwa Savage etc. have shot high quality musical videos in collaboration with notable South African artistes. For example, Nigeria's music sensation, Davido, featured the South African duo 'Mafikizolo' in his song 'Tchelete' (Goodlife) (OkayAfrica, 2018).

On May 07, 2014, general elections were conducted in South Africa by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC). Following the victory of the ANC at the polls, President Jacob Zuma was elected as the president of the country by the ANC-dominated parliament in Cape Town. He was sworn into office as the 4th president of South Africa on May 24, 2014. President Zuma's second five-year term was another opportunity for South Africa to reset positively her relations with Nigeria. But unfortunately, that did not happen owing to two events that cast a shadow over both countries relations. In the third quarter of 2014, \$9.3 million was smuggled on a private plane owned by the President of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Pastor Ayo Oritsejafor, into South Africa for the purchase of arms by the federal government to combat the Islamic militant group, Boko Haram, on September 05, 2014 (Adeola and Ogunnoiki, 2015). A week after the arms money was flown into South Africa, a six-storey guesthouse belonging to the Synagogue Church of All Nations (SCOAN) in Ikotun-Egbe, Lagos State, collapsed, killing over 80 South Africans out of the 116 death toll on September 12, 2014.

In 2015, the biggest opposition party in Nigeria, the All Progressives Congress (hereafter APC) ended the 16-year rule of the PDP when Major-General (Rtd) Muhammadu Buhari and his running mate, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo defeated President Goodluck Jonathan in the presidential election on March 28, 2015. The historical change of the ruling party from PDP to APC did not so much improve Nigeria-South relations. On the economic front, the telecom regulatory body, the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) in October 2015, slammed a \$5.2 billion fine on the South African-owned telecom giant, MTN, for failing to adhere to the directive to disconnect unregistered Subscriber Identification Module (SIM) cards. The dilatory of MTN to deactivate the SIMs posed a security threat to Nigeria, as such SIM cards could have aided the covert operations of the Islamic terrorist group, Boko Haram. The fine was later reduced to \$1.671 billion i.e. 330 billion naira (Shapshak, 2016) after President Jacob Zuma two-day State visit to Nigeria from March 08 to 09, 2016. While in the country, President Zuma was given the seldom honour of addressing the joint session of Nigeria's National Assembly.



On the longstanding defence cooperation between the Nigerian Armed Forces and the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), it was given a boost following the visit of Nigeria's Chief of Army Staff, Lieutenant General Tukur Y. Buratai, to South Africa in January 2018 (Martin, 2018). South Africa is well known to be ahead of Nigeria in terms of military technology and hardware. Considering this fact, plans have been made for the collaboration of the Defence Industries Corporation of Nigeria (DICON) with South Africa's Denel Soc Ltd, on technology transfer and the procurement/production of military equipment in Nigeria to combat terrorism and other security threats to Nigeria's political independence and territorial integrity.

On February 14, 2018, President Jacob Zuma (who was facing corruption allegations), announced his resignation after the ANC asked him to step down on February 13, which he initially refused. The 75-year-old who escaped a possible 'vote of no confidence' in South Africa's parliament, was replaced with his deputy, Cyril Ramaphosa, a businessman and former chairman of MTN. Few months after he was elected by the parliament on February 15, 2018, President Cyril Ramaphosa on July 11, 2018, met with his Nigerian counterpart, President Muhammadu Buhari at the Presidential Villa in Abuja to strengthen the bilateral relations between both countries (Burke, 2018; Vanguard, 2018).

2019 is another general elections year in Nigeria and South Africa. For the incumbent president of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari of the ruling party APC, his mandate was renewed after he and his vice, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo won the presidential election that was conducted nationwide on February 23, 2019. In South Africa, general elections took place on May 08, 2019, which the ruling party ANC won the parliamentary election, albeit recording a drop in its majority vote percentage to 57.5%. The South African parliament which is dominated by the ANC, elected Cyril Ramaphosa as the president of South Africa on May 22, 2019. Following the re-election of President Buhari and Ramaphosa, many Nigerians and South Africans are hopeful that both leaders would urgently treat the festering wound in Nigeria-South Africa relations which is the infrequent xenophobic attacks on Nigerians domicile in South Africa.

Xenophobic Violence in Post-Apartheid South Africa: An Overview

Immigrants, especially those from African countries, have been the primary target of violent xenophobes since 1994 in a number of hostile township in South Africa's nine provinces (Eastern Cape, Free State, Gauteng, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Northern Cape, North West, KwaZulu-Natal, Western Cape). Much as the Chinese, Indians, Pakistanis etc. can be found in different parts of South Africa, frustrated xenophobes have more often than not, taken out their anger aggressively on the nationals of neighbouring countries in Southern Africa – Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe; Central Africa – the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC); West Africa – Nigeria and; East Africa – Somalia and Ethiopia. Considering this fact, several scholars and analysts alike have reached a consensus that, those perpetrating xenophobic attacks on mostly African immigrants in the rainbow nation, have specifically 'afrophobia' and not the generic 'xenophobia'.

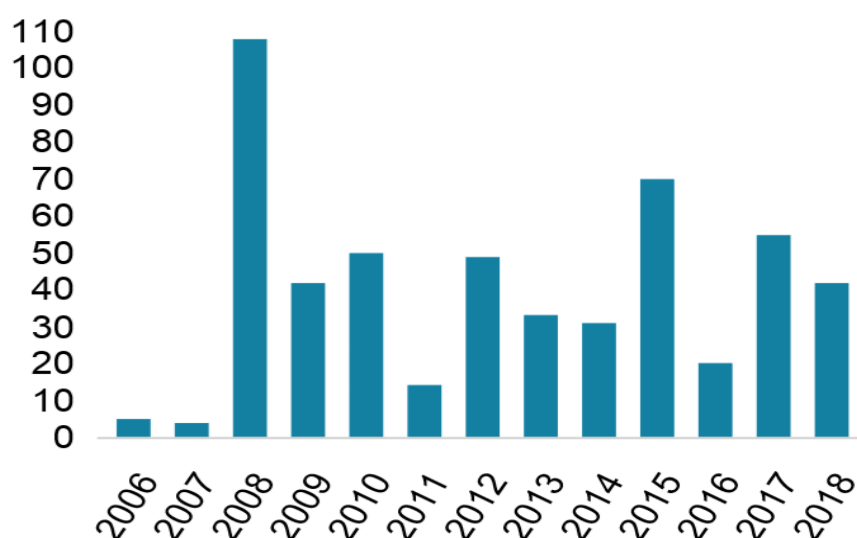
In South Africa, the manner in which xenophobic attacks have been carried out varies. African immigrants have either been beaten with a club, hacked to death with a machete, stabbed with a knife, shot at close range with a loaded gun, stoned to death or set ablaze



alive. Their business, home and personal effects are not spared in the attacks. They are usually looted, destroyed/burnt to ashes and stolen respectively.

On May 11, 2008, xenophobic attacks started in the township, Alexandra, in Johannesburg. By the time the anti-foreigner violence was over, 62 people had lost their lives (including South Africans) and more than 100,000 were displaced (Tlhabi, 2017). Since the 2008 anti-foreigner violence broke out, xenophobic attacks on foreign nationals have not abated. In April 2015, xenophobic attacks reared its ugly head in the rainbow nation which led to the death of 7 persons in the cities – Johannesburg and Durban (BBC News, 2019a; BBC News, 2019b). A day after the five-year National Action Plan to Combat Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance was launched on March 25, 2019, the latest wave of attacks erupted, which led to the death of at least two people in the coastal city of Durban, KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province (Mavhinga, 2019; Powell, 2019).

Threats, Attacks and Killings against Foreigners in South Africa



Source: Xenowatch, African Centre for Migration & Society – Extracted from BBC News South Africa: *How Common are Xenophobic Attacks?* (2019b)

The South African government has repeatedly condemned the dastardly act of the locals in the strongest terms, promising to investigate not only the ‘alleged’ xenophobic attacks on immigrants of African descent, but also the extra-judicial killing of Nigerians by the South African police. To date, many of the perpetrators of xenophobic attacks and extra-judicial killings of Nigerians are at large.

The Myths and Instigators of Xenophobic Attacks in Post-apartheid South Africa

According to Orovwuje (2017a; 2017b), the issue of xenophobia in contemporary South Africa is a profound psychosomatic carryovers and the negative product of the apartheid



regime that cannot be wished away from the collective consciousness of the people of the rainbow nation. Much as there are elements of truth in his argument that xenophobia is a psychological hangover from the apartheid era, there are myths behind the spike in xenophobic attacks in post-apartheid South Africa which would be looked into in the paragraph after this.

After the white minority rule in South Africa ended in 1994, black South Africans had high hopes of a prosperous country free of racial discrimination. Almost three decades after the country became a democracy, poverty is evident in some part of South Africa (a country endowed with solid minerals – gold and diamond) coupled with rising unemployment rate which was above 27% at the close of the year 2018 (BBC News, 2019a, BBC News, 2019b). Hence, the locals, out of sheer jealousy and hatred, have poured their anger and frustration on mostly African immigrants that are making a head way in their businesses. They claim that the immigrants are taking away the few jobs available in the country. The locals also chorus that the immigrants strain public services e.g. healthcare, education, electricity etc., are marrying their women in order to become legal citizens and, are into drug peddling, prostitution and criminal activities. Some, if not all of their claims, have been refuted. For example, in South Africa, a number of hard working foreigners have set up businesses in the informal sector of the country's economy which not only make them self-employed but create jobs for the locals.

The sporadic xenophobic attacks in the rainbow nation from 2008 did not erupt without instigators. In recent past, a traditional ruler, public office holder and political leader, triggered xenophobic attacks on foreign nationals with their reckless public utterances. On March 20, 2015, the Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini reportedly made an inciting comment in Pongola, KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province, likening foreigners in South Africa to 'head lice' and asked them to pack their bags and leave the country. In his words:

"Let us pop our head lice. We must remove ticks and place them outside in the sun. We ask foreign nationals to pack their belongings and be sent back," (Govender, 2015).

In December 2016, the Mayor of Johannesburg, Herman Mashaba made a public statement, blaming illegal immigrants for the crimes in the city and called on them to leave (Mavhinga, 2019). The latest xenophobic attacks, which started late March 2019, have been linked to President Cyril Ramaphosa remark during his campaign trail before the general elections on May 08, 2019. Quoting him verbatim:

"Everybody just arrives in our townships and rural areas and set up businesses without licences and permits, we are going to bring this to an end. And those who are operating illegally wherever they come from must now know..." (Hairsine, 2019).

The anti-foreigner violence that followed the president's remark forced many African immigrants to seek refuge in a mosque and police station. It therefore became necessary for the South African Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Mrs. Lindiwe Sisulu to hold talks with African countries ambassadors on the recent attacks which she did on April 01, 2019.



The Impact of Xenophobic Attacks on Nigeria-South Africa Relations

Nigeria has bore the brunt of most of the xenophobic attacks and extra-judicial killings in South Africa. According to the Senior Special Assistant to the President on Foreign Affairs and Diaspora, Mrs. Abike Dabiri-Erewa, no fewer than 117 Nigerians were extra-judicially killed in South Africa between 2016 and 2018 for one flimsy reason or the other (Vanguard, 2018). These egregious killings of Nigerians in South Africa has in several ways had an impact on Nigeria-South Africa relations.

Diplomatic Impact

Since the 2008 anti-foreigner violence, Nigeria and South Africa have been working towards patching their diplomatic relation. In 2013, Nigeria and South Africa signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to reinforce diplomatic ties and forestall future xenophobic attacks (Babalola, 2017). Nevertheless, the attacks on Nigerians have continued. In April 2015 during the Jonathan administration, Nigeria's Acting High Commissioner to South Africa, Martin Cobham, and the Consul-General, Uche Ajulu-Okeke, were 'invited' for consultation (and not 'recalled' as it was falsely reported by some media houses) following the xenophobic attacks in Durban and Johannesburg (Channels Television, 2015). Though, Nigeria, by taking such action, did not sever her relations with South Africa, such diplomatic move was seen by South Africa's Ministry of International Relations and Cooperation as an "unfortunate and regrettable step" (Brock and Dlodla, 2015).

Economic Impact

The spate of xenophobic attacks on Nigerians living in South Africa and the looting of their shops and stores led to somewhat a reprisal attack on a South African-owned company doing business in Nigeria. On February 23, 2017, the telecommunications giant, MTN, head office in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, was not only looted by some protesters but, office equipment were vandalised. Apart from MTN, there are over 100 South African companies (prior to 1999 there were only 4) operating in Nigeria's telecommunications, manufacturing, aviation, construction, banking, hospitality, entertainment and, oil and gas industry – Power Giant, Eskom Nigeria, South African Airways, South African Breweries (SAB miller), Stanbic IBTC Bank, MultiChoice Africa (operating DStv/GOtv), Umgeni Water and Shoprite to mention a few, which can become easy targets of reprisal attacks in the future if anti-foreigner violence against Nigerians in South Africa continues (DIRCO, 2010; Copley, 2017; Ismail and Sakariyau, 2017; Mbamalu, 2017; Unah, 2017).

Social and Psychological Impact

Xenophobic attacks in post-apartheid South Africa have over the years sowed the seed of fear in the minds of Nigerians. A number of them in South Africa no longer socialise freely with the locals as fellow African brothers and sisters with a shared history, values, norms etc., for fear of being attacked if not killed. As for the living Nigerian victims of anti-foreigner violence, it would not come as a surprise to discover that some of them are now suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Back home in Nigeria, many Nigerians are having a rethink of travelling down to South Africa for tourism, shopping, business, first degree/postgraduate studies etc. after listening/reading on print and electronic media the horrendous news on the killings of Nigerians residing in South Africa.



CONCLUSION

Nigeria and South Africa have experienced the good, bad and ugly in their diplomatic, trade, defence and socio-cultural relations over the years. Currently, as it was in recent past, the scapegoating of Nigerians in targeted attacks on African immigrants in South Africa has had a negative impact on the long-standing relations between both countries. The government of Nigeria, especially that of South Africa, must do the needful to avert xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in the nearest and distant future. In the light of the findings in this paper, recommendations have been made to majorly the government of Nigeria and South Africa which should not only be considered but implemented without delay.

RECOMMENDATIONS

South Africa now has the unfortunate reputation as one of the more hostile destinations in the world for African migrants (Claassen, 2014 cited in Claassen 2017:1). In order to repair the dented image of South Africa abroad, stamp out xenophobic attacks in South Africa and more importantly, repair Nigeria-South Africa relations, the following is strongly recommended:

- i) First thing first, the South African government should desist from labelling the intermittent anti-foreigner violence as ‘criminal acts’. Henceforth, it should acknowledge and accordingly address the issue as xenophobic attacks;
- ii) Political leaders, public office holders, public figures and traditional rulers should refrain from igniting and fueling xenophobic attacks in South Africa with their unguarded, inflammatory and discriminatory remarks;
- iii) The South African government should fight tooth and nail systemic corruption which is largely the cause of poverty and the high unemployment rate in the country;
- iv) Appropriate government agencies in South Africa should from time-to-time sensitise its nationals, especially the locals on immigrants;
- v) The South African government should fulfil its international obligation of protecting the rights of immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers in their country, irrespective of their race or sex as articulated in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the 1965 International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and, the 1981 African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR);
- vi) The government of South African should compensate Nigerians and other foreign nationals that have lost millions of rand worth of goods and properties owing to the reoccurring xenophobic attacks in the country;
- vii) The South African government should stop its ‘fire brigade approach’ to xenophobic attacks and set up an early warning system to monitor South African communities that are prone to anti-foreigner violence. With this mechanism in place, imminent attacks on foreign nationals would be reported to security forces and accordingly, prevented;



- viii) To deter xenophobes from carrying out anti-foreigner violence as well as the extra-judicial killings of immigrants by the police, the South African government should arrest, prosecute and convict the perpetrators;
- ix) Media houses in South Africa should join forces with appropriate government agencies to address the stereotyping of immigrants as criminals;
- x) The locals in the rainbow nation should develop the zeal for business rather than layback and blame African immigrants for their poverty and unemployment;
- xi) Nigeria and South Africa should block all loopholes *vis-à-vis* immigration policies and operations in their country which will prevent many Nigerians from leaving the country illegally and entering South Africa;
- xii) The Nigerian government should take concrete steps at getting its South African counterpart to investigate the recent and previous xenophobic attacks, and that those that have a hand in it be punished according to their municipal law;
- xiii) More importantly, the government of Nigeria should come alive to its responsibility of ensuring that good governance is the order of the day in the country which, to a great extent, will solve the perennial national problem of abject poverty and unemployment that has forced a number of Nigerians to relocate legally and illegally to South Africa for 'greener pasture'.

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