

## Periscoping the 2019 Nigerian Xenophobic Experience in South Africa

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### ABSTRACT

*The xenophobic attacks on foreign nationals residing in South Africa are no novel to Nigerian(s) and the entire African countries. The government of South Africa historically have not done anything tangible to tackle this problem that threatens her mutual cooperation with the African countries particularly Nigeria. This paper among other issues intends to assess xenophobic attacks against Nigerians in South Africa and its reoccurring impact on contemporary Nigeria-South African relations. Secondary method of data collection and content analysis approach were employed while using realist conflict theory to aid in the understanding of the phenomenon understudy. Our key findings revealed that xenophobic attacks against Nigerians in South Africa are well recorded, yet the South African government have not done anything tangible to stop its reoccurrence. We suggested the urgent need for governments of both countries to ensure that adequate policies and mechanisms are put in place to permanently hurt the ugly incidence and avoid it reoccurrence and ensure that this policies and mechanisms are enacted into their laws making xenophobia a crime punishable by the law.*

*Keywords: Xenophobia, bilateral relations, conflictual interest, Nigeria, South Africa.*

### 1. Introduction

Diplomatic relationship is built on mutual understanding with accruing mutual benefits. No nation goes into bilateral or multilateral relationship without thinking of its national interest first. In contradiction to the above, Nigeria appeared to be championing the course of Africa without corresponding benefit to her national interest. From independence to 2015 when South Africans intensified their xenophobic attacks on Nigerians, Nigeria had expended enormous amount of her national wealth on various countries in Africa. It is on record that Nigeria spent Sixty-One Billion US Dollars in fighting apartheid in South Africa (Ogbonnaya, Okorie, Madueke, & Chukwuma, 2017; Olaode, 2017).

More so, the African centeredness of Nigerian foreign policy cannot be divorced from the cultural values of Africa prior to the colonial incursion. In pre-colonial Africa for example,

common features of kinship, unity, agriculture, gift, traditional market and fixed division of labour pre-dominates the society (Niworu, 2018). These are the knots that tied Africa together in brotherhood. This is what informed the thoughts of Julius Nyerere of Tanzania when he said, traditional African society lived according to the principle of “Ujamaa” meaning family hood in Swahili. He said Africans lived together and worked together because that is how they understood life. The resources of their joint effort were divided equally according to well understood customs and norms. Traditional Africans thought of themselves as one and all their languages and behaviour emphasized their unity. The basic goods and life according to Nyerere are “our land, our food and our cattle”. This mode of production and wealth distribution was successful in traditional Africa because of mutual respect for one another, sharing all the basic goods and everyone had an obligation to work (Niworu, 2018).

The South African government is always prompt in explaining that xenophobia is not in any way South African in character and that all those involved in the act would be brought to book. Unfortunately, the world is yet to be told who were responsible for the first xenophobic attacks and how many of them have been tried (Ogbonnaya, Okorie, Madueke, & Chukwuma, 2017; Olaode, 2017). What is important here to underscore is the fact that the target of South Africa’s xenophobia even included the citizens of Nigeria. The Nigerian government compelled the deduction of monies from salaries of civil and public servants for the purpose of the liberation movement in South Africa, which shows that Nigerians deserve a little respect and just treatment. The big question is this; is it that South Africans did not and do not know the truth? Or did the government of South Africa consciously adopt a short term memory? There are so many unanswered questions, but all these submission boils down to the fact that the onus of educating the masses lies on the government. We cannot overemphasise the impact of xenophobic attacks (Ogbonnaya, Okorie, Madueke, & Chukwuma, 2017).

The unsavoury fallouts from the recent xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in South Africa have lead to a strain in the economic and political relationship that exists between the two countries. On Thursday, 23rd February, 2017 irate Nigerian youths, under the platform of the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) laid siege on offices of MTN in Abuja, while the Senate broached on possible reprisal, including preventing MTN, DSTV and Shoprite from doing business in the country. The Militants equally warned the South Africans that the only

way their citizens in Nigeria could be safe, is if they halt hostilities against their compatriots in South Africa doing legitimate business. With the brewing tension between the two economic giants of Africa, it is only a matter of time before an estimated N1.5 trillion economic relationship between them would be affected. Nigeria is a major supplier of oil and gas to South Africa, while South Africa ships in automobile, wine and paperboard to Nigeria among other product (Ogbonnaya, Okorie, Madueke, & Chukwuma, 2017; Akuki, 2012). If Nigeria has any policy on South Africa, it is undoubtedly that of “No Compromise with Apartheid”, as propounded in 1963 by Dr. Jaja Wachukwu, the then Minister of External Affairs. Apart from that, it can be said that Nigeria has a reactive policy which is more declaratory and less retaliatory. This has afforded the South African government, the luxury of speaking from both sides of its mouth in the face of xenophobic atrocities of its citizen against foreigners.

Recently, Nigerians living in South Africa came under attack by local vigilantes. Many suffered only the destruction of their homes and business while some who lost their lives were not so lucky. This report attracted the usual condemnation from Nigerian authorities (Ogbonnaya, Okorie, Madueke, & Chukwuma, 2017).

Amidst this statement of problem between Nigerians in South Africa and South Africans, this paper tends to disentangle the challenges that affect Nigerians and South Africa political economic relations in our contemporary time with regards to xenophobia in South Africa. It is quite disheartening that despite the records of Africa as the centre piece of Nigeria foreign policy even to the detriment of her citizenry and her national interest which is supposed to be the first and foremost guiding principle of the nation’s foreign policy, it is shocking that attacks against Nigerians in South Africa keep reoccurring at a glaring rate and out of the above backdrop the idea of this paper emerged. That been said, one could then ask certain inalienable questions such as, what actually causes the reoccurring xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in South Africa and how does it affect the political economic relations of both countries? Have the government of both countries in anyways made efforts to tackle these xenophobic experience of Nigerians in South Africa and how can the menace be tackled? In that context our aim in this paper would be to find out the cause of the reoccurring xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in South Africa and assess its effects on the political economic relations of both countries and also discuss the efforts made so far to address the xenophobic attacks on

Nigerians examining if the government both countries had made any effort to curb the ugly incidence with a view to chat way forward.

## **1.2 Significance of the Study**

This paper will be of an immeasurable value to international relations and diplomacy scholars and researchers and of interest to general African public especially Nigeria with her immediate West African neighbours. It will serve as an addition to the academic research of the fields of Political Sciences, Social Sciences and the Humanities etc.

## **2.1 Empirical Literature**

The review on Nigeria-South Africa relations centres on what Landsberg (2012) describes as volatility and tension in asserting their leadership roles. The literatures written prior to 1999 emphasized on Nigeria's indispensable roles in dismantling the apartheid system in South Africa; and how the post-apartheid state would recompense what Nigeria had done. Literatures from 1999 till date had been pre-occupied with the analyses of how to reach a détente, revive the sickening economies, and unveiling the love-hate relationship that is a recurrent decimal in Nigeria-South Africa relations (Seteolu and Okuneye, 2017).

Nigeria began relations with South Africa in the early 1960s against the background of the struggle to emancipate colonized African states especially in Southern Africa, Namibia, Angola, Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa. The African orientation of Nigeria's foreign policy is evident in the declaration of the former Minister of External Affairs, Mr. Jaja Wachukwu, in 1961 that colonialism and all its manifestations must be ended and that Nigeria would be failing in its duty if it did not use its full resources, intellectual, moral and material, in the struggle for the emancipation of the rest of Africa (Seteolu and Okuneye, 2017; Agbu et al., 2013: 1). The apartheid question was a pre-occupation of Balewa's foreign policy; the state-sponsored massacre in Sharpeville on 21st March 1960 that led to the killing of seventy two blacks and several wounded by the white minority police offered the Nigerian government a leverage to officially intervene in the apartheid regime.

Seteolu and Okuneye (2017) Ngwenya (2010) and Obi (2015) agree that the relations between Nigeria and South Africa improved dramatically with the creation of the BNC as a mechanism

for reinvigorating the inactive engagement. Obi reiterates South Africa's position in global economic governance; and how the development of Africa is predicated on South Africa's strategic partnership with Nigeria, which is the single continental economic power without BRICS. He insists Nigeria and South Africa should co-operate and avoid competing with a view to attain regional development aspirations. More so, Obi avers that the Nigerian state is a significant partner of South Africa in projecting a meaningful African agenda for engaging with global powers. He attributes the diplomatic setbacks in Nigeria-South Africa relations to the failure of leaderships to build relations that would endure (Seteolu and Okuneye, 2017).

Obi (2015) agrees with Otto (2012) that the relations maintained by Thabo Mbeki and Olusegun Obasanjo was built on personalities rather than independent foreign policy structures and institutions. To Otto, the relations have been cordial in trade and investment relations; but it has suffered at the political level. Obi and Otto cohere that the unstable political relation explains the inability of Nigeria and South Africa to sustain cordial relations beyond a few years of Obasanjo and Mbeki's tenure. Otto reasons that despite the problems in the bi-lateral engagement of the continental giants, the development of the region can be achieved when the states go beyond contest and rise above petty rivalry and unhealthy competition. He canvasses for the implementation of developmental policies and prioritization of mutual interests for their citizens and region.

Amuwo (2014) illustrates the dwindling influence of Nigeria in continental affairs amid South Africa's strides in the economic realm, governance and infrastructure. He argues that the Nigerian governing elite are preoccupied with domestic issues at the expense of African policy. Amuwo avers that bilateral relations have been marred by conflict citing the struggle for the chair of African Union, and the seizure of Nigeria's \$15 million (ZAR 164.6 million) meant for arms purchase by the South African government (Seteolu & Okuneye, 2017).

Agbu (2010) examines the prospect of future relations and interrogates domestic obstacles to healthy bilateral relations. He asserts the South African bureaucracy is largely occupied by whites who are less willing to forge relations with the most populous Black Country in the region. Conversely, the Nigerian infrastructural base problem, inadequate power supply and poor road networks are major impediments to its growth. The Nigeria-South Africa relations

have been described by Agbu (2010) as bumpy albeit cordial political relations. He argues, however, that the rivalry and competition between Nigeria and South Africa should not justify the fragile relations; and prescribes a strategic partnership in different aspects of relations (Seteolu and Okuneye, 2017).

The Nigerian government intervened through the ban on the importation of South African goods into the country (Seteolu and Okuneye, 2017; Agbu, 2010), and it became a leading voice on sanctions on South Africa in the international community. The expulsion of South Africa from the Commonwealth of Nations in 1961; expulsion of South African Dutch Reform Church from Nigeria and the cancellation of contracts awarded to South African companies demonstrated the Nigerian government despised the inhuman apartheid regime (Seteolu and Okuneye, 2017; Agbu et al., 2013).

Nigeria chaired the United Nations Security Council during the apartheid period till the collapse of the obnoxious economic and political system in 1994. The Nigeria state was committed to the South African question to the extent it became a member of the Frontline States despite its geographical distance to South Africa (Seteolu and Okuneye, 2017; Olanrewaju, 2013:51). The apartheid system repressed blacks and socially disaggregated the society into White, Black or Bantu and coloured people with mixed descent. The Asians, Indians and Pakistanis were later added as the fourth group. The expropriation of land owned by the black majority, its appropriation by White minority through institutionalized white supremacist policy was a critical aspect of apartheid's political economy. The African National Congress (ANC), Pan African Congress (PAC), and South African Youth Revolutionary Council (SAYRC) emerged within the context of this segregation policy.

The suspension of Nigeria led to contradictory realities for Nigeria and South Africa; the political and diplomatic isolation of Nigeria coincided with the increasing role of South Africa in regional affairs. The Nigerian despot, General Sanni Abacha, withdrew the Super Eagles from the African Cup of Nations held in South Africa, thereby drawing the suspension of the Confederation of African Football (CAF). The Nigeria and South Africa relations deteriorated with the verbal tirades between General Abacha and former President Mandela. The 1999

political transition in Nigeria offered the context for the restoration of civil rule and renewal of relations with South Africa.

Games (2013a) identified the prevalent features of Nigeria and South Africa relations as co-operation and competition. He posits that the type and level of bi-lateral relations have been defined by leadership issues and the differences in the countries' strategies in approaching continental problems. He cited the democratic attitude of Nelson Mandela and the despotic disposition of General Sani Abacha as the reason for the unfriendly engagement between 1995 and 1999; the efforts and established friendship of Thabo Mbeki and Olusegun Obasanjo as the factors responsible for cordial relations in post-1999. To Games, bi-lateral relations in the Jonathan and Zuma administrations almost crumbled due to the domestic policy emphasis of Nigeria and the South Africa's preoccupation with international issues beyond Africa (Seteolu and Okuneye, 2017).

Games posits that despite the often conflict nature of Nigeria and South Africa relations, there is a certain degree of cooperation on African issues. He perceives Nigeria and South Africa as powerful and emerging markets whose active participation at the levels of G-20 and BRICS would engender development. He advocates for cooperation of the powers and discouraged the promotion of self-seeking ambitions on the probable greatest power in the region. Games attributes Nigeria's inability to measure to South Africa in the economic realm to the local issues of the lack of institutions, poor infrastructure, and the heavy dependence on crude oil as the major import into South Africa. Games submissions are laden with subjective assertions that appear to be in defence of the impenetrable nature of the South African economy. He justifies the rigid nature of South Africa's economy as a function of the naivety of Nigerians to understand and compete favourably in the business and market domains in South Africa. The author placed little emphasis on the attitude of white dominated South African bureaucracy that has been reluctant to promote relations with black Nigerians (Seteolu & Okuneye, 2017; Agbu, 2010), a factor that hinders a level playing ground for Nigerian business players. He did not demonstrate in substantial terms the implications of xenophobic attacks in South Africa on the capacity of Nigerians to effectively penetrate the South African market.

Banjo (2010) relies on the collision between Nigeria's former Head of State, Abacha and South African's icon, Mandela to discuss the contradictions inherent in Nigeria and South Africa relations. He observes, however, that the Bi-National Commission (BNC) aided diplomatic rapprochement in Obasanjo and Mbeki's tenure. He insists on the actualisation of African potentials and the need to give credence to the probable impact of foreign relations on ordinary citizens. He avers that the strengthening of BNC is critical to improving bilateral economic relations and achieving synergy through the convergence of resources (Seteolu and Okuneye, 2017).

Sega and Lekaba (2014) appraise Nigeria-South Africa relations amid the rebasing of Nigeria's GDP in April 2014. The scholars examine the competitive and cooperative pattern of existing bilateral relations and the likely future gains at bilateral and regional level. In their view, the economic growth recorded by Nigeria as shown in the rebasing of its GDP signpost the likely gains of flourishing intra-African trade (Seteolu and Okuneye, 2017). Sega and Lekaba (2014) contend that the economic growth in Nigeria cannot be disconnected from the huge investment of South African companies in the Nigerian economy. South Africa is, therefore, rated by these scholars as a major player in the expanded and liberalized Nigerian economy (Seteolu and Okuneye, 2017).

To Sega and Lekaba (2014), the economic growth in Nigeria has been achieved through the co-operation of Nigeria and South Africa albeit the domestic challenges and contradictions that confront the respective national economies. The scholars argue these problems, particularly the Boko Haram challenge, could be contained through a collaborative effort relying on South Africa's strong military base rather than solicit external intelligence that derides Africa's intelligence. The authors insist the Nigerian state cannot be a regional leader as a result of its internal challenges, specifically the inability to recover the abducted Chibok girls from the Boko Haram Sect. This argument is faulty and ignores the global nature of terrorism, which makes counter-terrorism measures difficult. This position concedes that Nigeria's security architecture was not at its best when the school girls were abducted, but it is not sufficient to undermine the country's regional status and influence (Seteolu and Okuneye, 2017).



Adekeye and Landsberg (2003:171-204) appraise the rivalry in Nigeria-South Africa relations to fill the hegemonic lacuna in the region. These scholars contend the role of Nigeria and South Africa as hegemonies would likely induce anti-hegemonic alliances and deepen regional rivalries. Olaitan (Nigerian Tribune, 29 April, 2003) shares the view of Adekeye and Landsberg (2003) when he compared leadership roles of Nigeria and South Africa. He describes Nigeria's leadership role as mirage and predicates his submission on the predatory nature of power politics of the political class in Nigeria as against the engagement of young generations in the governance of South Africa (Seteolu and Okuneye, 2017).

## 2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Nigerian and South African relations would be understood better through the Realist Conflict theory. This theory was propounded by Donald Campbell, but was expanded by other scholars during the 20th century (Campbell, 1965). Shrief, Harvey, White, Hood and Sherif (1961) suggested that competition for access to limited resources results in a conflict between groups. The realist conflict theory takes into account the sources of conflict between groups, which include incompatible goals and competition over limited resources (Shrief, et al, 1961). The theory is used to explain the conflict, negative prejudices, and discrimination that occur between South Africans whose perception anchors on rising competition of the same resources with Nigerian residents in their country. The realistic conflict theory states that "whenever there are two or more groups that are seeking the same limited resources, this will lead to conflict, negative stereotypes, beliefs and discrimination between the groups" (Ajah, 2017; Okasana, 2008). The conflict can lead to increasing animosity toward the groups and can cause an on-going feud to develop. Conversely, conflict, negative stereotypes, beliefs and discrimination between groups can potentially be reduced in situations where two or more groups are seeking to obtain some super ordinate goals. Super ordinate goals are mutually-desirable goals that cannot be obtained without the participation of two or more groups. Because of its emphasis on group behaviours and conflict, the realistic conflict theory is also referred to as the realistic group conflict theory.

This theory captures the gamut of xenophobia in Africa, and how its reoccurrence has made the African project an object of mockery. The Realist Conflict theory applies to the situation

facing Nigeria and South Africa owing to the competition that exist over limited resources in South Africa, the nationals perceive non-nationals especially Nigeria, as the enemy. Nevertheless, both nations do not view their relationship from the mutual standpoint and is equally not interested in participating in super ordinate goals which cannot be achieved without the input of each state. South Africans are not hostile in nature, but the issue of xenophobia that is reoccurring amongst them, is traceable to the conflict that exists between them and foreigners. Little wonder they accuse foreigners of taking away their jobs.

### **The Gap in Literature**

Olaitan (Nigerian Tribune, 2003) insists there is no competition in a real sense and argues the most populous country is chasing the shadow of leadership without popular recognition. The foregoing review captured the periodic rivalry and competition in Nigeria and South Africa relations, which are based on the pursuit of conflicting national interests. The Nigeria and South Africa relations should respond to national strategic interests and regional imperatives in order to lead the region's development strives rather than focusing on conflicts of scarce resources between the citizens of the two countries. It appears that the South African government and her people are yet to recognise and appreciate the brotherly kindness and gestures that Nigeria and Nigerians in South Africa had showed to the people of South Africa. We then intend to periscope the relations between the two countries and its citizens. In that context our aim in this paper would be to find out the cause of the reoccurring xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in South Africa and assess its effects on the political economic relations of both countries and also discuss the efforts made so far to address the xenophobic attacks on Nigerians examining if the government of both countries had made any effort to curb the ugly incidence with a view to chat the way forward.

### **3.1 Research Methodology**

We employed secondary method of data collections which includes use of text books, magazine, articles, and journals to gather materials for this paper. While content analysis involves the use of historical and documentary evidence to analyse the phenomenon

understudy. This is because to meet Nigerians in South Africa who directly or indirectly experienced the xenophobia in South Africa and South Africans who engage in the act of xenophobia will be an expensive task and too tedious for a paper of this nature.

#### 4.1 Examining the effects of 2019 Xenophobic Attacks on Nigeria-South Africa Relations

To capture the effects of this phenomenon on the Nigerian society, we chose to illustrate it with some pictures seen below. Figure 1a and 1b shows typical pictures of some Nigerians repatriated from South Africa following xenophobic violence arrived in Lagos on the 4th of September 2019. And Shoprite surrounded with some Nigerian police officers.



Fig.1a: some Nigerians repatriated from South Africa Fig.1b: some Nigeria Police Officers seen around Shoprite. Source: Bukola Adebayo, CNN. <http://media.voltron.voanews.com>

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of September 2019, Nigerians living in Johannesburg, Pretoria and surrounding areas were attacked by South Africans. Many suffered the loss of their businesses and homes, while some lost their lives. Nonetheless, several explanations have been given as liable, as to why Nigerians are attacked, the most humorous of which is the argument that South Africans involved in the attack are working on false information that foreigners, like Nigerians, stripped them of all the jobs available for the young men in the country, making the citizens jobless and Nigerians slowly taking over their economy (Umezinwa, 2019).

There are numerous effects of the xenophobic attack on Nigerians. Firstly, this attack has created hate in the minds of Nigerians leading to Nigerians having a negative impression and don't want to be associated with South Africans. Two of Nigeria's leading artists, Burna Boy

and Tiwa Savage, stated that they were boycotting South Africa in reaction to the unrest in Johannesburg; Nigerian Government declared on 4th September 2019 that it was boycotting the World Economic Forum on Africa currently being held in Cape Town to condemn the violence. South African music is no longer been played, listened to or danced to by Nigerians. one reason why South Africans should spare Nigerians and other Africans from their xenophobic attacks should be Nigerians ‘ contribution to the liberation of black South Africans during Apartheid White rule (Umezinwa, 2019).

Secondly, the unemployment rate will increase as most South African owned businesses in Nigeria that Nigerians work for were destroyed by Nigerians as a reprisal for killing Nigerians in South Africa, while some shut down to avoid been destroyed for example the South African mobile company MTN. The implication of this is Nigerians working in this companies were displaced of their jobs leading to the increase in unemployment rate, aside from this reason, many Nigerians in South Africa have decided to come back home, and this will also increase unemployment as the educated Nigerians among them will join the unemployed wagon in the country. Life in Nigeria is very hard; it is very difficult to get a job with your academic qualification (Umezinwa, 2019). A branch of the South African supermarket Shoprite has been vandalised in the Lagos neighbourhood of Lekki, an eyewitness has told the BBC. One eyewitness reported seeing two bodies lying on the road outside the shopping centre where the supermarket is based. Cars stuck in nearby traffic were also vandalised as their passengers fled. The authorities have not confirmed the reports of casualties (Maseko, 2019).

According to Sahara Reporters, Johannesburg, South Africa with anti-immigrant violence sweeping parts of South Africa, Nigeria on Wednesday urged its citizens to refrain from vengeance – even as at least two major South African-owned companies have suspended some operations there because of attacks. In a Twitter post, the information ministry for Nigeria – the continent’s biggest economy – said the federal government “has appealed to Nigerians not to attack South African companies operating in Nigeria in retaliation for the ongoing xenophobic attacks against Nigerians in South Africa.”But days of looting and attacks on South African businesses believed owned by foreigners have had a ripple effect. The South African grocery chain Shoprite Holdings said some stores operating in its domestic market, as well as in Nigeria and Zambia, have been closed following attacks, Reuters news service reported

Wednesday. And the South African telecom operator MTN shuttered stores in Nigeria following attacks in several cities there, citing safety concerns for customers and staff. Vandals damaged its offices in the south eastern city of Uyo and set fire to MTN property in the southwest city of Ibadan on Tuesday, according to the Associated Press (Sahara Reporters, Sept 4, 2019; Taylor, 2019).

According to her the ministers of foreign affairs in both countries would ensure the implementation of the mechanisms as part of the efforts to curb xenophobic attacks in South Africa. The latest xenophobic attacks in South Africa have ignited the long-standing tensions between the country and Nigeria. These are captured in the retaliatory attacks on South African businesses in Nigeria and the diplomatic outrage by Nigerian authorities. Nigeria also boycotted the recent World Economic Forum (WEF) meeting in Cape Town. More critical was the temporary closure of South African missions in Abuja and Lagos and Nigeria's decision to recall its ambassador. But in the larger scheme of things, xenophobia is a distraction from the leadership role that Nigeria and South Africa should play on the continent on fundamental issues of immigration and economic integration (Taylor, 2019).

Moreover, no life deserves to be lost not even a soul, Xenophobic attack has led to the loss of many Nigerian lives, properties, homes and many of the lives lost are breadwinners of their family that left Nigeria because of the current economic problem to search for greener pasture in South Africa (Umezina, 2019). Some Nigerians in South Africa have refused to return home despite repeated xenophobic attacks. Citing unemployment, insecurity, kidnappings, poor infrastructure and epileptic power supply, and the reason are returning to the country is returning to a "hardship zone." So, in my opinion, the government's immediate response to the relentless xenophobic attacks on its people should be to devise measures that will make it easier for Nigerians to make a living here. Where jobs are available and the availability of business loans is not an issue, travelling to foreign countries for the purpose of basic economic sustenance and large scale direct foreign investment in the economies of other countries will be reduced (Umezina, 2019).

However, scholars had eluded some reasons put forward by the indigenes of South Africa as the cause of xenophobic grievances and attacks launched on foreigners or immigrants residing in their land. Some of these causes could be categorized as follow:

**The Economic effects:** Some of the citizens of South Africa perceive foreigners in their land as a threat to their economy. In the course of striving for the scarce resources, the indigenes believed that the immigrants who are in South Africa are there to snatch their jobs or employments and income which they think is leading to the high rate of unemployment, inequality in income and poverty in their land (Masenya, 2017; Moge kwu, 2005). South Africans' perceptions on competitive micro-enterprises handled by the indigenes and those managed by the foreigners where the level of customers' patronage on immigrants' shops or businesses are higher compared to those running by the indigenes is part of the differences in the country's economy posed by foreigners in the country (McDonald & Jacob, 2005).

The imbalances noticed in South African economy triggered the maltreatment meted on the foreigners living in the country. As a result of this, Misago opined that: Local residents in these areas have become increasingly convinced that foreign nationals are to blame for all their socioeconomic ills and hardships including poverty, unemployment, poor service delivery, lack of business space and opportunities, crimes, prostitution, drug and alcohol abuse, and deadly diseases (cited in Akinola, 2018). It is important to understand that, the people's migration in Africa irrespective of the duration may be either for social, economic or political reasons. Economically, immigrants are found in various countries in search for employment opportunities in order to improve their livelihood (Oni & Okunade, 2018). The desire of immigrants to search for lucrative jobs in Africa was due to the global desire for the increase in the demand for labour. Hence, people move from one location to another to access basic amenities, education, and healthcare among others, which can add value into their lives (United Nations Population Fund ([UNFPA], 2015).

The attachment of economic factor as part of the reasons why the natives of South Africa are attacking the foreign nationals accounts for numerous derogatory names given to African by the South Africans. The Magrigamba is a name given to immigrants from West Africa which implies that the person came to South Africa with nothing but will go back to their countries

with properties, monies and wealth acquired in South Africa (Tafira, 2011). Similarly, the derogatory identities like, Nigeria or foreigner which means the native of Nigeria and foreigners in South Africa, respectively (Oni & Okunade, 2018; Tafira, 2011). The literature has revealed that the skill and initiative which the natives of South Africa lack about trading or business is what made them to have assumed that, the foreigners have taken away their jobs from them (Fagbadebo & Ruffin, 2018). This has made Lindiwe Zulu, the South Africa's Minister for Small Business to have posited that: Let me tell you why they are better at running shops than the local owners – they have a great network system. And also that is how they live. From the moment they are born, they are introduced to trade. Their mothers, uncles- everyone trades. They started at an early age (Zwane, 2014). The Minister revealed further that the so called “secret” behind the successful records of foreign nationals business in South Africa is the ability to economize the resources (Fagbadebo & Ruffin, 2018). He stressed further that: Our people need to learn what other people are doing. They must ask themselves; how are they able to be successful in a space where we fail? Then they must look, learn and do the same. They must do it; the government cannot, the ministry cannot. We cannot just give money away. We have no money to give (Zwane, 2014).

Similarly, evidence from the literature has shown that the foreign immigrants in South Africa have contributed to the economic and other developments taking place in the country. This is argued by Meintjies that: Studies have shown that immigrants are, in fact, net contributors, not parasites. Immigrants are, on average, healthier, more energetic and better educated than people in the host population. Consequently, they draw comparatively less on social welfare and other social services. Many pay tax and, through their entrepreneurship, make a positive injection into local economic development (Maharaj, 2002). Aside from the claims that the foreign immigrants take the jobs of South Africans, literature has equally argued it that, an average native of South Africa are lazy (Shulika & Sabi, 2018). According to Tafira, (2018), majority of the South African's blacks, who see themselves as native of the country do not considering looking for job an option, rather they utilize their time idling or sitting in township. He posited further that: While these South African men are accusing immigrants of taking all the jobs for less pay, immigrants and South African women generally say South African men are lazy, do not like to work, and kill their time drinking, sleeping and playing dice, where they may win a

couple of Rands and then drink with the earnings... Alexandra women are not keen to have relationships with these kinds of men. Unemployed men are seen as both dom Khanda (thick-headed) and omahlalela (loafers) unable to provide and both inadequate and not real men. Women, rather, are looking for men who are either employed or are seen to make money in other ways. This kind of man happens to be the immigrants (Tafira, 2018). Therefore, the attitudes among some native of South African, particularly the blacks toward their means of livelihood has made their women to always patronize the immigrants (Saleh, 2015; Tafira, 2018).

The jealousy among the unemployed South Africans arosed the neo-apartheid relations which resulted in the killings and attacks of the innocent immigrants living in their country, similarly, other reasons for xenophobic violence in South Africa could be grouped as follows; The Political backup: Scholars have observed that one of the causes of the persistence in the attacks of foreign nationals in South Africa is simply because the perpetrators enjoy the supports of relevant government apparatus or departments in South Africa (Masenya, 2017). As submitted by Klotz (2016), and Crush and Ramachandran (2017), the relevant government departments who are supposed to protect the human rights in the State has been found to be biased in its dealing, exposing the immigrants to all sorts of abuses, attacks and discriminations to the point of losing lives and properties.

It is important to note at this point that, as long as the government of South Africa does not rise up to curb the menace with full implementation and enforcement of laws or policies prohibiting such acts, the lives and properties of foreign nationals will continue to be unsecured. The Perception of South Africans on Non-indigenes: Scholars associated xenophobia in South Africa to some of the heritage inculcated in South Africans during apartheid (Kalitanyi & Visser, 2010). The racism in South Africa's history has made the indigenes of the country to have the perception that the foreigners particularly the blacks who are residing in the country are there to hijack their economy, spread deadly diseases, and above all taken over their land from them (Zouandé, 2011). It is the belief of some South Africa's indigenes that the best way to deal with the matter is to make lives uncomfortable for the foreigners who are in the country in order to leave and return to their various native lands. **Cultural Norms and Beliefs:** The xenophobic attacks on non-indigenes in South Africa were not only confined to foreign



nationals but also to any person that does not belong to the dominant groups in the country. For a South African not to be attacked, the person must be either Zulu or Xhosa. Citizens of South Africa who do not belong to these dominant groups will be seen as foreigners (Gumede, 2015; Masenya, 2017).

The dominant groups in South Africa prevented their children from getting married to people tagged as foreigners and vice versa. This attitude has made it easier for the perpetrators of the evils through xenophobia to carry out their discriminate killings and attacks on foreigners. Attitude of South African Government towards xenophobia in the country: The whole blame of the xenophobic attacks on foreign nationals in South Africa has arguably apportioned on its government (Fayomi, Chidozie, & Ayo, 2015; Masenya, 2017). The government of South Africa has been accused of nonchalant attitude to enact laws or policies that will bring end to the illicit acts in the country and at the same time its failure to bring the perpetrators to book (Akindès, 2009). In as much as the government of a country is not ready to take the bull by the horn by dealing decisively with the criminally minded people in the society, such environment will not know peace as the hoodlums will take advantage to carry out their nefarious activities.

Therefore, molestation and frustration experienced by Nigerians and other foreign nationals who are residing in South Africa has caused serious havoc to many in the country. Some become widows or widowers, while some children become orphans and many whose properties were destroyed or carted away by thieves under the pretence of xenophobia are subjected to series of financial difficulties. Hence, the country whose nationals have witnessed any of the above conditions or more may be influenced to redefine its foreign policy direction towards South Africa. To this end, it will not be in the interest of Africa to experience disunity or any act that can cause crisis between and among the African countries.

The foreign nationals in South Africa, particularly the Africans, are having their countries contributing to the development of the continent in either stability contribution as the case of Nigeria; others are contributing in the areas of economic socials and political settings of the continent. Therefore, the earlier Africa realizes the need for the continent to avert all forms of racism or discrimination, the better for it to promote the existing cooperation among the African countries for the continent to develop.

#### 4.2 EFFORTS TO CURB XENOPHOBIC ATTACKS IN BOTH COUNTRIES

The picture in figure 2 below shows the Nigeria police force officers shoot canister of tear gas to disperse Nigerians during a demonstration and attacks against South Africa's owned shops in Abuja the Nigerian capital on September 4, 2019. This establishes how loving and friendly Nigerian government and Nigerians are to foreign nationals resident in their country.



Fig.2: Policemen shoot canister of tear gas to disperse people during a demonstration and attacks against South Africa's owned shops in Abuja, Nigeria, Sept. 4, 2019. [http://media.voltron.voanews.com/Drupal/01live-166/styles/sourced/s3/2019-09/afp\\_nigeria\\_south\\_africa\\_04Sept19.jpg](http://media.voltron.voanews.com/Drupal/01live-166/styles/sourced/s3/2019-09/afp_nigeria_south_africa_04Sept19.jpg)

The South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa warned and condemned a wave of looting and violence mostly targeting nationals of other African countries resident in their country. By his words, "There can be no justification for any South African to attack people from other countries". Dozens of people were arrested in Johannesburg on Monday. At least five people have been killed in the unrest. Other African governments have issued warnings to their citizens over the violence. Further he reiterated that attacks on businesses run by "foreign nationals is something totally unacceptable, something that we cannot allow to happen in South Africa," Mr Ramaphosa said in a video posted to Twitter, "I want it to stop immediately," he added (Maseko, 2019).

Separately, the African Union (AU) issued a statement condemning the "despicable acts" of violence "in the strongest terms". Police fired tear gas, rubber bullets and stun grenades in an

attempt to quell the unrest on Monday. The surge in violence also saw mobs loot shops, torch vehicles, and target Lorries that were being driven by foreign nationals. Violence continued on Tuesday in Johannesburg's Alexandra Township. Some angry residents in the city are calling on the government to deport undocumented migrants (the BBCs, Nomsa Maseko, 2019). But one Nigerian businessman, whose shop was targeted by looters, told the BBC that foreign nationals in South Africa were subjected to "a lot of allegations and lies because this is not a criminal attack. It is a xenophobic attack." he said (Maseko, 2019).

Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari sent an envoy to South Africa on Tuesday to "express Nigeria's displeasure over the treatment of her citizens". In a statement, the country's high commission in South Africa described the situation as "anarchy". The government alleges that Nigerian-owned businesses were targeted in Johannesburg and it has called on Nigerians to come forward to report what has happened to them (Maseko, 2019). The statement refers to reported attacks on foreign lorry drivers. The South African IOL news site says that there have been "numerous incidents" of vehicles being looted. But South Africa's police minister, Bheki Cele, said on Monday that "criminality rather than xenophobia was to blame for the 'senseless violence', xenophobia is used as an excuse," he told reporters after visiting Johannesburg's Central Business District, where much of the unrest has been taking place. He added that "Nothing... has sparked any form of conflict between the South Africans and foreign nationals" (Maseko, 2019). This isn't the first time the country has been rocked by anti-foreigner violence. In 2015 xenophobic attacks became so bad that a sports field south of Durban was made into a makeshift refugee camp for Africans escaping the violent looters (Maseko, 2019).

The Nigerian Government says it will implement the early warning signal mechanism recently signed with South Africa. Chairman/Chief Executive Officer of Nigerians in Diaspora Commission, Abike Dabiri-Erewa, gave the assurance following reports of renewed xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in that country on Tuesday. According to her the ministers of foreign affairs in both countries would ensure the implementation of the mechanisms as part of the efforts to curb xenophobic attacks in South Africa (Taylor, 2019). In a statement, Dabiri-Erewa said the Consul-General of Nigeria in South Africa, Godwin Adama, was on top of the situation. She said, "The Consul General, Godwin Adama, is currently in Witbank, Mpumalanga, where the crisis happened. "He is at a meeting with the highest police authorities

there. The mission intervened immediately and the situation is currently under control. After this meeting, a meeting with Nigerians along with the South African Police will hold.” In September, at least 600 Nigerians were forced to return home after xenophobic violence targeted their lives and businesses. Though President Muhammadu Buhari and South Africa’s Cyril Ramaphosa said both countries would work together to prevent a repeat of such, Tuesday’s episode of the traditional violence against African migrants especially Nigerians has rubbished all those assurances (Taylor, 2019). But, contrary to popular perception, xenophobic attacks do not disproportionately target Nigerians. Nigerians often exaggerate the effect of violence on their citizens. That is probably because Nigeria has a better organised, savvy, and loud Diaspora constituency in South Africa (Taylor, 2019).

Unfortunately, the loudness of the Nigerian Diaspora transforms victimhood into foreign policy, generating the reactions that have been witnessed recently. It also plays into the naïve narrative of the “liberation dividend”. This entails Nigerians seeking to be treated uniquely because of their contribution to the struggle for majority rule in South Africa. There were no such expectations from the other countries that supported South Africa’s liberation struggle (Taylor, 2019). According to Taylor, this narrative has taken on an equally economic tinge. South African companies are heavily invested in Nigeria. So, they often become targets of Nigerian ire in times of xenophobia. The accurate picture is that xenophobia affects all African migrants. These are mostly migrants from Malawi, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and, increasingly Ethiopians, Kenyans and Somalis. Nigerians are affected. But they’re not on top of the list. The Nigerian responses are understandable in light of the frequency of these attacks. But, it is important to probe the drivers of xenophobia to understand it more deeply (Taylor, 2019).

First, some studies reveal that the intrusion of foreign migrants into vulnerable communities beset by joblessness and despair inevitability produces a tinderbox that sparks violence. Migrants are easy targets. That’s because they are seen as being better off by the locals. They therefore become targets of people who feel their circumstances have not been addressed by government. It is no surprise that xenophobic attacks have typically occurred in poor neighbourhoods that have been affected by service delivery protests since the mid-2000s. Second, xenophobia thrives on ineffective policing in South Africa. Barely two days after the

Johannesburg attacks started, the national police spokesman admitted that the police were running out of resources to manage the violence. This prompted the Premier of Gauteng, the country's economic hub, to threaten to also deploy the army if the violence continued. Examples of the police's inability to maintain order and respond to threats to property and livelihoods are legion. This, in part, forces people to take the law into their own hands in South Africa (Taylor, 2019).

### 5.1 SUMMARY/CONCLUSION

From the foregoing it is debatable that South Africa depends on other African countries for some of the achievements attained in the country. Similarly, as part of the move to promote African economic development, there is need for cooperation and stability among the African states. This can only be achieved in the absence of discrimination and abuse of foreigners by local indigenes of their residing countries. Achieving this will promote the partnership and cooperation among the countries in Africa and at the same time achieve the common goals toward the development of the continent. South Africa like other countries in Africa has cordial relationship with Nigeria which has involved signing of various agreements and treaties between the two countries in the areas of economic, security and diplomatic ties. Hence, Nigeria's citizen diplomacy as included in the country's foreign policy sought for the protections of Nigerians and their properties both home and abroad. However, the South Africans xenophobia on Nigerians in South Africa could possibly break the ties the two countries had shared before now. It becomes pertinent for South Africans to see themselves as one and brothers to Nigerians in South Africa irrespective of race, colour, gender, and background for the continent to progress.

It is clear from our analysis above that the scarcity of resources and the facts that foreign nationals especially Nigerians in South Africans booms in business and other works of live in South Africans making them to resort to xenophobia against Nigerians in South Africa. The reoccurrence of xenophobia in South Africa is capable of breaking the relationship between the country and other African countries, particularly Nigeria whose nationals were among those molested or victimized by the natives of South Africa. Nigeria - South Africa economic and diplomatic ties which have developed through mutual relationship of the two countries in

African continent may be affected as a result of the attacks on Nigerians in the country (Koutonin, 2016). The alienation of foreign nationals especially black immigrant in South Africa had successfully created a thick line of partition between the “we” and the “them” in South Africa, undermining the ethos of black brotherhood rooted in Africa socialism and communalism. This partition might be with us for long unless urgent steps are taken to address the triggering factors that led to these attacks. Recurring conflicts affect bilateral relations; this makes it imperative to create effective conflict management mechanism to respond to it (Ajah, 2017).

## 5.2 Policy Implications

From the foregoing, anchoring on what Landsberg (2012) describes as volatility and tension in asserting the leadership roles of Nigeria and South Africa, certain recommendations are hereby put forward to tackle the Nigerian – South Africans squabbles and xenophobic attacks and tensions:

1. The National Action Plan put in place by the South Africa government to look into xenophobic crimes is a welcome development indicating the South African government’s intent to fight xenophobia, racism, and all forms of discrimination and prejudice. Now it should fully implement that plan, and work to stem the dangerous tides of intolerance for good. Further the following are suggested to tackle xenophobia between Nigeria and South Africa:

- 2. South African government must establish solid mechanisms to combat xenophobia and prevent its further occurrence in the country:** To effectively combat xenophobia, the government and police need to publicly acknowledge attacks on foreign nationals and their property as xenophobic and take decisive action. This should include ensuring proper police investigations of xenophobic crimes and holding those responsible to account. Inflammatory public statements – such as those made by Johannesburg mayor Herman Mashaba in December 2016, blaming illegal immigrants for crimes and calling on them to leave the city – should be strongly condemned. As South Africa prepares for national elections on May 8, 2019, political leaders should not incite xenophobic violence or promote discrimination (Taylor, 2019).

**3. There is urgent need for South African government to bring to book the perpetrators of the xenophobic attack and punish them accordingly:** Today, South Africa launched its National Action Plan to combat xenophobia, racism, and discrimination, marking an important step towards addressing the widespread human rights abuses arising from xenophobic and gender-based violence and discrimination that continue to plague South Africa. The five-year plan, developed in a consultative process between the government and civil society, aims to raise public awareness about anti-racism and equality measures, improve access to justice and better protection for victims, and increase anti-discrimination efforts to help achieve greater equality and justice (Taylor, 2019). But the Action Plan fails to address a key challenge fuelling the problem: South Africa's lack of accountability for xenophobic crimes. Virtually no one has been convicted for past outbreaks of xenophobic violence, including the Durban violence of April 2015 that displaced thousands of foreign nationals, and the 2008 attacks on foreigners, which resulted in the deaths of more than 60 people across the country (Taylor, 2019). The South African government must ensure that all the people involved in the recent xenophobic attacks against foreign nationals in the country are not only condemned but brought to book and punished commensurately.

4. The urgent need for governments of both countries to ensure that adequate policies and mechanisms are put in place to permanently erase the ugly incident and avoid its reoccurrence, if possible enacting into law as crime punishable by the laws of both countries.

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