A Revisitational Examination of the Xenophobic Attacks on Nigerians in South Africa and Its Socio-Economic and Political Implications for the Host Country

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Abstract
There is no denying the fact that Nigerians are facing primitive and undeserved xenophobic attacks in the hands of South Africans in South Africa. From Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban, Soweto, Bloemfontein, Pretoria, East London, Limpopo to Port Elizabeth it is the same barbaric tale of gruesome molestation and hounding down of foreign nationals, especially Nigerians. These heinous attacks when juxtaposed with Nigeria's financial and logistic support in her (South Africa) apartheid dark days, one will conclude without any iota of doubt that it is an act of ingratitude. Even though, there are allegations of Nigerians soiling their hands by engaging in the illicit businesses, it begs the questions that, why not allow the long arms of the law to take its course; rather than taking laws into their hands.These attacks by South Africans is not new, considering the hostilities being meted out to Nigerians by her Francophone proximate neighbours (Cameroun and Republic of Benin). To a Beninoise, an average Nigerian is an "Ibo", regardless of the person's ethnic stock in Nigeria. This is due to the fact that, out of every ten Nigerians in Cotonou, between seven to eight are ibos, especially in their main market (Topa and Missebour). From their borders or airports as the case may be, to their car parks, restaurants police stations, it is a testimony to their general hate for anything Nigerian. Even the elites who are supposed to evince panache and finesse and maintain an Olympian aloofness from the barbarism and despicable acts that characterise the interpersonal relationship of the illiterates Beninnoise or Camerounians to Nigerians are not doing any better. The paper therefore, interrogates the remote and immediate causes of the attacks in South Africa, the diverse circumstances surrounding them, the socio-political and economic implications of the attacks on both countries. The paper makes appropriate recommendations.
Keywords: South Africa, Xenophobia, Nigeria, Attack.
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Introduction
South Africa is one of the largest countries in the world in terms of landmass and population and is bordered by Namibia, Zimbabwe and Botswana in the north and Swaziland and Mozambique in the northeast (Rojorson, 2000). With a good GDP of about 326.541 billion, however inequality reigned supreme in the country, with corresponding poverty, unemployment and of course, crime is on the increase (Onyibo, 2018). The country gained independence in 1910 but found itself in the clutches of apartheid rule since then till it became emancipated in 1994. Kinge and Tiobo (2016) submitted that the white minority sort to oppress and marginalize the black populous settlement.

Nigeria and Nigerians across strata of its society contributed in no small way to the emancipation of South Africa, especially when she was under apartheid regime. The federal government of Nigeria expended enormous amount of money particularly following the Sharpeville massacre of 1960, Nigerian university undergraduates skipped lunch for a month in order to donate to the Cause of liberating South Africans from the shackles and manacles of apartheid by donating what was called "Mandela tax to fight apartheid". The Nigerian music industry was not left out of the struggle, as "fire in the Soweto" was composed by Sunny Okosun in order to reinforce help from the country (Onyibo, 2018).

Upon gaining independence in 1994, many Sub-Saharan African nationals saw a window of opportunities in new and free South Africa and they wanted to tap into it. Harris cited in Onyibo (2018) postulated that, educational pursuit, job opportunities, and fear of political persecutions form the bulk of the reasons why many non-South African black Africans migrated to the country and the inability of the authorities of South Africa to provide jobs, housing and good healthcare system complicated issues and precipitated the attacks on foreigners, especially the *Makwekwere* (people who cannot speak South African languages and who are economically and culturally inferior to them). Moses (2018) observed that xenophobia is a profound psychosomatic carryovers and the negative product of the apartheid regime.

The dust raised by the xenophobic attacks in South Africa in 2008 is yet to finally subside, as there are still remnants of them. In that attack, scenes of knife, stick wielding, South Africans could be seen chasing Nigerians

and other foreign Africans in South Africa, pictures of wounded Nigerian, several others who lost their lives in the attack could be seen on several international television channels. Crush et al (2008) and Steinberg (2008) observed that the barbaric attack left more than sixty people dead and more than one hundred thousand people homeless. Nigeria and South Africa are two important countries on the continent of Africa. This is due to their enormous influence on the diplomatic and economic planes on the African continent. Besides, the two countries having been colonized have come out better and bigger, with a population of people who are industrious and are ready to take up challenges. Their citizens are full of adventures, one of which is to seek greener pasture in any part of the world where such can be assured. This of course is in tandem with the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Right (UDHR) and the 1965 International Convention of the Eradication of all forms of Racial Discrimination. The fact must be emphasised however, that South Africa has made living and working on her land an arduous task for foreigners by viciously attacking them, treating them in the most despicable of manners at places of work, malls, market and some other public places. This seemingly barbaric attacks on non-South African, especially Nigerians has engendered a lot of bad blood between the two countries. This is against the background that, Nigeria feel short changed despite spirited efforts being made by to ensure and maintain pace on the continent of Africa. Little wonder, Nigeria made Africa the center piece of her foreign policy upon gaining independence in 1960. With this mindset, Nigeria acted with swiftness to unrest in Congo, Sierra Leone, and Liberia among others and she dissipated a lot of human and material resources in the process, sometimes to the detriment of her citizens at home in terms of denying them certain necessities.

The aforesaid has made Nigeria and Nigerians to feel sad considering the unwarranted attacks on Nigerians in South Africa in recent times, more so Nigeria contributed stupendously to end the highly detestable apartheid policy in South Africa. This racial practice in South Africa has indeed received the ire of the international community as it stifles relations between South Africa and the countries whose nationals are being maltreated in South Africa. This xenophobic attacks against non-South African can be seen from the prism of struggle for scarce economic resources. South Africans feel that they are being denied of their right to jobs, this in line with the opinion of Dodson (2010) who averred that South African feel that Nigerians are competing with them for jobs, housing and other resources to which they feel they are entitled to. This no doubt, has made living and working in South Africa a nightmarish experience for Nigerians staying in the country, other Nigerians who had wished to relocated to South Africa, either in search of greener pasture or in pursuit of further academic degrees have largely been dissuaded from embarking on this. The study is segmented into sixn sections, the first introduces it, the second explains xenophobia, the third addresses Nigeria-South African relations overtime, the fourth section appraises the impacts of these attacks on South Africa, the fifth section concludes and the last section makes recommendations.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Xenophobia as a term originated from two Greek words, *Xenos* which translates to foreigner, stranger, alien among others, while the second one, *Phobos* which means fear or insecurity. From the two Greek words, one can conclude effortlessly that xenophobia, translates to extreme dislike or hatred for strangers and foreigners, or any other person that is perceived to be strangers, outsiders, or a group of people, based on their colour, gender, ethnic affiliation, religion or on any other grounds (UNHR, 2013). On a related analytical plane, Fanon (1967) described Phobia as a neurosis that is characterised by of an object that is outside of the individual. In other words, it is a neurotic disorder. It is stating the obvious that targets of xenophobic attacks are meant to be humiliated or hurt for belonging to a particular race or ethnic stock. A proper deconstruction of the word xenophobia can be broken down to racism, some scholars have indeed christened it New Racism that is racism practised by blacks on other blacks, who though stay in the same community with them, but who are deemed to be inferior (Tafira, 2011). It could also be seen an intense dislike, hatred, fear of those perceived to be strangers (Crush 1996, Frederickson, 2002, De Master, and Leroy 2000). The fact must be stressed that, these attacks in South Africa are institutionally entrenched and systemic in nature, by this this study means that, there are governmental structures and institutions that are complicit in these attacks. They indeed help to aid and abet them. Some scholars like Fanon et al have described happenings in South Africa as Negrophobia-fear and dislike of black people and their culture, Afrophobia-fear and dislike for people of Africa and their culture. Most scholars are at crossroad on how to draw a line between Xenophobia and Racism. This article therefore addresses the question of what demarcates one from the other. Simply put, xenophobia is fear and dislike of strangers, while racism in the opinion of Goldberg (1993) is the discrimination against others based on their putatively different social membership. Tafira (2011) bolsters the analysis by explicating the fact that, commentators assume that when discrimination is being carried out among people of the same skin colour, that it is xenophobia and not racism. Goldber adumbrated the contours of the debate by adding that, racism as a fluid and highly chameleonic concept in that, it meaning depends on the prevailing social and epistemological conditions and realities.

A good number of Nigerians and Camerounians took refuge in Hillbrow, a community in the heart of

Johannesburg. Hillbrow, provided a refuge for these migrants because of the large concentration of non-South African national in this vicinity. Hillbrow appealed to these set of people for a number of reasons, one of which is that, it used to be a formally white dominated community but later became a predominantly black neighborhood (Morris, 1999).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Frustration-Aggression and Scapegoating theories will be used in explicating xenophobic attacks in South Africa. In order to situate the study in its logical perspective, these two theories are categorical imperatives, because they will help to better underscore the phenomenon of xenophobia in South Africa.

The scapegoating thesis presupposes that the non-South Africans were seen and used as scapegoats in teaching a lesson that, someone must be blamed for their woes and misfortunes in getting jobs and housing. The authorities of South Africa, consequent upon the end of apartheid in 1994 was unable to provide adequate jobs, housing and good health care system; the migrants, both legal and illegal must bear the brunt of their predicaments.

XENOPHOBIA IN SOUTH AFRICA

The emphasis must be laid that xenophobia did not start or originate in South Africa. Europe and North America have been steeped in xenophobic sentiments ever before its occurrence in South Africa. It has only become a big issue in Nigeria in recent times, because the bulk of the victims of these attacks are Nigerians. In 1914, many Mexicans were attacked in the United States of America on xenophobic grounds (Fetzer, 2000, Mikulich, 2009, Stacey, et al., Kinge and Tiobo, 2016). France attacked Muslims and non-French citizens because it's predominantly white, white many of them as Catholics (Kinge and Tiobo, 2016). Australia regarded nationals of other countries as criminals and asylum seekers in their country in the heat of their xenophobic attacks against foreigners (Buchanam, 2003). Back in Africa, xenophobia has been in place before its reappearance in South Africa. Ghana and Nigeria have had reciprocity of xenophobic dispositions and sentiments. In 1969, Ghana deported about 1.5 million foreign nationals from their country (Campbell, 2003), bulk of which were Nigerians and in a reprisal attack, Nigeria deported many Ghanaians in 1983 (Soyombo, 2008). Just a year after their gaining freedom from the hands of the apartheid lords, migrants from neighbouring Malawi, Zimbabwe and Mozambique were seriously attacked in the town of Alexandra (Buthelezi, 2009). In 2008, Idehen and Osaghae (2015) opined that there was an increase in the attack in 2008. Monson and Anan cited in Onyibo (2018) also contended that, in one attack 62 people were killed, while well over 670 people were seriously injured. In 2017 attacks, several lives were lost, property worth millions of Rands belonging to Nigerians were destroyed, while many people were hospitalized.

CAUSES OF XENOPHOBIC ATTACKS IN SOUTH AFRICA

There are as many causes of the series of attacks that were meted out to non-South Africans in the country, particularly Nigerians. From the amalgam of literatures on xenophobia, the following reasons have been gleaned as being the propelling reasons for the said attacks in South Africa in 2008 and 2015.

First cause of the attack can be looked at from the angle of governmental neglect of the essential necessities of the people. It can therefore be put hypothetically that, frustration with government precipitated aggression among the locals against the no-South Africans. Even though, some would put this down, as misplaced transfer of aggression but it holds some logic that, the people in their bid to vent their grievance, decided to deal with aliens. Morris (2008) submitted that, perceived disinterest of government and the resulting lack of voice experienced by many communities triggered the violence.

Secondly, Competition over limited resources constituted another logical argument for the attacks on non-South Africans in the country. Dodson commented that South Africans saw foreign Africans as competing with them for jobs, housing, and other essential services which they believed they are the ones that are entitled to those things. Sharp (2008) added that wealthy South Africans loathed the idea of paying taxes to provide essential services for non-South Africans Africans who escaped from their different countries due to bad leadership, political incompetence, and economic mismanagement. On a lighter note, Dodson and Oelofse (2000: 114) added interesting gender and sexual dimension to interpersonal competition between South African s and foreigners. In other words, foreign African men were wont to flashing money around, thereby "stealing" their women. In the area of jobs, illegal immigrants to South Africa were ready to take up any jobs without the corresponding benefit and at any wage rate just to survive, especially in low-wage sectors of the economy. This friction was exacerbated by a high rate of unemployment in South Africa that rose to 24.5% in the third quarter of 2009.

The third cause could be poverty. One can therefore say hypothetically that, poverty increases xenophobic attacks. This hostility towards the out groups can be placed at the door of economic deprivation which is a precursor to poverty. This theory holds that poverty begets frustration and by extension aggression.

The fourth reason for the attacks could be that, most times immigrants may believe in different cultural and religious traditions as opposed to what the natives subscribes to. Classen corroborating this position, observed bed that, cultural and religious differences of Mozambicans or Zimbabweans (formerly Rhodesia) is not too different from that of the South Africans, that of Nigerians and Eritrea for examples were poles apart from the South African's cultural and religious beliefs, and this made them to feel insure and threatened.

Another strong argument is the theory of relative deprivation. This theory holds that, natives naturally deserves better living conditions than immigrants who do not have a stake in the commonwealth of South Africa. They contend that, in the event of any eventuality, the immigrants have their various countries to run to, but they have nowhere to go.

IMPLICATIONS OF XENOPHOBIA ON SOUTH AFRICA
It is indeed very apposite to peruse the impacts of these attacks on non-South Africans on the socio-political and cultural sectors of the South African state.

Political Implications
That South Africa has been marked out as an unfriendly country to other Africans is stating the obvious. And this of course will affect such nationals in their different countries in the way they will relate to South Africans in their different countries. It must be emphasised that, on the political and diplomatic plane, a frosty relations has been engendered between Nigeria and South Africa as a result of the unprovoked attacks on non-South Africans, especially Nigerians in the country. South Africa has received public condemnation from several groups within the international community. South Africans proximate neighbours roundly condemned the heinous acts. The United Nations Security Council added its voice to the public condemnation that South Africa got. Nigeria in the hit of the attacks recalled her ambassador from South Africa to register her disaffection and indignation to the acts. This is more so that, the government of South Africa implicitly supported the violence being meted out to other Africans on South African soil.

Socio-cultural
Socially and culturally, South Africa citizens have got more enemies that the apartheid era. The pity and sympathy that South Africa got as a result of their apartheid experience has been obliterated by these attacks on innocent Africans. Instead of paying countries that came to their rescue in their dark days in good coins, they decided to hit them below the belt, especially Nigerians.

Economic Implications
On the economic plane, there are implications to South Africa for maltreating and molesting non-South African Africans on their soil. Conventional wisdom holds that, foreign investments contributes to the growth and development of any nation. It is common knowledge that, Nigerian investors in South Africa will not entertain any idea of engaging their citizens consequent upon such attacks, accepts in situations where they are mandated to have South Africans in their organisation statutorily. Chaman et al observes that, many foreign investors in

Conclusion and Recommendations
The paper has interrogated xenophobic attacks against non-South Africans in South Africa, especially Nigerians. These attacks that some scholars have tagged *West-a-phobia*- attacks against West Africans can be seen as a throwback to colonial days. These attacks have no doubt put South Africa and her citizens in bad light with the continent of Africa and beyond. It was discovered that there were institutional connivance in the entire attacks, more often than not, when the people cannot be actively involved, they looked the other way, while black Africans especially Nigerians were being dealt with sometimes killed.

On the basis of the afore-stated therefore, and a caveat is very apt and apposite here, and it is that, nationals of a country cannot be barred from migrating to other countries for greener pastures, therefore, makes the following recommendations.

First, the authorities of South Africa are to desist from institutional connivance in these attacks.

Secondly, Nigerians must be re-oriented on the need to be law abiding, be good representatives of their country and engage in legitimate dealings as against allegations of dealing in drugs and some other outlawed items.

Thirdly, a committee should be on standby to always wade in, in the event of future attacks on Nigeria to forestall unnecessary molestation and victimization and not after a lot of havocs must have been wrought then Nigerians will be embarking on fire brigade approach, in other words, we must be proactive and not be reactive.

Similarly, since the bulk of those going to South Africa are either for studies or business opportunities, Nigerians government should make education especially tertiary education a priority and a conducive business environment should be endangered.

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